

Ceremony: Naturalization process concluded with gun salute

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Ukraine native Alina Zaytsev, who became a citizen Thursday, said she decided to make the drive from her home in Vancouver, Wash., to the national park, instead of to the Portland office.

"It's in a park. It's something special," she said.

Exceptional setting

Bonamici, who gave the keynote speech Thursday, coordinated with the Portland field office to come up with the idea to host the ceremony outside at a national park. Organizers plan to possibly host more citizenship events at Fort Clatsop, which Bonamici, D-Ore., described as a symbol of exploration and discovery.

"Two years ago today I spoke at a similar ceremony in Portland. It wasn't outside like this," she said. "This is

an exceptional setting and a meaningful one, as well."

Along with the keynote speech, the 19 immigrants were led through an Oath of Allegiance, listened to an audio message from President Barack Obama, recited the Pledge of Allegiance and were handed their certificates.

Tucker gave each one a small American flag and a certificate, similar to a graduation ceremony. The moment marked the end of a lengthy process.

'Finally get to vote'

Julie Rosenthal, an immigration services officer, said each candidate for citizenship was examined by an immigration services officer and was found to be in good moral character.

In order to become a citizen, an immigrant needs to have a permanent resident



Photos by Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Citizenship candidates take an Oath of Allegiance during a naturalization ceremony near Fort Clatsop at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Thursday.

card — commonly referred to as a green card — for five

years before applying for citizenship.

An exception is if the person marries someone who

has been a U.S. citizen for at least three years. In that case, the person would have to be married to the citizen for three years and have a permanent resident card for three years to apply.

At the end of the ceremony, Tucker announced, the park had a surprise for the new citizens.

Park rangers shot off black powder guns as a closing salute.

Tucker found it appropriate that the ceremony took place in front of the replica Fort Clatsop, where the Lewis and Clark expedition camped more than 200 years ago at the end of their journey West. The land represented a different type of milestone Thursday.

As a new citizen, Villaflores said, he is looking forward to exercising his new rights.

"I finally get to vote," he said.



Fisseha Messay Tefera, originally from Ethiopia, poses for a photo with U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici after the naturalization ceremony.



Dozens were in attendance for a naturalization ceremony near Fort Clatsop at Lewis and Clark National Historical Park Thursday.



Park Rangers Matt Hensley, Randy Francom, Esther Steiner, and Ben Najera stand in the bushes waiting to do a gun salute during a naturalization ceremony near Fort Clatsop.

Hotel: Sonpatki and two other suitors are interested in taking over the inn

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The Port has had a cashier's check from Sonpatki for more than a week, Smithart said, but has refused to cash or acknowledge the payment publicly.

Smithart had attended the Port Commission meeting Tuesday and tried to comment when the Port was discussing his impending

eviction. But Port Commission Chairman John Raichl denied his request, and Smithart left shortly thereafter. Smithart said today that his intent Tuesday was to bring up the cashier's check.

Smithart had fallen behind more than \$350,000 to the Port, city and county. In June, the Port Commission unanimously approved transferring the remaining two years

of Smithart's lease to Sonpatki's Param Hotel Group. In exchange, Sonpatki agreed to pay off Smithart's debts.

The lease transfer was never signed over to Sonpatki, however, and the Port moved to terminate Smithart's lease in late July. Colin Hunter, Sonpatki's lawyer, has said the holdup in assigning the lease to Sonpatki was because the Port would not

include an additional five-year renewal option.

In a legal filing last Friday, Smithart's attorney Damon Henrie said the Port's failure to assign the lease to Sonpatki showed the Port "acted with unclean hands and should be prevented from now evicting" Smithart.

The Port had tried to evict Smithart in August

2013, when he similarly fell behind in payments to the agency and the city. But that case was also dismissed.

Sonpatki and two other suitors are interested in taking over the Riverwalk Inn.

Seattle businessman William Orr and former Hotel Elliott developer Chester Trabucco have partnered with others in an idea to revitalize the hotel and area

around the Port's west end marina.

Mark Hollander, the president of Hollander Hospitality of Bellingham, Wash., said he is interested in bringing a Marriott to Astoria. He has also talked about managing the Riverwalk Inn on a short-term basis while negotiating a deal to redevelop 6 acres the Port owns in Uniontown.

Lee: 'I do a lot of lifelong learning'

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"Children with disabilities, after high school who have nowhere to go, this can give them real meaning," said Joanne Halvorson, Lee's legal guardian.

Halvorson, who homeschooled Lee, said she found out about the award program and thought it would be a good way for her daughter to stay engaged.

When she first signed up at 16, Lee said, she didn't take the program seriously. But within a couple of years, she was steadily making her way up the ranks, with help from friends and her adviser, family friend John Souza.

It's elemental

"I do a lot of lifelong learning," said Lee, whose personal development and community service have revolved largely around her interest in science.

