



INSIDE

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A Red Bull can is partially buried in underbrush at Fort Stevens State Park.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Port expects a record cruise ship season

Forty-two cruise ships are booked to dock

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

As cruise ship season gets closer, the Port of Astoria is expecting a record number of visits from oceangoing vessels.

Bruce Conner, who manages cruise ship marketing for the Port, gave an update to the Port Commission on Tuesday, breaking down each cruise company's expectations and how the cruises will handle coronavirus protocols.

Forty-two cruise ships are booked to dock in Astoria in 2022.

"It is pretty amazing in the midst of COVID," Conner said. "42 is shocking."

Visits are starting earlier and lasting later than a typical year, Conner said, making way for more inventory. The first vessel is planning to dock on March 25.

Conner said the Port has seen very few cancellations, even through the spike in virus cases from the omicron variant.

"I think just that bookings have not changed is a great sign that they're committed to coming into Astoria and going on up to Alaska," Conner said in an interview.

Several cruise lines are planning to require vaccinations and booster shots for passengers, Conner said.

See *Cruise ships*, Page A6

Local man gets probation in Salem protest

Lyles said he used bear spray during fray

By **ERICK BENGEL**
The Astorian

SALEM — A Svensen man has pleaded guilty to charges related to a far-right protest at the Oregon State Capitol in December 2020 that police declared an unlawful assembly.

Ryan Ernie Lyles, 43, pleaded guilty in Marion County Circuit Court on Monday to three counts of unlawful use of a chemical irritant and to being a felon in possession of body armor.

Lyles was sentenced to three years of probation, will have to perform 120 hours of community service, pay a \$2,000 fine and have no contact with the Capitol building or with other individuals charged in the protest.

See *Protest*, Page A6

On the North Coast, a nudge toward sustainable tourism

Programs steer visitors to be more responsible

By **ABBEY McDONALD**
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Joshua Heineman, the city's director of tourism marketing, thinks about trash while on beach walks with his family. In the past few years, takeout containers, masks and even human waste have piled up on the North Coast's trails and beaches.

"Ever since the pandemic happened, I don't know if it's a mass psychology thing, I don't know if it's different people visiting that don't usually come out," he said. "It was very, very evident there's people out there that just didn't know how to look out for other people."

Seaside already has monthly trash cleanups, along with a few larger-scale ones throughout the year. Heineman wanted to do more.

"It was just putting together that idea that if everybody just did a little bit to not only pick up after themselves, but pick up after the people that aren't behaving, crowdsourcing that effort could really go a long way," he said.

The idea of having visitors contribute to improving natural sites and community spaces follows the idea of sustainable tourism, a concept that North Coast business, government and tourism management leaders will emphasize in the coming months.



The Coffenbury Lake Loop Trail in Fort Stevens State Park.

Earlier this month, Seaside launched its "Coffee for Clean Beaches" program. Participants pick up bags and gloves at the Seaside Aquarium, then leave them — filled with trash — for pickup on the Promenade. They can then bring a selfie with their handiwork to the visitor's bureau in exchange for \$5 worth of wooden coins to spend at participating coffee shops.

Over its first two weekends, people picked up around \$45 worth of coins. Seaside has only recently started advertising the program, and intends to market it to Portland with radio ads.

The city is testing out the program for the rest of the year.

Heineman is expecting more businesses to join. He said sustainable tourism projects will likely grow in popularity along the coast.

"I just think it's kind of a beautiful idea, and I think that it's one that — after all this stress everybody's kind of been through — we're all looking for ways to go back to that carefree life, but at the same time doing things that make it better for us and everyone else," he said.

A pledge

David Reid, the executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, presented potential sustainable tourism programs to the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners earlier this month.

The chamber has been working with state and local organizations, including the North Coast Tourism Management Network, to come up with solutions to issues such as waste removal and traffic.

Reid, too, said the pandemic brought a particularly low point for visitor treatment of parks.

"There sort of became this understanding that we needed to really be very clear in communication before they got here, as to how best to interact with the environment that they're in," he said. "Sustainable tourism is not a new concept, it has certainly become more of a buzzword."

See *Tourism*, Page A6

Bonamici visits remotely with students

Congresswoman talks about the high cost of college

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

WARRENTON — On Oregon's 163rd birthday, U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici fielded questions on topics ranging from the arts and school

lunch to sex education and mask mandates at a virtual meeting with Warrenton High School students.

The Oregon Democrat, who represents the 1st Congressional District, which includes the North Coast, also discussed her hobbies outside of work, the legislation she has helped pass and the Build Back Better plan with history teacher Trent Klebe's class via Zoom on Monday.

One emphasis during the congresswoman's talk was the cost of higher education and how it affects high school students after graduation.

"With a high school class, I really want to hear from you about — what do you think about the cost of going to college?" Bonamici said. "... Because in the United States of America, we should have a higher education system where everyone can make a choice about what they want to do without regard to how much it's going to cost."

James Mickelson, a student on the wrestling team, wondered "why, as a junior in high school, we get fed the same amount of food at lunch as kindergartners do?"

See *Bonamici*, Page A6



U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici, a Democrat, represents the 1st Congressional District.



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