

OPINION

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

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SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

Candidates to be heard in Seaside

At a time when civilized discourse (or is that an oxymoron?) is hard to come by, we welcome the opportunity to both meet the candidates and share their thoughts on issues to the community.

In Seaside, John “Chappy” Chapman is challenging Mayor Jay Barber for the city’s top spot. Three council seats are headed to the voters, with Tita Montero, Dana Phillips and Steve Wright running unopposed.



R.J. MARX

While a one-candidate election is a red flag to voter apathy, it can also be a signal that constituents are comfortable and supportive of the actions their representatives have taken.

However, even in noncompetitive races it is important for candidates to provide an audience with their measure of the community, their priorities and their plans for the future.

Already incumbents and challengers alike in Seaside and Gearhart have voiced their concerns for traffic safety, workforce housing and emergency management.

The Signal is honored to team with the American Association of University Women this year to present an election forum at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Sept. 19, at Seaside City Hall. It’s open to the public. Come listen to and ask questions of candidates for Seaside and Gearhart offices, as well as the state House of Representatives.

College connection

It makes sense for the Signal to link up with AAUW, a national organization which works to empower women and girls.

Their work is evident in the WINGS conference, a free, annual event since 2001 organized by the Seaside and Astoria chapters of the AAUW, helping women continue their education.

“How many students are working full time?” asked journalist Lisa Nadworny on a recent segment on NPR’s Morning Edition. “Today’s college students aren’t who you think they are.”

Nearly half of all college students attend community colleges; among those at four-year schools, nearly a quarter attend part time and about the same share are 25 or older.

How many need support services? Advisers? Financial aid officers? Child care, parking or commuter options?

“Maybe we need a new definition of nontraditional, considering those

qualities are the new normal,” Nadworny suggests.

Locally, that’s where groups like AAUW fill the gap in bringing educational options to those might not have the opportunity. Seaside AAUW has existed as an independent branch since 1943 and today has 50 members. Membership is open to all women and men with at least an associate degree from an accredited college or university or as a community affiliate supporting the organization’s mission.

The group’s scholarship foundation provides thousands of dollars locally each year for women returning to school or as the first in her family to attend college.

The WINGS program provides a day worth of workshops on anything from math anxiety to financial aid, along with the inspiration from other women who have overcome challenges to achieve their dreams.

The lives of women are permanently enriched by higher education and the support of mentors.

On the ballot

Enter the November election.

In Gearhart, a newcomer, Jack Zimmerman, is looking to unseat incumbent Kerry Smith, who was elected to City Council Position 1 in 2014. Paulina Cockrum, who was appointed by Mayor Dianne Widrop to fill the unexpired term of City Councilor John Duncan after Duncan died in 2015, is running unopposed for Position 3.

In Seaside, Mayor Jay Barber faces a challenge from John Chapman, owner of KSWB Radio Clatsop. Councilors Montero, Phillips and Wright will face the forum audience to invite questions and comments.

The region’s marquee race will bring the two candidates for House District 32, the seat vacated by the retirement of Deborah Boone.

Tiffany Mitchell handily won a competitive primary against challengers John Orr of Astoria and Tim Josi, a Tillamook County commissioner and former state representative. Her message of “fighting to resist” the agenda of Donald Trump resonated with primary voters.

Mitchell continues to campaign throughout the region, including an appearance in Seaside joining North Coast Indivisible in opposing Russian interference in U.S. elections.

Republican Vinaeta Lower, a Seaside resident, moved to the Northwest from Delhi, India, where she was born, and grew up in Olympia, Washington. She moved to Seaside after accepting a long-term position at Warrenton Grade School teaching eighth-grade language arts.



MAYOR OF SEASIDE



John Chapman



Jay Barber

VS.

SEASIDE CITY COUNCIL



Tita Montero



Dana Phillips



Steve Wright

GEARHART CITY COUNCIL

Position 1



Jack Zimmerman



Kerry Smith

VS.

Position 3



Paulina Cockrum

“We bring in so much revenue for the state, between timber, dairy, tourism industry, and our infrastructure doesn’t support that,” Lower said.

A former employee at the Washington Department of Transportation, Lower said the fatality rates on Highway 30 and Highway 26 are “horrendous.”

Brian Halvorsen, a Rockaway Beach resident, is running as an independent candidate for state House District 32, representing all of Clatsop County, most of Tillamook County and a western portion

of Washington County.

Halvorsen told the Astorian he believes the two-party system is broken and neither the Democratic or Republican parties represent the will of the voters. Instead the two major parties are sold to the highest campaign donors. “As an Independent, I won’t be bought by special interests,” Halvorsen said.

“I think our elected officials should be more responsive to the public,” he added.

