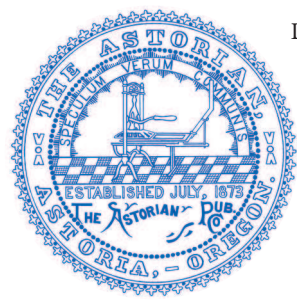


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## OUR VIEW

### New cutters will boost Coast Guard's presence

The mouth of the Columbia is one of world's great maritime entryways and corridors. A decision by the U.S. Coast Guard to station two of its brand new 154-foot Sentinel-class fast response cutters here is an acknowledgment of our estuary's strategic and practical importance.

This has long been Coast Guard country. The U.S. Life-Saving Service, one of the Coast Guard's parent agencies, established a station at Cape Disappointment in 1873, one of its first. Coast Guard presence here has expanded time after time in the subsequent 144 years, most recently with relocation of sector headquarters from Portland.

The cutters, at a combined cost of around \$150 million, will greatly enhance security and safety along the Pacific Northwest coast and beyond. With an operational range of 2,500 miles and a top sustained speed of about 35 mph, these cutters will be able to respond wherever needed in record time.

At a time when maritime commerce is expanding, security threats becoming more worrisome and other missions becoming more complex, these cutters will catch the Coast Guard up with the 21st century. Always among our nation's most competent and well-respected agencies, the Coast Guard will make good use of these long-needed assets.

For our area, the cutters will help guarantee continuing vitality of Columbia River shipping and other, more localized economic sectors like commercial fishing. They will even play an important role in the tourism industry by ensuring the safety of Astoria's robust cruise-ship business. They will even be tourist attractions in their own right. Curious onlookers will gather wherever the cutters end up being moored and they will add to the fascinating panorama of passing vessels on the river.

Each of the new cutters will require two officers and 20 crew — presumably along with additional shore-based support staff. These added paychecks will reverberate around our communities in countless positive ways.

It is worth noting that this welcome development also will put more pressure on local housing stock and add more motor vehicles to crowded streets and highways. Their grateful neighbors will appreciate whatever the Coast Guard can do to help address these needs.

The Coast Guard's decision is a big win for Astoria and all the towns of the Columbia and adjacent Pacific shoreline. We appreciate it and offer our continuing thanks for all the Coast Guard does on our behalf.

### Warrenton should tap Balensifer for mayor

Warrenton city commissioners have an important decision to make Tuesday of who should be the next mayor.

Former Mayor Mark Kujala stepped down from the position in March, mid-way through his four-year term to spend more time focused on his family and on his business. Kujala served 12 years on the commission and became the city's first elected mayor in 2014. The remaining four commissioners must now choose who among themselves should step into the mayor's position and fulfill his term, which expires in 2018.

Commissioners Henry Balensifer and Rick Newton are seeking the position. Balensifer, who was selected by fellow commissioners as mayor pro tem under Kujala, is serving as acting mayor until the appointment is made.

Assuming that Balensifer and Newton will each vote for themselves, the decision rests between Commissioners Pam Ackley and Tom Dyer. If the City Commission is divided 2-2, Balensifer would remain acting mayor until the stalemate is broken or until the 2018 election. Balensifer's or Newton's appointment as mayor would create a vacancy for their commission seats, and the commission would be charged with appointing an applicant from the community to fill that term.

We believe Balensifer is the better choice and should be Warrenton's mayor. He was first elected in 2012, and has been in the pro tem position since 2013 when it was called vice chair prior to the mayor's position becoming an elected one. Balensifer is extremely active in the community and the years he has spent as deputy mayor have groomed him for the job of representing the city.

It's important the commission make a choice because the fifth commissioner's slot will be vacant until a choice is made or until the election next year. Commissions usually have an odd number of members so votes won't end in ties, and even though commissioners aren't elected based on geographical districts, it's important that all the positions are filled and all residents are fully represented.



Henry Balensifer



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 'Guilty as charged'

Candidate Stephen Fulton is correct. I have a decidedly different position on the proposed Life Flight location that is in direct conflict with the interests of his campaign.

On April 10, I submitted a ten-page technical memorandum to the Port's Airport Advisory Committee and Executive Director Jim Knight in response to candidate Fulton's published letter of March 23, proposing to terminate the Bales lease and convert the hangar for Life Flight's use.

The purpose of the AAC is to advise the Port Commission with recommendations on both general business matters as well as consequential decisions that affect the airport.

On Jan. 17, AAC Chairman Henry Balensifer submitted the AAC's recommendation for the location of the Life Flight facility at a meeting of the full commission. The commission listened, discussed and adopted the recommendation for two southern sites. Commissioner Fulton voted the only "nay" vote on the resolution. The two southern sites became the governing policy of the Port.

Candidate Fulton's proposal in his press release of March 23 is in denial of the facts that had been previously presented to and acted on by the commission. Candidate Fulton proposes a solution that is potentially unsafe, costly and time-consuming; it also stands little to no possibility of regulatory approval.

Candidate Fulton's proposal has peripheral issues requiring resolution which would likely create as much or more effort than the commission approved primary and alternate sites. Candidate Fulton's proposal is a simplistic solution to a not so simple problem. Engagement with the Port staff and the AAC on the full range of relevant facts would have generated a more realistic solution, although still unlikely to achieve regulatory approval.

I serve at the pleasure and direction of the Port's executive director as a contract employee. I work on those activities which he directs and delegates to me. If candidate Fulton defines conflict of interest as carrying out assigned duties in conformity with Port policy and each day bringing to those tasks the best of my ability, judgement, experience and creativity, then I am, "guilty as charged."

