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HOMELESSNESS IN ASTORIA

‘We’ve reached a boiling point’

Gimre’s criticism and a downtown protest underscore city’s challenge

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Daily Astorian

Tensions over what Astoria should do about homelessness have intensified in the form of a protest, a viral Face-

book post and a misunderstanding.

Dot Olsen launched a small Occupy-style protest on Friday to speak out against the City Council’s vote to prohibit camping in the woods. “We surrender! Where do you want us to go?” a sign at Heritage Square asked.

That same afternoon, Pete Gimre, the owner of Gimre’s Shoe Store downtown, posted an emotional reaction on Facebook to homeless people who soiled his storefront.

Meanwhile, the KOA campground in Warrenton juggled a rash of calls

after people misinterpreted a statement by social service agencies and flooded the business with requests for free campsites.

While unrelated, the three incidents underscore the raw nerves behind policy debates in Astoria over homelessness and the impatience of people on all sides of the issue.

Gimre, whose family’s shoe store is among the most iconic businesses downtown, detailed on Facebook how he was called from the “Dancing With the Clatsop Stars” benefit at the Lib-

erty Theatre on Thursday night to deal with people camping outside the 14th Street store and drinking.

“I walk out of the performance to contact the police. Again. Like I’ve done several times in the past for the same reason,” he wrote. “And just like each time in the past we come to work the next morning to witness what needs to be cleaned up.

“This time it wasn’t s--- but piles of piss and cig butts. I’ve had it. I and my employees are sick of this crap.”

Police have received seven calls

from Gimre’s since the start of the year. “Not a ton of calls,” Police Chief Geoff Spalding noted.

Still, the chief added, he hears similar concerns frequently and wonders if some store owners have started to accept the homeless as “the way it is” and don’t call the police as often.

When Gimre called last week, the officers who responded talked to five homeless people and asked them to move along.

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HARVEST TIME ON THE NORTH COAST



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Justin and Dan Bogh move cranberries in their farm’s flooded bog near Gearhart toward equipment that will move the crop into a truck for transport to a processing facility across the Columbia River in Washington state.

ELECTION 2018

Price endorses Jones for mayor

A former candidate weighs in

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
The Daily Astorian

Astoria City Councilor Cindy Price says Bruce Jones should be the city’s next mayor.



Cindy Price



Bruce Jones

In a letter to The Daily Astorian, Price endorsed her fellow city councilor, pointing

to Jones’ record of leadership. “He knows how Astoria fits within the economic and social structure of our neighbor cities, the county, the state, the federal government,” she wrote.

Price had been a candidate for mayor herself, but withdrew from the race in August, citing family reasons.

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Wev, Roscoe differ on housing, development in election forum

Candidates in District 3

By **JACK HEFFERNAN**
The Daily Astorian

Pamela Wev and Peter Roscoe, the candidates for Clatsop County commis-

sion District 3, offered differing perspectives on housing and development at a debate Friday.

The candidates took part in an hourlong debate at the Astoria Library moderated by Chris Breitmeyer, president of Clatsop Community College. Wev, a land use planner who

once served in former Portland Mayor Vera Katz’s administration, and Roscoe, founder of Fulio’s Pastaria and a former Astoria city councilor, are vying for the seat that represents parts of Astoria, Miles Crossing, Jeffers Garden,

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Former Seaside public works director takes to the rails

Wallace is a trolley volunteer

By **REBECCA HERREN**
The Daily Astorian

From public works to trolley storyteller, Neal Wallace is enjoying his retirement.

“I am the perfect kind of busy,” he said.

Wallace, who joined the all-volunteer Astoria Riverfront Trolley team in August, has lived in Seaside for 25 years. Before retiring in 2015, he was the city’s public works director.

He arrived in Seaside during the spring break quake



in 1993 and went to work as a surveyor for the planning firm HLB, then in Manzanita. A little more than a year into his job, HLB opened an office in Gearhart, where Wallace remained for the next five years.

In 1998, Wallace was hired to do land surveys, engineering and project management for the city.

“I didn’t have anyone to supervise and only one person

to answer to,” he said. “It was perfect.”

Five years in, the public works director position became open, and after a discussion with his wife, Lisa, he decided to “throw his hat into the ring.” The rest is history.

Before retiring, Wallace finished his commitment to the food bank board and felt fortunate to have helped with the new building’s completion. He then took time to re-focus and redirect his interests.

“After a while I had enough of that,” he said. “There’s only so much inner focus I could do.”

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Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Neal Wallace waits for passengers to board the trolley.

