



The spillway of Fishhawk Lake near Birkenfeld.

Photos by Lydia Ely/The Astorian

Fishhawk Lake set to upgrade infrastructure

Private community looks to turn the page after fish deaths

By **ETHAN MYERS**
The Astorian

BIRKENFELD – Fishhawk Lake Reserve and Community, which was fined by the state over the deaths of thousands of fish after its reservoir was drained, is looking to turn the page as it nears construction of a new spillway and fish ladder at its dam.

At a kickoff Friday to celebrate the \$6 million project, residents of the private community invited stakeholders and other influential figures to mark the occasion, including Betsy Johnson, the former state senator who is campaigning for governor as an independent, and Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson.

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Jeanne Scilley, the president of the Fishhawk Lake board, at a groundbreaking ceremony for the new project on Friday.

Johnson launches ‘Betsy Brigades’

Her signature drive intensifies after primaries

By **GARY WARNER**
Oregon Capital Bureau

The “Betsy Brigades” are revving up to move into the Oregon political scene, carrying the message of the insurgent moderate seeking to become just the second independent governor in state history.

“We’re in full-court press,” Betsy Johnson said in an interview on Election Day last week. “We’re going to have Betsy Brigades teeing up to gather signatures in every county.”

Johnson’s mixing of basketball and golf metaphors is symbolic of what she says Oregon needs in politics: a variety.

“Take the best ideas from Democrats and the best ideas of Republicans so Oregon can get its mojo back,” she said.

Tina Koteck, a former state House speaker, won the Democratic primary for governor. Christine Drazen, a former state House minority leader, took the Republican primary.

With Democrats and Republicans depleted by the primaries, Johnson is jumping into the spotlight with the largest war chest. Johnson has raised more than \$8 million and has \$5.3 million in her campaign fund. Her campaign has attracted large contributions from what critics have called the “bulldozer and buzzsaw” industries — timber and construction.

The largest amount — \$1.75 million — has come from Nike co-founder Phil Knight.

Johnson’s first campaign goal is to gather at least 24,000 valid signatures to submit to the secretary of state by Aug. 16 and qualify for the November ballot.

“We’ll blow by that number,” she said.

Middle ground

Johnson has sought to stake out the middle ground between what she called “the shrill voices of the left and right.” She’s lined up endorsements from the moderate wings of both the Democratic and Republican parties.

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Betsy Johnson



‘It requires a lot of flexibility and problem-solving’

Emergency room called to Berry

By **ERICK BENDEL**
The Astorian

Shannon Berry, an emergency physician at Columbia Memorial Hospital in Astoria, wondered whether she could become a doctor.

She was fascinated with physics and astronomy but realized in college that those fields weren’t very social. As a scientist, she wanted to work with human beings rather than in a lab.

At the University of Washington, she applied to the college’s nursing school, nurse practitioner school and medical school at the same time, believing the last one was out of reach.

“I just had a lot of self-



Shannon Berry is an emergency physician at Columbia Memorial Hospital.



doubt,” Berry recalled.

She got accepted to all three programs.

After UW, Berry had a residency in emergency medicine at Oregon Health & Science University

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Tenants raise alarm at Ilwaco RV park

Complaints surface under new owners

By **KATIE FRANKOWICZ**
KMUN

ILWACO, Wash. — The City Council met last week to discuss a proclamation to declare a housing emergency in the city. But some residents say a very specific type of housing emergency has been unfolding for months only a few blocks away.

Tenants of the Beacon Charters and RV Park on Elizabeth Avenue say the new owners have threatened them with evictions and tried to intimidate them into leaving, a possible displacement that one business owner has called “homelessness in the making.”

The state and Pacific County have intervened over issues at the RV park, but tenants and others concerned about the situation are urging city leaders and port commissioners to take action as well. The Port of Ilwaco owns the land and leases it to the RV park owners, while the park itself, until recently, was owned and operated by the



Katie Frankowicz/KMUN

Susan Gill rests in her trailer at Beacon Charters and RV Park in Ilwaco. She has a place to go but says other neighbors aren’t as fortunate as they feel pressure to move from the new owners.

mayor.

Beacon is home to some of Ilwaco’s most vulnerable residents, the Pacific County Health and Human Services Department noted in a letter this month to city leaders. Many of the tenants live on fixed or very low incomes. Many are elderly and dealing with disabilities. Many have lived at the RV park for years.

Displacing these people, the county wrote, would “further the housing crises we are currently experiencing within Pacific County.”

The county was more specific in a letter to the Washington Attorney General’s Manufactured Housing Dispute Resolution Program in March: “Due to our lack of affordable housing within Pacific County and the sheer number of low-income individuals being evicted, this eviction would devastate our community and these families.”

‘Management’

Beacon Charters and RV Park includes 60 sites for RVs

and, according to various estimates, has been home to anywhere from 45 to 100 people — a significant portion of the city’s population, which hovers at just over 1,000.

Up until April, Beacon belonged to Mike Cassinelli, who has served two terms as mayor since 2009. He was elected to the post for a third time in November.

Cassinelli told port commissioners last year he was looking to sell the RV park. In early April, he finalized the sale of the business and his interest in the lease to Michael and Denise Werner of Deer Point Meadows Investments LLC for \$1.5 million.

But issues with the park were already in motion.

In February, before they had ownership of Beacon, the Werner began issuing 30-day notices to vacate the property. Bruce Conklin, an Olympia-based attorney who represents around 10 of the tenants, claimed the notices were illegal. They had not gone through the proper court process, he said, and gave tenants less time to move than is allowed under state law.

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