

Views from the Rock

Defending your space

It seems like conversations about parking always start too late. “There is nothing happening at this point,” city councilor George Vetter said. “The last time I brought this up, other councilors wanted to wait for some kind of initiative from the public and business community.”

Nothing is in the works, police chief Jason Schermerhorn added. There will be no changes in enforcement and police are not adding any parking limits or signage for the summer.

Former Mayor Mike Morgan brought presented timed parking as an option in 2008, during his campaign for election. He had two options for reducing the need for spaces — more parks downtown and timed parking zones to discourage all-day parking downtown. Shuttle service got a trial in 2011 and 2012, but it wasn’t cost effective.

At a charge to the city of \$47 an hour, “you could take a taxi to the Portland airport for less money,” Morgan said at the time.

Study commissioned

Last summer, after about a half-hour of impassioned arguments from the community, city councilors voted to table any discussion of timed parking or any other parking solutions until after the summer, the Gazette’s Brenna Visser reported.

This after Brian Davis from Lancaster Street Lab presented a parking study driving the timed parking experiment.

The study divided the city into three parking areas: crossroads or major downtown streets, outskirts and lots, and stall counts and types. Almost 400 spaces were not timed. Drivers stayed an average of 3 hours, 13 minutes. Downtown areas were 85 percent full by 10 a.m. on spring break Friday, while lots at more than 90 percent by 2 p.m.

Numbers for a “sunny April Saturday” were roughly comparable, according to the study.

Three-hour parking limit signs on some downtown streets were suggested by city council last year as a pilot program to see whether or not timed parking increases turnover as a way to help the city reach the goal of creating 50 new spots by the end of 2018.

But business owners and community members rejected the idea that timed parking would increase business. More than 100 residents and business owners signed a petition against proposed parking time limits.

“The city MUST offer additional parking NOT limit parking areas!” business owner Mary Ann Oyala wrote in a letter to the city.

Timed parking is “against the grain of our naturally family-friendly community,” jeweler Sharon Amber said.

Alaina and Marty Giguere proposed eliminating RV parking in downtown and midtown and building a parking garage by the recycling area with free parking for merchants and their employees.

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‘The back burner’

Greg Swedenborg, this year’s Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce president and general manager of The Waves, addressed the City Council early this year, after the council announced

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



Can Cannon Beach gather parking tips from the city of Bend?



Nick Hansen, Dalton Smith and Keanu Yokoyama, of Cannon Beach police parking enforcement.

its 2018-19 top initiatives.

“Parking was not on the list,” he said. “When I spoke I asked that as a concerned citizen and business owner that they make time this year for the discussion.”

After the tabling of the two-hour limit, the council “just put the topic on the back burner.”

Their decision frustrated Swedenborg. “They just took the parking engineering report they paid for and put it on a shelf,” he said.

So he offered his own ideas, including the suggestion that Cannon Beach implement a fee-based parking program.

“Nobody wants to damage the ‘character of Cannon Beach’ with the idea of parking meters, increased signage, burden on the locals, but the reality is that for about six months of the year, and probably 80 percent of the weekends we have a parking problem,” he said.

Swedenborg took the city’s 2017 report to a company called Passport Inc., a parking solution company that has a software-based solution and doesn’t require meters or coins.

Using a mobile application, users can be on the beach and repay if time runs out.

In lots, there can be a fee-based parking kiosk program could be rolled out seasonally, limited to summer or prime tourist dates, and locals can be given a sticker that allows them to park for free. Prices could be set at variable rates depending on the time of year, and could be enforced with tickets or warnings.

Swedenborg provided examples of communities similar to Cannon Beach that have successfully implemented the kiosk program — Carmel, California, Breckenridge, Colorado, and Ocean City, Maryland, among others. He estimates the city could implement this solution on city lots and generate about \$400,000 to \$600,000 a year in parking revenue — more if they include city streets and the Tolovana Wayside.

Swedenborg touts the projected revenue opportunity “that pays for itself” with almost zero capital investment instead of “just putting our head in the sand.”

If he gets sufficient backing, he said, he plans on going to the City Council again to share the idea and suggest that they make this issue a priority.

Strategies from Bend

Maybe Cannon Beach can learn some lessons from Oregon’s fastest growing city, Bend — and the fourth fastest growing city in the country.

The city met the problem with the hiring of a dedicated staff person, David Dietrich, as parking demand manager to handle their traffic concerns. The downtown parking district maintains a two-hour parking limit. “We want to have high circulation,” he said. “Obviously the more circulation, the more customers and visitors who can go, spend and enjoy downtown.”

Police mark license plates using a hand-held device, with a requirement that cars move at least 750 feet after two hours. A permit program designates certain lots in the downtown area for employee parking. “The idea is that we maximize on-street and certain areas for visitors and customers,” Dietrich said.

Permit revenue from paid parking pays for infrastructure — painting, striping, lighting and capital improvements. Enforcement pays for itself, he said.

For officials in Bend, the plan is in place to “enhance the customer experience here.” To handle future congestions, options would be adjusting time limits based on zones, expanding paid hourly lots, enhancing connectivity and wayfinding,” Dietrich said. “Say you’re coming into downtown Bend and a visitor, you’re probably going to the first spot you see. If you have wayfinding, we can steer you to the longer, more cost-effective parking. It’s like water — we want people to flow to the right places.”

