

# Fatal DUI crash leads to prison

## Costa sentenced to six years for a young life lost

By Jack Heffernan  
The Daily Astorian

A man who killed a Seaside woman in a drunken-driving crash on U.S. Highway 101 last June was sentenced June 28 to more than six years in prison.

Christopher Jeremy Costa was driving back to Astoria from Seaside just before 2:30 a.m. after a night of drinking. He crossed the centerline of the highway at an S-curve near Cullaby Lake. He then crashed head-on with a south-bound Toyota Camry driven by Kayla Lynn Weber, 27, of Seaside.

The Camry, which was moving at 40 mph, was knocked backward. The Chevrolet pickup Costa was driving flipped over the Camry, slid about 180 feet, came upright after hitting something and caught fire.

“Frankly, the defendant is lucky to be alive,” Deputy District Attorney Ron Brown said.

Weber died instantly, while Costa managed to escape the truck after sustaining serious injuries. A blood draw at the hospital about one hour after the crash revealed that Costa’s blood alcohol content was 0.16 percent, Brown said.

Costa was indicted a few weeks later on charges of first-degree manslaughter, driving under the influence of intoxicants and reckless driving. He faced a maximum of



A fatal drunken-driving crash on U.S. Highway 101 led to a six-year prison sentence.



Kayla Weber

10 years in prison. However, Costa agreed to plead guilty to second-degree manslaughter and DUI charges and serve the minimum of more than six years as part of a deal with the Clatsop County District Attorney’s Office.

Not lost on those in the courtroom was the irony that Costa — a student at the time — was driving back to his residence at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center, while Weber — a residential adviser at the center — was driving home from work. Some who spoke



Christopher Costa

at Thursday’s hearing talked about Weber’s impact at the job corps.

At a memorial, about 50 “visibly shaken” students stood in line to offer verbal tributes to Lorelei Weber, her mother. Weber lived with her daughter at the time, and they were described as best friends. She declined to say Costa’s name throughout her statement, instead referring to him as a “dumb kid.”

“He’s taken the joy out of my life. Together we had hopes and dreams,” Lorelei Weber said. “He affected so many lives. All she was doing was driving home from work.”

Tita Montero, a Seaside city councilor and former business and community liaison at the job corps, described herself as a mentor to Weber. She said the fact that Costa was a student made her angrier.

“He was a student there

who knew he was not only breaking the rules of the road. He was breaking the rules of his employer and of everything he was getting for free at Tongue Point Job Corps Center,” Montero said.

Four of Weber’s friends and family also spoke at the hearing. Weber was described as a dependable confidant and a loving person who never wished ill of people.

For 16 years, Weber helped take care of homeless animals. Her mother asked Costa to consider volunteering with animals after his prison sentence is completed.

Kirk Wintermute, Costa’s court-appointed attorney, said he believes his client has the ability to make a positive difference someday.

“I’ve been, frankly, impressed with Mr. Costa about how positive he’s been and how he’s wanted to do everything he can to try to make things right,” Wintermute said.

Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh said the incident was heartbreaking for both Weber’s and Costa’s families.

“In the blink of an eye, in the split second of a bad decision to get behind the wheel of that car, your whole world changed. Their whole world changed, the students at the job corps,” McIntosh said. “The ripple effect is crazy.”

Costa did not offer a statement Thursday. But during her statement, Lorelei Weber asked him a question.

“Did you ever have the honor of meeting my daughter?” she asked.

“No,” Costa replied.

“Then you missed out.”

# Two are displaced in Seaside motel fire



BRENNA VISSER

A small fire, which appears to have been caused by a forgotten cigarette, singed the door frame of one unit at Pine Cove Motel in Seaside June 26.

## Abandoned cigarette appears to be the cause

By Brenna Visser  
Seaside Signal

A small fire started by what appears to be a forgotten cigarette has displaced a family of two staying at the Pine Cove Motel in Seaside June 26.

At about 6:30 p.m., Seaside Fire Department responded to a call reporting small flames

and smoke smoldering at the bottom of the door frame outside unit 11 at 2481 U.S. Highway 101. Division Chief Chris Dugan the cause appeared to be a “disregarded cigarette,” which was left in a nook near the base of the door outside by the resident a few hours prior.

With flames only reaching an inch tall, Dugan said damage was minimal and no injuries were reported. The family is temporarily displaced, however, because the flames damaged the door frame enough to where the room could no longer be properly

secured. Dugan said the department is reaching out to the Red Cross for services. The family had already left the residence.

“They were lucky this didn’t happen at 2 a.m. while they were asleep, where it could have been left smoldering a lot longer,” Dugan said.

Motel maintenance worker Ken Hartman said the event was unfortunate, but was thankful it didn’t turn out to be worse.

“I suppose it’s a part of the business,” Hartmann sighed, looking at the singed door frame.

