

It's time to build a tsunami-safe campus

Anyone considering voting no on Resolution 4-185 — to build a new earthquake- and tsunami-safe school campus serving the children of Cannon Beach, Seaside and Gearhart — must not have seen the photo I saw, in the aftermath of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami in Japan, of a drift line of colorful children's backpacks in Hello Kitty and Superman themes, sparkling with seawater. They were left on the hillside in a curving line after the tsunami that killed those children receded. At Ookawa Elementary School, the children had drilled many times about what to do in an earthquake, but when 10 of the school's 13 teachers were killed in the quake, it's no wonder the kids didn't have the leadership to make it to high enough ground before the tsunami that killed them struck.

We now know that it's only a matter of time before a quake and tsunami of similar magnitude strikes the Oregon Coast. The geological evidence, first discovered only 30 years ago and a surprise to all of us, is now very clear. This will not be a tsunami of the size some coastal residents remember from 1964, caused by a quake more than 1,000 miles away in Alaska. This will be a tsunami generated by an earthquake along a fault line just off the Oregon. It will flatten

GUEST COLUMN
BONNIE HENDERSON

buildings all over Oregon — on the coast in particular — including aging schools throughout the state. Minutes later, what's left of the houses and schools in towns like Seaside and Gearhart will be washed away by a tsunami equivalent to the one that killed thousands of people in Japan in 2011.

We don't know if the next such quake will strike the Oregon coast in the next few years or in a few hundred years. But geologists tell us there is a high likelihood of it happening within the next 50 years. We know we are in the window. It is time to get ready.

The Seaside School District is one of the last two districts on the Oregon Coast with schools still in the tsunami inundation zone. Lincoln City has moved all its schools to high ground. Waldport has relocated its high school from the mouth of the river to a nearby ridgetop. Neahkahnie High School is in the tsunami zone, but unlike Seaside High School, Neahkahnie High School has a solid rock

hillside right outside the building where students can evacuate.

The challenges for the Seaside School District are unique. No other school district in Oregon — in fact, in the entire country — has three schools located in the tsunami inundation zone. Relocating the schools here is an expensive proposition — and there's no getting around it.

The need to relocate the schools in the Seaside School District cannot be disputed. It has to happen, and the sooner the better. The sticking point, naturally, is the cost, which is not insignificant. To be clear, I do not own property in the Seaside School District; I will not be affected by a property tax increase. But I want to point out some important facts to those who do.

Moving the schools is not the only pressing need. Seaside, in particular, must start rebuilding some of its bridges to ensure that citizens fleeing the tsunami will be able to reach high ground. But these are not competing priorities. They both need to be done. Right now, the proposal on the table is to relocate the schools. I urge you to vote yes on Resolution 4-185.

Bonnie Henderson is the author of "The Next Tsunami: Living on a Restless Coast."

LETTERS

Letters from Page 4A
cannabis years ago. I did too. It is part of our history.

I've used cannabis for 46 years and I'm now 64. They claim that there is no knowledge of the long term effects. That is just wrong. There are millions of folks in this country just like me. Did it hold me back? Well, I earned a college degree and a graduate degree. I've managed to support myself and have a productive and happy life too. Our federal government has lied to all of us about cannabis. It started with that old movie "Reefer Madness" and continues to this day. It is not a schedule one narcotic, even though our federal government still classifies it that way.

Some seem to feel that a cannabis store, if it is allowed, should be restricted to less desirable areas of Cannon Beach. I will agree with that when we subject alcohol to the same strictures. Can you imagine banning the sale and / or consumption of alcoholic beverages from our prime retail areas? I didn't think so.

It makes no difference where in town a cannabis store is located. By state law, no

consumption of the product is allowed at the store. (We don't drink at state liquor stores either, do we?) Why not let whoever opens the store decide where to locate? It is just going to be a storefront like the many that we already have.

Folks, cannabis is here to stay. We cannot afford to simply put our heads into the sand that surrounds us. We need to be smart and control it in a positive way. Let's not create unneeded regulation. Our capitalistic system will root out the weaker players. It always has.

I had guests this summer like most of you did. Guess what they wanted? They wanted to be able to see a cannabis store, of course. They spent their allotted shopping time and dollars in Seaside. No shopping or dollars spent here. Is this what all of you local merchants want? I didn't think so. We are right now driving many of your potential customers away.

The other thing that all of you cannabis haters are ignoring is the opportunity to tax the sale of cannabis. We can add a reasonable tax without killing all sales. Why not use it to fund something that we desperately

need, but no one wants to pay for. Something like affordable housing perhaps?

The real truth that many of you continue to deny, is that many of your neighbors and friends have used cannabis for years. Remember prohibition? Your elders found ways to drink. It has been the same for us. Cannabis prohibition has worked just as well. It has also created the same criminal class that alcohol prohibition did. Isn't it smarter to tax and control that what you cannot stop? We as a nation once came to that conclusion regarding alcohol. More recently we as a State made that decision about cannabis.

If you oppose cannabis, I'm sorry, but you lost. The majority of us see the value in making it legal. Please don't be sore losers like those who opposed alcohol. It is here to stay just as alcohol is. There is no going back from here.

Now you can be obstructionist and try to stop what will eventually happen anyhow, or

you can embrace the change that has happened and be a positive influence on cannabis in Cannon Beach.

Let's keep our guests and tax dollars in Cannon Beach. Vote to make sure that cannabis can be sold in our town.

John C. Huismann
Cannon Beach

Great performance

Recently we attended opening night of "Don't Dress for Dinner." We thoroughly enjoyed the play, with its many unexpected twists and turns, and all of the actors and actresses provided great performances. This was our first time attending the Coaster Theatre Playhouse, which is cozy with good acoustics. We highly recommend this if you are up for a night of fun, laughter and entertainment. We were also delighted with a delicious dinner at the Castaways before attending the performance.

Steve and Donna Oberg
Seaside

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