

## IN BRIEF

## Seaside man sentenced to prison for role in fatal crash

A Seaside man was sentenced to more than nine years in prison for his role in a 2021 crash that left a baby dead.

Rony Evelio Tomas-Garcia, 24, was sentenced in Circuit Court on Thursday to 110 months in prison for manslaughter in the second degree, assault in the second degree and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

On Feb. 15, 2021, Tomas-Garcia was driving on Ecola State Park Road with two passengers: Esperanza Martin-Ramirez and her daughter, Kenia, 3 1/2 months. The car went off the road and flipped over.

Kenia died at the scene. Martin-Ramirez suffered serious injuries.

## Seaside man sentenced to prison for kidnapping

A Seaside man was sentenced Friday to more than six years in prison for kidnapping in the second degree and being a felon in possession of a firearm.

Troy Wayne Skinner, 33, received a 50-month sentence in Circuit Court for a kidnapping that occurred in April 2020. For the same case, he had already served 18 months for unlawful use of a weapon.

Skinner got an additional 24 months for the firearm charge from a December case.

## State discloses virus cases at local schools

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

Both cases were students, according to the health authority's weekly outbreak report. One case was from Lewis and Clark Elementary School, while the other was from Jewell School.

## Transit district announces Ridership Appreciation Day

The Sunset Empire Transportation District announced that its annual Ridership Appreciation Day will be held on Tuesday.

The transit district will offer free bus service on all regular bus routes throughout Clatsop County as a thanks to the community for its ongoing support.

The day will coincide with Project Homeless Connect, which will be held at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center on the same day from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

— *The Astorian*

## CORRECTION

**Incorrect percentage** — The Clatsop Enterprise Zone offers businesses tax breaks on new investment in return for creating new jobs that pay at least 130% of the average county wage. The percentage was incorrectly listed as 150% in A1 stories on Jan. 20 and Jan. 8.

## ON THE RECORD

## Encouraging child sexual abuse

• John Mark Dailley, 61, of Seaside, was arrested this week for nine counts of encouraging child sexual abuse in the first degree and nine counts of encouraging child sexual abuse in the second degree. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in October.

## Rape

• Ronald Lee Harrod, 56, of Astoria, was indicted on Thursday for rape in the first degree, rape in the second degree, sodomy in the first degree, sodomy in the second degree, using a child in a display of sexually explicit

conduct, unlawful sexual penetration in the second degree, three counts of unlawful sexual penetration in the first degree and seven counts of sexual abuse in the first degree.

The crimes are alleged to have occurred in 2012, 2015, 2016 and 2021.

## Menacing

• Cameron Darnell Petteway, 33, of Steubenville, Ohio, was arrested on Wednesday at Walmart in Warrenton for unlawful possession of a weapon, menacing and disorderly conduct in the second degree. He allegedly threatened a store employee with a knife.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## MONDAY

**Warrenton Marinas Advisory Committee**, 2 p.m., Warrenton Marina Office, 501 N.E. Harbor Place.

**Seaside City Council**, 5 p.m., special meeting on camping ordinance, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Jewell School District Board**, 6 p.m., Jewell School library, 83874 Oregon Highway 103.

**Seaside City Council**, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

## TUESDAY

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

**Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors**, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Ave. A, Seaside.

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

**Seaside Airport Advisory Committee**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Warrenton City Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 225 S. Main Ave.

## the Astorian

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## Officials look to address chronic flooding

## Rain still impacts section of Highway 101

By R.J. MARX  
*The Astorian*

SEASIDE — During this month's heavy rains, police issued alerts for some vehicles to avoid U.S. Highway 101 between the Cannon Beach junction and Avenue U in Seaside due to flooding — a yearly issue.

"Guys, you know we had a little bit of water," Seaside Public Works Director Dale McDowell said at the City Council's meeting earlier this month. "Everybody did a great job and all our residents were patient. We helped everybody that we possibly could and I think we did quite well."

But the flooding that occurs near Highway 101 by Circle Creek RV Resort during heavy rains is something city officials hope to address and possibly mitigate.

Parts of Seaside flooded during the recent storms. With snow melt, rain swelling the rivers and king tides, the city had a lot of standing water, McDowell said.

Near Circle Creek, rain and snow melt made passage difficult if not impossible.

