

## 'Prayers are answered'

# Beloved dog Pearl found, returned to family

*A social media campaign ended happily with sighting in Cannon Beach*

By Dani Palmer  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Cannon Beach residents proved just how dog-friendly they are when they helped Portlander Krista Labavitch find her dog, Pearl, after a week-long search last month.

Pearl, a 7-year-old Bernese Mountain Dog, went missing on Thursday, Sept. 24. Someone tried to pet the skittish dog from behind and "she just bolted," Labavitch said, pulling the leash from Labavitch's daughter's grip.

Construction workers tried to catch Pearl, but lost sight of her on South Hemlock Street. Krista Labavitch then traveled to Cannon Beach to search for her, going home after finding "no sign of her."

She encountered Kate Pickford with Clatsop Animal Assistance when she came back on Friday, who volunteered her time to search and posted Pearl's

photo and information on the organization's Facebook page. It resonated with people.

"We reached up to 30,000 people in the area," Pickford said. "It was one of the most active posts on our page."

Locals quickly shared the post and wrote they were keeping an eye out for Pearl.

On Saturday, Labavitch got a call from Cannon Beach police that the dog had been spotted at Les Shirley and later near the place she'd disappeared from. They tried to catch her, but she again took off.

"The police were awesome," Labavitch said. "They kept in contact with us, and they were very kind. They treated Pearl like a person, not a dog."

She and her friend, Sandee Sanders, searched all day Saturday and Sunday with no luck. Locals Margo and Fred Silvester offered them a place to stay while they did so, and Pickford continued to post updates on Facebook.

Labavitch took time off from work to search and tried to stay positive, but it was hard at times.

"Pearl is a member of our family," she said. "They're not just pets, they're family."



Pearl, after being returned to her owners.

On Tuesday morning, Labavitch got a call Pearl had been seen near Hug Point. They looked there, then moved onto Arch Cape.

Around 7:30 a.m., the family got a call from Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Court Carrier. He'd taken the initial call from the Labavitchs — who were

frantic, like he would be as a dog owner himself, he admitted — and recognized the dog from her trailing leash as she crossed Highway 101.

He stopped and called to her, as did another passerby, but Pearl "jetted into the South Wind site."

A while later, Labavitch walked up the logging road Carrier had spotted Pearl

on with her shih tzu, Navarre, and called for the Bernese mountain dog.

"I sat down and I just prayed," she said. "I heard some rustling in the bushes, looked over and she came out to us."

Pickford said they believe Pearl was tracking Krista, and that she'd hid during the day and moved at night.

Labavitch gave her food along with fresh water. Her husband, Fred, a veterinarian in Portland, looked Pearl over.

The dog had lost nine pounds, but was fine, overall.

It was a happy ending after an abundance of worry. At one point, someone had suggested the family contact the Oregon Department of Transportation in case a dog was found hit on the road.

"It's been a horrible experience but also a wonderful experience," Krista Labavitch said. "The people in Cannon Beach were great, very nice and friendly."

Business owners allowed the family to put up flyers. Carrier put notice of the missing dog in the Chamber's newsletter, on the counter in the Visitor Center and contacted police, who also shared posts on Facebook. Pickford called it a team effort.

Fred Labavitch has his Sunset Animal Clinic veterinary practice for 42 years. In that time he has encountered people who have lost their dogs, but has never been in the situation himself. "Cannon Beach should be proud of itself," he said. "I just felt so good about how it was handled."

## Bridge collapse could hinder evacuation

Bridges from Page 1A

OBEC Consulting Engineers conducted a bridge study in 2011, warning the Ecola Creek existing bridge is "vulnerable to failure" even in a "relatively small earthquake" because of its age and construction.

"The shortest evacuation route for the north downtown area is across Ecola Creek and up Fir Street to reach elevations above predicted maximum tsunami wave heights," the report states. "Currently, evacuation by this route can be completed in approximately five minutes by using the North Elm Avenue/First Street Bridge. However, it is unlikely that this bridge will withstand a large earthquake or tsunami."

Chairwoman Carolyn Adamson said a bridge replacement is the best option. "That is my preference because it serves multiple purposes," she said.

"There's not a jam of 500 people trying to get across the pedestrian bridge."

According to the 2011 study, replacement of the existing bridge would cost \$4.8 million while a six-foot wide pedestrian bridge could cost up to \$1.6 million.

A proposed pedestrian bridge over Ecola Creek could either be a way for people to quickly evacuate



Cars cross the bridge over Ecola Creek coming from the north.

to higher ground as a tsunami approaches or it could be a "fatal funnel" leading to a crossing "over the jaws of death," according to a consultant in 2012, the time of the report's release.

In its 2011 report, OBEC reviewed several bridge options for the creek on the north side of Cannon Beach, which would quickly lead to higher ground and away from a tsunami. Among those options was a fixed timber bridge with a 6-foot-wide deck and steel pile foundations. The estimated cost was \$1.05 million.

Another study issued in 2011 by an OSU engineering professor who made computer models of potential evacuation routes in the city, estimated that, on a typical summer day in Cannon Beach, at least 1,080 people would head toward the bridge after the earthquake.

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator Stacy Burr suggested the committee go



The bridge that crossed Elk Creek on the north side of Cannon Beach collapsed during the 1964 tsunami. The school's gym is visible on the south side of the creek, as well as students from Cannon Beach Elementary School lined up to look at what remained of the bridge's footings.

for a pre-disaster mitigation grant, sharing costs with the Federal Emergency Management Agency. FEMA would pay 75 percent of the bridge cost and the city would bear the rest. The grant is competitive among cities nationwide, Burr said, adding national politicians do not always approve project money each year.

