

Port candidates meet in election forum

Hunsinger, McClaine square off in Seaside

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian



Bill Hunsinger Scott McClaine

SEASIDE — Port of Astoria Commissioner Bill Hunsinger touted his experience and criticism of what he sees as ineffective Port management at a candidate forum on Saturday, while Scott McClaine, his challenger in the May election, stressed he would bring fresh eyes.

The two are running for a four-year term in Position 3 on the Port Commission. Commissioner Robert Stevens, a retired Coast Guard captain, is running unopposed for Position 4.

Hunsinger, a commercial fisherman and former longshoreman, has been on the Port Commission for 12 years. McClaine, the owner of an online coin shop and a Coast Guard veteran, recently quit his job as a security guard at the Port to campaign against Hunsinger.

The Port is in dire financial straits, with staff estimating more than \$20 million in maintenance on decaying infrastructure and barely enough money to cover operating costs.

"I want to thank Commissioner Hunsinger for his 12 years of service to the Port. It's seen both good and bad," McClaine said at the forum, which was held at the Bob Chisholm Community Center and sponsored by Clatsop County Democrats. "But I want to say that I think I bring a set of fresh eyes to the Port. I've been known for thinking outside the box."

Hunsinger pointed to his experience with the Port, along with the fishing and shipping industries, as giving him credibility. He has been the biggest critic of Port management and has said Port Executive Director Jim Knight should resign or be fired.

"I've seen the Port at its very best, and I've seen the Port go a different direction," he said. "The reason I'm running again is I'd like to turn things around."

A volunteer committee of financial professionals has recommended a more proactive Port management and the sale of multiple properties to help fix decaying docks and keep the agency solvent.

Hunsinger at first said he is totally opposed to selling public property to make up for managerial mistakes. But he later stated his willingness to sell the Astoria Regional Airport, which loses money operationally but brings in the vast majority of the Port's federal grants.

McClaine said the Port

needs to study the finance committee's recommendations. Selling buildings, but not the land underneath, could be a good option, he said.

The Port recently shut down a causeway over the East Mooring Basin after an inspection by state engineers found a significantly rotted substructure, leaving several boat owners without access to their vessels. Asked how they would balance safety with servicing customers, Hunsinger said the Port needs a more experienced grant writer to seek government support.

The Port Commission has long been beset by squabbling, much of it related to Hunsinger's constant criticism of the agency's staff and Knight. Asked about making commission meetings more cordial, Hunsinger started with a laugh in recognition of his self-appointed position as a whistleblower.

"You all know I am," he said. "I don't like watching public dollars be spent recklessly, throwing money away. And that's what they do."

The Port Commission should resemble a family, McClaine said, with unity in public and disagreements hashed out privately.

"Live debate is not good," he said.

The Port's largest source of revenue is from charges to log ships exporting timber for Astoria Forest Products, a business nearly halted by tariffs amid a trade war between the U.S. and China. McClaine credited Hunsinger's role in attracting a log exporter to Astoria, but recommended the Port look beyond logs.

Hunsinger said the Port needs to do a better job marketing itself and take advantage of the potential for shipping cargo by barge on the Columbia River.

He recounted the Port of Grays Harbor in Aberdeen, Washington, which was similarly dependent on wood products but diversified into agricultural, liquid and auto exports, attracting more than \$200 million in private investment. In 2011, Grays Harbor was named by state officials as the Washington Port of the Year.

"Aberdeen was in worse shape than we were by far," Hunsinger said. "And what did they do to change that? They marketed their port. They marketed worldwide."



Patrick Webb/Chinook Observer

The Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival brought its royalty to the Long Beach parade. The royal party included, left to right, Miss Norway Jordan Walter, Junior Miss Norway Phaira Lane, Miss Sweden Hannah Sundstrom Eaton, Junior Miss Sweden Katelynn McCauley, Senior Court Chaperone Rebeckah Orton and 2018 Miss Scandinavia Kourtney Tischer.

Long Beach marks Loyalty Days with a parade

Chinook Observer

LONG BEACH, Wash. — Hundreds of people took part in Sunday's Loyalty Days parade through Long Beach.

The annual event celebrates patriotism.

