

IN BRIEF

Snow causes cars to slide into Plaza Jalisco

Snowy conditions caused two vehicles, in two separate incidents a few hours apart on Sunday, to slide into Plaza Jalisco, a Mexican restaurant in downtown Astoria. No injuries have been reported. Snowfall over the weekend blanketed streets across the North Coast.

State discloses virus cases at local schools

The Oregon Health Authority has disclosed nine new coronavirus cases at schools in Clatsop County.

All of the cases were students, with seven being from the Astoria School District, according to the health authority's weekly outbreak report. Three of the cases were from Astoria Middle School, while two were from Astoria High School. The report also showed one case each at Astor Elementary and Lewis and Clark Elementary.

The report showed one case at Warrenton Grade School and one case at Hilda Lahti Elementary.

— *The Astorian*

Feds contribute \$2.4M to rebuild at Port of Ilwaco

ILWACO, Wash. — A major project at the Port of Ilwaco is now fully funded following news this month of a \$2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Transportation.

The port's east bulkhead provides waterside work space for Safe Coast Seafoods, a major employer and crucial partner to the local commercial fishing industry.

The structure dates from the mid-20th century "and has endured severe deterioration due to age, frequent flooding and storm damage. The potential collapse of the bulkhead could render the entire wharf unusable," according to a press release.

With a considerable push from U.S. Sen. Patty Murray, U.S. Sen. Maria Cantwell and U.S. Rep. Jaime Herrera Beutler, the federal Port Infrastructure Development Program said it will provide \$2.4 million to rebuild the bulkhead, adding to grants obtained this summer of \$750,000 from the state's Community Economic Revitalization Board and \$80,000 from the Pacific County Council of Governments.

Total project cost is pegged at \$3.5 million.

— *Chinook Observer*

DEATHS

Dec. 27, 2021

BRUMM, Betty Inez, 93, of Astoria, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Dec. 23, 2021

JUE, Irene Chu Lin, 90, of Astoria, died in Warrenton. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Dec. 13, 2021

RUBINO, Ron, 77, of Warrenton, died in Warrenton. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

Nov. 5, 2021

NIEMI, Edward Alfred, 77, of Astoria, died in Portland. Crown Memorial Centers is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Kidnapping

• Jonathan Michael Fleming, 38, of Astoria, was indicted last week for kidnapping in the first degree; strangulation; assault in the fourth degree; menacing; and unlawful use of a stun gun in the second degree. The crimes are alleged to have occurred earlier this month.

Robbery

• Nicholas Brian Dierick, 27, of Waitsburg, Washington, was arrested last week for robbery in the second degree and menacing and theft in the second degree — incidents that took place at Walmart in Warrenton — and for supplying contraband and possession of

a controlled substance at the Clatsop County Jail. He also had warrants out of Washington state and Umatilla County.

Harassment

• Ricky Dean Sutton, 57, of Warrenton, was arrested last week for disorderly conduct and harassment constituting domestic violence.

Theft

• Manuel Li Rodriguez, 42, of Olympia, Washington, was arrested on Thursday at Fred Meyer in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

• Iddo Solomon Dechters, 30, of Seaside, was arrested on Friday at T.J. Maxx in Warrenton for theft in the second degree.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

TUESDAY

Clatsop County Planning Commission/Countywide Advisory Committee, 9 a.m., joint meeting, (electronic meeting).

Astoria Planning Commission, 5:30 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

the Astorian

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SNOW DAY

Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Sean Kahrhoff takes a slow motion video of his son, Peyton, hitting a homemade jump while sledding at the Astoria Column on Sunday. Snow fell over the holiday weekend across the North Coast.

Lower Columbia Q Center disputes spill out in lawsuit

By NICOLE BALES

The Astorian

Disputes at the Lower Columbia Q Center have prompted a legal battle pitting board members against each other.

The nonprofit Q Center provides outreach, education and advocacy for the region's LGBTQ community. A lawsuit filed in Circuit Court in December by four of the center's eight board members described a contentious breakdown in communication last June that has caused dysfunction over the past several months.

"These disputes, and defendants' stubborn refusal to discuss these important issues, led to and culminated in a crisis point on June 16, 2021," the court filing said. "Since then, the board has remained in a state of complete dysfunction."

Shortly after the June meeting, the suit said, each side hired legal counsel and through their attorneys discussed and negotiated several options to restore the board's functionality and return the organization to full operations. Despite all members signing an arbitration agreement in July, the suit said some board members ceased all communications about a month ago.

