

ELECTION 2018

IDEOLOGICAL SPLIT

Astoria man pleads guilty to manslaughter

Johns convicted in his uncle's death last year

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An Astoria man pleaded guilty Tuesday for killing his uncle last year.

Christopher Eric Johns, 46, was arrested in Portland in March 2017 a few days after his uncle — Ronald Boudreau, 66 — was found beaten to death in his home on U.S. Highway 101 Business. Johns allegedly also assaulted a woman before fleeing the scene.

Johns originally was charged with murder and fourth-degree assault. On Tuesday, he offered an Alford plea — meaning he asserts innocence but recognizes prosecutors have enough evidence for a conviction — to first-degree manslaughter.

The deal with the Clatsop County District Attorney's Office stipulates he will serve more than 15 years in prison, though he will be eligible for a reduced sentence after 10 years.

Under state law, those convicted of first-degree manslaughter are required to serve between 10 and 20 years in prison.

Johns had considered switching attorneys ahead of a scheduled status check hearing Tuesday. Minutes before the hearing, though, Johns agreed to the deal negotiated by prosecutors and Kris Kaino, his court-appointed attorney.

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Astoria looks at new rules for homeless shelters

Safety, buffer zones under city review

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

A code amendment that will shape the future of emergency warming centers in Astoria is moving forward.

Astoria planning commissioners have said such centers are necessary and there is a growing need for these kinds of services in the city. They provide temporary shelter to people during inclement weather, but are not addressed at all in the city code.

That absence became an issue last year when the city required the Astoria Warming Center to obtain a temporary use permit to operate a 30-bed emergency shelter out of the basement of the First United Methodist Church on Franklin Avenue, a location between downtown and a quiet neighborhood.

After that lengthy public process concluded, Planning Commissioner Daryl Moore suggested a code amendment to address temporary shelter facilities in detail.

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PAMELA WEV

PETER ROSCOE

Wev, Roscoe in a runoff for a seat on the county commission

By JACK HEFFERNAN
The Daily Astorian

An ideological split on the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners over the role of the county manager could be settled by voters in November. One camp believes the county manager should hold the reins on day-to-day operations, while the other insists commissioners should have a more active voice in decision-making.

A rare runoff between Pamela Wev and Peter Roscoe in District 3 could tip the balance.

Wev, a land use planner, mirrors the views of Commissioners Lianne Thompson and Kathleen Sullivan, who have been critical of County Manager Cameron Moore and want the board to exert more oversight.

Roscoe, a former Astoria city councilor and restaurateur, is closer to Commissioner Sarah Nebeker and Mark Kujala — an incoming commissioner — who view the county charter as giving the county manager clear authority over daily operations.

The schism has spurred public and private clashes — behavioral investigations, heated exchanges and even threats of resignation — between commissioners and Moore, who skipped a commission meeting in April over what he called “rude” and “unprofessional” behavior by Thompson and Sullivan.

In a December email exchange that illustrated the ideological divide, Sullivan expressed disappointment that she was not invited to hiring interviews for a new community development director. Moore countered that it was rare for commissioners to be involved in the hiring process of county employees except for the county manager.

Roscoe said he wants to work well with the county manager and department directors if elected. But would he want to sit in on a hiring interview?

“Absolutely not,” he said. “I think that commissioners hire the county manager, and the county manager’s job is to lead the staff. That’s my focus is to be the kind of commissioner that allows these professionals to do their jobs. I don’t want to hold a magnifying glass over them and burn them down.”

Wev said she would like to have the option of accompanying the county manager in hiring interviews for department heads.

“It’s important to give them their space, but for someone who directly reports to the county manager, it’s not uncommon for a commissioner to sit in on an interview,” Wev said.

Moore and other commissioners have also taken issue with Sullivan’s and Thompson’s interactions with county staff at board meetings. Wev, however, said the two commissioners are simply filling their roles.

“I think that asking questions in a commission meeting should not be seen as a hostile act,” Wev said.

Roscoe said he would save many of his critiques of county staff’s performance for the commission’s annual evaluation of the county manager.

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Lawmakers begin ‘cap and trade’ discussions



Paris Achen/Capital Bureau

State Sen. Elizabeth Steiner-Hayward, D-Beaverton, left, Sen. Alan Olsen, R-Canby, Sen. Fred Girod, R-Stayton, and Sen. Michael Dembrow, D-Portland, question experts during the first meeting of the Joint Committee on Carbon Pricing at the Oregon Capitol Tuesday.

Mission to reduce greenhouse gases

By PARIS ACHEN
Capital Bureau

SALEM — A joint legislative committee charged with developing policy for a state-wide “cap and trade” program launched its work Tuesday during the state Legislature’s quarterly meetings.

State House Speaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, and Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, appointed the 14-member Joint Committee on Carbon Pricing after lawmakers declined to act earlier this year on the Clean Energy Jobs Bill to create a cap and trade program modeled after California’s.

The committee launched its task by hearing and questioning experts on state and national environmental policies.

“We are here to develop a program that can help us reduce our greenhouse gases and to work on also growing economic opportunity across the state, and I’m really looking forward to working with each and every one of you to do that,” said Kotek, the committee’s co-chairperson.

State legislative leaders have committed to recommending a carbon-pricing policy during next year’s legislative session.

The Clean Energy Jobs Bill earlier this year set an allowance, or a cap, for the amount of emissions industry can emit free of charge. Any business that released more than the equivalent of 25,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide would have been required to buy credits at auction to offset their emissions.

The legislation called for Oregon to join the Western Climate Initiative, which shares a market to sell offset credits. The initiative includes

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