When a celebrity suicide rattles us all

I was still digesting the sad news about the handbag designer Kate Spade who abruptly ended her own life when I learned the celebrity chef and world traveler bon vivant Anthony Bourdain had killed himself. I woke up last Friday morning thinking only of coffee. Scanning my news feed on social media, I saw a post from a friend, a high achieving, successful young man who is the beverage manager at a restaurant in Manhattan and a partner in two other New York City dining establishments.

“Never knew or met Tony Bourdain, but have been a tremendous fan and follower for years,” he wrote. “Along with millions of other restaurant professionals, I’ve watched and read his work obsessively; he’s single-handedly been the most impactful influence on my outlook and passion for food and my industry as a whole, not to mention, somewhat painful in its irony, a lust for life and the world around us. This one hurts.”

Bourdain, an American chef, author, and television personality, ended his life last week, only days after Kate Spade, an American designer, ended hers. Both these brilliant, talented, wealthy, charismatic, and driven people chose hanging as their method. As is true with any celebrity suicide, news programs, talk show hosts, experts on mental health and culture pundits burst into action, discussing suicide, how to recognize those who might be in danger, and how to prevent it.

While most people cleave to the idea that mental illness is the only explanation as to why anyone would end their life, I think there are other factors. There is an increasing awareness that homelessness, job loss, loneliness, poverty, and chronic physical pain can drive people not normally given to despair to suicide.

Neither Kate Spade nor Tony Bourdain were poor, unemployed, or homeless. They both very much lived in the public eye, constantly surrounded by friends and supporters. To the average observer, it seemed they had everything: money, power, stature, and control over their own lives. They were brilliant creative types blessed with talent and vision. They did share in common, however, a history of depression and in Bourdain’s case, a history of substance abuse. After her death, Spade’s husband told Page Six of the New York Post, she had been drinking heavily. Bourdain readily shared in interviews he’d been a heroin addict. He was a former cocaine user. He never gave up alcohol.

You may have noticed how angry many people feel when someone takes their life. Suicide is often called the ultimate selfish behavior.

The battle between the dark and the light is a hard one. Bourdain was a dark and mordant personality; despite his love of food and his joy of eating it with others, it was his darkness, his “bad boy” status, that drew us to him. He is famously quoted for having said, “I should’ve died in my 20s. I became successful in my 40s. I became a dad in my 50s. I feel like I’ve stolen a car — a really nice car — and I keep looking in the rearview mirror for flashing lights. But there’s been nothing yet.”

I never owned a Kate Spade bag. Her style never was mine. But I admired her verve and her ability to position herself within the ranks of Great American Designers. What I loved about Bourdain was his honesty and capacity for self-effacement. While his death is sad, terribly sad, I choose to view it with sympathy, not judgment or anger. I accept he decided, for whatever reason, to surrender to his dark side. Given the extent of his depression, I thought he fought brilliantly for the light. He brought us joy in the form of food, travel, humor, generosity, his fabulous animal allure. I celebrate those parts and honor the truth that, for decades, he was a valiant soldier against his own darkness.



Anthony Bourdain in 2016.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



Engaging students, community at the Fire Mountain School



Kids at Fire Mountain School around the May pole.

Imagine this: first- and second-graders studying their local watershed and visiting the local water department so that they can understand where the water they drink comes from and why we have a responsibility to keep our streams and rivers clean. Or this: third- and fourth-graders surveying the number of visitors for the local state park to determine if needs of the visitors are being met. These are hands-on experiences for elementary students, but they are also examples of democracy in action, an effort to educate young citizens who will understand the importance of being actively engaged in their communities.

In place-based education schools and local organizations become partners with students. The authenticity of each project they create together guides students to feel like citizens who are

EDUCATION TALKS

LIZ BECKMAN

participating in their community.

Place-based education is a style of schooling that immerses students in local history, cultures, environment, economy, literature, and art, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. Place-based education emphasizes learning through participation in service projects in the immediate schoolyard, neighborhood, town or community.

Many parents focus on exposing their children to the big wide world and have them take in the magnitude

to enlighten and enrich them. But children tend to focus on their immediate surroundings. While the vista may be spectacular, the rocks underfoot or the moss growing on the bark of a tree are closer and often of more interest in their world. Encouraging curiosity helps children build confidence to explore a bigger world.

The goal of place-based education is for children to learn about and love the place where they live enough to want to become actively engaged in caring for their community. When students are engaged in projects that satisfy some levels of their curiosity, they become interested in acquiring the core academic skill of reading, writing, and math. These subjects become tools to explore the world rather than simply assignments. They begin to see that learning is not something that you just do at school

— it is part of everyday life.

More than 100 years ago, John Dewey wrote about the value of teaching hands-on democracy. He wrote: “Education is the preparation for the social position of life, the preparation of the individual to play his proper part in the community or state of which he is a member.”

This column is submitted by Fire Mountain School. Fire Mountain has a mission to nurture each child by providing a joyful, place-based learning experience. It’s an independent school nestled in Falcon Cove surrounded by Oswald West State Park. By providing a foundation of experiential, hands on education for the whole child, the Fire Mountain community nurtures healthy, happy, lifelong learners.

For more information visit FireMountainSchool.org or email firemountainschool@gmail.com.