



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Contestants compete for Miss Oregon in Seaside. Find more photos online at DailyAstorian.com

Miss Oregon: Mather to focus on music, work toward a doctorate's in psychology

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Miss Oregon 2016 Alexis Mather of Astoria crowned Emery as the new Miss Oregon.

"I'm excited for Harley, to see her grow and blossom," Mather said.

'Press play'

The former Miss Oregon is excited to start her own journey in life by focusing on music, selling real estate and working toward a doctorate's in psychology.

"You take this whole year off and put life on pause. This is the moment to press play," she said.

Miss Clatsop County Hannah Garhofer of Seaside advanced to the top 12. She said she has participated in the Miss America organization for six years and will attend the University of Oregon this fall.

"I've seen so much growth in myself," Garhofer said. "This program makes me the best version of myself."

Garhofer also received a scholarship award for being voted the nicest contestant.

Coming into the competition, Garhofer said she wanted to leave "everything out there" and "make Clatsop County proud."

"My end goal is to do the best I can and just be Hannah," she said.

Kaila Tripp, Miss Southern Gem, met her goal of advancing to the second round of the competition, the top 12.



ABOVE: Seaside's own Hannah Garhofer performs during the talent portion of the 2017 Miss Oregon Scholarship Program Saturday held in Seaside.

BELOW: Miss Oregon 2016 Alexis Mather performs at the 2017 Miss Oregon Scholarship Program.



Tripp said she started pageants five years ago. "I watched Miss America as a little girl. I never thought I wouldn't do it." "The end goal is to be Miss

Oregon one day," Tripp said. Stephanie Magee of Willamette Valley said she began competing in order to play her cello and win scholarships.

But Magee said she has gained much more.

"It tests your resilience," she said. "You never walk away a loser."

Magee said every time she and other contestants compete, they gain more qualities in which Miss Oregon embodies.

"She (Miss Oregon) is out in the community volunteering. She doesn't put people down. She is selfless," Magee said.

Emma Ellis of Cascade was crowned Miss Oregon's Outstanding Teen. She will represent Oregon in August in Orlando, Florida, at the national Miss America Outstanding Teen competition.

Peyton Sims and Nicole Ramsdell represented the area as Miss Clatsop County's Outstanding Teen and Miss North Coast's Outstanding Teen.

Sandy Newman is the executive director of the Miss Clatsop County Scholarship Program and has been the director since 2005.

Miss Clatsop County is a preliminary to the Miss Oregon Scholarship Program and Miss America.

Newman said competing is "very valuable" as it gives the contestants opportunities to gain skills that are not necessarily taught elsewhere, such as learning to make a resume, interview and speak publicly with self-confidence.

"I cannot express the growth I have seen," Newman said. "A complete transformation."

Evansen: He's debating whether to fight again

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to something new.

Evansen "got into training taekwondo" and then joined Rings Sports United in Bellevue, Washington, "where you could talk how you wanted to," and it was "family oriented."

"I hung out there all night like a gym rat," he said.

Evansen competed in MMA professionally in Texas and Seattle. After living in California, Seattle, Texas and Las Vegas, at 27, Evansen decided it was time for a change.

"I needed to go home to regroup," he said. "I never

thought I would stay here. I don't want any more big cities. I just want the ocean and surfing."

Evansen wanted a career that involved his passion for fitness. "I thought, 'What else am I going to do? Why not open a gym?'"

Evansen said he based his gym on the principles of Throwdown Gym in San Diego. "MMA, Zumba, yoga ... everything under one roof. When I started Valhalla it was my dream to do that."

For six years now, Evansen has owned, conducted classes and worked out at Valhalla

Gym. "I really do believe in this fitness stuff. It's a lifestyle to keep up with these crazy shenanigans."

Evansen still surfs at Cannon Beach. A group will "randomly go and show up. All of a sudden we're a bunch of kids again." He said he enjoys the fact that different people are brought together by one common interest.

Though he loves surfing, Evansen will not go alone. "I'm scared to go out there. I'm scared of the sharks," he said.

He is not sure what the reason is but believes it has something to do with the movie "Jaws."

"That movie really had me going when I was a kid," he laughed.

Evansen is unsure of what the future will hold for him. He is debating whether to fight again, but does not "want to get hurt." Buying the building where Valhalla operates is also an option.

But one thing he does know is that fitness is and will continue to be a huge factor in his life. "Every day, all day revolves around being healthy for me," he said. "When I'm sitting there doing nothing, I could be getting better."

—Kaelia Neal

Dam: Mayor wants a new study of flood plain, impact of dam on flooding

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The Army Corps is in contact with the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service, the water district's partner on the dam, but a federal opinion has yet to emerge.

"This is really a federal issue," Mayor Henry Balensifer said. "Until they resolve the federal issue, there's not much we can do about it. And so, at this point, we're in a holding pattern to determine how this will work out."

Balensifer and City Manager Linda Engbretson explained in an interview Friday that the emergency declaration was a method to bring in the Army Corps, the city's partner on the levee system.

Balensifer and Engbretson said they do not believe Warrenton owns the dam, although there are some unresolved questions. They also said there are no plans to sue the water district to quiet title.

