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Astorian

150TH YEAR, NO. 21

DailyAstorian.com // THURSDAY, AUGUST 18, 2022

\$1.50



'My children are finally included'

Alexis Weisend/The Astorian

Children play at the summer camp hosted by First Steps Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities.

Summer camp recognizes neurodiversity

By ALEXIS WEISEND
The Astorian

WARRENTON — Shelly Miller is the mother of two children with autism, which can make participating in community activities more difficult.

Loud movie theaters and crowded parades can be overwhelming. One of her sons has been sent home from six or seven different community programs. "If you don't have kids like this, you don't understand," she said.

Finding the right resources was a challenging and lonely effort. Then she found First Steps Center for Autism and Developmental Disabilities and enrolled her children in its free summer camp.

'WE'RE GOING TO SHOW THEM THAT IT'S OK TO HAVE YOUR MOMENT. IT'S OK TO BE EMOTIONAL, AND THEN COME BACK FROM IT AND MOVE ON TO YOUR ACTIVITY. THIS IS A SAFE SPACE TO DO THAT.'

Brandi Lindstrom | founder of the day camp

"For my kids to be able to come and interact with other kids, with parents that are understanding and understand their skills, like I'm going to cry," she said. "I've never — this is not something that happens in communities where you can have like-minded people that know your struggle."

At the day camp held at the Warrenton Community Center, children in kindergarten through 12th grade with autism and other developmental disabilities participate in classic activities like sports, arts and crafts and science experiments.

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Johnson takes next step in governor's campaign

Independent submits over 48,000 signatures

By DIRK VANDERHART
Oregon Public Broadcasting

Betsy Johnson took a long-expected step Tuesday in her quest to be Oregon's first nonaffiliated governor in almost nine decades, submitting 48,214 signatures to state elections officials.

With the move, Johnson well overshoot the 23,744 valid signatures she'll need to qualify for the November ballot without a party endorsement. The former Democratic state senator has been circulating petitions in support of her candidacy for months, using a mix of campaign events and paid signature gathering.

In brief remarks in front of the Oregon Secretary of State's Office in Salem, Johnson said it was a "historic day" and thanked several people who'd helped collect signatures for the effort.

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Vesta Hospitality purchases Surfsand Resort

Sale price was \$58 million

By ABBEY McDONALD
The Astorian

Vesta Hospitality has added Surfsand Resort in Cannon Beach to its collection of hotels for a price tag of \$58 million.

Surfsand, established in 1977, is a beachfront property with views of Haystack Rock. It was previously part of the Martin North hotel group, which includes the Stephanie Inn and Public Coast Brewing Co.

Vesta is planning a \$9 million renovation for the property. Rick Takach, Vesta's CEO, said plan details will be finalized in the fall.

"We're forecasting a top-to-bottom renovation with updated public areas, guest rooms, meeting spaces, a refreshed restaurant and a new suite of guest amenities," Takach said in an emailed statement to The Astorian. "We plan for construction to take

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CANNON BEACH

Several candidates step forward to lead

Priorities include housing and livability

By NICOLE BALES
The Astorian

CANNON BEACH — Candidates have emerged for the City Council in the November election.

Terms for the mayor and two councilors-at-large are expiring at the end of the year.

City Councilor Robin Risley, who was elected in 2018, intends

to run for reelection. Lisa Kerr, a planning commissioner, and Gary Hayes, the owner of a media and marketing firm, have filed for councilor-at-large.

Barb Knop, who serves on the Planning Commission, and Erik Ostrander, a hotelier, will run for mayor.

Mayor Sam Steidel and City Councilor Mike Benefield have termed out after serving two, four-year terms. The election filing period extends through Aug. 30.

The candidates said challenges like housing and livability issues that stem from tourism need to be addressed. The city is also balanc-

ing several major projects, including the construction of a new City Hall and police station, the redevelopment of the former elementary school, a code audit and a transportation system plan.

Risley, a principal broker at Cascade Hasson Sotheby's International Realty, said she is proud of the projects the City Council has accomplished and started over the past four years, including the work to redevelop the former elementary school her daughter attended.

She cited the improvements made to the city's water system

and the city's efforts to continue the famous "mooring" tsunami warning sirens.

Risley also pointed to victories when the state sided with the city after it was challenged over a restrictive dune management plan and again when it was challenged over an oceanfront setback rule.

One of the things she is the most proud of is the monthly Coffee with Councilors meeting she hosts with City Councilor Nancy McCarthy. Risley said the discussions are well attended by people of all ages.

"They're lively and people really care," she said. "And you

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Gary Hayes



Robin Risley



Erik Ostrander



Lisa Kerr



Barb Knop

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Phillips chooses not to run for reelection in Seaside • A6

