



Artist Steve McLeod dies at 70

Painter, sculptor contributed to study of ocean currents

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

Steve McLeod, 70, a versatile Cannon Beach artist and avid beachcomber, died of pneumonia May 11 at Portland's Providence St. Vincent Medical Center three days after being transferred from Providence Seaside Hospital.

"He was by himself," said his friend Dave Butler. "He chose to be by himself."

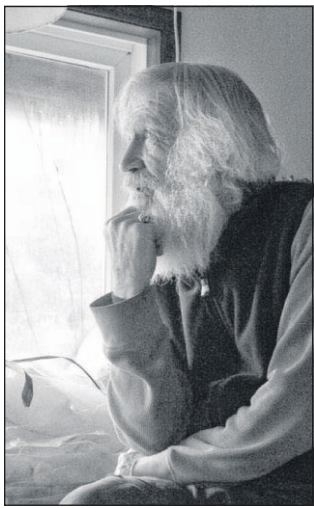
An evolving artist known for seascapes, abstract paintings, and pieces composed of dried kelp, jetsam and other beach detritus, McLeod's work resides in homes, galleries and other establishments throughout town.

"His paintings are everywhere," former Cannon Beach Mayor Mike Morgan said. "He's very well thought of in the Pacific Northwest."

Robin Risley, a Cannon Beach resident, said that McLeod "took life seriously." In his art, "you saw a technical discipline that he had, and I think he kind of approached life that way, too. He wanted to dig into the details ... to make sense of everything."

McLeod is also famous as the person who, in the early 90s, began collecting and selling hundreds of Nike sneakers that washed ashore along the West Coast — and especially the Oregon Coast — after the company's shipping containers en route to Seattle fell overboard and broke open. McLeod's notes on where the shoes ran aground proved valuable to the scientific study of ocean currents.

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PIERRE TOUTAIN-DORBEC PHOTO
Steve McLeod relaxes in his studio last year. The artist, who lived behind the Coaster Theatre for about 40 years, died May 11 from pneumonia.

Cannon Beach Academy finds temporary home

Charter school to share building with two businesses

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

After considering more than 20 possible locations over the last two years, the Cannon Beach Academy, a public charter school in development, has finally landed a temporary home.

The planning commission granted the academy a conditional use permit May 28 that allows the burgeoning K-5 school to modify and eventually occupy a ground-floor portion of the existing commercial building at 171 Sunset Blvd., which also houses Cleanline Surf, Copies & Fax and Cannon Beach Liquor

Store. The vacated space, which takes up 3,500 square feet of the 6,000-square-foot building, once housed the Cannon Beach Athletic Club.

The academy — which submitted its charter proposal to the Seaside School District Board for the third time

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ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

The temporary location of the Cannon Beach Academy, 171 Sunset Blvd., will be a vacated space between Cleanline Surf and Copies & Fax.

'We have the watch'



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Almost 100 people attended the American Legion Post 168's Memorial Day ceremony May 25. Locals and visitors turned out to honor the men and women who died serving their country.

American Legion Post 168 observes Memorial Day in Cannon Beach

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

It was a day of reflection and remembrance, said Dan O'Reilly, the incoming commander at American Legion Post 168 in Cannon Beach.

At 11 a.m. May 25, almost 100 locals and visitors converged on Fir Street to observe a decades-old home-grown Memorial Day ceremony conducted by the Legion.

From the Cannon Beach Elementary School site, the Legion's color guard, led by Post Commander Don Boehm, marched north to the Fir Street Bridge: Legionnaire Michael "Mick" French, carried the United States flag; Sergeant-at-Arms Leonard Skreba, the Post 168 flag; Legionnaire Terry Castle, the POW/MIA flag; and Auxiliary Carolyn Anderson, the Auxiliary (Cannon Beach unit) flag.

Before the crowd, O'Reilly delivered the following oration:

"This country was founded in revolution by overthrowing a tyrannical government. The cause was liberty. This was not done without cost. Patriots gave us all that they had and suffered incredible sacrifices to achieve what we now enjoy.

"Since then, the call to the colors has been sounded far too often, but our brave warriors continue to rise and respond. They have served, perished and bled in every part of the globe. They neither sought this responsibility, nor did they shy away from it. Our men and women have served with dignity and honor, regardless of race or creed, for



ERICK BENDEL PHOTO

Service Officer Barbara Johnson tosses a flower into Ecola Creek — as someone would lay flowers at a grave — to remember the United States' fallen warriors.

the common goal of the liberties we enjoy.

"This is what to remember and honor for those who have sacrificed their all. They truly are our families and must always be cherished. We owe them more than we could ever give. Their gift to us is best symbolized by the U.S. Military Academy's motto: 'Duty. Honor. Country.'

"It is our responsibility to accept this challenge and to never forget what these brave men and women gave to us. The plaintive tones of 'Taps' will tell these fallen warriors that they may rest, for we accept this duty, and we have the watch."