Taz Davis, Dida DeAngelis, Don Duncan and Sandi Hilton filed the lawsuit in December, asking the court to dissolve the nonprofit and appoint a custodian to manage its affairs.

The suit claims the other board members — David Drafall, Hilary Ann Levine, Tessa Scheller and Jim Summers — violated the arbitration agreement and have acted in other ways that are causing dysfunction.

The court filing details several conflicts leading to the deadlock, includ-



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The Lower Columbia Q Center helps organize events such as Astoria Pride.

THE NONPROFIT PROVIDES OUTREACH, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY FOR THE REGION'S LGBTQ COMMUNITY. A LAWSUIT FILED IN CIRCUIT COURT IN DECEMBER BY FOUR OF THE CENTER'S EIGHT BOARD MEMBERS DESCRIBED A CONTENTIOUS BREAKDOWN IN COMMUNICATION LAST JUNE THAT HAS CAUSED DYSFUNCTION OVER THE PAST SEVERAL MONTHS.

ing whether a former board member's background was properly vetted.

The suit also outlines several instances when board members allegedly spent the nonprofit's funds without board approval. Shortly after the June meeting, the filing said, board members moved the nonprofit's funds — about \$77,000 — to a different bank account.

Since the suit was filed, Judge Beau Peterson has issued a temporary restraining order directing board members to comply with the terms of the arbitration agreement, not spend any of the nonprofit's funds without approval by a quorum of the board and cease meeting and conducting business without a quorum.

Drafall and Scheller, through their attorney,

declined to comment. Levine and Summers could not be reached for comment.

The other four board members told The Astorian they hope the restraining order will prevent any further litigation.

"We didn't see a need to go to court until three directors started taking actions against us," they said in a statement. "They pretended to act with the authority of the full board knowing full well they had no authority to do so. They sought to remove us, rather than cooperatively discuss the important questions we need to address as a board of directors."

"We hope our fellow directors will now — finally — come to the table to discuss our differences in good faith, starting with mediation," they said. "We don't believe further litigation serves anyone's interests — not ours, not the Q Center's, not our stakeholders, and not the communities we serve."

Offices close for New Year's Day

The Astorian

In observance of New Year's Day on Saturday, all federal, state and county offices are closed Friday.

Astoria, Gearhart and Seaside city offices are closed Friday. Warrenton and Cannon Beach city offices are closed Thursday and Friday. All U.S. post offices are closed Friday, and there is no mail delivery.

Astoria, Jewell, Knappa, Warrenton/Hammond and Seaside (including Cannon Beach and Gearhart) school district schools, and Clatsop Community College, are closed for winter break.

The Astoria Library and Warrenton Library are

closed Friday and Saturday. The Seaside Library is closed Saturday.

The Port of Astoria offices and services are closed Saturday.

Garbage collection through Recology Western Oregon and the city of Warrenton garbage collection are not affected by the holiday. Recology Western Oregon's transfer station closes at 2 p.m. Friday and is closed Saturday.

The Sunset Library in Seaside is closed Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Astoria Aquatic Center is closed Saturday.

The Clatsop County Heritage Museum, Oregon Film Museum, Fla-

vel House and the Carriage House are closed Saturday. The Uppertown Firefighters' Museum is closed for the winter.

The Sprouts Learning Center is open from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Friday. Through Friday, costumed rangers will be at the Fort Clatsop replica to answer questions from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Fort Clatsop is also open Saturday from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is open from 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

The Sunset Empire Transportation District final run schedule for Friday is as follows: Route 101 leaves McDonald's in Asto-

ria at 5:53 p.m., and ends at Fred Meyer in Warrenton at 6:20 p.m.; Route 20 leaves Seaside Cinema at 4:35 p.m., leaves the Cannon Beach Visitor Center at 5:12 p.m., and ends at Seaside Cinema at 5:30 p.m.; Route 10 leaves the Astoria Transit Center at 5:05 p.m., and ends at the Astoria Transit Center at 5:28 p.m.; and Route 15 leaves Warrenton Mini Mart at 5:52 p.m., and ends at the Warrenton Mini Mart 6:07 p.m. The Columbia Connector route is running its regular schedule on Friday.

There is no bus service on Saturday, and the Astoria and Seaside transit centers are closed.