



PHOTO BY ALEX PAJUNAS

Astoria's old train depot was reopened to the public and renamed the Barbey Maritime Center in January 2013 after an extensive renovation.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Repairing and remodeling the building that would become the Coaster Theatre was a community effort.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Maurie Clark presented Cannon Beach with the Coaster Theatre as we know it today.

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It was a bit of a prestigious gig, too: Skate setters got to skate for free.

One day a week, the rink served double-duty as a silent movie theater, complete with a piano player to accompany the films. Folding chairs were placed on top of the rink for seating, and adults paid 15 cents while children paid 10.

Vacationing beach-goers weren't the only ones to enjoy Wave Roller Rink; during the 1940s, U.S. Coast Guard personnel would frequent the rink during off hours while they were stationed in Cannon Beach.

As business dwindled at the rink, different ideas emerged as to the direction the building should take.

"Maurie Clark had a real passion for theater," says Elaine Murdy-Trucke, executive director at the Cannon Beach History Center & Museum. "He wanted to see more art, theater and live music in town."

The transition to a working theater began in the 1960s, highlighted by Portland State University's Haystack Program and Summer Stock Company.

Now, the Coaster Theater is synonymous with volunteerism. The nonprofit community theater's annual lineup of plays and musicals are brought to the stage by local volunteer actors and backstage crew.

"It was definitely a passion project for the Clarks and everyone involved," Murdy-Trucke says. "It still has that community volunteer spirit."

'A real gem'

When a community's history is so closely entwined with its geography, saving a building to better preserve that relationship takes on a sense of urgency. Such was the case with Astoria's Barbey Maritime Center for Research and Industry.

Thanks to the extensive \$2.5 million restoration undertaken by the Columbia River Maritime Museum, the Barbey Maritime Center — named in honor of the Barbey family, which ran the Barbey Packing Company, a front runner in the Columbia River salmon packing industry — was dedicated in January 2013.

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