

I hope your husband does within your own influential circle," she said.

"I think Hillary is going to change the White House," a man named Jim said to his companion Cathy. "I like her enthusiasm," he said. "She is brilliant. She is not sluggish. She will be highly visible and active."

But Josie Nelson of Cannon Beach was somewhat pessimistic. "Because the President has a wife it's her duty to play a role," she said to a friend, Mark Brown. "I think because she's younger and far more liberal than any First Lady we've had she might break the mold. But I don't expect much."

Josie looked at the crowd that surrounded the President. It seemed as if much of Astoria was packed into the small open pier space, despite the cold and a bitter, strengthening east wind. Though the winter sun shone in a clear sky and the colors of river, mountains and ships were sharp and bright, the wind whitecapped the ebbing river and forbode a snowstorm later that night. "I don't care that much about what Clinton will do as President," Josie said to her friend Mark Brown, also from Cannon Beach. "Every little bit helps, but he's not going to save the world. He's not going to make much difference because we Americans are so lazy and selfish, more concerned about jobs than the environment. We must change but I don't think we can. We just want to take care of ourselves. A few try but the majority would rather save their jobs than the Earth."

"We need a President who will think a generation down the road instead of a single generation," Marks said. "I don't believe the President has that much power to make change. At this point we are living on the blood and bones of our grandchildren. We live in a system where we are already feeding on our own buttocks and tails. If we had a President who thought clean air, clean water and clean earth — the whole idea of a President as an example is what a President must do, and a President should show that it can be done. But when you have the powerful interests of the multinational corporations against you it's incredibly difficult..."

Josie stayed back while Mark took a turn to speak to Clinton. "I would like you to break the stranglehold of the multinationals," he said.

"Keep your sunnyside up in the year of the Rooster," V-Lott said to the new President.

"Give money to the poor," Mary Allen said. "Tax the rich and give it to the poor. I want you to play a saxophone solo."

Clinton laughed. "I left it in Little Rock," he said.

Vicki Stultz suggested Clinton worry about "domestic problems, like homelessness, also medicare," she said, "and our education system is really bad."

"Get a Canadian-style health care plan," Harry Johnson advised. "Don't get buffaloed by the fearmongers about the deficit. If we can live with it to make weapons we can live with it to make health care."

"We definitely want the health care situation fixed up," Harry's daughter Robin Johnson said. She smiled at Hillary, and said to her father as they eased through the crowd, "I don't care how wonderful she is, I didn't vote for her. I don't know how much power I want to give people I didn't vote for."

"I feel the same as Harry and Robin," Chuck Wilder said to Clinton. "Institute national health care along West European lines, none of these phony public/private schemes they're talking about. And I think you should aim for full employment of a kind that would insure a minimum of half the median income of the country for all Americans, and I don't mean full employment at McDonald's but a decent wage for everyone."

Jill Wilder followed her husband. "Come up with a national health care plan to cover everybody," she said. "I want elimination of nuclear weapons and power plants, and a living wage for all Americans. If you can do just those things in four years it will be remarkable. I won't load you up with any more — unless you can get rid of Clarence Thomas and replace him with a woman justice."

Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen greeted Clinton with a handshake as hearty as the ebullient President's, and said "Get the working man and woman working again."

Gary Brownrigg, dressed as a large parrot, said to Clinton, "Build bridges of understanding."

"I hope you encourage that hatred and bigotry be replaced with mutual tolerance," Sarah Meyer said. "And that groups not be set against other groups for political, racial, religious or sexual supremacy."

"I hope you don't pander to any particular group, especially the religious right," Gehlen Palmer said. "I hope you encourage the diversity and participation of all our citizens."

"I would like some decent outreach for the homeless and homeless mentally ill, and for drug affected people and children," Peggy Davis said.

"National health care," Rick Murray said. "Don't get in a war," Polly Buckingham said. "Truth," John Geiss said.

"Sign the Law of the Sea Treaty and contribute in a positive manner to the concept of a global community," former state representative from Clatsop County Tom Hanlon said. "Focus on the renewability of both human and natural resources."

"This might be too much to ask but I wish you would restore faith in the integrity of government," Joan Herman Fencsak said. "I am cautiously hopeful, as I believe most people are."

Her husband Richard Fencsak suggested Clinton "Reduce the deficit and stay out of wars around the world. Reduce unemployment and constantly look for alternatives to defense-related jobs. In the broadest sense I hope you do everything possible to make life better for Americans who do not share the top one percent of the country's wealth."

