

Mushen to resign from Port Commission

Commissioner cites health reasons

By Edward Stratton
EO Media Group



Robert Mushen

Robert Mushen, who led the Port of Astoria Commission through a tumultuous period of infighting, said he will resign as commissioner for health reasons.

Mushen, 73, was appointed to the Port Commission in 2014 to replace Commissioner Jack Bland and ran unopposed for election in 2015. A Cannon Beach resident, he has often served as an emissary between the Port and South County.

He will announce his resignation during Tuesday's Port Commission meeting.

In April, Mushen suffered a blood pressure spike during a heated discussion among commissioners and Port Attorney Eileen Eakins. He briefly lost the ability to speak coherently during a vote, after which the meeting was canceled and he was taken by paramedics to Columbia Memorial Hospital.

"I can't take a chance on having that health problem happening again," Mushen said.

"It's a sad decision, but it's really the only one I can come to," he added. "It's not about me. It's about the Port moving forward."

Mushen said his doc-

tors found no signs of a stroke, but that his personality would not allow him to take it easy and avoid another potential episode.

Mushen served as the commission's president at a time when the panel was divided 3-2, so he often had to referee contentious debates. Commissioner Bill Hunsinger and former Commissioner Stephen Fulton were critical of both fellow commissioners and Port management, but found themselves on the losing end of several votes.

Earlier this month, commissioners selected Frank Spence, who was elected in May, as president. Mushen was named secretary.

A retired eye surgeon, Mushen moved to Cannon Beach from Seattle 17 years ago. Before joining the Port Commission, he was appointed to replace Ann Samuelson on the Clatsop County Commission in late 2009, serving until replaced by Debra Birkby in January 2011. He has served on the boards of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and Clatsop Community Action, and on the Clatsop County Health Services Advisory Council, Friends of the Regional Food Bank and Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee.

The first floor of her home is devoted to a nursing museum

Nursing from Page 1A

It was during that year she decided her love of the Pacific Ocean was real, and she vowed to return to the North Coast.

Her love for writing also was real, so Melodie eventually pursued a master's degree in journalism and began writing books for nurses who wanted more from their careers. Her books segued into speaking engagements throughout the U.S. and in several countries.

Throughout her travels, Melodie always found time to scour antique stores, flea markets and garage sales, searching for mementos that depicted nurses and encouraged pride and productivity in nursing.

After she and Gary decided to make Cannon Beach their permanent home five years ago, she started the museum. It's open from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturdays during the summer and by appointment during the rest of the year (contact information is on the website, www.pronurse.com). Admission is free.

The South Hemlock Street house, once owned and operated as a gift shop by Cannon Beach resident Marlene Laws, was already in a commercial zone. Melodie, in her often contrary way of thinking, decided that since those interested in tourism were always trying to put "heads in beds," she might have something unusual to attract tourists.

"Nurses are always trying



NANCY MCCARTHY/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

A summer uniform for nursing cadets hangs in the Lost Art of Nursing. The U.S. Cadet Nurse Corps was established by Congress in 1943 to train women between the ages of 17 and 35 to be nurses and to ensure there were enough nurses in the nation during World War II. The program ended in 1948.

to get heads out of beds," she said, laughing.

Museum visitors include current nurses, retired nurses relatives or friends of nurses and those who never considered being a nurse. She has had as many as 25 people come through on a Saturday and as many during midweek; they stay from 10 minutes to three hours, sharing memories, glancing at the nursing kitsch, browsing the nursing books, or buying specially made nursing stickers and necklaces.

Comments in the guest book include the words "amazing," "awesome" and "fascinating." One vis-



NANCY MCCARTHY/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Melodie Chenevert points to a photo of Irene English Countryman, who directed the Methodist-Kahler School of Nursing in Rochester, Minn. from 1923-1938. Countryman eventually moved to Arch Cape. Chenevert, who also received her nursing diploma from Methodist-Kahler, displays Countryman's nursing cape and caps.

itor called the museum a "joy-filled, magical journey through nursing."

Eventually, Melodie wants to share her museum with a larger community, by housing it in a university or even creating a national nursing museum, possibly in Portland. "I would like to see the collection stay in the Northwest," she said.

She worries that people will forget the time when nurses, like those in the historic posters and magazine covers, were celebrated and considered bold, noble and patriotic. She also worries that the mementos she has rescued

over the years will once again be discarded.

Most of all, Melodie, whose first class in nursing school was called "nursing arts," is concerned that the emphasis on nursing as an art as well as a science has been overlooked. That's why a nursing museum is important, she added.

"I think there's not much interest in history in general in this country," she said. "With nurses, they're so consumed by the here and now, they don't think about their history or their future. They're just trying to get through their shift."

Cannon Beach trainer Ira Evansen finds 'Valhalla' at fitness gym

By Kaelia Neal
EO Media

Former MMA fighter devotes energy to fitness



KAELIA NEAL/EO MEDIA GROUP

Ira Evansen has devoted his life to fitness.

A school dropout, who was briefly homeless as a young man, Evansen found his confidence as a gym rat, testing himself through taekwondo and mixed martial arts.

Evansen, now 34, owns Valhalla Alpha Fit Gym in Gearhart, where classes such as powerlifting, boxing, wrestling and Zumba are offered.

"Fitness is a large pie and we cover a large part of it," Evansen said.

The gym has classes Monday through Friday, though there is 24-hour access for members. On Wednesdays, Spanish Spoken Alpha Fit allows people to train with Spanish translation. Children as young as 6 can also train.

A Cannon Beach native and an only child, fitness has always been a big part of Evansen's life. "When I was younger, I was always surfing," he said.

Ira Evansen racks the barbell after an overhead squat at Valhalla Alpha Fit Gym.

But the road to Evansen's success was not always smooth. He dropped out of school in the seventh grade, and ran around with an older group of boys that led to some trouble. Eventually, when Evansen turned 18, he began working at Cleanline Surf Shop in Seaside.

Evansen said he decided to make a bold move and abruptly fled to California with his best friend where they had no place to stay. After about eight months of being homeless, Evansen decided enough was enough. He left the streets and moved to Seattle with his father, where he was introduced to something new.

Evansen "got into training taekwondo" and then joined Rings Sports United in Bellevue, Washington, "where you

could talk how you wanted to," and it was "family oriented."

"I hung out there all night like a gym rat," he said.

Evansen competed in MMA professionally in Texas and Seattle. After living in California, Seattle, Texas and Las Vegas, at 27, Evansen decided it was time for a change.

"I needed to go home to regroup," he said. "I never thought I would stay here. I don't want any more big cities. I just want the ocean and surfing."

Evansen wanted a career that involved his passion for fit-

ness. "I thought, 'What else am I going to do? Why not open a gym?'"

Evansen said he based his gym on the principles of Throwdown Gym in San Diego. "MMA, Zumba, yoga ... everything under one roof. When I started Valhalla it was my dream to do that."

For six years now, Evansen has owned, conducted classes and worked out at Valhalla Gym. "I really do believe in this fitness stuff. It's a lifestyle to keep up with these crazy shenanigans."

Evansen still surfs at Can-

non Beach. A group will "randomly go and show up. All of a sudden we're a bunch of kids again." He said he enjoys the fact that different people are brought together by one common interest.

Though he loves surfing, Evansen will not go alone. "I'm scared to go out there. I'm scared of the sharks," he said. He is not sure what the reason

is but believes it has something to do with the movie "Jaws." "That movie really had me going when I was a kid," he laughed.

Evansen is unsure of what the future will hold for him. He is debating whether to fight again, but does not "want to get hurt." Buying the building where Valhalla operates is also an option.

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