

# CANNON BEACH GAZETTE



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## Whale lands at Oswald West State Park



### Researchers seek cause of humpback's death

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Remains of a dead humpback whale washed back to shore Tues-

day, this time at Short Sand Beach in Oswald West State Park.

A necropsy of the 38-foot mammal will likely be performed by Seaside Aquarium General Manager Keith Chandler and Portland State University researchers on Thursday, state Park Manager Ben Cox said.

The whale is not expected to return to sea again. "It looks like we're having a series of lower tides

and based on the current location of the whale, we're expecting it to remain in place," Cox said.

Due to fewer visitors and cooler temperatures, Oregon Parks and Recreation Department staff will leave the whale to decay naturally. During a busier time, staff would likely bury it.

The whale came ashore only 2 miles south of where it was first

found on an Arch Cape beach Friday. The whale's stomach was initially bloated with gas, but deflated mid-day Saturday, leaving stomach contents and a stench that filled the air. Because of tide patterns, Chandler and Tiffany Boothe of the Seaside Aquarium and a team of researchers from Portland State University were

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### Nature to 'take its course'

"The whale is now under the jurisdiction of Oregon state parks," Ranger Ken Murphy of Oregon State Parks and Recreation said Wednesday. "For right now, because of the remote location, we're going to let nature take its course as part of the ecosystem of the North Coast."

This weekend, Oregon State Parks and Recreation Department offers an interpretative program on humpback whales. The event takes place Saturday and Sunday at 1 p.m. each day at Sand Shore beach in Oswald West State Park.



**FRIDAY EVENING:** The dead humpback whale was at first just a blip on the horizon.

**FRIDAY NIGHT:** The whale washes ashore in Arch Cape.

**EARLY SATURDAY MORNING:** The bloated body indicates gas build-up from decomposition.

**EARLY SUNDAY MORNING:** The carcass was swept out to sea sometime during the night.

**TUESDAY:** The whale after beaching at Oswald West State Park on Tuesday.

PHOTOS, LEFT TO RIGHT, BY R.J. MARX, L.M. SMITH, R.J. MARX, SUBMITTED PHOTO

# TRADING PLACES

## Costa Ricans visit the North Coast as part of cultural exchange

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

As part of the annual Partners of the Americas adult cultural exchange, 13 visitors from Costa Rica are experiencing Oregon this month, including the North Coast.

Both the visitors and their North Coast hosts from Brownsmead, Astoria and Seaside came to Cannon Beach on Sept. 9 to explore the area's nature and culture. Hosts introduced the Costa Rican guests to Cannon Beach art galleries, coffee shops and, of course, Haystack Rock. The group walked to the famous landmark, guided by Lisa Habecker, education co-

ordinator from the Haystack Rock Awareness Program. Partners of the Americas participants also visited the Seaside Aquarium, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park and other area attractions.

Cannon Beach resident Jeanie McLaughlin, a former Spanish teacher in English as a second language, has visited Costa Rica in 2002 and 2007 as part of the Partners of the Americas exchange.

"It's a wonderful organization," she said of the program, which was inspired by President John F. Kennedy and aims to promote peace and understanding between cultures.

After the coast, Costa Rican exchange participants visited Hood River and Bend. In February, Oregonians will take a trip to Costa Rica, McLaughlin said.



SUBMITTED PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Costa Rican visitors and their Oregonian hosts explored Haystack Rock on Friday, Sept. 9.

## Feds get fire chief claim

### New allegations over Cannon Beach firing

By Lyra Fontaine and R.J. Marx  
Cannon Beach Gazette

A lawsuit pitting former fire chief Mike Balzer against the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District has been moved to federal court after Balzer raised civil rights claims.



Mike Balzer

The change of venue was triggered by a new complaint from Balzer that his federal due process and free association rights were violated when he was fired last October.

The case, which had been slated for trial in Clatsop County Circuit Court in October, will instead be heard next year before U.S. Magistrate Judge Paul Papak in U.S. District Court in Portland.

Balzer has alleged breach of contract, wrongful discharge and defamation in his complaint against the fire district and directors Sharon Clyde, Linda Beck-Sweeney and Garry Smith.

In an August court filing, Balzer made federal civil rights claims that the fire district made false statements "for the sole purpose of embarrassing and humiliating" him and fired him without a due-process right to a hearing.

Balzer states in his complaint that the board's actions led to damages to

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## Nonprofits come together at community potluck

### Collaboration and connection are key

By Lyra Fontaine  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Through providing social services to those in need, offering recreational opportunities and enhancing local arts and culture, the nonprofit organizations receiving this year's Cannon Beach community grant impact residents throughout Clatsop County.

At the community grant potluck on Thursday evening, nonprofits receiving funds presented to the room that included state Rep. Deborah Boone, City Manager Brant Kucera, Assistant City Manager Colleen Riggs, councilors, parks committee members and many others.

"I wish everyone in town could see this," Mayor Sam Steidel said.

The City of Cannon Beach awarded \$75,000 to 18 local and county-wide nonprofits. Now in its 28th year, the city's community grant program received about \$113,000 in funding requests. The city's Parks and Community Services Committee made funding recommendations.

New recipients included the Clatsop Community College Foundation to support its volunteer literacy program, offered for Spanish-speaking residents.

The local arts scene, including the Coaster Theatre, Cannon Beach Chorus and Cannon Beach Arts Association, also got a boost.

"This community just blows my mind," arts association program director Jane Brumfield said.

The Coaster Theatre will introduce a visual arts program later this fall. "We would love to have kids and adults coming together to create art," executive director Patrick Lathrop said.



LYRA FONTAINE/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

**Former Parks and Community Services Committee Chairwoman Barb Knop served as emcee at the Cannon Beach community potluck.**

Cannon Beach Chorus, which brings together 50 to 60 singers from all over the state to perform, will use funds for its performance series music.

Serving the community is a group effort. The Tolovana Arts Colony

makes its space available for Coaster Theatre play rehearsals and community groups. The Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, which provides homework help and activities for middle school students, joins forces with Cannon Beach on events like "12 Days of Earth Day." The South County Community Food Bank works with the weekly Cannon Beach food pantry.

"We could not make it in the county without everyone's support and collaboration," said Elaine Bruce, director of Clatsop Community Action, which addresses poverty by providing rental assistance, energy assistance and a food bank.

Event emcee and former Parks and Community Services Chair Barb Knop said she kept hearing the words "community" and "partnership" throughout the presentations.

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