



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

In the carpeted “registration room” of the food pantry’s new location where Lila Wickham, foreground, left, and Myrna Wierson, right, speak with Molly Edison, the food pantry manager. The volunteers arranged the food items that eventually went into the packing room in back. A former library for the now-closed Cannon Beach Elementary School, the portable building provides the pantry about 1,710 square feet.

Home free!

Food pantry moves into new “digs”

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Cannon Beach Food Pantry is finally home free.

Several dozen pantry supporters turned out the morning of Jan. 24 to make sure the move from the pantry’s former location at Cannon Beach Bible Church on Hills Lane to the pantry’s newest location — the portable structure on the west side of Cannon Beach Elementary School, 268 Beaver St. — was short, sweet and smooth. Four days later, at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Jan. 28, the pantry was due to open for its weekly two-hour distribution of food boxes.

By 1 p.m. last Saturday, volunteers from the pantry, the commu-



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Shawn Cole, left, of the city public works department, takes a box of food from Rockne “Rock” Wickham, the food pantry facilitator, to load into a truck donated by the Sleepy Monk Coffee Roasters. It took a few dozen volunteers to make the pantry’s move a smooth one.

nity, Coaster Construction, the city public works department, the Cannon Beach Police Department and Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue had already seen the food and furnishings safely to their new home.

Coaster, public works and Sleepy Monk Coffee Roasters each let the pantry load up one of their trucks.

The rows of tables in the carpeted section (now the pantry’s “registration room”) of the 1,710-square-foot space were quickly covered with bags of oatmeal; boxes of cereal; mac-and-cheese; packets of Ramen noodles; crates of potatoes and dried goods; cans of beans, fruits and sliced tomatoes; jars of spaghetti sauce; and other pantry essentials.

Over in the adjacent “packing room,” handymen and handywomen made quick work of setting up shelving units.

“Everything just fell into place,” said Molly Edison, the pantry manager. “Thank you, thank you, thank you to everybody.”

A grand opening is planned for next month at a date and time yet to be determined.

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Breakers Point dune grading project denied

Approving a changed proposal without public input is ‘unfair,’ say the planning commissioners

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Opponents of the Breakers Point Homeowners Association’s proposal to grade down the sand dunes at the north-end condominium complex were caught unaware at this month’s planning commission meeting when the association unexpectedly changed its proposal in order to alleviate some of the community’s concerns.

But several community members continued to oppose the dune grading, despite the changes in the association’s original proposal. And, in the end, the planning commission voted 4-2 to deny the controversial proposal, which it had carried over from its December meeting.

The homeowners association had requested a conditional use permit to allow foredune grading west and south of the condos. In recent years, Breakers Point dunes — held in place with European dune grass, which traps windblown sand — have grown higher than 40 feet, blocking oceanfront views and pushing sand onto properties.

The purpose of the project — which would have involved shifting almost 74,000 cubic yards of sand onto the beach during the next couple of years — was to restore the residents’ views and prevent further sand inundation. At least 25 feet of sand needs to be removed in

some areas, according to Tom Horning, a geologist working with the homeowners association.

Faced with adamant public disapproval last month, the association modified its original proposal. It agreed to deposit the sand above the intertidal zone (and thereby reduce the threat to razor clams on the shoreline), keep sand out of the Ecola Creek estuary, extend the project to 2017 and provide monitoring reports on the project’s environmental impact, Horning said.

But some members of the commission, including Vice Chairman Hank Johnson and Commissioner Lisa Kerr, said they felt the proposal had become so different that they were essentially voting on a new proposal.

“This looks nothing like the original proposal,” Johnson said. “I don’t know how, in all fairness, we can vote on this because it’s not the same.”

A motion to deny the project passed, with Johnson, Kerr, Charles Bennett and Joe Bernt voting yes, and members Ryan Dewey and Chairman Bob Lundy voting no. Member Janet Patrick recused herself because she is a Breakers Point homeowner.