Channeling Seeger at fundraiser for the PAC



Patrick Webb/The Astorian
Keith Clark celebrated folk singer Pete Seeger at a fundraiser on Saturday.

Local musicians honor folk singer

By PATRICK WEBB
The Astorian

Most know Keith Clark as a world-traveled classical orchestra conductor who has been the leading light at the Astoria Music Festival.

But on Saturday, his

musical repertoire embraced another genre when he took down his cherished "wall ornament," a banjo which Pete Seeger, a friend of his father, had had made for him, and performed in Astoria at a folk concert to commemorate what would have been Seeger's 100th birthday.

Clark performed "Wasn't That A Time," a song that got Seeger in trouble during

the communist "witch hunt" era of the 1950s.

Clark joined 29 musicians from the North Coast folk scene who performed Seeger material, including many protest anthems of the 1960s.

The event, attended by 240 people, was a fundraiser for the venue, the Clatsop Community College Performing Arts Center.

College candidates have similar views, different backgrounds

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Astorian

SEASIDE — Incumbent Andrea Mazzarella and challenger Sara Meyer, candidates for the Clatsop Community College Board, shared many similar views in a Saturday candidate forum, albeit from different backgrounds.

They are running for Zone 2, Position 2, which covers Astoria and outlying neighborhoods.

Also at the forum was Karen Burke, a former nurse and instructor who is running unopposed for Zone 1, Position 1, covering much of the eastern portion of Clatsop County. The college's two positions covering South County and Warrenton have no candidates and will likely be decided by write-in campaigns.

Mazzarella, 38, spent more than 20 years in the service industry before becoming a real estate agent and delving into community service. She was in the college's Upward Bound high school enrichment program,

used its Small Business Development Center when starting a small business and studies in its historic preservation program.

She was appointed to the college board in January 2018 to replace Patrick Wingard, and also serves on the Astoria Budget Committee. The May election is to fill out the remaining two years of Wingard's term.

"I may not be considered an academic in some traditional senses, but I do understand how a community college not only builds a strong foundation for furthering your education, but also offers an opportunity to explore your creativity," Mazzarella said at the forum, which was held at the Bob Chisholm Community Center and sponsored by Clatsop County Democrats.

Meyer, 74, came to Astoria in the 1970s with her husband, Chuck. She worked at the Tongue Point Job Corps Center and opened the Complete Photographer with her husband in 1977, running it

for 40 years.

She served on the Astoria School Board from 1976 to 1980 and the college board from 1996 to 2000. She has a bachelor's degree from the University of Oregon.

"I want to serve more," Meyer said. "I've got the time now. I've got the experience."

The college recently purchased the land it leased for the Marine and Environmental Research and Training Station, its career-technical campus at South Tongue Point. It is trying to gather \$14 million from a variety of sources to pair with up to \$8 million in matching state bonds to build a new maritime science center.

Asked how the college can get the money, Mazzarella focused on reaching out to companies that employ the mariners trained at the campus and looking at phasing in improvements to save money.

Meyer said donors to the Columbia River Maritime Museum should also be supportive of the expansion of maritime science education.

Both candidates agreed on the need to empower staff, promote the importance of higher education and strengthen connections with K-12 students.

Meyer touted her retired status as providing more time to serve on the college board, while Mazzarella said she has invested significant time in learning about the organization and wants to delve deeper.

Burke made a call at the end of the forum for residents interested in serving as Warrenton and South County representatives on the college board.

"Please consider thinking about who might serve and serve us well, because we do need a fully functioning team to be a good board," she said.



Karen Burke



Andrea Mazzarella



Sara Meyer

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Jeffrey Allan Hamel

Hamel, 56, of Tillamook, formerly of Seaside, died in Tillamook on Monday, April 15, 2019. Waud's Funeral Home of Tillamook is in charge of the arrangements. In lieu of flowers make a donation to Tillamook animal shelter.

Celebration of life and potluck reception
Saturday, May 11th at 1 p.m.,
Seaside American Legion,
1315 Broadway in Seaside.
For potluck information, contact
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Schedule of Events: 3:00pm - Champagne Reception
3:30pm - Helicopter Drops Golf Balls
4:00 to 6:00pm - Social & Silent Auction

WHERE TO BUY TICKETS: -Holly McHone Jewelers, Astoria
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