

Higgins P.T. Boat 659 going back home to New Orleans

After an eight-year struggle to restore the historic Higgins P.T. Boat 659, the P.T. Boat Council of Vancouver has found a permanent home for the boat in New Orleans, where it was built during World War II, and where it will be restored.

Following a \$1-million restoration, the 78-foot long craft will be displayed in the new four-block National D-Day Museum in downtown New Orleans, according to **Judith Davis**, president of the P.T. Boat Council. She says the boat will be the only one of its kind to be showcased in a world-class museum.

"We're all pleased that a permanent home has been found, but saddened that we weren't able to complete the job locally," Davis says.

The 50-ton P.T. 659 was donated to the Columbia Barracks Military Historical Society in 1996 by Save the P.T. Boat, Inc., Portland, after which the newly formed P.T. Boat Council of Vancouver was formed. Save The P.T. Boat currently is in the process of restoring another P.T. Boat. Only three other P.T. Boats are known to have been restored.

The fast, wooden-hulled boats became famous more for their crew and passengers than their exploits. Army Gen. Douglas MacArthur left the Philippines on orders of President Roosevelt when the islands were taken over by the Japanese in World War II; President John Kennedy commanded P.T. 109, which was sunk by the Japanese Navy; and a P.T. Boat was a prop in a television series, *McHale's Navy*.

The boat, now located at the corner of 4th and E Reserve Streets. A "bon voyage" event is planned before the boat is taken by ship through the Panama Canal to New Orleans, Davis says.

Steve Wrightson named to ESD 112 board

Steve Wrightson, chief of Fire District 3 for the past 15 years, has been appointed to the board of Educational Service District 112, **Marilyn Koenniger**, chair of the board, announced today.

Wrightson succeeds **Dean Sutherland**, who has moved away from the Hockinson district in which Wrightson lives.

Wrightson is in his 30th year in fire service. He earned a bachelor's degree from San Diego State University, a fire science degree from Portland Community College, graduated from the Executive Fire Officer Program of the National Fire Academy, and recently earned a masters degree in business administration from City University.

EDS 112 serves 100,000 students in 30 school districts and 26 private schools in southern Washington. The organization has 600 employees.

Evergreen Public Schools awarded \$1.35 million federal grant

Evergreen Public Schools has been selected to receive a \$1.35 million federal grant from the U.S. Department of Education to implement small learning communities at its three comprehensive high schools.

"The grant funding will allow Evergreen Public Schools to finish implementing changes at the high schools that are based on research and will ensure that all students achieve at high levels before graduation," according to **Rick Melching**, Evergreen Public Schools Superintendent. He adds, "Research on effective high schools, where fewer students drop out and more students successfully complete course-work and graduate on time, support the concept of smaller learning communities."

The three high schools are Evergreen, Heritage and Mountain View High Schools. Each already has a plan in place for implementing smaller learning communities.

"The awarding of this grant by the federal government recognizes and affirms that Evergreen Public Schools is on the right track and is providing excellent direction with its high schools," said Melching.

People

Dee Skilling, a Vancouver school custodian, yesterday was presented a lifesaving award by Gov. **Gary Locke** at the state's 53rd annual Industrial Safety and Health Conference in Spokane. Fifty-two lifesaving and humanitarian awards were presented at the conference. According to the citation accompanying the award: "When a school district secretary choked during early morning hours, she was able to get to the only other person in the school before she blacked out. Dee Skilling, the school custodian, used what he'd learned in first aid to clear a blockage."

News briefs

Mystery author **J. A. Jance** is the featured speaker at the 2004 Authors & Illustrators Dinner at 6 p.m. today in The Hoop, 7250 NE 41st Street. The dinner and a silent auction are sponsored by the Fort Vancouver Regional Library Foundation. ☞ The Southwest Washington Chapter of the American Red Cross offers two blood drawings Friday, Oct. 1, the first from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Blood Donor Center, 6300 NE St. James Boulevard, and the second from 1 p.m. to 6 p.m. at the Masonic Lodge, 2500 NE 78th Street. ☞ Gubernatorial candidates, Democrat **Christine Gregoire** and Republican **Dino Rossi**, are together for the only time this election year in a forum sponsored by the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce at 11:30 a.m. Friday, Oct. 1, in the Red Lion Hotel at the Quay. Pre-registration tickets are \$30. Tickets at the door are \$35. For further information, call **694-2588**.

Thursday headlines from at home and around the world:

[Agencies on alert in case of ash cloud--Columbian, **Kathie Durbin**](#)

[Holiday Shop begins its 8th year--Columbian, **Kelly Adams**](#)

[Challenger calls Moeller both liberal Democrat and an activist homosexual; Moeller agrees--Columbian, **Don Jenkins**](#)

[Report says Clark County needs more ball fields--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)

[Agri-tourism bringing city folk to Clark County farms--Oregonian, **Foster Church**](#)

[Airport sounds...and fury--Oregonian, **Bill Stewart**](#)

[Frito-Lay factory in Beaverton, three others, shutting down--KATU](#)

[Snohomish County may layoff 80 government workers--Seattle Times, **Emily Heffter**](#)

[Constitutional amendment to ban gay marriages fails in Republican controlled House--USA TODAY, AP](#)

[Baghdad blast kills 35 children--USA TODAY, AP](#)

Thursday on the air

17th District, Position 2 debate—5:30 p.m. CVTV

Presidential Debate #1 (live)—6 p.m. Most Networks

Vancouver Chamber of Commerce Annual Dinner—6 p.m. CVTV

Vancouver Center Vision Plan (9/23)—8 p.m. CVTV

City-County Code Enforcement Appeals (9/23)—10:30 p.m. CVTV

Town Tabloids and the weather

Dean Sutherland in complete Penguin suit sans yellow tennis shoes. ☼ **Dean Patrick** appreciating change of scenery. ☼ **Garen Horgen** cranking up 15-day ad blitz. ☼ **Rich Riegel** checking in. ☼ **Anne Chapman** shedding light on shadows. ☼ **Thursday**, sunny afternoon, 74. **Friday**, warmer and sunny, 76. **Saturday**, still sunny, 78.