



Painting the town red, green and sparkly



WBA Chair Mike Moha, with son, Connor, and Mayor Henry Balensifer.



Sara Rehnert (center) and her family.



Everyone waits for Santa's arrival.

The Columbia Press

Downtown Warrenton has put on its sparkly party dress and is ready for the holidays.

Volunteers lined the first two blocks of South Main Avenue with candy cane stripes and hung banners and pole decorations. Storefronts got fancified.

Sunday afternoon, Mayor Henry Balensifer – with the help of several children – threw the main switch to light the decorations on and around the lighthouse museum at the four-way stop.

“We wanted to support the community and it’s just a good kickoff to Christmas,” said Sara Rehnert, who brought her large family to the lighting ceremony.

Spruce Up Warrenton and Warrenton Business Association sponsored the event, which included visits with Santa, an appearance by a snowman and elf, hot cocoa and treats, plus holiday music.



Photos by Cindy Yingst

Elliott Strain, 4, visits with Santa. Below: A group of youngsters helps the mayor throw the switch to light up downtown.



Fire destroys home at marina Seven children, three adults are displaced

By Cindy Yingst
The Columbia Press

Fire destroyed a house at Warrenton Marina Tuesday afternoon, leaving 10 people homeless.

Ben and Christina Secord, their five children, plus Christina’s sister, Heather, and her two children, all were able to leave the house and there were no injuries.

“When I got there, four to five minutes after the first engine got there, there were multiple reports of people trapped in the building and we went right into rescue mode,” Fire Chief Brian Alsbury said. “Once we determined no one was in the house, we went into suppression mode and were able to knock it down in an hour.”

The fire was reported about 12:45 p.m. at 826 N.E. First Court, next door to a city-owned property that burned in 2018.

The fire was deemed accidental, Alsbury said. Investigators believe it was caused by a heat lamp over a metal tub full of chicks that was just inside the garage door. The chicks and a family pet, Lola, a 15-year-old great Dane, perished in the blaze.

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As time goes by, so do the whales. Especially next week



Courtesy Oregon State Parks

Visitors watch for whales at the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Ilwaco, Wash..

Thousands of gray whales are migrating past Clatsop County and you’re invited to view them at several state parks during annual Winter Whale Watch Week, which begins Dec. 27.

Oregon Parks and Recreation Department will have trained volunteers from the Whale Watching Spoken Here program stationed at some of the best spots between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. each day until Dec. 31.

Sites closest to Clatsop County are the Peter Iredale Shipwreck

in Fort Stevens State Park, Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center in Cape Disappointment State Park in Washington state, Ecola State Park, and the Highway 101 turnout at the Neahkahnie Mountain Historical Marker.

The volunteers will help visitors spot whales and answer questions about the animals.

An estimated 25,000 gray whales are expected to swim past Oregon’s shores over the next several weeks, part of their

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How to help

Donations of new clothes or children’s Christmas presents for the Secord family can be dropped off at the Fenton Building across from El Compadre Restaurant on South Main Avenue between 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. today through Sunday.

Money can be donated to the family through any Columbia Bank branch.