

Side Rail JON RAHL

Defining what travel means to me and the benefits

Going to the beach. Relaxing. Meeting new business partners. Discovering history. Supporting small businesses and jobs. These are just a few examples of what travel means to people and to communities like Seaside, Oregon.

This year, to celebrate National Travel and Tourism Week (NTTW) 2015, May 2-10, the travel industry is underscoring how travel affects us all with the theme: "Travel is..."

Travel is enriching. Travel is exploring places you've never been before. Travel is spending time with family and friends while sometimes making

new ones. There are many ways to complete that sentence, but no matter how you draw it up, travel is extremely vital to our community. Whether you travel yourself or have a job in the travel industry, you know that travel and tourism can be impactful to people all over our county, state and country.

I've written something similar in the past, but without travel in Seaside, I don't have this job and my family probably never moves to the great state of Oregon. It's as simple as that. Without the travel and meeting industry, there would be other employ-



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ment to be found by approximately 5,000 people that are supported by travel and tourism jobs in Clatsop County. Those jobs had

direct earnings of \$134.9 million in 2013, while overnight stays contributed more than \$8 million in local transient tax receipts for Clatsop County during the same time period. Take that a step further and you'll learn that Oregon's tourism industry generates \$10.3 billion in economic impact and directly employs more than 100,000 Oregonians.

Pretty easy to take that last paragraph and sum up travel in one word. Travel is impactful. One out of nine jobs in the United States is dependent on travel and tourism. That number shrinks to about

one in four jobs in Clatsop County. In hindsight, impactful may be selling the definition of travel a bit short.

The theme — "Travel is..." — not only amplifies the call of an entire industry, but it customizes the unique impact of the U.S. travel industry on the fabric of America. Destinations, including ours here in Seaside, are defining travel as it specifically contributes to our local economies, businesses and lives.

Did travel bring you to Seaside or have you had a job in Seaside that allows you to say what travel is to you and your cur-

rent relationship with this popular spot on Oregon's North Coast? If you have a "Travel is..." story, I'd love to hear it. I don't get much email related to this monthly column, but I'd love to share a few other meaningful definitions of travel, so please let me know if you have one.

Have other thoughts or a question about tourism in Seaside, or maybe an idea for a future column? Drop me an email at jon@seasideor.com. Jon Rahl is the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and assistant general manager of the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.

Scene and Heard CLAIRE LOVELL

It's May Day... time to welcome spring, happy days

May Day! May Day! May Day!

No, it isn't a distress call, only a reminder for you to hang that little flower basket on your neighbor's doorknob as a welcome to happy days. Just knock and run.

This and that

Continuing last week's story, Smoke, the wild German shepherd was discovered by Chris, the protagonist, who befriended him and eventually became his owner. It was an interesting, well-written story and afforded my discovery of a gifted author. He's written stories about horses as well, one called "A Horse

in the House," which may be my next read.

A few days ago, I was invited for lunch to Himani, an Indian cuisine restaurant on Marine Drive in Astoria. The meal was served buffet style with everything labeled, but of course, I couldn't remember those names. Let me just say I had basmati rice, potatoes and broccoli and some kind of flat bread which looked like a not-quite done pancake. There was rice pudding cooked with nuts and raisins and curry sauce wherever you wanted it. It left a nice hot sensation in my throat but the ice water helped. They also had chicken. I



CLAIRE LOVELL

wouldn't try it because it was red and I thought it might burn, too. Adding much to the ambience were Indian women in pretty saris — a scene from another world.

Easter Sunday, after taking a small part in the church service, I went as a dinner guest with friends to Surf Pines. We had a very nice meal, after which we talked for a couple of hours. I mostly listened because that's the best way to learn. Seeing a herd of elk in a ravine on the way to their home was an extra bonus. They have a regular route they travel there. Our host said they have taken over the underpass of the Lewis and Clark Trail on Highway 101 near Camp Rilea. Guess that puts the kibosh on any hikes through there.

I know everyone wants to get on the marijuana bandwagon, but I'm sor-

ry we're thinking about it. I doubt that we can stay within the medical guidelines and not spill over into public recreational use with the possibility for accidents. Anything mind-altering can cause serious problems. Do we have to go along to get along? Sounds like a cop out to me.

I'm writing this on April 20. If my brother Tommy had lived, this would have been his 100th birthday. Egad! He was just a year younger than Freida Johnson.

I really admire Neal Maine's photography skills, especially with birds. His capture of the courtship

of Caspian terns is fantastic, showing the interplay among three of them, sharing fish. I guess one good "tern" deserves another.

Laugh lines

Two athletes were discussing whether or not they would play baseball in heaven. They concluded that whoever died first would come back and let the other one know. Soon one guy did cross over and flew down with a word for his friend. "About baseball in heaven," he said, "I've got good news and bad news. The good news is there is baseball in heaven. The bad news is you're pitching next Thursday."

Gardner's Art of Surfing school to give free lessons for Veterans Surf Day

Local surfing instructor promotes the healing quality of the sport

By Katherine Lacaze
Seaside Signal

Local surfing and martial arts instructor Tony Gardner believes there is something restorative about being out in the ocean that is abstract yet actual.

"It's very therapeutic, being out there with the sun and the waves," said Gardner, a Seaside native and founder of the Art of Surfing. "It's a transformative experience and it brings peace."

