

Listening – really listening – is the only way to learn the message

“We are the land. The stories of our people — we’re all about the land.”

And so, the tale of the Native Americans who lived on the North Coast hundreds — thousands — of years before pioneer settlers ever approached began.

It was a standing-room-only crowd in the Seaside Public Library community room during the “Listening to the Land” lecture sponsored by the North Coast Land Conservancy.

For two hours we listened to Dick Basch, the vice chairman of the Clatsop-Nehalem tribes, and his wife, Roberta, who calls herself a “Heinz 57” of tribal affiliations.

Through slides showing old photographs, Dick introduced us to his great-grandfather, Joe Duncan, “who lived when the land was gone” and took up logging to “keep the family alive.”

There were other slides, of another tribal member, Simon, first as a young boy in the 1800s, then as a young man, who left the North Coast for 10 years to attend school. As a young lawyer, Simon returned home and saw how the settlers had occupied the land of his ancestors.

The settlers, Dick said, saw that the land “provided everything people needed.”

“Simon was the first to file lawsuits against the federal government for return of the land,” Dick said, raising his chin and smiling ever so slightly.

The slides showed his grandfather clam digging and, later, with family at Indian Beach.

For many, many years Indian children were raised on the beach, at Arch Cape or Hug Point, Dick said.

“Indian Beach was one of the last holdouts,” he said of the area now part of Ecola State Park. “It was one of the last places we had people living in a village.”

Another slide showed Dick as a child, at what is now called NeCus’ Park, which once was the former playground of Cannon Beach Elementary School. The photo was taken in 1955, the sesquicentennial celebration of Lewis and Clark’s arrival on this land.

Even as he described the slide and how he had come dressed for his Indian role, Dick couldn’t mask the excitement he still felt about that day 60 years ago when he gathered with family and friends on land where a Clatsop village once stood.

“We lost a lot of our culture,” he said. “We sort of pushed it down because it wasn’t accepted.”

Hard to understand

The loss of culture may have started as long ago as 1851, when Clatsop Chief Tostow signed a treaty with the federal government; he was clearly not happy about it.

When asked why he was days late arriving to sign the document, Tostow told the government officials, “We were not so very anxious to sell our homes and be driven away like so many birds as we have heard was to be done as soon as we sold our lands.”

Although the treaty reassured the Clatsops that their fishing rights would be protected on Neacoxie Creek and that they would be free to walk along the beach, later they found that newly constructed fences barred them from the land they had once occupied and had fed them.

“It’s hard to understand how it really happened,” Dick told us. “How it happened here.”

But with the Clatsop-Nehalem tribe’s recent participation in the Canoe Project, the tribe’s smoldering spirit caught fire. The Canoe Project, which required the tribe first to find a cedar log large enough to build a 36-foot-long canoe, then to carve it, brought the

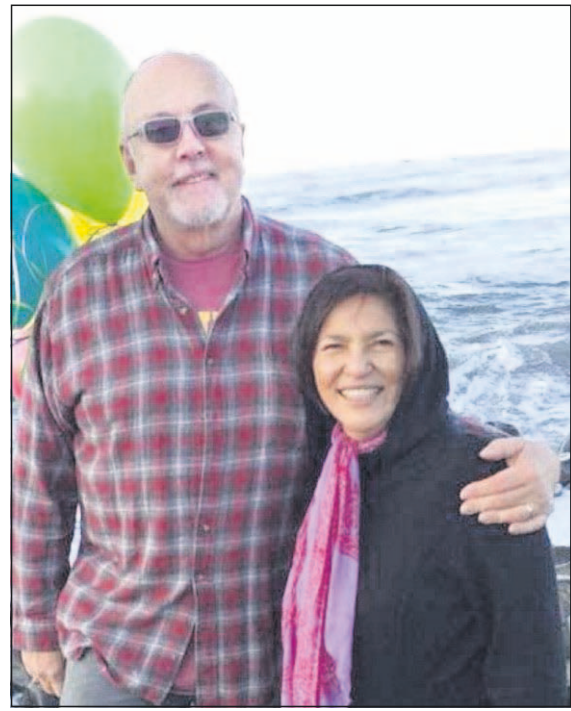
IMPRESSIONS

By
NANCY
MC CARTHY



‘There’s a dance of energy and color in every single plant’

Roberta Basch, Native American, on how they relate to the land



Left: Richard and Roberta Basch of the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes spoke at the Listening to the Land talk recently in Seaside. COURTESY OF THE BASCH FAMILY

Below: Cannon Beach Public Works employees Kirk Anderson, left, and Paul Phillips, right foreground, place the NeCus’ Park sign atop its base near Fir Street in January. EO MEDIA GROUP FILE

Northwest tribes together as they embarked on canoe trips along the Pacific Coast to visit each other and attend celebrations.

From those ongoing explorations, Roberta Basch said, the tribes are learning their songs and sharing stories. They trade information about wild herbs and flowers that can be applied as medicine or eaten for nourishment.

And, they continue to listen to the land.

Neahkahnie Mountain, Roberta said, is “one of the most powerful places on Earth” and remains a sacred place. Saddle Mountain also is revered by the Clatsops.

“People don’t understand what makes us different, why we are connected to the earth,” Roberta said.

“We’re sent out to listen,” she added. “When we’re listening to the land, we’re forming a relationship with the land. ... There’s a dance of energy and color in every single plant.”

