

ASTORIA GIRLS THREE-PEAT AS STATE TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPS

'DYNASTY DAYS'



David Ball/For The Daily Astorian

Astoria athletes pose with the 4A championship trophy following Saturday's meet. More photos from the state meet online at DailyAstorian.com/sports

By **DAVID BALL**
For The Daily Astorian

EUGENE — The Astoria girls traded the lead three times with Phoenix before coming out on top at the end of the day to win its third consecutive 4A track and field championship at Hayward Field.

The Fishermen came into Day 2 of the meet with a 15-point lead over their top threat, Phoenix High, and that margin grew unexpectedly when Astoria kicked off Saturday's racing finals with a win in the 400-meter relay.

The purple and gold came into the meet with only the sixth-fastest qualifying time, forcing them to the outer lanes of the track.

"When you're in the middle you see people on both sides and you know what you're up against," said Astoria's Gracie Cummings, who ran the first leg. "It was intimidating being out on the edge where you don't have anyone to measure up against."

The solution was to simply run as fast as she could, and that she did, being the first to get the baton away to teammate Andrea Harris, who zoomed down the backstretch. Nara Van De Grift maintained a slight edge around the corner, but as the stagger disappeared, a wall of three or four teams came into the final exchange zone at the same time.

Astoria senior Natalie Cummings was the first to get away, about a half step ahead of Emonie Snowton out of Phoenix.



David Ball/For The Daily Astorian

Astoria's Darian Hageman flies into the pit during her winning effort in the triple jump on Saturday, pushing the Fisherman to the top of the team leader board late in the meet. The Astoria girls traded the lead three times with Phoenix.

MORE SPORTS

Fishermen baseball team moves on to state tournament.

Seaside's Januik goes out a winner in the 800 at state meet.

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"It seemed like we were all handing off at the same time, so I just got out fast and took it home," Natalie Cummings said. "I didn't know how close they were, so I just gave it my all to get to the finish line."

She maintained the clear front-runner position through the end, clocking in at 49.77 — 0.15 hundredths ahead of the Phoenix tag-team. Not only was it a surprise win, but also resulted in a four-point swing between the contenders in the team score.

Back and forth

The teams traded punches in the ensuing races with the Pirates getting a win from Danielle Jantzer in the 1,500, while Natalie Cummings came in second in the 100 and Gracie Cummings also found her way onto the podium, pushing Astoria's lead back to 10 points midway through the meet.

Phoenix made its final push in back-to-back races with Sienna Bauer taking second in the high hurdles and Jantzer doubling up with a convincing win in the 800.

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Youth camp principal helps young people prosper, grow

By **DAMIAN MULINIX**
For EO Media Group

NASELLE, Wash. — When longtime local educator Gary Flood took a job with the Nye County, Nevada, school district in 2008, he didn't foresee moving back to the Long Beach Peninsula until he was ready to retire.

Flood had worked in the Ocean Beach School District since 1991 and his family was rooted at the beach. But his plans changed when he saw that the

Naselle Youth Camp school was searching for a new principal.

"I'd always planned to come back," he said. "When that opportunity presented itself I said, 'I hate to leave my students especially, but this is home. What am I going to say, no?'"

Flood said a former co-worker, Naselle Grays-River Valley School District Superintendent Lisa Nelson, was



Gary Flood

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In emergencies, a radio cure

Hillgaertner 'can talk to the world' by radio

When a hurricane-like storm lands in Clatsop County, as was the case in 2007, 911 telephone lines often stop working. In these moments, a retiree and his team of 36 fellow volunteers rush to fill the void.

Don Hillgaertner has operated amateur radio, commonly referred to as ham radio, for more than 50 years. He's led the team in coordination with the county Emergency Management Division since



Submitted Photo
Don Hillgaertner's ham radio skills are an asset in emergencies.

the 1990s.

Hillgaertner spends 10 to 12 hours of his time each week

EVERYDAY people

in the volunteer position. He and his wife, Terrie, both keep ham radios in their cars and have participated in multiple local ham radio clubs.

Hillgaertner, 69, spent 31 years as a communications maintenance specialist with the Oregon Air National Guard, retiring as a master sergeant. He also served in the Oregon wing of the U.S.

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