That sensation can be hard to define — surfers just call it "stoked," he said — but giving veterans a chance to experience it is the goal behind his inaugural Veteran Surf Day event, scheduled May 22, over Memorial Day weekend. He is offering free surfing lessons to about 20 veterans, and Josh Gizdavich, owner of Cleanline Surf Shop, is donating surfboards and gear.

Together, the men hope to give veterans an opportunity to take a break from overwhelming emotions that may be triggered by Memorial Day observances and focus instead on the water. Participants also can interact with other military members in a community setting and, perhaps, find comfort and enjoyment by swapping stories and sharing an experience.

"I want to help them find health and healing, and I think the ocean does that," Gardner said. "I think their participation would be healing, both physically and mentally."

He originally generated the idea of helping veterans through surfing because he has a close family member who is a veteran, has been deployed overseas and has developed post-traumatic stress disorder. He thought surfing would be a good way to help his family member cope with the stress. Unfortunately, he said, it did not work out that way, but he has seen it be a successful positive outlet for other veterans dealing with the same problem.

Teaching veterans to surf has been a way to help them overcome their challenges and to focus on their abilities, not their disabilities, Gardner said. It often is accompanied with a sense



of achievement and improved self-esteem, he added. He plans to make Veteran Surf Day an annual event.

"If I can just help one veteran ... or one veteran can receive some relief from what they're going through, then I've accomplished something," he said.

Other upcoming events

Gardner also will be holding Grom Day on June 20 and a Family Surf Day on June 26. Grom is slang for a young surfer, and on Grom Day, Gardner will give free instructions for children as old as 16. This is the second year he's offered the event. His desire is to help children experience nature and sojourn away from the "technology-saturated" culture for a day.

"You can still have fun outside without a screen in front of you," he said.

As for Family Day, he encourages families to share a hobby, and surfing is one option. His definition of family is as simple as "at least one parent and a child." Instructions are free both days, and Cleanline is again donating equipment.

"Sometimes it's hard for parents to pay for lessons and gear, so this is a nice opportunity for them to try it and see how they like it," Gardner said.

Passionate about the learning process

Teaching has played a large role in Gardner's life for many decades. He has taught martial arts for more than 40 years, both informally to friends and formally through classes. He became a mixed martial arts black belt in 1976 and now is a seventh-degree black belt. He has experience with Jeet Kun Do, Tae Kwon Do, Modern Arnis,

Kajukenbo, Wun Hop Kuen Do, Judo, Karate, Kendo and Siu Pak Pai Kung Fu.

His martial arts experience is tied to his appreciation of Japanese language and culture as a whole. He was immersed in both as a student in Japan starting in 1989. He was originally intrigued by Japanese language and culture, though, when he saw a white writing exhibit by Mark Tobey at the Asian Art Museum located inside Volunteer Park in the Capitol Hill neighborhood of Seattle. He was 7 at the time. That experience was followed up by him attending a few of martial artist and film star Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do classes, as Gardner's uncle was a student of Lee's at the time.

"That really started me, drew me in, pulled me in," he said. "It's like gravity."

After obtaining an associate of science degree from Portland Community College, he went to Japan, where he taught English and got an associate of Japanese language degree in Nagasaki in 1991. While living there, he developed an appreciation for several aspects of Japanese culture, from the residents' sense of unity and ability to work together harmoniously to achieve a goal, to their emphasis on mental focus, determination and meditation.

He traveled back to Kyoto several times over the years, but the trips became less frequent during the past decade. Nothing, he said, helps a person stay current in a language in the same way as visiting or living in a foreign country.

"It's just one of those skills you have to do by living," he said.

After returning to the states in 1991, he taught Japanese at Clatsop Community College in Astoria and also gave private Japanese instruction in Cannon Beach for about three years starting in 2002. He got a bachelor of arts degree with a focus on Japanese language from Evergreen State College in Olympia, Wash., in 1998 and then went to Maui, where he taught a mathematics at Kalama Intermediate School in Makawao.

He has taught surfing since 1985, when he was Seaside's



KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

Tony Gardner, right, the founder of Art of Surfing, and Josh Gizdavich, owner of Cleanline Surf Shop, are partnering together to offer free rental gear and surf lessons for a Veterans Surf Day on May 22. They also will be offering a Grom Day on June 20 and a Family Surf Day on June 26. Gardner is a master surf instructor with more than 30 years of teaching experience. He also teaches martial arts.

head lifeguard on the beach. He continued teaching professionally after school and on weekends when he was in Maui. In 2002, he took his teaching to the next level by establishing Art of Surfing, his own surfing school that offers lessons year-round.

Gardner incorporates several of the techniques and principles he acquired from practicing martial arts into the way he teaches surfing, and that gives his methods a distinction, he said. He lays a foundation for students that contains similar principles, such as flexibility, balance and a specific type of strength. He believes it's important to be patient and take time laying a strong foundation, so students know the answers to basic questions about movement and body mechanics, such as why, how and when. From there, he introduc-

es techniques, takes the students through gradient steps and helps them work through problems as they practice their skills.

"When you put all these things together, after a few years, there's a flow," he said. "You're not thinking, you're reacting."

He works with all level of students for surfing, from beginners to advanced learners. He also teaches martial arts classes at the Mary Blake Playhouse. His philosophy is that "as a teacher, you've got to be in love with what you do," and he is passionate about the learning process.

"I have this chance to introduce people to this wonderful world out there and introduce them to what they can do," he said.

For more information, visit www.artofsurfing.net or contact Gardner at 503-440-5017 or tonygardner@artofsurfing.net.