While playing the video game "102 Dalmatians: Puppies to the Rescue," Lee said, she learned about blimps. From there, she learned about the periodic table, which has since developed into a life-changing interest in the elements.

Halvorson said Lee visibly shakes with excitement when studying the elements. She has performed experiments, such as creating hydrogen gas; visited Rice Museum of Rocks and Minerals in Hillsboro; and even taught a classroom full of 25 middle schoolers in Jewell about the periodic table.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Alexiya Lee, left, received the Congressional Award bronze medal from U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici Thursday at Baked Alaska. Looking on is her adviser, John Souza.

For her presentation, Lee discovered a periodic table song from Canadian science blog AsapSCIENCE that she said enraptured the students. On Thursday, she asked Bonamici, D-Ore., to stick around a few extra minutes so she could sing through the entire periodic table.

"Learning can be fun, you know," said Lee, who would like to be a math and science comedian visiting classrooms.

In addition to her classroom talks, Lee is creating a Web page about the elements and radio shorts for KMUN Coast Community Radio, both of which she said will be called "It's Elemental."

"Every little thing I did helped me overcome anxiety issues," said Lee, who wants to continue on and reach the top level of the Congressional Award.

Going for silver, then gold

Within the next four months, Lee said, she expects to earn her Congressional Award silver medal, the second-highest level of the award. To reach the gold medal, Lee must complete 400 hours of community service, 200 hours of personal development, 200 hours of physical fitness activities and four overnight explorations to regional sites.

If she does, Lee could become only the 12th Oregonian to win the Congressional Award gold medal since the program was created in 1979. The last recipient of the gold medal in Oregon was Alexandra Joy Gritta of Portland, who was presented her award by Bonamici in 2013.

Queen: 'You really are treated like royalty'

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It was a common sentiment throughout the night, which included several speeches, a question-and-answer session with the Regatta princesses and performances by the Maddox Dance Studio.

"In our hearts, you are all winners," said Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, who wished the court bright futures.

The princesses are Kimberly Castro, Katrina Diego

and Sophia Thomas.

"I want to crown all four of you. These girls are all marvelous," said Astoria Regatta Co-President Kathy Koppen Dean tearfully from the stage.

A new reign

Part of Bentley's role during this year's proceedings will be to select the winner of the "Queen's Choice" award following the Highwater Boat Parade Saturday.

Former queen Helligso

said Bentley has a lot of busy days ahead of her. For the next year, she'll be the queen. And that's not all.

"Being a queen is so different from being a princess," Helligso said. "You really are treated like royalty."

John Bentley, the newly crowned queen's father, said all the court members are exceptional and the entire Regatta experience has been great.

"But of course, it's only the beginning now," he said.

LEGAL NOTICE

You Could Get \$164 or More If You Bought Gas in Oregon at an ARCO or ARCO *ampm* Station and Paid a Debit Card Fee

Case Update You may have seen a previous notice in this case. The Oregon state rule on unclaimed money in class actions has recently changed, and your rights may be affected.

People who did not previously receive a letter about this case, file a claim, or opt out of this lawsuit may need to take action. If this applies to you, you must file a claim or opt-out of this lawsuit to preserve your rights. Any money that is not claimed will be paid to Oregon Legal Services and an entity (or entities) chosen by the Court.

What is this case about? An Oregon jury found that BP West Coast Products LLC ("BPWCP") charged more for gas than the amount registered at the pump and failed to properly disclose its prices when it charged a 35-cent fee to consumers who used debit cards to pay for gas at Oregon ARCO stations and *ampm* locations. BPWCP has denied the claims in this case and plans to appeal the jury verdict.

Am I eligible to file a claim? You can file a claim now if:

- You purchased gas at Oregon ARCO or ARCO *ampm* locations between January 1, 2011 and August 30, 2013 and paid a 35-cent debit card transaction fee,
- You did not receive a letter about the lawsuit,
- You did not already file a claim, and
- You did not opt-out.

If you already received a letter about this case, do not file a claim because you will receive an automatic payment.

How can I file a claim? File a claim online or by mail by **September 21, 2015**. If you file a valid claim, you will be eligible to receive \$164.85 or more, and you will give up your right to individually sue BPWCP for the claims in this case. The previous notice talked about a \$200 payment, but the fees required to pay Class Counsel will reduce payments by \$35.15.

What are my other rights? If eligible, you may also:

- Exclude yourself (or opt-out) online or by mail from the lawsuit by **September 21, 2015**. You will keep your right to sue BPWCP yourself.
- Object to the notice or claims process (or the fees if you file a claim now) by **September 18, 2015**.
- Do nothing. If you did not previously take action and now do not file a claim or exclude yourself, you will give up your right to get any money from this lawsuit and your right to sue BPWCP yourself.

For More Information
Visit: www.DebitCardClassAction.com
Call: 1-866-329-5931