



PHOTO COURTESY OF AMANDA FRITZ

Amanda Fritz, Mary Nolan

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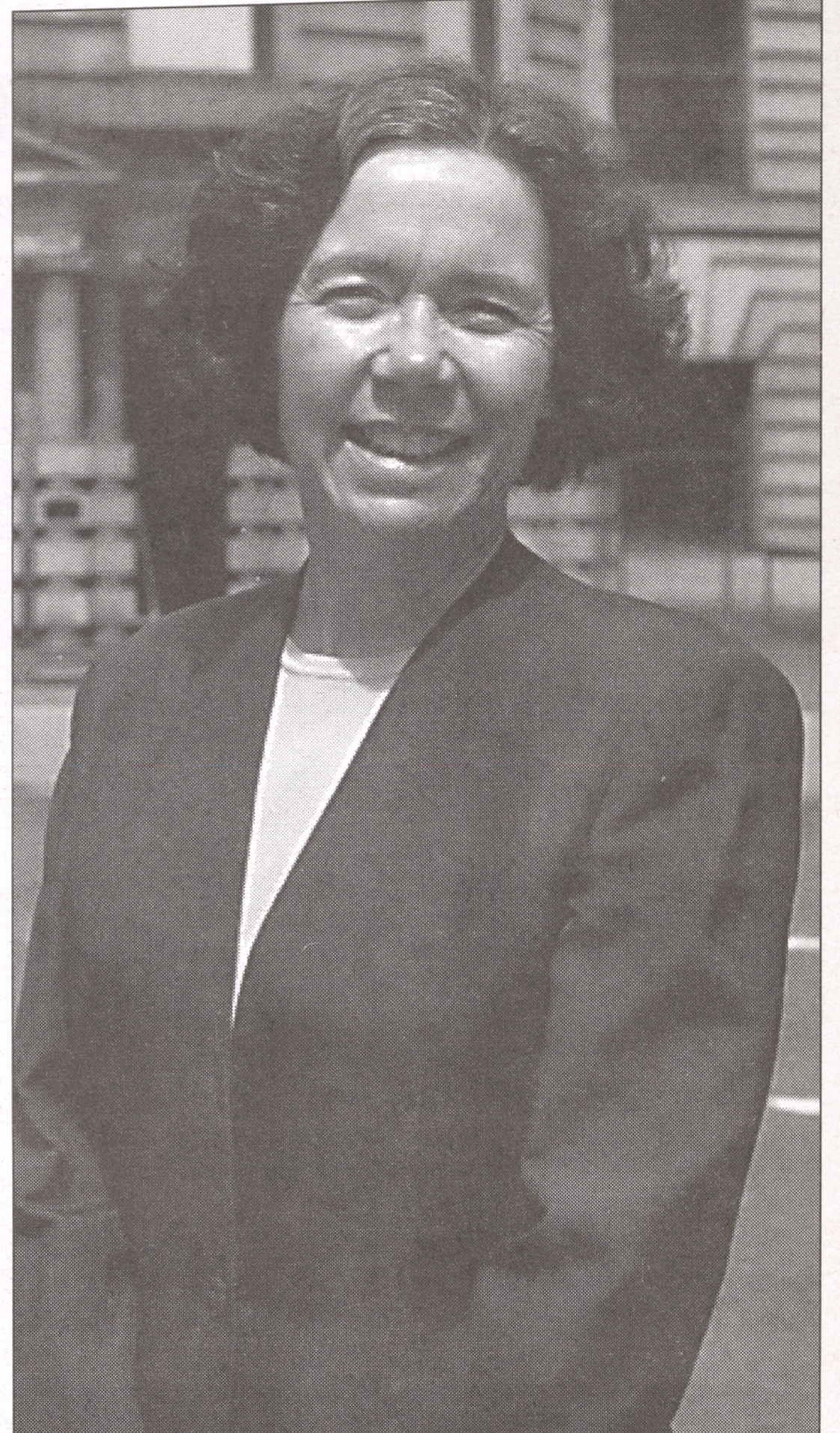


PHOTO COURTESY OF MARY NOLAN

The dollars and cents behind the race for City Council, Position 1

Janice Thompson is the executive director for Common Cause Oregon. She is the former head of Democracy Reform Oregon (which was previously known as the Money in Politics Research Action Project). Common Cause is a nonpartisan, nonprofit advocacy organization founded as a vehicle for citizens to make their voices heard in the political process and to hold their elected leaders accountable to the public interest.