Before applying for such a grant, the city needs to decide on which route it wants to take.

Burr advised the committee work together to offer options to City and Emergency Manager Brant Kucera, who would decide what to present

to the City Council. She added that Cannon Beach would need to do another bridge study on the best option, costing up to \$30,000.

Wierson suggested taking a closer look at Washington's bridge standards as they're designed to withstand earthquakes. He also recommended flashing beach signs to further improve the city's disaster preparedness. Cannon Beach is waiting to hear back now on a grant for beach kiosks.

Burr said they would offer emergency information and be designed by local artists. Preparedness talks continue this month.

## Not alone: It takes a village to battle leukemia

Leukemia from Page 1A

Isair now receives a blood count and treatment in Portland every Tuesday and has a 90 percent chance of recovery. Since his diagnosis, the Leon-Mejias have spoken with a child specialist who told them not to hide anything from the boy.

They've also alerted his teachers of what's going on. Isair can go to school, but he can't be as physically active with a tube inserted to help clean his blood.

It hurts sometimes, Isair gets tired quicker and his hair is starting to fall out, but he finally got his appetite back.

"Every now and then it's too much for him," Julie said, but Isair's siblings have helped make life seem as it did before. Isair's older sister, Mariliz, 7, also knows what's going on and watches out for him.

Since the ordeal, Julie noted they've learned just how common leukemia is among youth. It's the most common cancer in children and teens, according to the American Cancer Society.

They want to use their experience to help other families better understand the signs.

Taylen, of Wheeler, passed out at home in August. He was rushed to a nearby Urgent Care, then

to Providence Seaside Hospital and later Doernbecher's, where he too was diagnosed with leukemia.

He, like Isair, will need three years of chemotherapy in Portland, Gadelhak said.

Donations for "Tough Taylen" may be made online at [www.gofundme.com/toughtaylen](http://www.gofundme.com/toughtaylen) or to an account in his name at U.S. Bank.

Donations for Isair may be made at [www.gofundme.com/loveforisair](http://www.gofundme.com/loveforisair) or by depositing a check into an account titled the "Isair Leon-Mejia Benefit Fund" at Wells Fargo Bank.

Employees at Escape Lodging in Cannon Beach started Isair's GoFundMe page, and invited the community to help.

"The tyranny of illness doesn't need to be made harder by the compounding effects of lost wages, frequent treatments requiring travel, and the costs of moving," they said.

The family is looking for a new place to live as Isair needs a mold-free environment.

The Leon-Mejia family also wants to give back after all the assistance they have received. Julie said they are collecting pop tabs for the Ronald McDonald House and encourage others to do the same.

## Board says developer meets zoning code

Development from Page 1A

in December 2014, the Cannon Beach City Council reviewed the application. In February, the council voted to tentatively approve the application. In early March, councilors voted to adopt the findings by a 4-1 vote.

A group of local citizens — Jeff Harrison, Cleve Rooper, Dale Hintz, Linda Hintz, Elizabeth Lorch, Jane Emrick, Diane Amos, Rex Amos, Mindy Hardwick and Robin Risley — challenged the decision in a brief before the Land Use Board of Appeals. Many in the group were neighbors to the property at 532 N. Laurel St. where the development would take place.

They said the city failed to comply with timing requirements for notices, made mistaken references to the Design Review Board and improperly closed council hearings to new evidence.

In their decision, the three-member appeals board acknowledged the Feb. 10 City Council hearing "contained some errors," but wrote that the mistakes did not rise to the level of a procedural error that would have caused the petitioners to "fail to prepare for and submit their case to the



A home currently located on the .57-acre property owned by Jeff Nicholson. A Land Use Board of Appeals ruling gives an OK to his four-home subdivision plan.

City Council."

The appeals board concluded Nicholson's plans for his 24,800-square-foot property met the allowable density for the city's residential zone. The R-2 zone's minimum density for the subject property is one dwelling per 5,000 square feet.

"The petition raised largely a number of procedural concerns, and a number of procedural concerns that were not raised by the petitioners in the local decision," Rasmussen said. "LUBA found that the process used

by the city followed all the state laws and local laws, and approved the decision."

Nicholson does not have immediate building plans, but the decision opens the way for four houses on the property, Rasmussen said.

Plans must conform to those submitted, "so the neighbors can be assured we won't be building up to their property line," Rasmussen said.

Other conditions include repair of any potential damage to Laurel Street during the construction process and a shared access driveway between the four homes.

A certified arborist will examine spruce trees, and within a year of the preliminary approval, the final plan will be submitted to show utilities to the houses. Only one driveway will access Laurel Street.

An attorney for the neighbors did not return a call requesting comment and city officials also declined to comment.

With the appeals board decision, plans for the subdivision are ready to move forward, Rasmussen said.

"We need to have a conversation with the city," he said. "The applicant would like to move forward as soon as we can with the next step."

## Local artist Steidel to sign his first children's book

The senior artist from Cannon Beach, William Steidel, will present his first published children's book, "Whose Move," a story about a boy and a dragon. Steidel will be

signing books Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m. on. An edition of hand-embellished hard-back books limited to 100 will be available. For information call 503-436-1757.



Art by William Steidel.