While veterans saluted and civilians placed hand over heart, Pat Hegrenes, a Sons of the American Legion member, sounded "Taps" on the bugle.

In the solemn silence that followed, dozens of people tossed flowers of different varieties over the bridge's

westward railing into Ecola Creek, "in the same way you lay flowers at a grave — to say 'Thank you,'" said Cannon Beach resident Mary Kerwin, who threw lilies. Her husband, Jack Kerwin, served in the Vietnam War.

'What we owe'

Col. Steven Easterday, a parttime Cannon beach resident from Portland, said he attends commemorative events like Cannon Beach's to pay tribute, not just to departed service members, but to all members on active duty.

A veteran who served as a Marine engineer from 1972 to 2002, Easterday said several Marines from his unit whom we knew personally were killed in action during and after Operation Desert Storm. "It was great to be working with them, and to remember them on a day like today," he said.

Post 168's Memorial Day ceremony originally began in the 1970s as a way to honor the auxiliary women of Cannon Beach who had lost their husbands, said Boehm, who helped expand the event over the years.

"I just appreciate the people that turn out for it," he said. "To me, it's just a very heartwarming and a very meaningful way to show respect for the servicemen and women lost in the Great Wars."

Asked how he feels after these annual observances, O'Reilly — who served in Vietnam along with his brother, whose father served in World War II, and whose oldest son served in the first Gulf War — said:

"I feel a real depth of commitment to continue to do this as long as I can, for what we owe that's been paid for," he said.

Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest celebrates 51st anniversary

Event founders turned tragedy into opportunity

By Erick Bengel
Cannon Beach Gazette

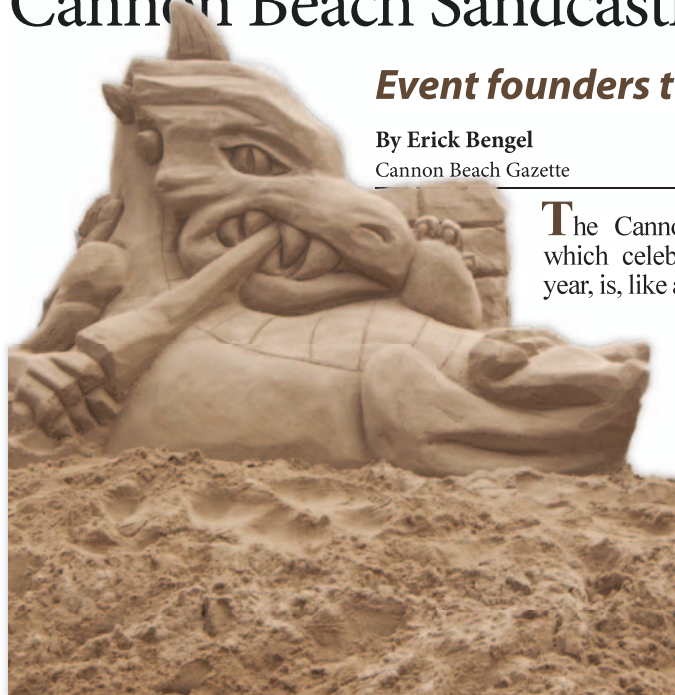


PHOTO COURTESY OF THE CANNON BEACH CHAMBER OF COMMERCE
Fantastical creatures, like dragon pictured here, tend to appear during Cannon Beach's annual Sandcastle Contest. This year celebrates the city's 52nd consecutive Sandcastle event.

The Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest, which celebrates its 51st anniversary this year, is, like all sandcastle events, an exercise in living with impermanence, in creating order and beauty while preparing for its destruction, in learning to let go.

For several sunny, enchanted hours, thousands of visitors descend on Cannon Beach's shoreline to watch dozens of sand sculptors build mighty, majestic figures: castles and dragons, sea creatures and cartoon characters — the inspiration seems inexhaustible.

Just about everyone has a good time: The sculptors — amateurs and masters — revel in the teamwork

and craftsmanship, while the spectators stroll among the plots, awed and entertained.

But the end is written into the beginning. By sunset, all physical evidence of the sculptures will be erased, taken by the tides. And the canvas of the coastline will be blank once more, ready for another troupe of imaginative beachgoers to momentarily shape nature to their will.

Schedule of events

Cannon Beach's Sandcastle Contest — the oldest in Oregon — falls on June 20 this year and is the grand centerpiece of a three-day shindig.

The festivities kick off at 5:30 p.m. June 19 with the Sandcastle Parade; the line-up begins at 5 p.m. at Spruce and Second streets.

This will be followed by a "Bucket & Shovel" dinner with salad, spaghetti and clam chowder options on offer at the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce Community Hall from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The Sandcastle Contest itself begins the next day at 7:30 a.m. down on the beach. Awards will be announced at 12:30 p.m. (Registration closes at noon June 19.)

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