## POLICE LOG

**June 17**  
**2:34 a.m.,** S. Columbia and Avenue A: A person is arrested and charged with DUII.

**9:35 a.m.,** Twelfth Avenue beach approach: A woman with five outstanding warrants is arrested.

**9:39 p.m.,** 1800 block S. Roosevelt: A theft in the third degree is reported.

**June 18**  
**3:17 p.m.,** 400 block First Avenue: Police respond to a request for a welfare check on a baby in distress. Police say the baby was just having a very bad day.

**June 19**  
**2:47 a.m.,** N. Prom: Police contact subjects reported doing drugs in a restroom. They were indefinitely trespassed from the area.

**12:55 p.m.,** Police headquarters: A gold ring found on Ocean Shore is turned in to the police department.

**4:42 p.m.,** Broadway: Caller requests welfare check on subjects thought to be doing drugs in a public restroom.

**June 20**  
**11 a.m.,** Police headquarters: A person came in to register as a sex offender.

**11:55 a.m.,** Carousel: A child reported missing is reunited with its parents prior to police arrival.

**6:23 p.m.,** Avenue G: A person is arrested for DUII.

**June 21**  
**12:48 a.m.,** Seaside Chamber: A person loitering suspiciously outside the building was asked to move on.

**4:46 a.m.,** 1800 block S. Columbia: Caller reports boisterous person outside their residence they wish to be trespassed. Officer located subject and told them of the trespass.

**June 22**  
**1:28 p.m.,** Skate Park: Police look for a woman reported to be talking to herself as well as children in the area. They are unable to locate.

**2:56 p.m.,** 800 block Second Avenue: A bicycle thief reported stealing a bike in the area was identified and located by police. The bike owner said he wished to press charges. The purported thief was cited and released.

**June 23**  
**12:59 a.m.,** Wahanna: A man reported yelling and screaming about treatment he received at the hospital was cited for disorderly conduct and advised to move along.

**3:43 a.m.,** Lincoln and Avenue A: A couple having a shouting match were reported by a caller; police were unable to locate.

**9:48 a.m.,** Shilo Inn and the Prom: Police are summoned to break up an argument between two parties regarding removal of sand dollars from the beach. Police separate the people and advise them of disorderly conduct.

**7:18 p.m.,** 200 block First Avenue: Sex crimes are reported.

**June 24**  
**2:44 a.m.,** 400 block N. Prom: A person is arrested and charged with unlawful possession of a weapon with intent to use; criminal mischief in the first degree; and reckless endangerment.

**3:05 p.m.,** Avenue A: Caller

reports a guest at their hotel who called after check out to say they’d accidentally left behind their handgun. Police contact the owner of the gun; a search of the room turned up no results.

**9:57 p.m.,** 1000 block Sixth Avenue: An assault in the fourth degree is reported.

**June 25**  
**3:07 a.m.,** Broadway: A theft in the second degree was reported.

**8:22 a.m.,** Prom: A man reported screaming told police he was agitated by other people. He was warned of disorderly conduct.

**9:20 a.m.,** Keepsake Drive: Burglary in the first degree and two counts of identity theft are reported.

**June 26**  
**7:19 a.m.,** 800 block N. Lincoln: Theft in the second degree is reported.

**8:17 a.m.,** 400 block S. Roosevelt: Theft in the second degree is reported.

**9:27 a.m.,** 400 block S. Roosevelt: Theft in the second degree is reported.

**10:08 a.m.** –10:32 a.m., Broadway Middle School: Multiple phones are reported found at the Middle School.

**10:40 a.m.,** Broadway Middle School: Another phone is discovered at the Middle School as well as a Sylvania MP3 player.

**11:02 a.m.,** Broadway Middle School: A gold chain is found at the school gym as well as a silver necklace from “Claire’s.”

**11:19 a.m.,** Broadway Middle School: Child size eyeglasses and black ear buds are discovered.

ered at the school. Shortly after, more ear buds; a purple watch; house keys on a lanyard are also reported as found.

**5:32 p.m.,** Highway 101 and Frontage: A person is arrested and charged with DUII.

**June 27**  
**5:18 p.m.,** Keepsake Drive: Suspicious circumstances are reported.

**June 28**  
**9:08 a.m.,** Roosevelt Drive: Police made contact with an individual who violated their probation. The person was subsequently charged with failing to report as a sex offender; they were transported to Clatsop County jail.

**5:02 p.m.,** Broadway: Caller reports person taking pictures of young girls. Officers on priority call; subject was unable to be located.

**10:26 p.m.,** Holladay Drive: A person eluding a police officer and then giving false information to a police officer was cited.

**June 29**  
**10:54 a.m.,** Roosevelt Drive: Caller reports a man “acting weird” in front of a business. Officers advise subject of trespass. Subject agrees to move along.

**2:32 p.m.,** N. Wahanna: Minor calls 911 stating he is afraid and no parents are home. The responsible party for the child shows up. No further action taken.

**5:38 p.m.,** Convention Center: Caller reports an elderly woman “barking” at people and making them uncomfortable. Subject said she would stop after talking to police.

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