

Cemetery: Leamy enjoys having students around for the help, company

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She estimates she has already sprayed over two hundred gravestones with D/2 — the nontoxic, algae-eating cleaning solution.

As for the other two seniors, the chance to glance into the past drives their intrigue.

Noah thinks of the cemetery like a library — each gravestone like a single book, with the engraved words giving a quick glimpse into someone's life, similar to a summary on the back cover of a novel.

Sanchez thinks of himself as a history nerd. While considering a potential career as a mortician, he figured the project would look good on his resume.

Leamy enjoys having the students around, he said, both for the help and the company.



High school senior Aidyn Noah, left, and cemetery owner Mike Leamy walk through Greenwood Cemetery.

When Leamy and his wife, Lynda, bought Greenwood Cemetery in the

1980s, he knew next to nothing about cemeteries. In fact, he said, he had only

been to one funeral in his life.

It was not exactly what

he expected, Leamy said, but since then, the work has been an endless amount of restoration and preservation.

Last year, the couple received a grant through the Oregon Commission on Historic Cemeteries to assist in the restoration of gravestones in the oldest area of the cemetery.

While Leamy is grateful for the volunteer outreach he has received, help has been hard to come by over the past year and a half.

"In these COVID times, volunteers are few and far between," he said.

A place of significance

Leamy estimates that around 4,000 gravestones need improvement, while the flat markers need periodic attention, as well. While some just need some scraping and cleaning, older and broken-down gravestones require exten-

sive effort.

Due to the history of Greenwood, which opened in 1891, Leamy views it as both a place of significance for families, but also as a place of record.

"You are everlastingly at it and personally, I view this as a stewardship — I am the caretaker," he said. "Eventually, there will be someone else who is taking care, who is the custodian of our history."

When the students aren't at the cemetery, the work crew consists of Leamy and his wife. But he hopes the students' love for restoration will inspire other volunteers to offer their labor.

"Over the decades — (Greenwood) is 130 years old — it has a checkered past. But we look to the future, and that is the value of the kids doing their senior project here — looking to the future," Leamy said.

Spear: Attributes his win to more training miles without overtraining

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A running family

Spear's parents were runners, participating in the Hood to Coast race in the early '80s when the relay finished in Pacific City.

Growing up, Spear went to Jesuit High School in Beaverton. He came to the coast in the summer to visit his grandparents, who lived in Seaside.

His first sport was soccer, which he said he knew he wasn't very good at, but he found he had endurance and enjoyed running.

He switched to cross-country.

Spear was influenced by the high level of coaching and performance. "The winter of sophomore year I kind of started ramping it up and increased each year, just trying to do a little bit more," he said.

The Jesuit team was so competitive Spear didn't



Portland Marathon Matt Spear runs on the course of the Portland Marathon in October.

joined the club team, using his junior and senior years to get into running shape. He ran at Hayward Field — the university track — and up to Pre's Rock, the iconic memorial where the Oregon Olympic runner Steve Prefontaine died at the age of 24.

Spear started "adventure runs," running at Black Butte in central Oregon and other outdoor locations.

After graduating, he began a career in systems development in Portland, still running four or five days a week.

Training and a victory

Spear, 32, moved back to Seaside four years ago. He lives with his girlfriend, who is a nurse at Providence Seaside Hospital.

Long-distance running is part of his regimen. He has a few favorite routes, from his home on N. Holladay Drive across Tillamook Head

to Indian Beach and back, the Fort to Sea Trail and a 22-mile route that includes six loops 2 miles each around the Gearhart Golf Links.

For this year's Portland Marathon in October, Spear started out with a decent night's sleep, an early wake-up and a good breakfast. The day was clear with little wind.

At the start, one runner took the early lead. Spear was among a group of five or six behind the leader.

He was feeling strong. "I just focused on what I was doing," he said. "I could kind of see the leader, so I thought that was a good position to be in."

Around the area of Reed College, Spear began gaining on the leader. "People would say, 'He's a minute ahead,' and we go another mile, 'He's 40 seconds ahead.'"

Another runner from the pack caught up to the leader,

who was slowing down. "I held the pace, maybe picked it up a little bit. I didn't feel tired. I just felt really energized," Spear said.

As Spear crossed a bridge, about a mile from the finish, he saw his father and brother along the waterfront. Spear got to the finish before the tape was up and kept running.

"You're pretty thrilled and excited about things, so I didn't feel the exhaustion that I felt on the other times, when I could barely move," Spear said.

His first place finish time? Two hours, 28 minutes and 47 seconds.

His family joined him for the celebration and interviews after the race.

Spear attributes his win to more training miles without overtraining.

Runners call it "the taper," referring to the reduction of exercise before the race.

"I think the taper is always hard the last two or three weeks," he said. "You don't want to back off too much or you feel flat, but you don't want to overtrain so you're so tired at the start line you can barely run."

In February, Spear will be setting his sights at a longer run: the 100K Black Canyon Ultras — 62 miles — in Black Canyon, Arizona. Spear will be running at a minimum of about 4,000 feet above sea level in mountains between Flagstaff and Phoenix. Temperatures could range from the 70s to below freezing with snow.

He's run ultramarathons before, at Forest Park, Mount Hood and St. Helens, running for eight or 10 hour stretches.

"You take a bathroom break, but try to keep going. When you stop, it's always hard to get going again," he said.

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