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Beach Bill interpretive sign dedicated

Signage honors public beaches, landmark legislation

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Now, when Oregonians and out-of-staters play and plod along the beach near Second Street, they do so in the presence of the only

known interpretive sign honoring the legislation that gave the public that right.

Cannon Beach's Twelve Days of Earth Day celebration concluded on Earth Day (April 22) with a short ceremony dedicating the city's "Beach Bill" sign, recently installed just beyond the west-end railing platform where people can simultaneously study the signage and survey the shore.

In 1967, Governor Tom McCall signed the Oregon Beach Bill, which granted the public recreational access to the state's beaches from the water to the vegetation line. The bill finished the job of Governor Oswald West, who, in 1913, classified Oregon's 363-mile coastline as a public highway and thus kept it free from commercial use.

Thanks to those two governors, Oregonians became the proud owner of some of

the most open and accessible beaches in the United States.

The sign features illustrated photographs of McCall and West, and replicas of their game-changing documents, against a tableau of beachy pastimes (flying kites, building sandcastles, collecting agates, etc.) drawn in pencil and watercolor by Sally Lackaff, an Astoria artist.

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ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

A windblown Sally Lackaff stands before the newly mounted Beach Bill sign, for which she did the pencil-and-watercolor artwork. Lackaff also did the artwork for the interpretive signs along the Cannon Beach Nature Trail, unveiled last year.

Committee considers lodging tax increase

Half-percent tax increase would fund Info Center

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The city's first two budget meetings looking at fiscal year 2015-16, held April 22 and 29, contained two crucial pieces of advice from City Manager Brant Kucera.

The city should increase the transient lodging tax, from 6 percent to 6.5 percent, solely to fund the Visitor Information Center through the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce, and should invest in long-overdue improvements to the city's infrastructure.

The proposed FY2015-16 budget represents a 7.6 percent increase over the current fiscal year's budget — a jump from \$13,508,389 to \$14,539,865.

The increase is mainly because of the half-percent tax increase, which is expected to generate approximately \$139,000 for the information center, according to Kucera's budget message. The city is also counting on nearly \$400,000 in grant money to come its way, and approximately \$3,471,230 will carry over from this year's budget.

The city's spending on its personnel may increase by about 12 percent because two positions — the finance director and the information technology director — will now be filled by employees rather than be contracted out, Kucera said.

The final budget meeting, scheduled for May 13 at 5:30 p.m., will include a public comment period. Members of the business community in particular are encouraged to share their thoughts on the tax increase, Kucera said.

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PUFFIN SPOTTING



With his eye to the bird scopes, Cosmo Simmons, 11, scans Haystack Rock on April 22 for the tufted puffins that recently returned to begin their four-month nesting season.

Tufted puffins receive a warm welcome

Story and photos by Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

The four-month nesting season of Haystack Rock's tufted puffin colony began early last month, and seven students from Arch Cape's Fire Mountain School spent their sunny Earth Day morning, April 22, welcoming them back after the birds' eight-month excursion over the sea.

Melissa Keyser, the Haystack Rock Awareness Program's education coordinator, led the students — Genevieve "Gigi" Gardner, 5; Otto Harter, 9; Ocean Jones, 9; Taylor Kahrs, 6; Sean Kerwin, 8; Adelia Lippold, 6; and Cosmo Simmons, 11 — through a series of educational activities designed to teach them all about the bird and marine life at the rock.

First came the HRAP bird scopes. One by one the students took turns viewing the puffin nests tucked into the rock through scopes and binoculars, priming themselves for the next activity: a game of tag meant to teach the students the perils of nesting season.

The students paired up into "puffin parents," and while one "parent" stayed home at the "nest," the other "flew" out over the "ocean" to grab as many "fish" (i.e., sticks ... get it?) as possible.

But there are dangers out on the open ocean, including bald eagles who try to swoop down and nab puffin parents before they returns to the



The students and staff of Fire Mountain School take turns viewing tufted puffins through bird scopes April 22. The Welcome Back Tufted Puffins event is hosted annually by the Haystack Rock Awareness Program.

nest with the fish in their beaks. Puffins, which have barbs on their tongue, can hold up to 30 fish in their mouth at any one time, HRAP coordinator Samantha Ferber said.

The only eagle in sight, though, was a hand-puppet worn by Fire Mountain teacher Mike McGlenn, who tagged the wee puffins as they squawked and scrambled back to their nests. Once tagged, the puffins had to drop their fish, and the one who ended up with the most fish won (congratulations, Sean Kerwin!).

Before Earth Day, Keyser had visited Fire Mountain to teach the kids about puffins and, their local anthem, the "Welcome Back Tufted Puffins" song, which is crooned to "The Muffin

Man" melody ("Have you seen the puffins dive, the puffins dive, the puffins dive?").

When the time came for Keyser and the Fire Mountain-ers to welcome the puffins back for real, Adelia Lippold's mother, Sarah Lippold, a Fire Mountain volunteer, accompanied them on the tenor recorder.

Finally, it was time for the children to venture into the rocky intertidal life around the base of Haystack Rock, where sea snails and even more elusive sea slugs awaited them.

And, high above them all, the tufted puffins of the rock made themselves comfortable in their lofty — hopefully predator-free — perch.



Genevieve "Gigi" Gardner, 5, breaks out the binoculars to see tufted puffins nesting on Haystack Rock.

Every picture tells a story

Artists celebrate the rites of spring at 'Unveiling'

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette



When perusing a piece of art, it can be fun to figure out which famous fore-runners had the greatest influence on the artist, or which movement best defines the artist's work.

But, when creating it, the artist may not even be thinking

in such pigeonholing terms; he or she may just be trying to make something beautiful and seeing where it goes.

Take the work of Spencer Reynolds, the oil painter from Brookings, Ore., featured at Archimedes Gallery during Cannon Beach's 15th annual Spring Unveiling Arts Festival, held citywide May 1 through 3.

His unfinished, untitled painting of colossal, crashing waves — whose orange ripples Reynolds meticulously traced with a pinstripe brush during a demonstration — has shades of surrealism and 1960s-era psychedelic poster art. It is also reminiscent, he noted, of Katsushika Hokusai's woodcut "The Great Wave off Kanagawa."

But this kind of reference-based appreciation is helpful only up to a point. Reynolds said his style is pretty hard to nail down; he likes to joke that the work in

progress, like many of his other paintings, falls into its own special category called "pinstripe impressionism."

Reynolds, in fact, has a background in impressionism and, after graduating from the Art Institute of Seattle, studied for a couple of years under Henry Stinson, the Russian impressionist. But, though that experience does inform his work, Reynolds finds that his pieces touch on several movements at once.

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