The question of whether the dam is part of the city's levee system remains murky, they said, but they have been told by the Army Corps, which built the levees, that the Corps does not own the dam.

An easement the city granted to the water district for the dam in 1962 may give the city some leverage, but legal opinions differ on the scope of the city's discretion.

"I don't think we have all the answers yet," Engbretson said.

Contrast in tactics

Warrenton paid Akin Blitz, the Portland attorney, \$112,000 for his work on the Eighth Street Dam last year. The city is now getting legal counsel from a firm brought in to handle a range of issues while the city searches for a replacement for the late City Attorney Hal Snow.

Former Mayor Mark Kujala's family and the Nygaard timber family had urged the city to take control of the dam for flood control.

Blitz threatened to sue the water district if the district did not give up ownership claims to the dam. The attorney also asked whether the Columbia River Estuary Study Taskforce, a partner in a failed \$1.2 million project to remove the dam and construct a bridge over the river for the city, engaged in public corruption and civil rights violations.

An attorney for CREST called Blitz's report on the dam inaccurate, incomplete and "extremely careless."

The controversy has complicated life for the water district.

The water district thought it owned the dam and two other federally financed flood-control structures on the Skipanon River — the Middle Control Structure and the Cullaby Lake Water Con-



The Eighth Street Dam in Warrenton has been the subject of a long-running dispute between the city and the Skipanon Water Control District.

The Daily Astorian file photo

trol Structure — but the dispute with Warrenton showed that no one has clearly established title.

Confirm ownership

The Department of State Lands told the water district in May that the district had to confirm ownership before applying for a state easement that would solidify the district's control over the dam.

The water district's board is concerned that control of all three properties will be in doubt unless ownership is clarified. In addition to removing the dam, the water district would also like to take out portions of the Middle Control Structure to improve fish passage and water quality.

"It's a can of worms for us," said Tessa Scheller, the water district's chairwoman.

The water district's board voted 4-1 Wednesday to ask their attorney how much it would cost to pursue a declaratory judgment in court establishing title to the three properties. Robert Stricklin, who said the district has already been told a legal case would cost more than \$30,000, voted "no."

Scheller believes the water district has the best claim to ownership of the dam. "My feeling is that we have demonstrated good stewardship," she said. "We've acted as the owners."

But ownership is only one part of the equation. The water district needs a permit from Warrenton to remove the dam, a fact that has led some of the attorneys and others who have looked at the dispute to recommend that the water district and the city again try to negotiate an agreement on the dam's future.

New study

Experts say the dam was built to protect against a two-year flood. The structure's 50-year useful life expired in 2013. The water district and others believe the dam is a hazard and a liability that could actually increase flooding risk to neighboring property.

Yet many dams remain functional past their original lifespans with modifications and upgrades. Some at the city believe the water district is more interested in fish passage and water quality than flood control.

Mayor Balensifer said he would like a new study of the flood plain and the impact of the dam on flooding and the city's levee system. "So that we can then determine, once and for all, what the heck that thing actually does provide," the mayor said, "and then come to a swift resolution."

Engbretson said the city wants to know, "How do we protect our citizens and property in the long run?"

Warnings: 'Balloons, kites and drones don't mix well with power lines'

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Seaside, Gearhart and parts of Warrenton were without power from about 4:40 to 10:20 p.m. as Pacific Power crews replaced the damaged equipment.

Mylar-free

Pacific Power wants Independence Day events this year to be Mylar-free. So far this year, Pacific Power has recorded 13 instances where balloons have caused outages in Oregon, Washington state and California, the three states the company serves. In 2016, there were 26 such outages.

"Mylar is particularly bad as it is a conductive material," Alisa Dunlap, Pacific Power's regional business manager, said Friday. "However, all items that can get tangled in our lines can cause problems."

The 2015 Seaside Fourth of July outage was an "unavoidable fluke," Dunlap said. Nevertheless, precautions must be taken.

"We always try to communicate with the community at large that balloons, kites and drones don't mix well with power lines," she added. "We have done our best to educate."



Pacific Power/Submitted Photo

The rather charred remains of the balloon that caused the power outage on the North Coast on the Fourth of July in 2015.

In issuing a list of safety tips, the power company advises residents to keep the balloons indoors where they can't rise into overhead power lines or drift into contact with

transformers or substations. Make sure the string for each balloon is securely attached and short enough to control its direction. Power company officials recommend attach-

ing a weight to the balloon's string. Never intentionally release metallic balloons, they warn.

'Such a fluke'

In 2015, as soon as the power went out, the Seaside Fire Department called the substation to respond to the incident. While there was smoke coming from the failed transformer, there were no flames.

While Seaside Fire Chief Joey Daniels has not completely discounted the possibility of another Mylar incident, the fire department is focused on other safety mea-

sures. "That's the first time any of us had ever heard of something like that," Daniels said Friday. "It's such a fluke. We have more issues with people letting off illegal fireworks and illegal parking. There's a reason we have everything painted red — it's so our firetrucks can get around the city. Respect the red parking lanes in the city, because those are so emergency vehicles can make it around."

Daniels advised residents and visitors to watch the illegal fireworks, "because the reason they are illegal is because they cause harm."