This relationship — a way of “connecting with your soul” — she calls “Indian science.” It’s



what “European science,” which involves experimentation, measurement, hypotheses and proofs, is missing.

“Imagine how powerful it would be if they were matched together,” Roberta Basch said.

Keep listening

As I left the lecture, I wondered why so many people had turned out on a Wednesday night to listen to Dick and Roberta, who are already well known on the North

Coast. Perhaps it was curiosity. Maybe it was a genuine desire to learn more about the Indians’ history about the land we all share.

But I hope, in any case, we all listened closely. And we keep listening.

That’s the only way healing will begin.

Nancy McCarthy covers South Clatsop County as a reporter for *The Daily Astorian*. She also is the editor of the *Seaside Signal* and the *Cannon Beach Gazette*.

Side Rail

JON RAHL

Tourism grants an opportunity to expand awareness

Long before my time in Oregon and association with the Seaside Visitors Bureau, some very wise people made the decision to create a program that invites businesses, nonprofits and organizations to help impact travel and tourism in Seaside.

The visitors bureau’s budget funds an annual advertising campaign to help generate ongoing awareness and visibility for the area, but an annual earmark (also known as Seaside’s tourism grant program) for events and development is also a critical piece towards long-term success for Seaside.

Events have been a staple in our community for years. The summer events are synonymous with

Seaside, and you know them well. The Fourth of July celebration showcases one of the biggest fireworks shows in the Pacific Northwest. Seaside Beach Volleyball and Hood to Coast anchor August and bring thousands of people to town.

Most locals are also well aware of Seaside’s two car shows (Muscle and Chrome in June, Wheels and Waves in September) that usher in summer while also bidding it adieu right after the kids go back to school.

Dig a little deeper and you find events and programs that help pepper the fall and winter months with visitors during what has traditionally been Seaside’s “slow” months. The Seaside Jazz Festi-



JON RAHL

val fits this category well. Occupying a late February weekend for more than 30 years, it drives hundreds of music enthusiasts into Seaside hotels for a long weekend when we could see a brief skiff of snow, or we could see temperatures in the 60s — as was

the case a couple of weeks ago.

What’s unique about the jazz festival is that it’s also been a longtime recipient of Seaside’s tourism grant program. The annual grant application process kicked off on Feb. 20 and invites ideas for events, infrastructure and programming that help drive additional awareness and visitation to the coast. Priority is given to projects that happen between Sept. 15 and June 15, but the key ingredient is development that brings more overnight visitors to our community.

Past tourism grant funds helped develop Seaside Naturally. The Seaside Chamber of Commerce started that program, built a website and a terrific

foundation. A year ago, the visitors bureau took over management of the website and social media presence, but it likely wouldn’t have started without that kick-start from the grant program.

For 2014-15, two first-year events, Coast-ucopia (a fall harvest festival) and a business entrepreneurial retreat run by Seaside Yoga, tried their hand at bringing something different to Seaside. Both experienced their own versions of success, and the Tourism Advisory Committee (a City Council-appointed group that meets monthly to discuss all visitors bureau activities) also saw enough promise in both events that there is reason for optimism if each were to take a stab at a second year.

The funds are meant to be seed money to get things going, with the hope that it’s eventually a self-sustaining event. Some work out, some do not, but I love this program because it creates opportunity and exploration, which might spur another idea or program down the road. What’s your idea for an event? A complete grant packet is available at SeasideOR.com/grant, or you can drop me an email to request one.

Jon Rahl is the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and assistant general manager of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. For questions or column suggestions, he can be reached at jon@seasideor.com.

Planning commission mulls medical marijuana

Pot from Page 1A

holders in Clatsop County, she said, and giving them access to their medicine will improve their quality of life.

The speakers also shared with the commission how difficult it is to get a medical marijuana card, and most people won’t put in the time, effort or money to get a card for fraudulent purposes, they said.

“Some of your best friends are people who use medical marijuana, and a doctor sent them there,” Geiger said.

Speaking from personal experience, Nelson told the commission there have been no problems in relation to



ANGELA FAIRLESS

Sweet Relief in the nearly one year it has been operating.

“There has not been one hassle or adverse effect on the

city,” he said. Rather than throwing “the baby out with the bath water,” Nelson said, the city should articulate what its goal is with the restrictions and what it is trying to prevent in terms of public safety, parking, traffic or other issues.

The speakers offered to continue sharing information and other resources as the city

considers allowing medical marijuana dispensaries.

“At this point, we’re willing to do whatever we have to do to work with this commission, to work with the council,” Geiger said.

State restrictions already exist that prevent medical marijuana dispensaries from being within 1,000 feet of a school and another dispensary. Taking those restrictions into consideration, as well as the likelihood that dispensaries would go in commercial zones, the commissioners asked Cupples to create a visual representation of potential locations or areas where dispensaries could go. From there, they can consider if any

of those sites raise red flags or which ones seem appropriate.

Using those guidelines, Cupples said, three dispensaries probably is the maximum for Seaside.

Also at the meeting, the commission voted unanimously to approve a variance for the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District to expand the permitted sales associated with the Seaside Farmers Market. The district asked that vendors be allowed to sell prepared food cooked on site, as well as arts and craft items. The farmers market takes place on the Seaside American Legion property, which is zoned medium-density residential.

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