"I want from you more than any person can accomplish," Betsy Wentworth said. "Cut the fat off those guys sucking it out of everybody else. I don't like my money going to those people who swindled the country. I want it to go to the poor, to education — but not into the general fund."

Next to speak to Clinton were four members of the International Association of Machinists and Aerospace Workers, District Lodge 24, who have been on strike against Lovell's Auto in Astoria for 21 months. "Do something about unemployment," Chuck Anderson said. "Get this country back on track and back to work." Jim Goldie had two things on his mind. "The economy, of course," he said, "and you should sign the anti-scab bill to stop scabs from permanently replacing striking workers."

"I agree with Chuck and Jim," Jerry Blakely said.

"Ditto," Steve Hale said.

"I would like you to endorse the individual's right to sexual expression," Roger Hayes said. "Reduce the emphasis upon sex as a reproductive process and introduce steps to bring about an education of sex as a meditative and holistic process."

Judith Hayes, Roger's wife, was next. "I would like you to reverse the Reagan/Bush tendency to turn the country into a prison camp," she said to Clinton. "Get the nonviolent offenders out of jail and reserve the prisons for persons who are too violent to be anywhere else. Legalize marijuana, decriminalize everything else and use enforcement money for crime prevention and rehabilitation." She started to go, then abruptly turned back. "Tell Packwood to cut his losses and go back home while he's still got one."

Larry Lonnon was at the edge of the crowd. "Clinton should get serious," he said to the

people near him, though his voice carried to everyone on the pier. "He's still campaigning. He's going to campaign his entire term. It's a big publicity stunt."

Dennis Braun stepped up to Clinton. "Put God's word first on everything," he said.

Bruce Smith smiled at Clinton. "I think you ought to run two marathons and swim across the English Channel," he said. "Maybe you should do something to dilute some of the bad feelings of the Middle East toward the United States. And ride a bicycle to work every day."

"I want you to get things shaped up," Alice Schurman said. "I don't expect you to do much. I'm tired of people expecting huge things. I think you just have to start at the bottom and work things out."

"What I want from you is too much to expect of any administration," Kevin Violette said. "I want the Jefferson ideal. The 'City on the Hill.' In particular I wish the country would lead by example and conduct foreign affairs in that manner. I wish we would be the leader in international law instead of cynically conducting our affairs opportunistically."

"The first thing I want you to do is get us to believe in ourselves again," Dave Kruger said. "It's better we practice the politics of principle instead of the politics of banality. Take the high road instead of the low road. Look at the long view instead of the quick fix. I think it's more important to have the attitude than the details. You must shape attitudes."

"Quit eating junk food," Ron Baldwin said. Clinton laughed. "I'm as fat as a wood tick," he said.

Izaak Van Horn, a junior at Astoria High School, said, "I will be eligible to vote for President next time. The major debate at school was about gay rights and about fishing on the Columbia River, but not much attention was paid to the Presidential election. I'm not too sure if it matters who's President. There's a lot of problems no one can fix. You're this young guy everybody hopes has the answers, and I guess if you don't you'll be out and somebody else will be in."

Izaak's mother, Phuong Van Horn spoke to Hillary instead of her husband. "I'm very interested in what you are going to do. The previous First Ladies have all been older, without careers. You inspire me. You are your husband's right arm and that is a strong foundation in a family — a partnership."

"Tougher laws on child support and enforcing them, which will cost taxpayers much less than the current system," Kathy Van Vlack said. "And reevaluation of the Social Security system; rich dippers should be banned from the public trough."

"Balance the budget, that's the main thing," Al Somppi said. "If it's not done soon we will be as bankrupt as Russia. I would also like to see you institute national health care. It's essential that everyone receive adequate health care regardless of income."

"I hope you do what you say you're going to do," Fred Smith said. "I don't think you can. The national debt is four trillion dollars — going up \$13,000 every second. People don't like to bite the bullet, so I don't know what you can do."

"Stick to your bloody campaign promises," Fenton Stokeld said in his usual abrupt manner, "and if you don't, you should resign."

"I just hope you come through with what you say you're going to do," Tammy Weiler said.

"I want you to make a fool of George Bush," Connie Kimble said. "I want you to take the shit Bush gave us and turn it into apples, grapes and oranges."

"I want you to put an end to a ruthless era," Karen Mellin said. "A friend explained to me that 'ruthless' is the absence of the qualities of Ruth, who is synonymous with nurturing, generosity and loving."

Shay Williams and Jim Weathers were in Astoria from Cannon Beach. They joined the crowd around the Clintons and waited patiently for their turn. "Health care and eliminating PACs, or at least changing them so that big corporations aren't paying off politicians to ignore the people," Mr. Weathers said.

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