

# Cam McKirdy's survival tips include a good hug

**W**here do you start, with the tsunami or with the cuddling? Seaside native Cameron McKirdy is dedicated to the welfare of his fellow human beings. He's the founder of a quirky survival website. Now he's cuddling strangers. My thought is that he wisely realizes after a catastrophe we're going to need all the emotional support we can get.

McKirdy, 32, resides in his Chevy G20 Van — something you can observe on YouTube, where the “vandwelling experience” is one of 281 videos on his channel. He's so successful at drawing web traffic that YouTube sends him checks.

“YouTube is where it's at,” McKirdy said. “I have about 6,000 YouTube subscribers on the Survival Bros. channel. It's not really anything to brag about right now, but it should be a source of income in the future.”

McKirdy's creative roots began in Seaside. As an eighth-grader at Broadway Middle School, McKirdy and classmate Kevin Irish co-wrote a column, “Shark Bytes,” for the Signal. His father Kelly McKirdy taught history in the Seaside School District and mom Brooke worked for the hospital and as a wedding coordinator. Younger brother Andrew works for an adventure travel company in Seattle and still teams with Cam on special projects, like hot-dog eating contests. The McKirdy brothers were the only siblings on Major League Eating's “top 50 gurgitators rankings.”

“My parents think it's pretty crazy,” he said. “Everybody wants me to jump back in line in society and get a job.”

## Ready for anything

Along with survival and prepping tips, McKirdy's Survival Bros. YouTube channel offers advice on how to get free dog food for your pet or locate treasures at the Goodwill store — a technique he calls “extreme thrifting.” In one video, he noshes on 26 sample items at Costco.

If you're tired of standard cable fare, consider McKirdy's “Trying fresh elk jerky meat at the beach in Seaside, Oregon,” “Using Altoids survival tins for emergency preparedness” and “Breaking car windows with the Gerber LMF II-Knife.”

“I'm trying to help people get prepared,” McKirdy said.

Saving people is all in the preparation, he said. “Tsunami preparation and awareness now — that's how we can save people when it happens.”

McKirdy considers the 2011 Japanese tsunami a precursor of what could happen here. “We've only got a couple days to get it together,” McKirdy said. “Then people will be charging \$50 for a gallon of water and trading and bartering and wheeling and dealing. If you don't get prepared, then it's going to be hell.”

McKirdy offers tips on building tarp shelters and using UV light purifiers to provide potable drinking water. “It takes



R.J. Marx gets a hug from Cam McKirdy in the Seaside Signal office.

## SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



90 seconds to purify it with a wand,” he said. “I even have a hand-crank UV light purifier.”

The single most important item in an environmental catastrophe, McKirdy said, is a stainless steel water bottle for holding water and cooking. “Stainless steel is top on the list.”

If the ground started to shake “right this minute,” he said, his bug-out bike is ready to roll. “I'd be going straight up 12th. Hit the road and take off.”

## Cuddle Up to Me

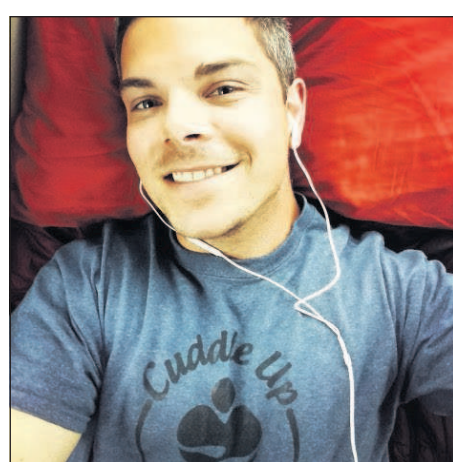
There's another side to McKirdy — that's as “Cam the Cuddler,” who may be found offering hugs on the Prom for a suggested \$5 gratuity. His cuddling career took a giant step when he earned “certified cuddler” accreditation at the world-renowned Cuddle Up to Me in Portland. He's been cuddling for the last year.

“I'm trying to get my face out there,” McKirdy said. “The cuddling is paying a little bit of the bills. I like it. It's a blast.”

