



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

People dressed as witches attend an annual Halloween party in Cannon Beach on Saturday.

Bewitched: Witches are a universal symbol

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"It kind of just fed on itself. Everyone who ever saw a witch would bring them to me," Feldmeier laughed.

There's not a specific reason as to why she loves witches more than other Halloween staples, other than seeing them as "funny" with a "sense of mystique."

Universal symbol

To Feldmeier, witches are a universal symbol representing years of travel and memories.

"The concept (of witches) is universal. Most countries have some form of witch," she said. "I will travel to other countries and try to explain what I'm looking for, and in different languages they usually get the idea after I describe the broomstick."

Her guests are as diverse as the witches themselves. About 75 family members, neighbors and old friends fly in on their broomsticks each year from all over for Feldmeier's party — some as close as her next-door neighbors, others as far away as Australia.

Ruthie Leonelli, a Cannon Beach local, remembers back in 2000 when Feldmeier first



One partygoer in Cannon Beach on Saturday arrived dressed as Glinda the Good Witch from the 'The Wizard of Oz.'

knocked on her door to invite her to a witch party, and has been coming every year since.

"She's different. She's outgoing. She brings out the best witch in all of us," Leonelli said.

There's some sadness in the fact this will be last big witch party with all 365 present, but Leonelli said what makes these events special is far from ending.

The witch party isn't the only way Feldmeier brings the neighborhood together. Her other local claim to fame is as the head of Cannon Beach's "chair brigade," a mainstay in the Fourth of July parade.

"There is more to this than the witches," Leonelli said. "Sure, we first got together

for the witches, but we've all grown to have very special relationships because of Helen. She makes the neighborhood."

Bittersweet

As partygoers started taking the witches one by one, Feldmeier said the feeling was bittersweet.

"You know, I'll tell you the real reason I chose to do it this way," Feldmeier said, referencing her choice to give them away to family and friends. She twisted a knob on the back of one of her witches, who started to sing the song "Ding Dong! The Witch Is Dead."

"I remember visiting Salishan with one of my favorite cousins, and my cousin's wife

called me over and said listen to this — you know, the song. She said 'We could play this at your funeral,'" Feldmeier said. "I guess I got to thinking I shouldn't wait to have everyone take a witch at my funeral. Instead they can take them now." Anne Ryan, Feldmeier's daughter, has seen the important role the witches have played in her mom's life. She has contributed many witches herself to the collection, which represent moments the two shared together.

While Ryan said she also has developed an intense love for Halloween and witches, she was not ready to take on the responsibility of housing a whole coven.

"She knows every story, every name of each witch," Ryan said. "These witches are her history. That's why she couldn't just give it away to someone who didn't care about it. They are such a large part of who she is."

Port: Spence levelled most blame at former commissioner Fulton

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"Obviously, I'm disappointed, and I'm going to call an executive session to meet with our attorneys and see what our next steps will be."

Other Port commissioners either did not respond to requests for comment or declined to speak about the verdict, citing instructions from Port counsel.

Param Hotel Corp. sued the Port after failed attempts to acquire the remaining seven years on the lease of indebted former hotel operator Brad Smithart. A jury ruled Thursday that the Port breached a contract with Param and made false representations to the Portland company. A separate fraud claim against Knight was dismissed.

Spence levelled the most blame at former Port Commissioner Stephen Fulton. After the Port voted in June 2015 to have staff transfer Smithart's lease to Param, Fulton was called by Chester Trabucco, a local developer interested in taking on the Riverwalk Inn lease. Trabucco and William Orr, Fulton's brother-in-law, were among several suitors for the hotel after the Port terminated Smithart's lease in July 2015.

Their company, Astoria Hospitality Ventures, was chosen several months later by the Port Commission to operate the hotel on a short-term basis. Hospitality Ventures later received a two-year contract to October 2018. Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh has yet to rule on a claim by Param for specific performance of a contract, a legal remedy that could award Param the lease the company had sought on the Riverwalk Inn.

Missing texts

Fulton publicly recused himself during Port Commission discussions on the Riverwalk Inn. But during the trial, Colin Hunter, Param's attorney, pointed out text messages between Fulton and Trabucco, some of which had been deleted from one of Fulton's phones. Fulton claimed he had changed phones, and that some of the text messages he was ordered to turn over in the lawsuit might have been deleted by a software glitch.

"What was brought out was the actions of Steve Fulton continuously working behind the scenes, even after he had recused himself from official meetings, to try and get Chester Trabucco and William Orr the contract," Spence said, adding he doesn't think Knight fully understood what was going on behind the scenes.

Fulton, who lost re-election in May, did not respond to a request for comment.

Spence has added an agenda item to Tuesday's Port Commission meeting about an extension for Knight, whose contract will soon expire. A divided Port Commission voted 3-2 in December to grant Knight a 2.5 percent pay increase. Fulton and Commissioner Bill Hunsinger, both frequent critics of Knight, voted against the raise.

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Henry Ryan was just one of many people dressed up for an annual Halloween event on Saturday in Cannon Beach.

Invitation

TO OUR FELLOW CITIZENS OF CLATSOP COUNTY

Whereas the Baha'is of Astoria, Seaside and Warrenton have been an integral part of the citizenry of Clatsop County, embracing members from all races, nationalities and cultural backgrounds since the early 1930's, and

Whereas, October 22, 2017, marks the two hundredth anniversary of the birth of the Founder of the Baha'i Faith, Baha'u'llah, and

Whereas, the Baha'i communities of Clatsop County work to eliminate all forms of prejudice, to develop and enhance the spiritual life of the human family and to demonstrate the value and necessity of unity in diversity in neighborhoods across the county, and

Whereas, Baha'i gatherings held throughout the County and open to all provide a social space for reflection and consultation to find the many points of unity, and

Whereas, the men and women of the Baha'i communities have worked diligently towards the equality of men and women, and to end the scourge of racism, classism and other divisiveness, and

Whereas, the Baha'is of Clatsop County, their families, friends, neighbors and colleagues are commemorating this bicentenary along with Baha'is around the world,

We invite you to join us in the pursuit of these goals for the benefit of all humanity and to join us in the celebration of the life and teachings of Baha'u'llah in the coming week.

Warmest regards,

The Baha'i Communities of Astoria, Seaside and Warrenton

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