

IN BRIEF

Warrenton mayor to host town hall on library

WARRENTON — Mayor Henry Balensifer will host a town hall meeting later this month to discuss the former Hammond Library building.

The structure, formerly a barracks from Fort Stevens, is likely to be taken over by the Veterans of Foreign Wars. The group plans to give a presentation at the town hall.

The event will take place at 4:30 p.m. on April 26 at City Hall, just prior to the City Commission meeting.

Gray School campus to close for renovations

The Gray School campus will close for school and public use as exterior windows are replaced, the Astoria School District announced.

The school district's office, which is located in the building along Alameda Avenue, will shut down starting May 2.

Other programs will remain until June, Superintendent Craig Hoppes said.

The project, part of the school district's facility bond, is expected to be completed in late August.

State seeks members for new Entanglement Advisory Committee

The Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife is seeking members for its new Oregon Entanglement Advisory Committee, which will advise the department during efforts to reduce the risk of marine life entanglements in Dungeness crab gear.

The department is looking for a range of perspectives from the commercial crab industry, recreational crab community, conservation organizations, researchers and other experts.

The application closes on May 20. For more information and to apply, visit the Department of Fish and Wildlife's website at dfw.state.or.us.

— *The Astorian*

DEATHS

April 11, 2022
SWITZER, Pauline Alice, 94, of Vancouver, Washington, formerly of Astoria, died in Vancouver. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in

charge of the arrangements.
April 5, 2022
LOUKKULA, Loren, 70, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary is in charge of the arrangements.

ON THE RECORD

Harassment
• Jamel Alexander Joseph, 33, of Gearhart, was arrested on Friday for harassment constituting domestic violence. The crime is alleged to have occurred at a Warrenton residence. Joseph was arrested at T.J. Maxx in Warrenton.

Burglary
• Guy Demoiné Gann, 62, of Astoria, was indicted on Tuesday for first-degree burglary, fourth-degree assault, second-degree criminal mischief and harassment. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in October.

• Tia Alexandra Howard, 33, of Astoria, was indicted on Friday for second-degree burglary. The crime is alleged to have occurred in December 2020.

• Zaneta Jean Hans, 41, of Warrenton, was indicted on Friday for second-degree burglary. The crime is alleged to have occurred in December 2020.

• Joel Seda, Jr., 39, of Seaside, was indicted on Friday for second-degree burglary, second-degree criminal mischief and second-degree theft. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in January 2021.

• Tiffany Louise Binkley, 39, of Banks, was arraigned on Friday for first-degree burglary and first-degree criminal mischief. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in December 2019.

Theft
• Rhonda Renee Allen, 50, of Portland, was indicted on Tuesday for first-degree theft and second-degree theft. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in Clatsop County in April 2021.

• Kari Jean Morse, 35, of Seaside, was indicted on Friday for first-degree theft. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in February.

Criminal mistreatment
• Nichole Marie Knutinen, 33, of Seaside, was indicted on Friday for first-degree criminal mistreatment, second-degree theft and six counts of identity theft. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in December 2020.

DUII
• Brandy June Morin, 41, of Seaside, was arraigned on Monday for driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving. The crimes are alleged to have occurred in March.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

THURSDAY

Seaside Civic and Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Ave.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

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

FRIDAY

Astoria City Council, 9 a.m., work session, City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

the Astorian

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FLYING HIGH



Lydia Ely/The Astorian

A kite flies over the sand dunes at Fort Stevens State Park.

Man sentenced again in Cannon Beach hotel robbery

By ERICK BENDEL
The Astorian

A man who in January 2014 robbed a Cannon Beach hotel and detained the night clerk at gunpoint was sentenced for the second time on Wednesday.

Ernest Lee Dean, 49, pleaded no contest to second-degree robbery. He was sentenced to five years and 10 months, with credit for time served.

He has already served more than six years for the crime, which originally included charges of first-degree robbery, first-degree theft, second-degree kidnapping and felon in possession of a firearm.

Dean, who represented himself, is incarcerated for similar armed robberies he committed in Multnomah and Clackamas counties.

More than eight years ago, Dean, wearing black clothing and a face mask, held up the Stephanie Inn, an oceanfront hotel in Cannon Beach's Tolovana area.

Dean forced the night clerk, an elderly man, to give him about \$6,500 from the safe, then made him lie on the floor and restrained his hands behind his back with zip ties, Deputy District Attorney Sarah Shepherd recounted at Wednesday's hearing.

