

A show of numbers from unusual creatures

Pyrosomes washing up on local beaches

By Katie Frankowicz
For Cannon Beach Gazette

The pyrosome invasion continues. Thousands of the strange, pickle-shaped gelatinous creatures continue to wash up on Clatsop County beaches months after ocean biologists first recorded masses of them drifting offshore during a research cruise in the spring. Very little is known about pyrosomes or why they have shown up in force now. Research into what they eat and what it means to have them in the ecosystem is ongoing. Pyrosomes have been seen in Oregon and Washington state waters before but never in such large numbers. This spring, there were enough floating in the water column to clog up fishing

gear on commercial shrimp boats. The colonial animals — a single tube contains hundreds, possibly thousands of individuals — have been recorded as far north as Alaska, where they have never been seen before. Fishermen first saw them in their fishing gear in February. At the end of October, researchers with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Alaska Fisheries Science Center were still encountering them in acoustic, surface and bottom trawl surveys all the way from Kodiak to waters off southeastern Alaska. According to NOAA, pyrosome numbers in the Northern California Current — which encompasses Northern California, Oregon and Washington state — went up in 2015 and spiked again in 2016. "As far as scientists know, however, their abundance this year is unprecedented," NOAA spokesman Michael Milstein wrote in June.



Mysterious creatures known as pyrosomes have been washing up on local beaches recently and have been showing up in fishing nets.



Pyrosomes dot the landscape near Cannon Beach as research into their impact on ecosystems continues.

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Seaside resident fights campus relocation

Dunzer challenges UGB expansion

By R.J. Marx
Cannon Beach Gazette

The Seaside School District rammed through plans for a new school campus without adequately considering alternative proposals, a resident said in a legal challenge submitted to the state Land Use Board of Appeals. Money saved from an alternate plan could be used to provide upgrades to the city's bridges, John Dunzer said. "I'd like to see the money that would be saved for the schools would be spent building bridges so the kids could be safe for the 71 percent of the time that they are not in school." In November, the county Board of Commissioners adopted an ordinance amending the county's comprehensive plan expanding Seaside's urban growth boundary to accommodate a new campus. At that meeting, the commission declined to accept Dunzer's submission as the record was closed. A longtime critic of the plan to relocate Seaside's endangered schools out of the tsunami inundation zone, Dunzer

said county approval of the school district's plan violates state planning rules requiring local government to look at all options within the existing boundaries before expansion of those boundaries. Tom Bennett, the county's community relations coordinator, said the county had not received the appeal. **Two sites proposed** By voting to recommend approval of the school district's request for an expansion of the urban growth boundary, the county paved the way for rezoning 40 acres of the property and annexing an additional 49-acre portion of the property located at Seaside Heights Elementary School. Dunzer said he thinks the relocation — at a cost of more than \$100 million, to be paid by voters after passage of a 2015 bond — is unnecessary. "They did not look at expanding the school on two sites instead of just one," Dunzer said. "When you do that, you have the potential of saving almost over \$50 million for the price of the schools. Because it is possible and quite feasible to build a junior high school right above Seaside Heights Elementary School."

Linda Beck-Sweeney to leave fire district board after 18 years

Business owner to continue local volunteer efforts

By Brenna Visser
Cannon Beach Gazette



BRENNA VISSER/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District board member Linda Beck-Sweeney resigned Monday night, citing "personal reasons." Beck-Sweeney, who has served on the board since 1999, was one of three board members who prevailed in a recall vote last year organized by residents who criticized the

Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District board member Linda Beck-Sweeney resigned Monday night. board's handling of former Fire Chief Mike Balzer's firing. Beck-Sweeney did not indicate whether or not the experience played a role in

'I need to make some changes in my personal life... It has nothing to do with the board.'

Linda Beck-Sweeney

her decision, but said after 34 years of volunteer work in Cannon Beach she needed to focus more on her personal life. "I've been doing this since March of 1999. I love it, but I need to make some changes in my personal life, and I feel like it's time to step away

from the board for awhile," she said. "It has nothing to do with the board." Mark Morgans of Greenwood Resources was recommended by Beck-Sweeney and appointed by the board to fill her position until the seat is up for election in May 2019. Morgans served as a volunteer firefighter at the district for more than 17 years before stepping down as a captain in 2016. "It was the right time to retire then, but when you make this kind of commitment it

becomes a part of your life-style," Morgan said. "I missed the camaraderie and the service to the community, so when Linda asked me I saw it as an opportunity to get involved again." Morgans said he hopes to bring his dual perspectives as a firefighter and as a businessman to the table to help the district achieve its goals. "With my background, I am concerned with the needs of firefighters and the taxpayers of Cannon Beach," Morgans said.

Beck-Sweeney, who is the owner of Cannon Beach Vacation Rentals, said that while she is resigning from the board she "isn't going anywhere." She plans to still volunteer at fundraising functions and host barbecues at her business across the street from the district. Board members thanked Beck-Sweeney for her work. "You are going to be missed. Thank you so much for your time and efforts," said board member Garry Smith.

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