To educate, inform and lead is a key goal of the Signal. Our public officials are our connection to

good government.

In a world where our voices in public discourse are more and more diluted, the forum provides an opportunity to participate in our democratic process.

It’s not just promises we’re looking for from our politicians: It’s reflective answers, persuasive logic and a vision for the future.

Let’s help them shape it.

R.J. Marx is The Daily Astorian’s South County reporter and editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

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Homeless story on Warrenton camp breaks my heart

The story “Homeless start moving out of Warrenton camp after trespass notices” (The Daily Astorian, Sept. 7) breaks my heart.

These residents of the camp — most of them local, victims of various addictions, mental health issues or just poor luck or judgment — are in need of protection. They also need medical care, a place to take a shower and wash their clothes, and sleep under shelter.

If these people were animals, they would be taken to a shelter, and their needs met. But Warrenton police need to protect the property owner, North Coast Retail LLC, whose property consists of a dirt plot that has been there for millions of years. Is that what needs protection?

DORIS LARREMORE
Astoria

Cannon Beach can seem like a petting zoo with bunnies

I was struck to learn the origins of the bunnies of Cannon Beach occurred when anonymous homeowners released them to the wild, and not a “Canadian Side” entrepreneur who saw rabbits as a boon to tourism (“As the bunny population grows in Cannon Beach, so do frustrations,” The Daily Astorian, Sept. 14). In passing, for the uninformed, the Canadian Side of Cannon Beach is the land lying north of Elk Creek.

Petting zoos have universal appeal, which is to say people will stop to stare at a rabbit. This is not to imply Cannon Beach has

become a petting zoo, but oftentimes it can seem like a zoo, nonetheless.

I have a story of my own, about the origins of raccoons in Cannon Beach. One dark and rainy morning at the cardlock gas pumps in Seaside, as I was filling my tank, a contractor driving a box van pulled in and said “Psst, come have a look at this.” He raised the back door of his van and lo, there was a raccoon in a live trap.

He allowed that he had a job in Cannon Beach, and that whenever he managed to trap a raccoon in Astoria, he invariably released it in Cannon Beach, saying he didn’t like Cannon Beach that much. He

imagined Cannon Beach offered his captive a more suitable habitat, and I couldn’t disagree.

So, I hope my story gets as many legs as the truth about the origins of the rabbits of Cannon Beach.

GARY DURHEIM
Seaside

Measure 105 makes me angry

It seems I was mistaken about state Sen. Betsy Johnson’s attitude and inclination towards undocumented Mexican immigrants (“Officials show attitudes against immigrants,” The Daily Astorian, Aug. 7).

I saw her at the Hispanic Heritage Celebration, at St. Mary, Star of the Sea, and asked her a fairly daft question considering where we were, what were her thoughts were on Measure 105? I desired to know if I needed to retract part of my previous letter to the editor.

I explained to her how I taken her comment at the Ghadar Party event, about “Indians coming to the U.S. with respect to our laws,” as a jab aimed at the undocumented in our nation. She assured me it wasn’t a backhanded slight. She told me she felt Measure 105 was deplorable, though she used a less gentle word. She was a remarkably warm and genial, and I regret falsely accusing her.

But Measure 105 makes me so angry; to think that there are those who would bring harm or pain to the children playing amongst those at the celebration; or to think that in the year 2018 people still fall for the oldest racist lies.

MICHAEL A. “SASHA” MILLER
Astoria

Clearcuts and wildflowers

It was somewhat heartening to read that Hampton Lumber Company is devoting 17 acres of the thousands they clearcut to do research on bees (“From clearcut trees to habitat for bees,” The Daily Astorian, Sept. 6). Are we now to assume that soon all of Hampton’s clearcuts will be planted with wildflowers? That would be a temporary benefit to bees, since Hampton’s tightly spaced tree farms shade out any ground cover.

It’s true that Hampton’s gesture raises them above the more investor-beholden mega-corporations like Greenwood Resources LLC in civic/environmental responsibility. But Hampton’s stream restoration, road improvements and help for bees amount to putting Band-Aids on the gaping clearcut wound they helped create.

Some might argue that we should encourage any steps taken by Hampton that are healing for the environment. Well, maybe. But I smell a slick public relations move calculated to bolster the company’s brand. To me, praising their gestures of retribution is like patting the crazy uncle on the head because he repaired the kitchen stool after destroying all of the furniture in the house.

Those of us who support a timber industry based on sound ecology await the time when outfits like Hampton will log selectively, and receive compensation from the state for restoring harvested land to healthy diverse forests, rather than monoculture tree farms.

The bees? If we quit harming their environment, they will do just fine on their own.

ROGER DORBAND
Astoria