Dunes ‘for everybody’

The Breakers Point proposal is “just a mess,” said Clay Newton, a part-time Cannon Beach resident who told the commission he could think of no better way to describe it.

He particularly objected to the homeowners association’s decision to suggest a revised proposal, giving the project’s opponents no time to revise their responses.

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Beat poetry workshop to be held at Tolovana Hall on Feb. 13

Event to be followed by Valentine’s Day open mic at Cannon Beach Gallery

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The cultural landscape of 1950s America flourished amid a peculiar contrast.

While “Father Knows Best” — that perfect paean to the status quo — ran on television, the specter of nuclear annihilation hung over the head of every U.S. citizen.

While the country’s industrial production skyrocketed — providing career opportunities mostly for white, straight, able-bodied men — the existential threat that technological “progress” presented to America’s way of life was difficult to ignore.

While clean-cut family men drove to work dressed in suits and fedoras to sup-

port their upwardly mobile middle-class lifestyles, a considerable number built bomb shelters, stocked up on ammunition and hoarded canned goods and jugs of water, just in case the Cold War with the Soviet Union stopped being cold.

“You had a lot of really scary stuff,” said Mark Mizell, an English teacher at Seaside High School.

Meanwhile, the writers of the Beat Generation gazed at this petri dish of misplaced values and said: *Are you all out of your minds?*

The Beats — including



Artwork by Stirling Gorsuch

such luminaries as Allen Ginsberg, Jack Kerouac and William S. Burroughs — beck-

oned the masses to “wake up and look at some of the stuff around us,” he said.

Some scholars believe the writing the Beats produced was among the finest, most original literature of the 20th century.

Next month, Mizell will teach an inaugural two-part workshop called “The Beat Poets” at Tolovana Hall, to be held from 6 to 9 p.m. Feb. 13 and noon to 3 p.m. Feb. 14. The cost is \$35 for both classes. Early sign-ups will receive a book about the Beat movement.

Then, from 7 to 10 p.m. Feb. 14, the Cannon Beach Gallery will host “The Beachnik Cafe,” an open mic for people to read their work (or someone else’s work), even people who didn’t attend the workshops. Bald Eagle Coffee House will donate coffee. The event is free and open to the public, but donations are accepted.

Lisa Kerr, program coordinator of the Tolovana Arts Colony, which is presenting both events, said the open mic

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Ken McQuhae makes his quiet voice heard

Retired engineer is soft-spoken, but his persistence speaks loudly

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Ken McQuhae may be soft-spoken, but he is outspoken.

In his retirement years, the part-time Cannon Beach resident has championed an assortment of high-profile local causes — even if it means courting controversy at City Hall.

The 74-year-old McQuhae — who now sits on the city’s Affordable Housing Task Force and supports the effort to establish a charter school in town — first became involved with city issues when he led the charge

to remove Cannon Beach from the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District in 2011 and 2012.

He discovered that he belonged to a group of Cannon Beach residents who unwittingly paid for parks twice — to both the city parks budget and to Sunset — because their properties partially stood in territory that had been county property before the city annexed it. This brought portions of Cannon Beach, which had already voted not to join Sunset, into Sunset’s taxing district, and the city had neglected to take them out of it.



Sunset officials put up a fight, but the City Council eventually voted to remove the annexed territory from the taxing district. The next year, McQuhae and some of his neighbors saw their property taxes decrease.

“A lot of people who owned these lots that were paying both (city and Sunset taxes) didn’t realize that the rest of the lots in the city weren’t paying,”



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Ken McQuhae, a retired engineer, can make out Haystack Rock from his Chapman Point home. He worked in the semiconductor industry for 30 years, first in Ottawa, Canada, then in Hillsboro.

Dune grading

he said. He added that few people cared about the extra tax, even when they noticed it, because people often assume that “taxes are inevitable.”

The skirmish with Sunset may have provoked objections from certain quarters,

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