

# Crown: Topics involved life before and after the bridge



Regatta Princesses Kristen Travers and Victoria Holcomb wait beside 2015 Regatta Queen Ally Bentley for the judges decision Thursday night at the Liberty Theater.

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feels nice, I was not expecting to hear my name," said McMahan, a Knappa High School junior.

The festival honoring the heritage of the Lower Columbia has always had a queen for the celebration. For the past year, the court, made up of local high schoolers, has acted as dignitaries for the North Coast by traveling to events and walking in various parades. Now that Regatta has opened, they will take part in public events, this time closer to home.

As is tradition during the coronation ceremony, the court was asked to come for-

ward individually and speak to the crowd. Coinciding with the 50th anniversary of the Astoria Bridge, the topics involved life on the Lower Columbia before and after the bridge's construction.

McMahan spoke about how the historic bridge was the final piece constructed of U.S. Highway 101, but had skeptics when plans were first made public.

"People called it 'the bridge to nowhere,'" she said. "Needless to say without the bridge, people wouldn't be able to cross the Columbia River at any time of day."

Thursday evening also signified the passing of the crown from last year's queen,

Ally Bentley. During her final few moments bearing the title, she spoke about how influential the experience had been.

"Watching the girls in the court grow has helped me gain mentorship," Bentley said.

The nerves of anticipation and public speaking may be settled for the court, but the festival's duties will keep them busy throughout the rest of the weekend.

For McMahan, the responsibilities have just begun but she seems eager to bear the crown.

"I'm proud to represent the community and, most importantly, thankful for the friendships that I've made," she said.

## Trump: More Hispanics are registering to vote

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for it by threatening to cut off remittances those living in the U.S. send to relatives. He questioned the impartiality of an Indiana-born federal judge hearing a lawsuit against him because of the judge's Mexican ancestry. He's complained Mexico has sent "rapists" and "criminals" illegally to the U.S.

Now some Republicans worry Trump is creating more people like John Herrera, 38, who signed up to vote in June in Las Vegas.

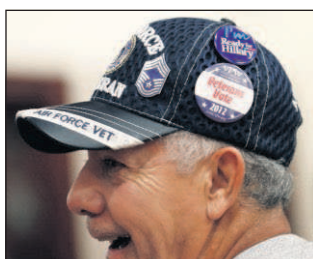
"I've never really voted until now, only because of Trump being against Hispanic people," he said. "I didn't think my vote would count before but now I want to make a difference."

Republicans blame a 1994 ballot measure targeting illegal immigrants in California for alienating that state's growing Hispanic population and turning it solidly Democratic.

"With Trump saying the things he's saying, we might see this same thing again," says Jody Agius Vallejo, a University of Southern California sociologist and author of "Barrios to Burbs: The Making of the Mexican American Middle Class." "Only this time, it would be nationally."

### Voting record

There is reason, though, to be skeptical. Overall, the Hispanic voting record is not good.



AP Photo/Eric Gay  
Gil Cadena wears buttons supporting Democratic Presidential candidate Hillary Clinton during a Democratic National Convention watch party in San Antonio on July 26.

The first obstacle is that more than half of the nation's Hispanics cannot vote because they are either under age 18 or not citizens. Relatively few of the Hispanics who are eligible to vote actually register and then cast ballots. Their turnout rate in the 2012 was lower than that of blacks and whites.

In Texas, where 39 percent of the population is Hispanic, Democrats have been shut out of statewide elections for decades. During 2014's elections, fewer than 2.3 million Texas Hispanics reported being registered to vote, or about 46 percent of the nearly 4.9 million who were eligible, according to U.S. Census Bureau surveys.

"We've been spending our money wrong," concedes Crystal Zermeno, director of special projects for the Democratic field organization Texas Organizing Project.

"For the past 15 to 20 years, we've been focusing on moving swing white voters. If you talk to Hispanic voters, they say, 'No one has asked me to vote.'"

### Success stories

There are success stories. In Nevada, Latinos have demonstrated the power they wield when they either turn out or stay home. In the 2014 midterms, for example, Hispanic turnout plummeted, and Republicans swept every statewide office and won control of both houses of the Legislature for the first time since 1929. But in 2008, 2010 and 2012 they helped deliver the state for Democrats.

"When you have the resources put in, you see turnout that favors the Democrats," says David Damore, a political science professor at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. "But you need to put resources in the community. It's not just going to happen."

This year — with Trump priming the pump, and with former state Attorney General Catherine Cortez Masto running to become the first Latina senator — resources are flowing.

In June, two days after graduating from high school, Fabi-

ola Vejar stood outside a Latin grocery store on a sweltering afternoon quizzing a parade of customers in Spanish: "Are you registered to vote?" Most shook their heads no. Vejar followed up: "Are you eligible?" Again, most responded in the negative. One man laughed and belittled: "Soy Mexicano!" I'm Mexican!

Vejar cannot vote. Now 18, she came from Mexico with her mother when she was 2 years old.

So she volunteers with Mi Familia Vota, encouraging others to be heard at the ballot box.

"I don't have that voice," she says, "but there's other people ... who feel the way I do. They should vote."

Xiomara Duenas will. She immigrated legally to the United States from Cuba in 1996 to join her father. She had always believed that her shaky English prevented her from becoming a citizen. She was resigned to the idea that immigrants didn't have the same rights as native-born Americans — until Trump's candidacy.

Last November, she became a citizen. This November, she plans to act.

"I didn't want him to become president, but I couldn't do anything," says Duenas. "But now, I can vote."

## Pot: FDA last evaluated medical use in 2006

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"It is best not to think of drug scheduling as an escalating 'danger' scale — rather, specific statutory criteria (based on medical and scientific evidence) determine into which schedule a substance is placed," Rosenberg wrote.

The Food and Drug Administration said agency officials reviewed more than 500 studies on the use of medical marijuana, identifying only 11 that met the agency standards for "legitimate testing." For various reasons, none of the trials demonstrated "an accepted medical use," the agency concluded.

The FDA last evaluated marijuana for medical use in 2006 and said in its latest review that the research "has progressed," but does not meet federal standards.

While the DEA won't reclassify marijuana, the agency did announce plans to make it easier for researchers to study pot's possible medical benefits by expanding the number of entities that can legally grow marijuana for research purposes.

Currently only researchers at the University of Mis-

issippi are allowed to grow marijuana, as part of a contract with the National Institute on Drug Abuse.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., said the DEA's decision "is keeping federal laws behind the times."

"The DEA's decision flies in the face of choices made freely by voters in Oregon and many other states about the legality of marijuana," he said. Oregon legalized pot last year.

Washington Gov. Jay Inslee, a Democrat, said he was disappointed with the DEA's ruling but his state would continue "to maintain a well-regulated adult-use marijuana system and continue to allow patients to have access for necessary medicinal purposes."

Jaclyn Stafford, an assistant manager at The Station dispensary in Boulder, Colorado, called the DEA's decision "an inaccurate judgment of the plant." She said rescheduling marijuana would allow for more regulation to an already growing market and allow more people to take advantage of what she described as the "holistic benefits" of pot.

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Victoria from Australia, 17 yrs. Enjoys spending time with her family and younger siblings. Victoria plays volleyball and is excited to learn new sports while in America.

Giorgio from Italy, 16 yrs. Loves to play baseball and spend time with his dogs. Giorgio also plays the guitar, and his dream is to join a drama club at his American high school.

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