GARY KOBES  
 Interim Airport Manager  
 Port of Astoria Regional Airport

### Stokes for health district

Come May 16, I hope you will give some serious thought to voting for Mindy Stokes for Clatsop Care Health District Director Position 1. Mindy has been an active member of the community in ways that advocate for the rights of the elderly, women and LGBT members of the North Coast, and will achieve great things in this position if given the chance.

Having worked with Mindy in a variety of educational and activist settings, I can tell you she is motivated to work, and actively seeks to represent the best interests of the community. She is meticulous but thoughtful, driven but easy to talk to, and she will tackle local health issues head on until she is satisfied with the result. She truly is a "people's" candidate. I encourage you to vote Stokes.

DEAC GUIDI  
 Warrenton

### Re-elect Wingard

I'm writing to support Patrick Wingard's re-election to the Clatsop Community College's Board of Directors. Patrick's record of community service spans both paid and volunteer positions over a period of many years.

He serves to further the best and brightest, the greatest good for the greatest number, in whatever capacity he finds himself. As a land use planner or a governing body member, as a friend or neighbor, Patrick Wingard acts as a stable, logical and intelligent voice to promote and protect good causes and efforts wherever he's involved, locally and regionally.

His collaborative skills demonstrate his flexibility and focus, yielding wonderful results. As a community, we'd be well-served by his re-election.

LIANNE THOMPSON  
 Arch Cape

### Aho and Burke serve district

As a long-standing member of the Clatsop Care Health District Board, I'm encouraged by the recent interest in the district, and by the unusual interest in serving on the district board. The two individuals who are contesting current board members bring enthusiasm and skills which could serve the district well. However, this alone does not warrant a vote to replace the incumbents they are challenging.

Long-term care is a complex enterprise, and it probably takes the typical new board member over a year to effectively participate in board discussions and decisions. Understanding these complexities is especially

critical now, as we deal with a rapidly changing operational environment that has led many providers of nursing home care to exit the field.

Karen Burke, our current chairwoman, has more than eight years service on the board, and has been an engaged and effective leader. As an experienced nurse, she brings that perspective to board discussions along with a solid understanding of the district's operations and challenges, and especially the circumstances leading to recent board decisions.

Prior to joining the board, Mike Aho spent more than four years gaining an understanding of the district firsthand, while family members were either resident in a district facility or utilizing services provided by district staff. When he had questions about the district's operations, he began regularly attending our board meetings to learn more. With that, and his experience as a small business owner, he has become a valued member of the board.

Mike Aho and Karen Burke have been working diligently to ensure that the district continues to provide a variety of long term care services to the area. They have shown their commitment to the district, and our community, and I strongly recommend that they receive your vote.

ROY LITTLE  
 Astoria

### Support for Lum-Toyooka

My name is Stephanie Snyder, and I, along with my husband Ryan Snyder, own and operate Martin Hospitality and a small collection of hotels and restaurants in Cannon Beach. I am writing this letter today in support of Lori Lum-Toyooka for a board position on the Seaside School District.

I have known Lori for 15 years, and have watched her impact on the community in which she lives and the communities in which her company serves throughout Clatsop County. She is extremely involved in the local schools, and currently serves alongside me on the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) for Broadway Middle School. Lori is very involved with volunteering for fundraising efforts, and in efforts to help kids have special opportunities at school like cultural events, assemblies and field trips. Lori has been strategic in her leadership, and has an ability to inspire those around her.

Professionally, Lori is striving with their business at Lum's Auto, not only being considered one of the best employers in Clatsop County, but also in their efforts to meaningfully engage locally, and give back in time and treasure to the community.

These brief comments share my absolute support of Lori and her efforts to join the school board for Seaside School district. I know she would be fantastic fit; dedicated and passionate.

STEPHANIE SNYDER  
 Cannon Beach

### Running for school board

I'm a progressive running for Position 4 on the Astoria School District Board. Two years ago, I took a job here in Astoria so that my wife and I could be close to her sister and two nephews. Coming from Indiana, we love the beauty of the area and the town, and we're grateful every day to live in this wonderful place.

Last year's presidential election was a shock to my system. After a few days of reflection, I resolved that I would become civically active in my new hometown to try and make a positive difference.

In the past few months I've become active in the Clatsop County Democratic Party. I'm honored they chose me to serve as one of their delegates to the Democratic Party of Oregon's State Central Committee to recommend policy and help the party move forward in our state. Now I'm running for Astoria School Board to further serve you and our schools.

Why am I running? There are many reasons, but the top one is that our current Secretary of Education, Betsy DeVos, is an advocate for "school choice" policy, supporting the establishment of private charter alternatives to public schools.

My issue with this system is that it diverts funding from public school programs, often with little oversight or guarantee that they will provide adequate education. I'm committed to fighting to keep public money in the public schools. If the federal government forces us to divert funds to for-profit education programs, I'll help to create the most robust system of oversight possible to ensure that our tax dollars are used to benefit students in our community, and not just line the pockets of profiteers.

I have three years of experience as an English teacher, and I currently work as a data analyst for Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc. I also served two years as vice-chairman of Bloomington, Indiana's Commission on Sustainability.

I think my experience and skills will be great assets for the school board, and I hope you will give me your vote. Please visit my website at [www.andyavisfor-schoolboard.org](http://www.andyavisfor-schoolboard.org) to learn more about me.

ANDY DAVIS  
 Astoria