

## IN BRIEF

## Port hires consultant for pollution remediation plan

The Port of Astoria has hired Maul Foster & Alongi, of Vancouver, Washington, for \$40,000 to draft a remedial design and work plan for the cleanup of oil contamination along the waterfront.

The Port Commission voted unanimously on Tuesday to retain the environmental consultant, which has helped the Port throughout the process of pollution remediation.

## State discloses virus cases at local schools

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

All five were from the Warrenton-Hammond School District, according to the health authority's biweekly outbreak report.

Three were students from Warrenton Middle School, while two were students from Warrenton Grade School.

## College raises tuition rate

Clatsop Community College has raised its tuition rate by \$7 per credit.

The college board voted on Tuesday to approve the increase in an attempt to help address financial challenges.

The increase will take effect with the winter term in 2023.

## Three sent to the hospital after crash on New Youngs Bay Bridge

A three-vehicle crash on the New Youngs Bay Bridge sent three people to Columbia Memorial Hospital on Wednesday afternoon.

A Mercedes-Benz sedan leaving Astoria crossed the center line and collided head-on with an oncoming Mercedes-Benz SUV, spun, then hit a truck behind the SUV, Astoria police said.

Two people in the SUV were hospitalized, as was the sedan driver, who had to be extricated from the vehicle.

— *The Astorian*

## DEATHS

June 14, 2022

HUNT, Bernard F. "Tubby," 88, of Svensen, died in Astoria. Caldwell's Luce-Layton Mortuary of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

June 1, 2022

CAMPBELL, Barbara Ann, 85, of Astoria, died in Warrenton. Ocean View Funeral & Cremation Service of Astoria is in charge of the arrangements.

## MEMORIALS

Sunday, June 19

KNUTH, Linda G. — Visitation from noon to 2 p.m., service at 2 p.m., Herman-Taylor Funeral Home, 2201 Chestnut St., in Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin. Scott Kaczowski,

pastor, will officiate.

Wednesday, June 22

ALBERTSON, William C. — Celebration of life at 3 p.m., the hall at Salmonberry Knoll Apartments, 1250 S. Wahanna Road in Seaside.

## ON THE RECORD

## Assault

• Kyle Arthur Gilman, 35, of Westport, was arrested on Wednesday near the intersection of Hungry Hollow Loop and Mellow Loop in Westport for second-degree assault, menacing, harassment, coercion, being a felon in possession of a restricted weapon and failing to report as a sex offender.

## Hit-and-run

• David Scott Knigge, 56, of Warrenton, was arrested on Sunday near the intersection of U.S. Highway 101 and Glenwood Village Road for a hit-and-run involving another vehicle and driving under the influence of intoxicants.

## DUI

• Sarah Elizabeth Loeffler, 38, of Warrenton, was arrested on Wednesday for driving under the influence of intoxicants, reckless driving and recklessly endangering another person. She was allegedly involved in a two-vehicle crash on E. Harbor Drive in Warrenton.

• Cristian Noe Cruz-Ramos, 20, of Seaside, was arrested on Sunday on U.S. Highway 101 near Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center for DUI and reckless driving.

• Cindy Jo Bell, 59, of Astoria, was arrested on June 11 on U.S. Highway 101 in the Gearhart area for DUI and reckless driving.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

## MONDAY

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

**Astoria City Council**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 1095 Duane St.

## TUESDAY

**Port of Astoria Commission**, 4 p.m., 10 Pier 1, Suite 209

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

**Cannon Beach City Council**, 6 p.m., special meeting, City Hall, 163 E. Gower Ave.

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., work session, City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Seaside School District Board**, 6 p.m., 2600 Spruce Drive.

## the Astorian

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Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Casseopia Fisher, a nurse supervisor at Columbia Memorial Hospital, discusses sexual assault nurse examiner training.

## Shortage: Kits are stored for up to 60 years

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A trained nurse can conduct a sexual assault forensic evidence exam within 120 hours of an assault. The exam includes an interview about the assault, which takes the majority of the three-to-five hour process, and a physical to look for injuries and gather evidence.

The process also involves a wellness check, a pregnancy test, Plan B emergency contraception and medication for sexually transmitted infections and HIV prevention. Each part of the exam is optional.

The number of sexual assault nurse examiners has been an issue on the North Coast for over a decade.

The state first required hospitals to contract or employ the trained nurses in 2011. In 2014, in the aftermath of a sexual assault of a 10-year-old girl who had to be driven to a Portland hospital for an exam, The Astorian reported that Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria had three of the trained nurses and Providence Seaside Hospital had five. Neither hospital had a nurse who was certified to conduct the exams, which is obtained by meeting the training and clinical practice requirements.