"I do think it would be interesting to have a conversation with the Oregon



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Cars crossed a submerged section of U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside early this month.

Department of Transportation again concerning the flooding that does take place south of town," City Manager Mark Winstanley said.

Changes were made several years back that lowered the frequency and level of flooding, "but it has obviously not solved the problem down south of town," Winstanley said.

In the 1970s, berms had been built to hold back the Necanicum River and improve the land for development, City Councilor Tom Horning said.

Much of the seasonal water was constrained by the berm, but floodwaters could not flow into the fields and wetlands, and had nowhere to go but across the highway, causing delays and closures.

In 2013, the Depart-

ment of Transportation, the county and North Coast Land Conservancy completed remediation of a parcel of wetlands designed to flood-proof the area of land near Circle Creek.

While the Department of Transportation acknowledged the wetlands mitigation project would not stop the highway from flooding entirely, they hoped to significantly reduce flooding by allowing the water to drain naturally onto the wetlands.

The removal of parts of the berm along the west side of the river on North Coast Land Conservancy property did solve a large part of the flood problem, Horning said.

"However, not all of the berm was removed, so not all of the problem was

fixed," Horning said. "It stands to reason that the remaining berm could be removed to return the highway and river flooding to the way they were in November 1972 when the flooding really began in earnest."

Its total removal should restore that flooding section of road to nearly dry, he said.

The fixes in 2013 were "both expensive and extensive," Winstanley said.

"Coming back and taking a look at that again is something that would be interesting," he said. "It's about time for the city to engage the Oregon Department of Transportation again and see whether they have any ideas on how they might solve that. We complain just like anybody else would, but I think we can see if we can't have some more conversation about that."

City Councilor Steve Wright, the Seaside board member for the Northwest Oregon Area Commission on Transportation, brought the issue to the group's January meeting.

Group members were responsive, he said, and will look for a regional coalition.

"The areas that flood are outside the city so a regional agency seems a good place to start," Wright said. "We need to keep working on solutions. The problem occurs less frequently but it still shuts down 101."

## After Tonga eruption, a focus on Pacific Northwest volcanoes

By KALE WILLIAMS  
*The Oregonian*

The eruption of the Hunga Tonga Hunga Ha'apai volcano in the South Pacific last week was brief, but extremely powerful.

A mushroom cloud of gasses and ash rose nearly 20 miles into the atmosphere. The shockwave created by the massive explosion traveled around the world twice and was reportedly heard in Alaska, about 5,000 miles away. The blast triggered tsunami warnings across the Pacific Ocean.

The eruption only lasted about 10 minutes but likely triggered some longer introspection for residents of the Pacific Northwest, which is dotted with volcanoes, both active and dormant, onshore and off. While the northwest Pacific is home to one of the world's most active undersea volcanoes, known as the Axial Seamount, there is little threat of a cataclysmic eruption like the one in Tonga.

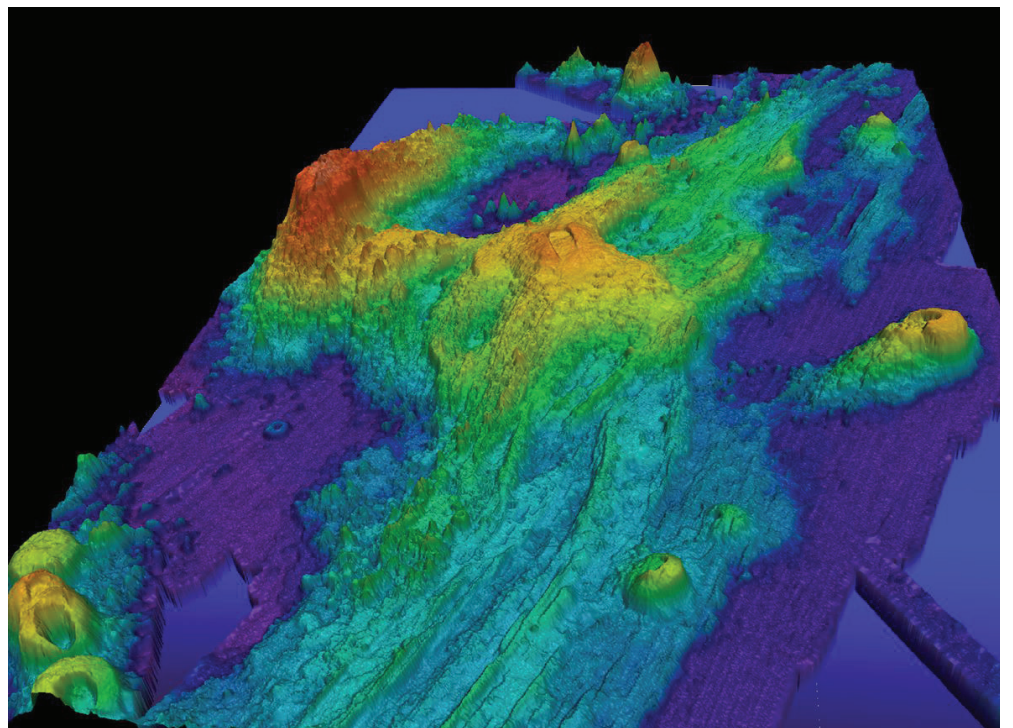
"There's no real risk," said Bill Chadwick, an Oregon State University researcher who has been studying volcanology in the Pacific Northwest for the past 30 years. "It's pretty far offshore, and it's in pretty deep water."

