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ONE DOLLAR



UNMOORED

Colin Murphey
The Daily Astorian

Election may set new course at divided Port of Astoria

POSITION 1

Campbell, Fulton square off for post

Race could tip power on board

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

No campaign in the May election has embodied the acrimony and infighting on the Port of Astoria Commission more than Stephen Fulton and James Campbell, two incumbents battling for re-election.



James Campbell



Stephen Fulton

The race could tip the balance of power on the Port Commission between two camps with differing viewpoints about Port management.

Seats on the Port's five-member commission are not geographically based, allowing candidates to run for any position and county residents to vote in each race. Faced with a challenge for his existing seat from former Clatsop County Commissioner Dirk Rohne, Fulton took the rare move of filing against Campbell.

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POSITION 2

Rohne, Hellberg are experienced hands

Candidates strive for civility

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Dirk Rohne and Dick Hellberg recently stepped out of political retirement to run against each other for the Port of Astoria Commission, albeit for different reasons.



Dick Hellberg



Dirk Rohne

The two candidates are running for a seat held by Commissioner Stephen Fulton, who avoided a challenge from Rohne by filing against fellow Commissioner James Campbell.

Rohne, a Brownsmead dairy farmer and former Clatsop County commissioner and Clatsop Community College board member, said the Port Commission needs more stability to attract investment and help from the state and federal governments.

See POSITION 2, Page 9A

POSITION 5

O'Grady, Spence vie to replace Raichl

O'Grady is a Fulton ally

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

A chasm of government experience separates the two candidates running to replace Port of Astoria Commissioner John Raichl, a former appointee who is not seeking re-election.



Pat O'Grady



Frank Spence

Patrick O'Grady, a longshoreman and owner of Warrenton Auto & Marine Repair for the past 15 years, said he is running to improve transparency at the Port.

Frank Spence, a retired transplant to Astoria with more than 40 years of administrative experience in city and county governments in Florida, said he wants to bring his expertise in government and budgeting to the Port.

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MAY ELECTION

Ballots for the May special district election in Clatsop County started going out this week.

Votes are due by mail or in-person by 8 p.m. May 16 at a designated drop site or the county Clerk's Office at 820 Exchange St.

In races for the Port of Astoria Commission, all county voters can choose candidates for Position 1, Position 2 and Position 5,

regardless of where they live.

All voters can also choose candidates for the Clatsop Community College Board.

For candidates for the Clatsop Care Center Health District Board and the Astoria School Board, only voters who live in the health district or in Astoria are eligible to vote.

The American Association of University Women will hold a candidate forum at 7 p.m. Wednesday in Columbia Hall Room 219 on Clatsop Community College's main campus, 1651 Lexington Ave., in Astoria. The forum will include candidates for the Port of Astoria Commission, Clatsop Care Center Health District Board, Clatsop Community College Board and Astoria School Board.

Thompson pushes back on questions about expenses

Commissioner claimed more than half pool

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

A Clatsop County commissioner is pushing back against accusations that her travel and education expenses have been excessive by questioning



Scott Lee



Lianne Thompson

the Board of Commissioners' goals.

Commissioner Lianne Thompson has claimed

\$7,328 in expenses during the first three quarters of the fiscal year. The five commissioners combined are allotted a total of \$13,500 each year.

Commissioners have spent \$12,692 in the first three quarters, or 94 percent of the allotted amount.

The board voted unanimously Wednesday to direct \$2,000 until the end of the fiscal year in June to account for the

decreasing amount of money for expenses.

"We've got to wing this until June," Scott Lee, the board's chairman, said.

Lee addressed the issue in a March 30 letter to Thompson.

"I know that for the remainder of this fiscal year you will be mindful that this budget is for all five commissioners who also may have travel or training plans," he said in the letter.

Need for expenses

Thompson responded Wednesday.

"Reimbursement for all actual and necessary expenses incurred on county business while outside the county is both required by the county charter and essential for commissioners doing that business," she said.

Thompson added she often seeks to limit expenses by avoiding hotels and eating cheaper food such as energy

bars or takeout from a grocery deli.

While explaining her need for expenses, Thompson pointed to a lack of a concrete vision or goals from other commissioners. Three issues — housing, economic development and emergency preparedness — have been the primary focus of her county-related travel, Thompson said.

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168 days — and counting

Record rainy days for Astoria

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

Astorians love the rain, but even longtime residents felt something was different about this season.

They were right.

Rain has hit the area on 168 days since Oct. 1. That breaks a record of 166 set in 1894 and 1921.

Astoria has seen 84.70 inches of rain to date, which lands in the top 10 in recorded history. The National Weather

Service has kept track of rainfall dating back to 1890. Astoria's wettest year came in 1915, when it saw 91.55 inches of rain.

The National Weather Service tracks rain locally from the Astoria Regional Airport.

While Friday is expected to be dry, Saturday and Sunday likely will see some showers, meaning the October-through-April record could hit 170 days.

The total rainfall, as usual, is higher than in other places throughout the state like Portland — 46.86 inches — Eugene — 42.31 inches —

Klamath Falls — 10.68 inches — and Redmond — 7.97 inches. Portland is less than a half inch away from a record for total rainfall in the time period.

Because of the coast range to the east, high-pressure systems that move through Astoria often rise, cool and condense, which creates more rain, said Gerald Macke, a meteorological technician with the National Weather Service. When more high-pressure systems hit Astoria off the Pacific Ocean instead of moving north or south, heavy amounts of rain follow.



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Afternoon rain drizzles in March. The National Weather Service says that Astoria has set a record for number of rainy days.

