

Talking about dying

Two more years

City of Seaside, Hood to Coast get back on track

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The city of Seaside and Hood to Coast reached an agreement Monday night to continue their 25-year relationship for two more years.

Seaside is the final leg of the 197-mile relay, which originates in Mount Hood and draws up to 20,000 visitors to Seaside each year. The council unanimously voted to grant Hood to Coast permission to be held the weekend before Labor Day — the traditional date for the race — for two more years.

“We’re really, really excited. Seaside is such a big part of this race. We’re pumped,” said Hood to Coast Chief Operating Officer Dan Floyd after the meeting. “I think this was all really important. Seaside’s excited, we’re excited. We’re going to be back next year.”

Change of date sought

The rapprochement occurred only a few weeks after business owners presented a petition seeking a date change for the event.

“Although the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and many of the area’s lodging facilities benefit financially, many of us year-round business owners feel that the overall impact of hosting this massive event during the busy summer tourist season is negative,” wrote 74 business owners in a letter delivered to the council at a workshop in September.

That number reached 87 signatures by Monday’s meeting.

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Local schools short on subs

North Coast faces dearth of fill-in teachers, staff

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Local school districts are running thin on substitute teachers and staff to fill in for illnesses and time away, and the rush is on to reinforce before flu season hits.

Cascade Technology Alliance, which provides substitutes for 36 school districts across seven north-west Oregon counties, including Clatsop, is trying to build a corps of reserves before flu season hits.

Steffanie Frost, the substitute services coordinator for Cascade Technology Alliance, said, out of about 3,000 substitutes the alliance has in reserve, about 5 percent are sometimes available to work on the North Coast.

An urban-rural divide comes into play.

Frost said the Yamhill-Carlton School District, less than 50 miles from the center of Portland and comparable in size to Astoria, has more than 200 substitutes, about twice as many as Astoria. Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes said the district has 25 to 30 substitutes working at any given time.

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Young and old share views on end-of-life



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Andrea Cano, a facilitator from the nonprofit Oregon Humanities, asks people around the room to say a word they think of when they think about death during the “Talking About Dying” event at the Astoria Library Friday.

By ERICK BENGEL
The Daily Astorian

Death and dying are not easy topics for everyone to discuss, and they don’t always become easier with age and experience.

When Andrea Cano, a facilitator from the nonprofit Oregon Humanities, asked a group of about 35 mostly senior attendees to name a word or phrase that they associate with dying, many answers made this fact apparent: “long,” “depressing,” “worrying,” “terrifying,” “not ready yet.”

But just as many answers were either neutral or positive: “peace,” “painless,” “closing,” “leaving,” “memories,” “universal,” “inevitable.” Several answers — “beyond,” “rebirth,” “next life” — had a spiritual ring, and others — “sad and glorious” — bespoke ambivalence.

This striking array of attitudes toward the reality of impermanence — one’s own, that of friends and family, even of pets — commingled Friday evening at the Astoria Public Library, which hosted the Oregon Humanities event “Talking about Dying,” a conversation the nonprofit is taking to communities across the state.

For 90 minutes, the participants reflected on dying, the influences that shaped their beliefs and values about it, and the anxieties that come with preparing for it.

“I lived in a family where you didn’t talk about emotions, and you certainly didn’t talk about death. My father was told he had a year to live, so we danced all around that,” one woman said. “There are so many things I wished we’d had: a comfort level, a script, something that would’ve helped us have some conversations, that would have made it easy for everybody, including my father.”

She wasn’t alone in lacking the ability or permission to speak of mortality when a loved one stood on the brink — a deficit that left many ill-equipped to cope with the loss.

“We have patterns, perhaps, of not talking about certain things, even to the very end,” said Cano, who guided the discussion but let attendees do most of the talking.

The dead

Among the group were people still reeling from the death of a parent or partner. Though some could speak freely, if somberly, of the deceased,

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Invasive goldfish have to go to save trout

Fish and Wildlife kill fish in Eastern Oregon ponds

By GEORGE PLAVEN
East Oregonian

PENDLETON — Bill Duke doesn’t know how schools of goldfish came to invade Boundary Pond on the Umatilla National Forest. It’s possible they were pets someone released into the wild, or live bait that slipped off a fisherman’s hook.

“Why you take your goldfish out here, I have no idea,” said Duke, district fish biologist for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife in Pendleton.

What’s clear, Duke said, is the colorful intruders don’t belong. ODFW routinely stocks rainbow trout for anglers in tiny Boundary Pond, off Summit Road near Mount Emily.



E.J. Harris/East Oregonian

Kevin Drake, with the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife, puts on protective gear before using a drift boat to spray pesticide on a pond to kill illegally introduced species Oct. 7 in the Umatilla National Forest east of Meacham.

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