The clerk, left face down, went to a nearby hotel and

asked for help, Shepherd said.

Dean was arrested in Portland the next month following an investigation that involved Cannon Beach police and the Clatsop County Major Crime Team.

In 2017, Dean was sentenced to a decade in prison for the incident. His convictions were reversed on appeal. A new trial had been scheduled for last month.

At the original trial, the clerk testified that he was scared for his life, but that he bore Dean no ill will, *The Astorian* reported. Dean had patted the clerk reassuringly on the back during the ordeal, the clerk said.

The clerk had asked Dean

not to hurt him because the clerk "had a young son and wanted to see him grow up, and Mr. Dean stated that that would not be a problem as long as he complied," Shepherd said.

The clerk was not present at the hearing Wednesday.

Dean wanted him to know "how sorry I am (for) the anxiety and the pain, the emotional stress, that I caused him, and I hope that he would find a little solace in knowing that I'm going to make some better decisions with my life and try to be a better father to my son."

Dean said he will make better decisions, in part, so that the clerk's generosity "does not go to waste."

Officials urge the public to limit consumption of sturgeon from river

Associated Press

State health officials in Washington and Oregon are recommending the public limit their consumption of sturgeon caught from the lower Columbia River.

A health advisory comes from the Washington Department of Health as fish tissue data shows contaminant levels of polychlorinated biphenyls — or PCBs — at levels above Washington state's screening values, the *Seattle Times* reported.

In Washington, the

advisory applies to any fish caught in the Columbia River between the Bonneville Dam and the mouth of the Columbia.

Officials recommend that most adults should not eat more than eight meals of sturgeon a month, and no more than seven for pregnant women, nursing mothers and children.

The Oregon Health Authority also issued an advisory for the lower Columbia River and the lower Willamette River.

PCBs can exist in sediment where sturgeon feed,



Rob Manning/Oregon Public Broadcasting

Sturgeon, an enormous Northwest fish, have been on the decline in the lower Columbia River.

which can lead to accumulations in their fat-rich meat. Eating too many fish contaminated with PCBs can have negative health effects, including damage to organs, the nervous system and potential learn-

ing and behavioral organs, according to the Oregon Health Authority.

Infants and young children are the most vulnerable to the effects, according to Washington officials.

Wyden: Mental health 'deeply personal,' 'cause of a lifetime'

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Tuesday afternoon from *The Astorian* newsroom. "This is a central issue for Oregonians."

A similar issue that often overlaps with the housing crisis — the availability and accessibility of mental health services — was a topic broached by a Warrenton woman, particularly around funding that could be allocated to primary care settings.

Wyden said he believes "there is going to be concrete action taken on mental health reforms in this Congress. I know people say, 'C'mon Ron, Congress is so polarized, I'm not sure you guys could agree to order a 7UP, let alone deal with a major issue' ... I want you to know ... we're going to

be focused on integrated care just like you're talking about."

The Senate Finance Committee, which Wyden chairs, has authority over federal programs that are the primary contributors for mental health services, such as Medicaid.

The senator mentioned his efforts on the CAHOOTS initiative, which secured funding to adjust the approach to interactions between people struggling with mental health and law enforcement. The outreach is modeled after a mental-health-crisis intervention program in Eugene.

Wyden called mental health "deeply personal" and a "cause of a lifetime," sharing that his brother has struggled with schizophrenia and has become a source

of inspiration for making an impact.

Fishing and salmon were also topics of discussion.

Questions arose about the impact of a proposed coastal wind call project and the battle for salmon recovery, particularly the debate over the removal of Snake River dams.

"First of all, my door is open to all sides in respect to the Snake River. To me, the decisions need to be collaborative if we (want) everybody's input," Wyden said. "There are multiple needs in these kinds of instances and if you don't address them in a responsible way that is really connected to the science, basically you're not going to have a win-win, you're going to have a lose-lose."

"You're not going to be

able to do anything in terms of economics, in terms of fish restoration."

Several times, Wyden referred to the importance of bipartisanship, collaboration and solving matters the "Oregon way."

After the livestream concluded, Wyden referred to the town halls and the input he receives from them as influential. The event, hosted by People's Town Hall, was his 1,011th town hall since his pledge to hold at least one in each of the state's 36 counties every year.

"This helps reduce the distance between Washington, D.C., and the coast," the senator said.

"I'd like to think, at the end of the day, people say, 'Alright, I got a chance to be heard.'"

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