

City mourns loss of community 'pillar' Muriel Dunn

BY CINDY YINGST
The Columbia Press

Muriel Dunn of Warrenton, a lifelong resident, business owner and quintessential volunteer, died Saturday of complications from pancreatic cancer. She was 81.

She'd spent much of last summer receiving treatment at Oregon Health Sciences University and was diagnosed as terminal in October. She died at home surrounded by family.

"With the cancer diagnosis, Muriel was overwhelmed by the amount of love and support she received," her son, Dennis, wrote. "There were hundreds of people who prayed, family drove from all over to visit, sent cards and called."

Dennis Dunn chronicled his mother's treatment and final months of life on his Facebook page, with touching photos and words about her strength of mind and character while her body deteriorated.

Muriel is best known for her work with Veterans of Foreign Wars, Warrenton Christian Church, her

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Above: LeRoy and Muriel Dunn sit with her longtime friend, Rayla Goldberg, at the Hall of Fame Induction Ceremonies in September.

Courtesy Dennis Dunn

Right: Muriel with friend Terri Coulombe at a gathering at El Compadre in November.

Cindy Yingst



New fire chief is longtime volunteer

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Brian Alsbury, a longtime volunteer firefighter for the city, has been named Warrenton's new fire chief.

"I'm grateful to be given the opportunity to be at the helm of the Warrenton Fire Department," Alsbury said. "I am especially looking forward to supporting the volunteer firefighters and career staff so that we can continue to provide the best fire (and emergency medical) services to our citizens, the Rural Fire District and those visiting our great coastal community."

The decision was announced Wednesday night to the fire volunteers.

Alsbury is the department's assistant chief and also works in the city's Public Works Department. He has been a volunteer firefighter and emergency medical technician for Warrenton since December 2007. Prior to that, he served with the Astoria Fire Department for seven years.

Alsbury graduated from Astoria High School in 1999, is married and has four children. His father,

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New ideas for Spur 104

The Columbia Press

An Astoria architect's drive to help the county's housing shortage could set a new direction for the Spur 104 area.

Spur 104 runs along Alternate Highway 101 between Ensign Lane and Ocean Crest.

Stuart Emmons of Emmons Design told Warrenton city commissioners on Tuesday that he was working with a development team that wants to use the land for three-story multi-family workforce housing, senior housing, courtyard cottages, tiny homes or other options that would maximize use of the property.

The plans took the commission – and the property owners -- a bit by surprise.

"That property is so valuable and should be utilized to its full potential," said Ken Yuill, whose family owns several parcels in the proposed area. "I

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Downtown Christmas lighting set for Sunday

Christmas decorations have been up for a while, but there still are some surprises this weekend for downtown Warrenton.

Spruce Up Warrenton and Warrenton Business Association are hosts for a holiday party and "light up downtown" event that begins at 4 p.m. Sunday at the Lighthouse Museum at Main Avenue and Harbor Drive (also known as the four-way stop).

Santa will be available for photos and he's bringing an elf who will help distribute cookies and hot chocolate.

There will be holiday music and caroling. Mayor Henry Balensifer and other city notables will welcome the crowd.

Rick Newton donated money from his City Commission stipend to install a large JOY sign on the side of the museum. Several high school students decorated the windows of the Fenton Building this week. They'll be using the building to fill Christmas food and toy baskets, which will be distributed to needy families before Christmas.

More holiday events can be found on Page 8.