



Fourth-grader Samuel Taylor makes a move in a chess game during a chess club meeting at Gearhart Elementary School. The club was started last year and has about 15 students this year.

KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

Checkmate!

School groups hope to spark a 'renaissance'

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

It's deathly quiet in the Broadway Middle School library for a few moments. An engaging competition is underway but the flurry of activity is taking place entirely in the competitors' minds.

Every so often, they make hand movements, but even those are subtle and muted.

At last, the silence is broken when sixth-grader Sage Park finally announces, "Checkmate."

The game is over, but the excitement to play is not. Park's opponent, fellow sixth-grader Crystal Rouse, immediately asks if Park wants to strike up another match, and the process starts over.

That is one of the girls' favorite things about the game of chess: Even if you lose a match, you can play again, and there's always something new to learn.

"You're just getting smarter every time you play," Rouse said.

The two students, along with others at the middle school, now have ample



Broadway Middle School chess club leader David Rouse, back right, gives instruction to eighth-grader Payton Stowers while sixth-graders Crystal Rouse, front left, and Sage Park are engrossed in a game during a chess club session. David Rouse is getting the program up and running at the middle school this year.

KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO



Gearhart Elementary School students Olivia Mayhugh, front left, and Cara Foust, front right, play a game of chess during a chess club meeting. The club is in its second year under the guidance of Dan King, who has years of experience leading a chess club at Seaside Heights Elementary School.

KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

opportunity to play and learn, thanks to the school's new chess club, one of very few in the county.

Until recently, the offering of scholastic chess opportunities in the area has been sparse, but that may change as several fledgling groups at local schools work to spark a renaissance.

David Rouse, Crystal Rouse's grandfather and the former Seaside Lady Gulls soccer team coach, started the middle school club. Although he led a club at the former Cannon Beach Elementary School for a time, he still is learning the ropes at Broadway Middle School when it comes to student interest level and club objectives.

"I've seen some kids in here who might want to play; we'll see how that develops," he said.

For a few months, Rouse has held club meetings during lunch periods and after school on Mondays and Fridays. He hopes giving students different times to meet will spark more interest and increase participation.

The school administration supports the program. Even if only a handful of kids attend the club, Principal John McAndrews said, "It's important to provide an opportunity they're engaged in."

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Clerk's office collecting ballots for Gearhart recall election

The Clatsop County Clerk and Elections Department has received more than a fifth of the ballots from eligible Gearhart voters in the March 26 special election for the recall of Mayor Dianne Widdop.

Ballots were delivered to the post office March 6, and voters received the ballots starting March 9. As of Wednesday, the Clatsop County Clerk and Elections Department had received 206 ballots from a total of 928 eligible voters for a current voter turnout of 22.2 percent.

The number of registered voters is subject to change based on undeliverable ballots received, according to the clerk's office.

Voters have until 8 p.m. March 26 to return their ballots to the elections office, which will be open from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. on election



DIANNE WIDDOP

day. Ballots must be delivered to one of two official drop sites: Gearhart City Hall, 698 Pacific Way or the clerk's office, 820 Exchange St., Astoria. Postmarks will not be considered.

Daily ballot returns can be found on the elections division webpage on the county's website at www.co.clatsop.or.us.

Gearhart awaits decision on state land-use appeal

State land use board verdict due in April

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

The city of Gearhart is waiting on a decision from the Oregon Land Use Board of Appeals regarding an appeal by local historic livery owner Shannon Smith.

In June, Smith filed a notice with LUBA that she intended to appeal a land-use decision made by the Gearhart City Council. Since then, Gearhart city officials have turned in a record of the documents compiled and filed on behalf of the case; Smith and her attorney made several record objections; the city provided more documents to settle the record; Smith submitted a petition for review; and Gearhart filed a response brief.

The last stop was an oral argument that took place before the three-member appeals board in Portland on Feb. 26. Shelby Rihala, an associate with Jordan Ramis PC, represented the city; Smith was represented by her attorney Dan Kearns, of Portland. The board indicated the decision would be announced around April 1.

City Attorney Peter Watts said the board "could go in a lot of directions with this."

"It's difficult to know exactly where it will come down," he said.

When Watts receives the decision, he will forward it to City Administrator Chad Sweet and the Gearhart City Council.

"What the decision is will determine our next step going forward," Watts said.

In her appeal, Smith is challenging the city's position that she must seek another conditional use permit to complete work on her historic livery stable, which she has been trying to renovate for use as an event center for several years. Rather than having to seek a new permit, Smith wants an extension of a previous conditional use permit, which was issued in 2012 and subject to 13 conditions for approval.

The city can grant a six-month extension on a conditional use permit if substantial completion of a project has occurred, Watts said. Smith was granted an extension in October 2013. Her permit expired April 26, 2014, and she requested a second extension, claiming

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Adolescent Sexuality Conference canceled

Seaside convention center waives \$1,000 cancellation fee

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

The annual Adolescent Sexuality Conference, previously held at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, has been canceled for 2015.

The Oregon Teen Pregnancy Task Force, the event's fiscal sponsor, recently emailed conference participants announcing the news.

Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin, news station KOIN6 and a few special interest groups, such as Parents' Rights in Education, had expressed disapproval for the conference, which was scheduled for April 13 and 14. Some people and interest groups said they believe

the material disseminated at the conference in the past was inappropriate, even illegal.

"This conference has morphed into such a perversion from actual health and welfare that it is time to bring it to a stop and get back to some sanity," Bergin said in a December interview the *Seaside Signal*.

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Protesters turned out at the Adolescent Sexuality Conference in Astoria last year. Although the conference has been conducted for 30 years, it was canceled this year a month before it was to open at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, where it has been held for several years.

LOUIE OPATZ PHOTO