BY JANICE THOMPSON
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

Incumbent City Commissioner Amanda Fritz is being challenged by Representative Mary Nolan who has represented southwest Portland in the Oregon House since 2001. In other words, two current elected officials are facing off in the Position 1 race for Portland City Council. A third candidate, Teresa Raiford, has filed to run in this election but has only received one \$102 contribution.

So far, Mary Nolan has raised \$212,248 for this contest and has \$171,503 on hand while Amanda Fritz has raised \$75,831 and has \$41,065 available now for continued campaign spending. (These figures are based on data downloaded from the state's campaign finance system, ORESTAR, on Feb. 12., Oregon's campaign must report each contribution within 30 days after it is received and within seven days of receipt during the six weeks prior to an election. This continuous reporting means that these figures will have been updated by the time this article is published.)

Fritz started her fundraising from zero because she won her City Council position using the Voter-Owned Elections reform program. An under-reported element of that reform program was that if a participating

candidate was elected, he or she retained no war chest and was barred from fundraising between campaigns. Retention of the reform system was defeated in November 2010 by a narrow 49.6 percent margin.

Nolan had \$13,740 in her campaign account at the beginning of 2011 but did not raise additional money during the legislative session in the first half of last year due to a fundraising ban adopted as a rule of the Oregon House. These dollars are part of her current ending cash balance of \$171,503.

Nolan has raised \$103,577 from 59 donors who wrote checks of \$1,000 or more with these dollars representing 49 percent of her total contributions to date. Nolan's largest contribution is \$20,000 from the Portland Metro Fire Fighters PAC. Thirty-seven percent of her fundraising, or \$78,745, came from 249 donors writing checks between \$101 and \$999. Her contributions of \$100 or less add up to \$29,926 or 14 percent of her total fundraising from an estimated 597 donors. The total number of contributors to the Nolan campaign is estimated to be 905. (See Table 1.)

Fritz, in keeping with her previous run as a reform program candidate, is not accepting any contribution greater than \$50. Contributions in this category come to

\$25,403 or 33 percent of her fundraising thus far of \$75,831. The rest of her campaign fund is \$50,428 of self-financing; small in-kind contributions and two loans of \$25,000 from Fritz to her campaign in June and December of 2011. This self-financing comes to 67 percent of her total contributions to date. The total number of contributors to the Fritz campaign is estimated to be 1017 donors. (See Table 1.)

Typically, financial underdogs who self-limit contributions, like Fritz in this race, are not successful unless they have significant name recognition. The major exception in recent Portland history is when in 2004 Tom Potter, a popular former chief of police with 30 years of public service, beat Jim Francesconi who raised over a million dollars.

As an incumbent Fritz does have name recognition, however, Representative Nolan is also well known and has proven fundraising capacity. The same could be said of Francesconi who in 2004 was a member of the City Council, however. Voters mark their ballots for a number of reasons, and in this contest one reason could be the different fundraising strategies of the two candidates.

Table 1— Fundraising by three contribution size groups as reported through Feb. 12: dollar amounts and percentages of total fundraising and numbers of contributors	Candidates	Contributions \$1,000 and up	Contributions \$101 to \$999	Contributions \$100 or less	Total Fundraising
	Mary Nolan	\$103,577 49% 59 contributors	\$78,745 37% 249 contributors	\$29,926 14% 597 contributors*	\$212,248 100% 905 contributors
Amanda Fritz	\$50,428 67% 1 contributor – self-financing by Fritz	\$0 0% 0 contributors	\$25,403 33% 1016 contributors**	\$75,831 100% 1017 contributors	

*Contributions of \$100 or less do not have to be itemized by individual donor. Rather those contributions are reported as aggregated dollar amounts. This means it is impossible to know exactly how many donors are giving in the contribution category of \$100 or less. But our standard procedure to develop an estimated number of donors is to assume that each of these small donations is \$50.

**Commissioner Fritz is self-imposing a \$50 cap on contributions. For this reason the procedure used to develop an estimated number of small dollar donors to her campaign is to divide the dollars for which contributions are unitemized by \$25, an assumption that each contribution is half of her \$50 contribution limit.



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