

CANNON BEACH GAZETTE



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Celebrating 30 years of HRAP

The mission to protect Haystack Rock through education carries on

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Haystack Rock, that towering 235-foot monolith of the Cannon Beach coastline and Oregon's signature sea stack, is a locus of biodiversity, a subject of scientific research, a catalyst for community involvement and a source of shared wonderment.

While the iconic formation is a nesting, breeding and hunting ground for sundry bird species, the rocks and tide pools at its base support mussels, chitons, sea stars, barnacles and other creatures of the rocky intertidal zone.



HRAP volunteer Michael Loftus, foreground, gathers up HRAP's equipment with volunteers Nadine Nordquist, background left, and lead interpreter Lisa Habecker, background right, after a morning shift on the beach. ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

The site, which is part national wildlife refuge and part state-protected marine garden, draws about 200,000 visitors annually, mostly during the summer months, according to the city.

And, between February and September, when the tides are low (aka "beach season"), tens of thousands of these visitors interact with a team of

interpreters distinguishable by their red jackets and eagerness to educate.

These are the staff and volunteers of the Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP), which this year celebrates its 30th anniversary as a full-scale city program.

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PHOTO COURTESY OF CHRISTOPHER BURKETT
"Cottonwood and Light," by Christopher Burkett, is on display at Northwest By Northwest Gallery.

Masters of scenery

Spring Unveiling features photographer Christopher Burkett, painter Shirley Gittelsohn

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Photography is both a literal and an interpretive art, said Christopher Burkett, a Milwaukie-based color photographer of the American landscape.

The camera can capture the subject as reality presents it, or, rather, as most people see it. Yet the final image — the content, the perspective, the embellishments or lack thereof — captures something of the photographer, too: not just his skill level but his attitude toward the subject.

So where, then, does reality end and interpretation begin?

Feel free to ask Burkett that very question when he arrives in Cannon Beach to discuss his craft and unveil new works in progress at 2:20 p.m. May 2 at Northwest By Northwest Gallery, 232 N. Spruce St., where he has shown his prints for more than 25 years. Burkett is the only photographer having a special showcase during the Cannon Beach Gallery Group's 15th annual Spring Unveiling

Arts Festival, held city-wide May 1 through 3.

Mentored by Ansel Adams, a black-and-white landscape photographer, Burkett has shot in all 50 states in his 40 years as a photographer. He has been featured on Oregon Public Broadcasting's Oregon Art Beat.

Burkett works in traditional (i.e., nondigital) fine art photography, which means he spends long hours in his darkroom, developing his own film and making his prints by hand. Eschewing filters and Photoshop, he opts for natural light and color.

The way he tells it, Burkett is "just representing what's real."

"And that's one of the strengths of traditional photography, is that, essentially, because of its limitations compared to digital, you can trust the image more than you can a digital image in general," he said. Digital images, of course, can be tweaked to no end.

A devout Christian known for his pictures of

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ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Cannon Beach's version of Hands Across the Sand took place April 19 in front of Haystack Rock, Day No. 9 of the city's Twelve Days of Earth Day celebration.

Hands across the sands of Cannon Beach

In front of Haystack Rock on April 19, North Coast residents joined hands for 15 minutes of pro-ocean solidarity during Cannon Beach's "Hands Across the Sand," one of the city's Twelve Days of Earth Day events.

Their statement: to draw a line in the sand, physically and metaphorically, against offshore oil drilling, deepwater drilling, offshore seismic testing and other practices viewed as environmentally unsafe.

Nothing of that nature has taken place off of Cannon Beach's shores, and Cannon Beach-ers want to keep it that way.

Hands Across the Sand — an international observance where people gather to support renewable energy and energy independence — began in 2010 after the BP oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico. Cannon Beach has observed it for the last few years.

This month's event was led by Christen Allsop, owner of Cannon Beach Yoga Arts, who instructed the 12 participants on ujjayi breathing.

Another Hands Across the Sand in Cannon Beach is scheduled for May 16, as part of the worldwide Hands Across the Sand event.



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Hand-in-hand before Haystack Rock, Stacy Benefield, left, and Mindy Hardwick show solidarity with other supporters (not pictured) of Cannon Beach's coastal environmental.

The art of storytelling

"Get Lit" covers writing, reading, '50 Shades of Grey'

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

It wasn't until day No. 2 of this year's "Get Lit at the Beach" that Jennifer Romo, from Redding, Calif., worked up the courage to tell Terry Brooks, a bestselling fantasy author and Cannon Beach resident, that she believes his books saved her life.

Keeping most details off the record, Romo said that Brooks' "Shannara" series, which she discovered as a teenager living in Alaska, gave her a comforting place to return to, a shelter of the imagination, while the rest of her life was barely tolerable. The characters, Romo said, are "so real and alive" that, while turning the pages, she could be more concerned about their plight than her own.

Afraid, at first, that she might cry through her encounter with Brooks, Romo managed to keep her composure. "I did get kind of emotional when I told him, but I didn't full-out cry," she said.

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ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

The five guest authors held a candid Q-and-A panel, moderated by Terry Brooks, center, before an audience at the Coaster Theatre Playhouse on the third and final day of Get Lit at the Beach. From left: Jim Lynch, Nancy Pearl, Brooks, Gail Tsukiyama and Karen Joy Fowler.

Spring Unveiling Arts Guide



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