

Grad rates take a dip

Disruptions from the coronavirus pandemic

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

Graduation rates at high schools in Clatsop County took a dip after the first full academic year of the coronavirus pandemic.

The data from the Oregon Department of Education showed the Astoria School District with an 82.8% graduation rate for the 2020-2021 school year, compared to 90.9% after the previous school year.

“While we strive to support each student to reach a high school diploma and disappointment can be felt when those goals are not met, as a district, we celebrate the successes of those who overcame unprecedented obstacles and challenges to reach this achievement,” Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes said in an email. “What made the 2020-2021 (school year) difficult was that most of the students tried to complete school remotely and any time there is a barrier with engagement, student education will suffer.”

Graduation rates had been steadily climbing in the school district until last school year’s decline.

“The effects of the (coronavirus) pandemic upon the educational programs of the district were significant,” Hoppes said. “... The high school is working to meet the needs of all students and in particular students who have fallen behind over the last couple of years.”

The state’s report showed the Warrenton-Hammond School District with a 70.8% graduation rate, compared to 73.9% the previous year.

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A common area in the women’s side of a sober living house will eventually host an office.

‘We’re really trying to give a few people this chance to make this work’

A sober living house to open in Warrenton

By **ERICK BENDEL**
The Astorian

WARRENTON — At a tucked-away residence in the southwest part of the city, people who have struggled with drug and alcohol abuse will have a chance to rebuild their lives.

Last year, Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare purchased a two-story duplex to serve as a sober living house.

The men’s side has four bedrooms to rent, the women’s side three. The extra room in the women’s unit will become an upstairs office, where peer recovery allies will work during the week.

People in varying states of recovery and employment plan to move in over

the next few weeks. They can live in the house for up to a year.

To qualify, an applicant must be involved in a Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare drug-and-alcohol recovery service, been sober for at least 30 days, and have enough money — from \$250 to \$350 a month, depending on the room size — for the program fee.

Tenants can come from anywhere on the substance abuse spectrum, from alcoholism to opioid addiction. “I don’t care if you’re coming right out of prison,” said Trista Boudon, who leads the agency’s recovery ally and peer support team.

Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the county’s mental health and substance abuse treatment contractor, co-runs another sober living house — a fourplex on Agate Street in Astoria — with other social services agencies. That house is designed as a safe space for single mothers in addiction recovery, and

doesn’t have many of the same tenant requirements.

As a sober living site owned and operated solely by Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, the Warrenton facility is a first for the agency, which bought the property for \$650,000. Half a million came from an Oregon Health Authority grant, while the rest came out of the agency’s reserves.

The interior has been refurbished, including new floors. The common areas will have new and donated couches and other furniture; the kitchens, new supplies and ceramic cookware. Both upstairs and downstairs will boast a flat-screen TV.

The facility follows a modified Oxford House model, in which people who live together create fellowship around sharing responsibilities and supporting each others’ sobriety.

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Knappa man finds success on YouTube

Caron tries to decipher macroeconomics

By **NICOLE BALES**
The Astorian

Sitting behind the wheel of his car, a pair of blue fuzzy dice hanging from the rearview mirror, Simon Caron delivers his daily talks on macroeconomics.

Caron works in retail sales at an Astoria lumberyard and has no formal education in economics.

What started as trying to understand the financial collapse that led to the Great Recession in 2007 became a hobby and grew into an obsession.

Since launching his YouTube channel — Uneducated Economist — in 2017, he has gained more than 84,000 subscribers.

Caron said he started the channel after someone suggested he share his knowledge online. He never expected to have a large following. He certainly did not expect the videos to change his life.

“I was really just looking for a place to kind of pour my thoughts out and maybe keep track of them like a journal or something like that,” Caron said.

As he talked more about lumber and building supply, he caught the attention of real estate agents,



Simon Caron



contractors and others with industry ties.

His audience continued to grow slowly until he came across another economics YouTuber, George Gammon. Caron said he formed a relationship with Gammon after recommending his channel to his subscribers.

While Gammon’s channel was

new at the time, it grew to an audience of 342,000 subscribers. And after Gammon had Caron on his show, Caron’s subscribers soared.

Caron was stunned to find himself onstage at an economics conference hosted by Gammon in Houston, Texas, earlier this month. He was invited to speak along with others including Ron Paul, a former Republican congressman and presidential candidate from Texas who has libertarian views, and Robert Kiyosaki, an author of popular personal finance books.

Caron said he had been following some of the speakers years before starting his channel.

“I’m like, how the world did I end up here?” he said.

Caron’s quest to understand macroeconomics and explain it to others in layman’s terms grew out of years of his own financial struggle.

He graduated from Knappa High School in 1995 and has spent much of his career working in construction and retail in the lumber and building supply industry.

Caron bought a house in 2007 after his wife became pregnant with their first child. While he had heard about the possibility of a financial collapse, he did not think it would affect him.

By the end of the Great Recession, Caron had trouble finding work and bills started piling up. His home later fell into foreclosure.

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Lindsay Cobb

Pyrosomes are starting to wash up on beaches in Clatsop County. Each tube is actually a collection of small animals that works as one to move through the water and feed on small particles like phytoplankton.

Pyrosomes spotted again on local beaches

Roughly the size and shape of a pickle

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
KMUN

The pyrosomes are back. Sort of.

Typically found in tropical or subtropical waters, pyrosomes made a dramatic appearance on the North Coast in 2017 when unusually warm waters off the Oregon and Washington state coastlines encouraged a sur-

prising expansion north. They clogged fishing gear and washed up in small piles on beaches. Before 2014, it was rare to see them off Oregon, and never in such quantities.

In the past week, people have reported seeing some pyrosomes again on beaches in Clatsop County. Researchers have also started to notice them more in ocean waters off Newport. It is possible recent storms and strong currents have swept them in.

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