McKirdy works for Samantha Hess, founder of Cuddle Up to Me. He's the only male in the house, offering, according to the website, “a kind and gentle soul with an open ear and an embrace that will melt your troubles away. Your session will surely cure what ails you.”

Here is an interesting hook: You can play video games while cuddling with Cameron.

“We do free consultations first, and we make sure they know there's nothing sexual about it,” he said. “I want everyone



Cameron McKirdy, aka “Cam the Cuddler.”

to know they are appreciated, and worthy of touch.”

McKirdy called the experience “touch positive.” Among his clients are introverts, extroverts, people with disabilities and health care professionals. “You really have to tailor a cuddling session based on the individual,” he said.

“I did overnight cuddling with a lady who was in an abusive relationship,” McKirdy said. “I helped her start dating again after two years. There are others who haven't been touched by a man for over 25 years. I get them used to that concept again and they know I'm a safe person.”

Clients become members of his “chosen family.” Cost is \$1 a minute.

Considering the crazy, insecure and perilous world in which we live, McKirdy aka Cam the Cuddler may be on the right track. He has his eye on Mother Nature and an embrace for his fellow man.

There could be a day when we need all those hugs. And the hand-cranked water purifiers could come in handy too.

# Farewell to Freida Johnson

**O**n Sept. 10, our neighborhood lost its oldest resident. Freida Johnson was just two months short of her 102nd birthday. She has lived on 10th Ave. since she was five years old, as far as I know. At least she's been in Seaside that long. There were a few years when she and husband Howard and their family lived in Arizona, but they always came back to Seaside.

Freida went to Seaside High School with some of my siblings. Her kids attended

school with mine and our families were related by marriage. She will be missed in the neighborhood. We offer our condolences to her children Ron, Larry, Bruce and Bonnie and will always have fond memories of Freida's contributions all over the county with her accordion.

On Sept. 15, I had to get up from my chair and raise the window blind to sing, “Shine on Harvest Moon” before bedtime. It was full and gorgeous and something we don't see to often. It happens, sure, but many times at the seashore fog or clouds — or rain — obscures it. I should have paid attention when the moon rose over the eastern mountains. Then it's usually orange and appears much larger. I couldn't see the flag from my window, although I do have a snapshot of that moon when an astronaut was spending his last night (or day) there. What I like is that it connects you to your loved ones. However you are separated, the same moon shines down on everybody. Yes, I know there is such a thing as time zones.

Did you see the flu sign on TV where they spelled coming with two “M's” (comming)? I give that guy a grade of 70 or 69 in spelling because it's such an easy word. So the flu shots are coming. I'm waiting till late October.

Sept. 18 was the occasion of a musical program at the United Methodist Church. There were several piano numbers from Broadway shows played by Carey Buerk in his inimitable style, as well as a few selections from the choir. This was the third annual performance for the benefit of the local food bank. Mary Blake, emcee, explained the situation for our homeless and hungry residents. There are pockets of privation all over our county, which, may I say, is deplorable. Mary told us that if everyone could give \$10 a year, the 1,200 person needing assistance could be taken care of. We are our brothers' keeper and concerts are a great way to approach the problem. This one was a treat.

I really like the Spectrum commercial where four people eventually sing their phone number. It's a catchy tune and, for me, rapidly becoming a most popular song. “1-844-264-1999!”

Kathy, a niece from Redding, California, visited me recently. She's my sister Betty's daughter whom I haven't seen in a long time. We enjoyed getting better acquainted over dinner at Dooger's.

## Laugh Line

A young man came home from college dressed in the latest clothes.

“You look like a fool,” his father told him.

At the same time, a neighbor girl went by and called to the young man, “You look more like your father every day!”

“I know,” he replied. “My father was just telling me that.” (Courtesy of John Hagee.)



