

Lamplighting: Duty has been passed on to select grade schoolers

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"It makes me teary just from the beginning to see Sandpiper Square fill up with so many people like this," said Margo Dueber, the organizer and emcee of the event. "We come together as family, friends and a community. It feels just kind of yummy, doesn't it?"

The lamplighting tradition began in 1973 amid an oil crisis that drove down the number of vacationers who were coming to visit Cannon Beach. To get back visitors, the town banded together to create a holiday celebration with a Charles Dickens theme. The Coaster Theatre put on productions of "A Christmas Carol" and shop owners dressed in Victorian style, Dueber said.

Since then, many of the traditions remain and others have evolved. Bill Steidel and Paul Dueber again performed the town's official song "Christmas in Our Hometown," which Steidel composed for the Due-

ber family when Paul Dueber Sr. died on Christmas Day 1967. For the first time, students from the Cannon Beach Academy sang highlights from Christmas carols. The lamp is still lit the same way Jay Schwehr, a Cannon Beach local, did for 40 years before falling ill.

The lamplighting duty since has been passed on to selected Cannon Beach grade schoolers. But this year, the task was given to Ethan Burnett, the oldest grandson of Tom Drumheller, a local hospitality leader who died in September.

"He was also caring, always helping, always reaching out to the community during the holidays and every other time of year," Dueber said at the lamplighting. "It was extremely important to him for people to feel loved and appreciated."

The evening ended with kids lining up to see Santa, who made a surprise visit in a blaring fire truck to Sandpiper Square to hand out bags of treats.



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Laura and Gregg Freedman of the Providence Seaside Hospital Foundation and meteorologist Mark Nelsen, Fox 12 Oregon.



Photos by Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Santa walks through the crowd at the lamplighting ceremony.



Bill Steidel and Paul Dueber sing the town's traditional Christmas song at the lamplighting ceremony.



Hundreds stand waiting for the lamplighting ceremony Saturday in Cannon Beach.

Gala: Sold-out event hosted 330 guests

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A visit with Santa

Saturday ranged from Christmas stocking caps to black tie.

For the more than 1,000 visitors to Candy Cane Lane at the convention center, the event offered not only an opportunity to support the region's medical services, but a chance to dally awhile with Santa and peruse 30 donated Christmas trees and displays decorated by local businesses, designers, florists and North Coast residents.

A line of children waited on the mezzanine level for their audience with Santa.

Warrenton's Adalyn Saysongdeth, 8, had no doubt what she would ask for — a Hatchable, an egg with birds inside, she explained.

Adalyn's brother Brody, 5, and friend Dominic Dow each had their eyes on Nintendo Switches.

A wine tree from the Seaside Chamber of Commerce presented 60 bottles alongside the tree.

An entry from the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce honored founder Tom Drumheller, chief executive officer of Escape Lodging and co-owner of Tom's Fish & Chips, who died earlier this year.

The tree memorialized one of Drumheller's favorite slogans. "He used to always say, 'It'll be fun,'" Drumhell-



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Tom and Marilyn Christiansen visit the Festival of Trees on Saturday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

People line up to meet with Santa at the annual Seaside Festival of Trees on Saturday.

er's longtime friend and business partner Patrick Nofield said. "That was one of his hallmarks."

Cannon Beach resident

David Frei, just back in town from the National Dog Show, was accompanied by Angel, a Cavalier King Charles spaniel, and Grace, a Brittany, to pub-

licize the therapy dog program at the hospital.

The program, initiated by Frei and his wife, Cherilyn, now has 10 teams visiting the hospital.

"Dogs help patients manage whatever challenge they may be having," he said. "It gets them to smile, to talk. It brings them back to home a little bit."

With auction of the tree came a trip to Beverly Hills and a meeting with Frei and show host John O'Hurley.

Premier event

The sold-out gala hosted 330 guests from as far as San Francisco, with 16 live auction items. It was a night to see and be seen, all for a good cause.

"This is the premier social event of the year," convention center General Manager Russ Vandenberg said. "The community supports all the things the hospital does for us."

Freedman said that means moving into the 21st century of medicine — proactive as opposed to reactive.

"Right now, medicine is reactive in responding to someone in an emergency, whatever that might be," Freedman said. "We need it to be more preventative so that people don't need those services. The ultimate goal of the foundation and Providence Seaside is to improve our community and make it a healthier place to live for all of us."

Transit: 'We're not in competition, we're in collaboration'

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Local taxes are commonly used as matches for the state and federal grants that subsidize public transit. Fare revenue also provides a small percentage of a transit district's revenue — about 15 percent for Sunset Empire and a similar percentage in Columbia County — but often can't be used as a match on grants.

Arla Miller, a regional transit coordinator with the state Department of Transportation for the North Coast, mid-Coast and Willamette Valley, said the state saw Hazen's study as a good idea when it funded his grant request.

"Our big push is for collaboration ... just to have (transit districts) work together to try and help serve the underserved and unserved," she said.

Miller's position covers Columbia, Clatsop, Tillamook, Yamhill, Polk, Marion, Linn, Benton, Lincoln and Lane counties. In that region are six separate transit districts, she said. The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners formed Sunset Empire in 1993.

Sunset Empire has partnered with transit programs in Columbia, Tillamook, Lin-

coln and Benton counties since 2012 on Northwest Oregon Transit Alliance, a project funded by a U.S. Department of Energy grant to increase transit use by commuters and

visitors in rural northwestern Oregon. The program focuses on creating seamless transit connections between the Oregon Coast, Portland and the Willamette Valley.

"One thing about transit, we're not in competition, we're in collaboration," Hazen said. "To me, it sounds like common sense."

Olsen: The district has the support structure to make sure kids graduate

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with, a single mom, a number of kids. She works long hours. It's just a struggle to have the basic structure you need for your family when you work 12 hours a day and don't see your kids from the time they wake up to the time they go to bed.

"So I just try to support families like that, relieve a little tension, a little anxiety, a little stress, maybe give them a few skills they might not otherwise have."

the Strive for Five campaign this year with a goal of students not missing more than five days as a way to encourage higher attendance. Curriculum Director Melissa Linder reported at a recent school board meeting that the district started the school year strong on attendance, albeit with absenteeism increasing within a month, likely because of fall hunting trips and other early vacations.

Astoria Superintendent Craig Hoppes has said that if kids get to school, the district has the support

structure to make sure they graduate.

Olsen sees attendance as one of the main measuring sticks of his success, and the primary reason behind referrals from teachers.

"I can't tell you how many times the referral process looks something like this," Olsen said. "We love the student. They're bright. They're amazing. They're engaged. They're not showing up, and we can't figure out why. We can't crack whatever the problem is for them not showing up."

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