



# Astorian

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**Nathan Pinkstaff, a deck mechanic, is the challenger in District 3.**

**Commissioner Pamela Wev is running for a second term in District 3 representing Astoria.**

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian  
**Commissioner Mark Kujala, the board's chairman, is running unopposed for a second term in Warrenton's District 1.**

**Commissioner Lianne Thompson is running for a third term in South County's District 5.**

**Steve Dillard, an innkeeper, is the challenger in District 5.**

## CANDIDATES' FORUM

# HOUSING, CHILD CARE AMONG TOPICS AT COUNTY COMMISSION FORUM

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

Clatsop County commissioners and the challengers looking to unseat them in the May election outlined their strengths and differences Tuesday night at a candidates' forum at Clatsop Community College in Astoria.

Two of the region's defining issues — housing and child care — came up during a discussion moderated by Chris Breitmeyer, the college president, in the Patriot Hall gymnasium.

Breitmeyer asked the candidates what projects they would promote to increase

affordable housing.

The question came after a controversial project at Heritage Square in Astoria that would have provided workforce and supportive housing was nixed, amid a storm of criticism, after the cost to the city became clear. The Northwest Oregon Housing Authority recently unveiled an affordable housing project for seniors and the disabled next to the Owens-Adair Apartments in Astoria.

Commissioner Pamela Wev, who is running for a second, four-year term as the District 3 representative for Astoria on the Board of Commissioners, cited her support for

two housing projects: Trillium House, a workforce housing project slated to break ground in Warrenton, and the proposed expansion at Owens-Adair.

Wev is the board's delegate to the housing authority, which manages low-income housing in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties.

Her challenger, Astoria resident Nathan Pinkstaff, said that in addition to cities and the county, developers should be brought into the conversation.

Pinkstaff, a deck mechanic for Tidewater Barge Lines, also said the 2019 county housing study should be updated to reflect the pandemic era.

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# State Senate, House candidates appear at forum

A potential preview of November election

By ETHAN MYERS  
*The Astorian*

In a potential preview of the November election, candidates for the state Senate and House went behind the microphones Tuesday night at a candidates' forum in Astoria.

Betsy Johnson's decision to launch an independent campaign for governor created an open seat in state Senate District 16 and a domino effect in state House District 32.

State Rep. Suzanne Weber, a Tillamook Republican, and Melissa Busch,

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**Melissa Busch, a nurse in Warren, is the Democratic candidate in state Senate District 16.**

**State Rep. Suzanne Weber is the Republican candidate in state Senate District 16.**

**Logan Laity, a community organizer in Tillamook, is the Democratic candidate in state House District 32.**

**Cyrus Javadi, a dentist in Tillamook, is a Republican candidate in state House District 32.**

# City chooses child care provider

A partnership with Bumble Art Studio

By NICOLE BALES  
*The Astorian*

The city will partner with Bumble Art Studio, an Astoria preschool provider, on child care.

The new arrangement means 21 children enrolled at Sprouts Learning Center will continue to have child care without interruption.

After the city ends services at Sprouts at the end of June, Bumble Art Studio will take over operations at the Astoria Recreation Center on July 1.

"I can't tell you how excited all of us on council are that our program — although it will terminate in its current form — that the facility will still be used for child care under different management with a partnership with the city, and those kids will continue to be cared for," Mayor Bruce Jones said during a City Council meeting on Monday night.

The city announced plans to close Sprouts Learning Center in February after reaching a critical staffing shortage and operating at an unsustainable loss. After

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# Surf Pines man sentenced for child porn

Cazee pleaded guilty to two counts

By ERICK BENGEL  
*The Astorian*

A Surf Pines man received a 17-year sentence in federal prison on Monday for producing child pornography.

Kirk Richard Cazee, 60, was convicted in U.S. District Court in Portland for crimes involving the sexual exploitation of two girls younger than 16.

He had been indicted by a federal grand jury in September 2018 on 10 counts that covered producing, receiving, possessing and transporting child pornography. As part of a plea deal, Cazee pleaded guilty to two counts of producing the pornography.



**Kirk Richard Cazee**

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# Jewell principal resigns

Wood declined to disclose reason

By ETHAN MYERS  
*The Astorian*

Jon Wood, the principal at Jewell School, has resigned.

At Monday night's school board meeting, Mike Stahly, the board chairman, read a statement acknowledging that Wood, who has been in the role for three years, is stepping away at the end of the school year.

Wood declined to comment on his resignation or the reason for his departure.

School board members Stahly and Mike Wammack and acting

Superintendent Brian Gardner all thanked Wood for his service.

Wood was brought on as principal in 2019 after serving as the director of programs for the Nyssa School District in Eastern Oregon.

"In my experience — again, I got here a month and a half, two months ago — Jon has done everything that I've asked him to do," said Gardner, who was hired by the school district in March on an interim basis. "He's essentially running the operations of the school right now and he's done a good job. I wish him well in his next endeavors."

Members of the unions for Jewell's educators and classified employees sent a letter to the school board in March regarding their confidence in Wood's abilities and leadership.

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# Transit district drops mask requirement

Move follows a federal judge's ruling

By ETHAN MYERS  
*The Astorian*

The Sunset Empire Transportation District announced that masks to protect against the coronavirus are optional for riders and employees on buses and in facilities.

The move comes after a federal judge in Florida struck down the national mask mandate for public transportation on Monday, leaving room for agencies to determine their own mask requirements.

The decision was based on the judge's ruling, guidance from the Federal Transit Administration and the U.S. Transportation Security Administration's announcement to make masks optional, the transit



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Masks are no longer required on local buses.

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