SCENE & HEARD  
CLAIRE LOVELL

# When Seaside was known by east side and west side

**W**hile researching the history of the Seaside Library in the microfiche of the Seaside Signal, I am often distracted by other anecdotes of the history of Seaside. I started researching around the year 1913 in the archives, because that was when the Seaside Library first opened as a reading room and public bathrooms in the Dresser building downtown. Headlines and noted items of interest of that time were very brief but tantalizing in their descriptions of the events of days gone by. Events that must have torn the town apart back then were often tersely described and as a reader of over a hundred years later, I often found myself wanting more information to fill in the gaps. Thankfully, the Seaside Signal put together an anniversary edition of articles commemorating the first 75 years of the paper that helped fill in some of the gaps in the paper's reports.

1910 to 1913 seemed to be a key turning point for Seaside. In 1910, Mayor Henninger and his brother Ed owned the local lumber mill, bank, and also ran the city as mayor and treasurer. In 1907, banks had failed back east but the results weren't

## BETWEEN THE COVERS

ESTHER MOBERG



felt in Seaside until three years later, when wood from Seaside was shipped and sold back east but the Henninger's were unable to collect payment. While the mayor was back east desperately trying to collect on the unpaid bills, his brother Ed could no longer borrow from the bank to make payroll for the sawmill and he took his own life. The saw mill and bank closed, and the mayor resigned. Less than two years later, May of 1912 was one of the hottest Mays on record with 90-degree weather. Much of the water reserves were used on gardens and local farms in Seaside. Several different accounts including an exploding stove were listed as the cause, but I believe the true story is that someone was boiling a crab in the back room of a business downtown on the west side of Seaside but left it too long and it boiled dry on the stove and started a fire.

The fire department ran out of water within 15 minutes of helping

**May of 1912 was one of the hottest Mays on record with 90-degree weather. Much of the water reserves were used on gardens and local farms in Seaside.**

because of the low water reserves, although later on it was also rumored that West Seaside had turned off the water to East Seaside (Seaside was two towns divided by the river) as part of their ongoing rivalry. Whatever the reason, 48 buildings burned to the ground while townsfolk tried desperately to stop the fire. A grove of trees across from city hall was chopped down by a group of men in less than an hour, a feat that would have been typically a full day's work.

Two to three other men who each weighed no more than 150 pounds each, carried a grand piano down from a two-story building, another feat the Seaside Signal editor marveled at. The fire stopped when it reached the Necanicum River on the east side, but at the other end of town

they had to use dynamite to blow up a building so that the fire couldn't keep jumping from house to house. When the fire was over, total devastation of Seaside was left behind.

Fortunately, Seaside's residents were resilient. Houses and businesses were quickly rebuilt, the first structure to be built was a chicken coop for the antlers saloon to keep all of their chickens from running away. Shortly after, Seaside also incorporated into one city and businesses and civic improvement started to flourish once again.

That's just a brief snippet of Seaside's past and we have more books on the history of Seaside (as well as the Seaside Signal on microfiche) here at the library. We also have programs each month on many topics including the history of Seaside and the history of Oregon.

If you're interested in Oregon's waterways then we have just the event for you. The Friends of the Seaside Library are excited to host Tim Palmer, author of “Field Guide to Oregon Rivers,” on Thursday, Oct. 20, at 7 p.m.

Despite Oregon's watery reputation, the state has lacked a field guide for its many celebrated rivers

and streams—until now. Preeminent river conservationist, photographer, and author Tim Palmer will profile 120 waterways throughout the state, from the Alsea to the Williamson.

Palmer will offer us an interpretive approach to the state's network of rivers that will be valuable to travelers, outdoor enthusiasts, and anyone interested in Oregon waterways. He will begin with a natural history of Oregon's rivers — geology, climate, hydrology, plants, animals and ecology. He will present portraits of individual rivers, with a summary of the rivers character as well as notes about its nature, fish, and protection efforts. He will point out opportunities for seeing the river, hiking along its shores, fishing and exploring by canoe, kayak, or drift boat. Tim will also give us a list of the best rivers for a variety of outdoor activities.

Tim Palmer is the author of 26 books on rivers, conservation, and the environment. He has served on the board of the national river advocacy group, American Rivers, as well as The River Network. “A Field Guide to Oregon Rivers” won the National Outdoor Book Award and was also an Oregon Book Award finalist.

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