

# It's time to open another door

Why is it that, when introduced to someone for the first time, the question always pops up: What do you do?

Not: Who are you?  
We seem to know people by their occupation. Indeed, we even start thinking of ourselves in terms of how we earn a living rather than what kind of person we are or how we enjoy spending our time.

I've fallen into this trap, too. When I introduce myself at Seaside Downtown Development Association or Seaside Chamber of Commerce meetings, I give a long list of occupations: I'm the editor of the *Seaside Signal* and the *Cannon Beach Gazette* and South County reporter for *The Daily Astorian*.

Whew!  
Pretty soon, however, I'll just have one word to introduce myself: Retired.

My retirement on March 20 will, I expect, allow me to become involved in my community instead of being the objective third party. Hopefully, my friends and those who have always known me as the "reporter" or the "editor" or even the "columnist" won't feel that they have to tell me, "This is off the record" or warn others to

"be careful of what you say because it will end up in print."

Yes, I do expect to do some freelance writing and maybe even work on projects that need a writer's touch. But I also expect that, as I close the door on this part of my life, another door will open that will allow me to be truly part of the community of volunteers, of activists that I have come to admire.

This is what is so exciting about living on the North Coast: We are a small band of people (I have lived in neighborhoods elsewhere that have larger populations than all of Clatsop County) who get things done. In my eight years here, I have seen huge projects accomplished, all because people here know how to work together. They combine their experience, their intelligence, their connections and their compassion into a joint effort, and they move mountains of barriers to accomplish their goals.

I want to be part of that.  
What keeps me here — what will keep me here permanently? The people, the beauty, the "family" I have found and the sense of being at home.

There are way too many people I have met through the years and have truly grown fond of to mention here. The difference between living in a big city and living on the North Coast

## IMPRESSIONS

By  
**NANCY MCCARTHY**



**I'm looking forward to finding out what else is out there**

is the amount of care we have for one another. It goes beyond the surface of the brusque "Hi, how're doing?" When people here ask how you are doing, they really want to know.

Although people here may know what's going on in your personal life (no, we aren't above gossiping; it's still a small area, you know), they keep out of it. They let you find your own way, and if they are asked for help, they are always ready and willing to give it.

That's why it has been such a pleasure to be an editor and reporter here

for eight years. I've been privileged to observe and chronicle the incredulous, crazy, amazing, thoughtful, fantastic, mind-blowing, gut-wrenching, hysterical and sobering events, issues and people of South Clatsop County — during what I consider the best years of my life.

In this next stage, however, I want to do more than write about it; I want to experience it.

People who know about my impending retirement ask me what I'm going to do. I jokingly tell them I'm going to "sleep in."

But, in fact, I don't plan to doze through the rest of my life. Yes, I've heard a rumor that there's an ocean to the west of us, and I do plan to catch up on some long overdue beach walks. Maybe now that I won't be sitting in front of a computer for numerous hours a day, I'll get more exercise by hiking along the area's beautiful trails. Casual conversations over coffee with friends in the middle of the afternoon won't be unheard of. Perhaps I can catch up on my reading — without feeling I have to edit every sentence.

But I'm looking forward to finding out what else is out there, how I might put what little talent I have to work for others. As my friends and co-workers will testi-

fy, I don't feel comfortable being too lazy for too long.

I admit, it will be wrenching to turn the newspapers over to someone else. They feel like my children.

Every week they start out as a casual list of story ideas, and as the days continue, they are formed and shaped into living stories that are meant to inform, entertain and call to action. They may irritate some readers, satisfy others, spark a laugh or trigger tears, but they are meant to reflect the community that we all have decided to be a part of.

Those stories, however, will be in good hands with reporters Erick Bengel and Katherine Lacaze, who have honed their knowledge about the North Coast and have come to respect those who live here. They will do fine for you.

I never really thought about retirement, but, after 48 years in the newspaper business (I started, of course, when I was 3 years old...), perhaps it's time to try something different.

And when someone asks me what I do, maybe I can tell them who I am, instead, or how I enjoy spending my time.

If nothing else, I can just give them a one word answer: Retired.

*Nancy McCarthy is editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette and writes for The Daily Astorian.*

## LUBA decision will impact Smith application

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she completed substantial work on the building before the permit expired, according to a notice of intent to appeal filed last June.

The notice states Smith applied for "verification of substantial construction on her conditional use permit, which was administratively denied" by Sweet.

Smith then appealed Sweet's administrative decision to the Gearhart Planning Commission. In response, Sweet "issued a written decision reiterating his denial and explaining that (Smith) had no appeal remedy to the planning commission," the notice states.

Shortly after, the Gearhart City Council accepted Smith's request to appeal Sweet's decision. The council

took up the request at a meeting last May and continued the request to a June 4 meeting, when City Councilor Dan Jesse made a motion to grant Smith's appeal. The motion died for lack of a second.

The basis of Smith's LUBA appeal, according to a letter Kearns wrote to Watts last June, is that Smith feels she was denied an important right when Sweet told her she had no appeal right with the planning commission.

"It is quite clear that the city committed a procedural error that prejudiced Ms. Smith's right to a full and fair hearing and a final written decision based on evidence in the record and the applicable approval criteria," Kearns argued in the letter.

Gearhart's position, Watts said, is that the "expiration of

**A historical livery stable in Gearhart is the subject of an appeal made by owner Shannon Smith to the state Land Use Board of Appeals.**  
NANCY MCCARTHY PHOTO



the permit was not a land-use decision," and the city did not make a decision or take action at the June 4 meeting, so there is no action to appeal.

Sweet's interpretation of the Gearhart Municipal Code is that the city does not have the discretion to allow a second six-month extension on a permit. As it stands, Smith will have to apply for another conditional use permit, her third, if she wants to continue

work on the barn, which city officials have told Smith multiple times. The LUBA decision could change that.

The board could send Sweet's original administrative decision back to the Gearhart Planning Commission or City Council so those bodies could decide whether to grant her the extension, Sweet said.

Smith could not be reached for comment.

# SEASIDE Signal

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