That was far from the case last weekend in Tonga.

The volcano sat at a depth of just 650 feet, optimal for creating a large explosion, Shane Cronin, a volcanology professor at the University of Auckland, told the Associated Press.

When the pressure of building magma and gasses grew too great, the cone of the Tonga volcano ruptured and seawater flooded in and met with molten rock. The crack allowed the pressurized gasses to expand rapidly, Cronin said, and the water above vaporized in a flash, steam augmenting the already-towering mushroom cloud.

At least three people are confirmed to have died in Tonga, which is about 50 miles south of the eruption site, and the ensuing tsunami killed two people and caused an oil spill in Peru. Still, given the size of the eruption, it's relatively shallow depth and its proximity



The Axial Seamount, a 3,600-foot-tall active volcano, sits under about a mile of ocean water 300 miles west of Cannon Beach off the Oregon Coast.

to Tonga, experts have said the damage was surprisingly limited.

By contrast, the top of the Axial Seamount, which rises to just over 3,600 feet tall about 300 miles west of Cannon Beach, sits under nearly a mile of ocean water. You don't have to look far back in the history books to find an eruption, either. The seamount has erupted several times over the past couple decades, most recently in 2015.

The only way to actually detect an eruption of the seamount, though, is with technical instruments. The volcano is so deep underwater, Chadwick said, that even if you were directly over it during an eruption, there would be no detectable change at the surface, not even a bubble.

"The deep ocean is very secretive," he said. "To detect an eruption at Axial, if you were over it in a ship, you'd have to lower some instruments down over the side. Either something to measure temperature or chemical anomalies from the hydrothermal plumes being produced."

The seamount sits over a "hot spot" in the Earth's crust. As the tectonic plate moves over the hot spot, the ground is forced up. The result has been a chain of seamounts forming, much like the Hawaiian islands. Axial is the youngest and

only active member of the chain.

What it lacks in pyrotechnics, the Axial Seamount more than makes up for in research opportunities.

The seamount is home to an array of sensors that measure geophysical, chemical and biological changes on the seafloor and in the water as well as cameras that capture images of the volcano, all sent back to shore in real time via undersea cable.

"It's totally unique in the world," Chadwick said. "It's one of the most active submarine volcanoes that we know of, and it's the best monitored in the world."

The volcano has provided data that allowed researchers to predict its most recent eruption seven months in advance, which could hold the key to forecasting eruptions on land, according to Chadwick.

"During its eruptions, Axial's seafloor drops suddenly by about 8 feet, and then over the next several years it gradually rises back

up," he said. "When it re-inflates to a certain level, the volcano is almost ready to erupt again."

The seamount essentially acts like a balloon, Chadwick said, except instead of filling with air, the chamber fills with molten rock.

Early predictions called for another eruption sometime in the first half of this decade, but the rate of magma filling the seamount has slowed recently, Chadwick said. In his most recent paper, published in December, he and a team of researchers pushed back their forecast for an eruption to the latter half of the 2020s.

The next time it does go off, Chadwick and dozens of researchers will be poring over the data, looking for clues they can apply elsewhere so that those who live near volcanoes that pose very real threats, like the people of Tonga, can be better prepared next time a more dangerous eruption occurs.

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