Today, there is one Portland-based certified sexual assault nurse examiner who works intermittently at Columbia Memorial and no certified nurse at Providence Seaside.

A handful of local nurses in training for certification juggle the cases that come in when time allows. When trained nurses are not available, survivors are told they must go to Portland.

Facing long waits, some survivors leave hospitals without getting an exam.

"CMH offers compassionate care to any patient who is a survivor of sexual assault. We do our best to see patients in a timely manner and give them a comfortable space to wait in when it is available," the hospital said in a statement to The Astorian. "We are proud to have several SANE-trained caregivers who provide patients with a safe space to talk about their experience and discreetly obtain the necessary information and evidence to move forward with their case."

Hospitals without a trained nurse available to collect evidence kits can still treat injuries caused by an assault, test for sexually transmitted infections and take steps to prevent pregnancy and HIV.

The exam and associated treatment are free of charge for survivors within seven days of an assault. Providers are reimbursed by the state sexual assault victims emergency medical response fund. The crime victims' compensation program can also cover associated expenses and treatment, not including HIV prophylaxis.

Providers don't always know to tell survivors about available services beyond the forensic exam, said Savannah Powell, the sexual assault nurse examiners coordinator for the Oregon Attorney General's Sexual Assault Task Force.

Powell recently published her master's capstone project on the medical response to sexual assault on the North Coast in conjunction with Providence Health & Services.

"If there's not a (sexual assault nurse examiner) available they may or may not get the medication that they need," she said. "This is because an emergency room physician has to know a lot of things, and they may not understand the risks and may not have the time to really sit down and listen to every detail of what happened in the assault and the risk that patient has for these diseases or for pregnancy."

## 'I'm always surprised'

Typically, a forensic exam after a sexual assault is the first step toward filing criminal charges.

For survivors who choose to have an exam, DNA evidence will be collected and sealed anonymously until the survivor decides to pursue a case. Kits are stored for up to 60 years.

Providers are required to report to law enforcement if the survivor is under 18 or over 65.

Exams on children under 15 require additional training

certification that no one working in Clatsop County has at the moment. Anyone under 15 is automatically referred to Portland, like the 10-year-old girl was when this issue was in the spotlight back in 2014.

Ryan Humphrey, a detective with the sheriff's office who works on cases involving sex crimes, remembers one case where the victim was hours from her 15th birthday and a local hospital referred her to Portland.

The detective has driven several survivors to Portland with his partner, who is a woman.

"I'm always surprised when there is (a sexual assault nurse examiner) available. Like, 'Hey, we need to go to the hospital, they just did a (sexual assault forensic evidence) kit.' I'm like, 'Oh, that's amazing. Great.' That surprises me more than when I get the call saying, 'Hey, the hospital just turned this victim away, can you take them to Portland?' Because that's been the more common thing.

"And I know the hospitals want to improve this, but again it's like anything else. There's specialists in Portland that handle this stuff on a daily basis. It's hard to maintain a specialist in a rural community where they're only going to see their specialty one or two times a month."

Evidence kits improve the chances an assault case will lead to conviction. Along with collecting physical evidence of the assault, trained nurses are also able to measure bruises, take photographs and collect DNA samples.

Choosing to open a case is still a gamble for survivors, though. Nationally, only 9% of reported sexual assaults lead to felony convictions, according to the Rape, Abuse & Incest National Network.

Over 1 in 3 women and nearly 1 in 4 men experience sexual violence in their lifetime, according to the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

These rates increase among people of color, people with disabilities and people in the LGBTQ community, who are at greater risk of sexual assault.

"Reporting these crimes to law enforcement is not something someone should ever be forced to do because I'm aware of what that entails. And it's unfortunate that it's not a quick, clean and easy process," Humphrey said. "I can understand why somebody would not want that."

When hospitals refer survivors to Portland, they may ride in an ambulance, with law enforcement, or drive themselves.

Humphrey said he volunteers to drive survivors because he doesn't want transportation to be a barrier.

"We want to investigate these cases. We live in this community. I don't want rapists wandering the streets of Astoria where I live," he said. "If somebody sees a barrier, make me aware of that barrier and I'm going to help tear it down."

## 'Gold standard'

Jackson County, which includes Medford and Ashland, faced a similar shortage of sexual assault nurse examiners two decades ago. The county has since become a state model for effective medical response.

It began in 2000, when Susan Moen, who had worked at a Los Angeles rape crisis center, and the late Judy Ferris

See Shortage, Page A3

## OPEN HOUSE: Saturday, June 18th 11-2



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Details on these events and more at [oldoregon.com](http://oldoregon.com) & at the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce.

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