

Sheriff finds no wrongdoing at Man Cave

Fulton's claims were 'political in nature'

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

The Clatsop County Sheriff's Office has concluded there was no criminal activity at a private hangar at the Astoria Regional Airport known as the Man Cave, describing allegations from Port

Commissioner Stephen Fulton as "political in nature."

Fulton had called the Man Cave an "unlicensed speakeasy" and claimed that alcohol consumption at the hangar placed the Port of Astoria at serious risk of liability. The hangar is owned by retired dentist Philip Bales, a pilot, on land leased from the Port.

Fulton also alleged that Commissioner James Campbell, his opponent in the May special district election who socializes at the Man Cave,

failed in his role as Port treasurer to disclose the private club in the agency's financial statement.

Sheriff Tom Bergin, in an investigative summary released Monday, said he found nothing criminal in nature. "I find from the detectives' reports that there was no criminal activity at this hangar in question," the sheriff wrote. "No alcohol was sold by Bales and this appears to be a very limited place for pilots and other(s) from the community to rarely or occasionally socialize."

Bergin also wrote that he found it "suspi-

cious" that Fulton had visited the Man Cave yet did not report any violations, as Fulton claimed Campbell had failed to do. The sheriff noted that Fulton switched seats to run against Campbell in the election rather than campaign for his existing seat on the Port Commission.

"I felt pretty good about it all along," Campbell said of the allegations against him. "I didn't think there was any substance."

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TO THE RESCUE

SOUTH PACIFIC COUNTY TECHNICAL RESCUE DRILLS TO PRACTICE SAVING OCEAN VICTIMS



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Rescue swimmers keep a lookout for other emergency personnel bringing in 'victims' during a beach rescue drill Monday.

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

SEAVIEW, Wash. — A callout came over Washington's Pacific County Dispatch just after 6 p.m. Monday. Five people were seen in the water south of the Seaview approach.

"This will be a drill," the dispatcher said.

The all-volunteer South Pacific County Technical Rescue, a nonprofit founded in 1978, has practiced such scenarios for the past quarter century, a precursor to the summer season when tourists descend on the Long Beach Peninsula, and some inevitably fall prey to the Pacific Ocean.

Within several minutes of the call, local first responders roll down the beach approach on 38th Place to where the call was made. Rescue team members unload their personal watercraft and tow

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A mock victim is pulled in from the surf Monday as part of beach rescue training involving multiple agencies and departments in preparation for increased traffic on local beaches in coming months.

Legislators unveil new plan for roadways

Would raise \$8 billion through gas tax, fees

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — Legislators on Monday announced a blueprint for raising \$8 billion over the next decade to pay for projects to relieve congestion and maintain roads and bridges.

The plan represents the first comprehensive framework for crafting a transportation package this year.

"We are running the most transparent transportation process I think this building has ever seen, so now it's time for public input," said state House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland. "We still have plenty of time to work out the details, but this is an important turning point in terms of having specifics out there for people to respond to."

The money for the plan would come from a combination of hikes in the gas tax and registration and license fees, tolls and new taxes on payroll and purchases of new vehicles and bicycles.

The plan identifies a few specific projects to ease congestion, but other projects would be prioritized by the Oregon Transportation Commission. Specific projects would:

- Add lanes on Interstate 5 near Portland's Rose Quarter from Interstate 84 to Interstate 405.

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Paris Achen/Capital Bureau

Left to right, state Sens. Brian Boquist, R-Dallas, and Lee Beyer, D-Springfield, talk at the state Capitol Monday before their presentation on a transportation package lawmakers will consider this session.

Downtown housing project receives state grant

Money will help renovate Waldorf Hotel

The Daily Astorian

Oregon Heritage has awarded \$100,000 to the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association for a proposed housing project in the former Waldorf Hotel.

"Housing is a proven need in this community and people living in downtowns support other downtown businesses," a release from Oregon Heritage said.

Innovative Housing Inc., a Portland nonprofit that refurbishes old buildings into low-income housing, is performing due diligence before purchasing the old hotel from Groat Brothers Inc. Innovative Housing hopes to develop about 40 one-bedroom and studio units for people earning 50 to 60 percent of the region's median income. To finance the project, the group is lining up a series of tax credits for historical buildings and affordable housing, a mortgage and some smaller grants through the State Historic Preservation Office.

The Waldorf, also known as the Merwyn, was expected

to be demolished as part of a library renovation project. Preservationists urged the city to spare the hotel as an example of 1920s architecture.

Oregon Heritage, a division of state Parks and Recreation Department, awarded 27 matching grants worth more than \$2 million to Oregon Main Street Network organizations across the state for building projects that encourage economic revitalization.

The Astoria Historic Landmarks Commission will hold a meeting about the proposed development at 5:15 p.m. May 16 in the Astoria City Council chambers.



The Daily Astorian/File Photo

A proposed low-income housing development in the former Waldorf Hotel, also known as Merwyn, has received a \$100,000 state grant.