

Summer tourism begins, but who plans the events?

Every town on the North Coast has its own way of signaling summer, and when summer does arrive on the weekend of June 20 this year, it will be duly noted by thousands of visitors.

From Cannon Beach to Astoria, the weekend promises to be filled with activities — if anyone can get to them.

My question is this: Do the planners of these events ever talk to each other?

In Cannon Beach, the Sandcastle Contest Weekend runs from June 19 to 21, when the tides are low enough to accommodate the crowds, cars and the sandcastle-crafters. That is also opening weekend for the Coaster Theatre's "Little Shop of Horrors."

Meanwhile, in Seaside, two of the city's largest events, the Seaside Beach Soccer Tournament and the Muscle and Chrome car show, will occupy the downtown core area.

Gearhart Golf Links will host the Greater Oregon Brew Tour on June 19.

Astoria will be the site of the annual Scandinavian Midsummer Festival June 19 through 21 at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds.

And, for those who can make it to the Long Beach (Wash.) Peninsula, the annual Northwest Garlic Festival is being staged in Ocean Park June 19 and 20.

And so, the summer begins. Last summer, traffic snarls

caused consternation among drivers up and down the coast. When there's only one main road connecting those towns and every town has a big event, there's bound to be bumper-to-bumper traffic. And that's a bummer.

I admit that, after eight years of being a full-time North Coast resident, I'm becoming tired of seeing all the visitors in town every weekend. I'm turning into a curmudgeon who growls when six cars are parked in front of a vacation rental home on my street for an entire weekend.

At the same time, I know our area thrives on the generosity of strangers. Without them, we would have few resources to maintain the lifestyle we would like to become accustomed to.

Finding the balance

So there's the balance we need to consider. The Seaside Visitors Bureau and the Seaside Chamber of Commerce have done a bang-up job of attracting crowds to local events. Astoria's event planners also produce myriad tourism opportunities.

The Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce has managed to coax a 1 percent lodging tax increase out of the city's budget committee. Seventy percent of that increase will go to help the chamber bolster the staff at the information center, which, ultimately, will result in more "visitors and tourism" for

IMPRESSIONS

By
NANCY MCCARTHY



Bumper-to-bumper traffic is a bummer.



EO MEDIA GROUP FILE

Between 10,000 and 15,000 people, according to an informal estimate from City Councilor George Vetter, turned out for the 2014 Sandcastle Contest.

Cannon Beach, according to City Manager Brant Kucera.

Yippee. Just this past week, two of the "old guard" in Cannon Beach have died. Steve McLeod, an artist who may be remembered for his paintings of Haystack Rock that looked more like photographs when finished and who also created artwork from seaweed, lived in Cannon Beach since the time the town was an early arts colony.

Pat Friedland, former operator of Pat's Coffee Shop from the late 1970s to 1998, died May 30. She lived a quiet life in Cannon Beach, but she was a generous benefactor to the local arts, conservation projects and student scholarships.

Those who raised a cup of black

coffee in Pat's honor at a recent informal tribute, recalled how she used to tell the tourists who came to her shop on our rare sunny afternoons to head to the beach instead of to the stores.

That attitude may not be very popular now.

At another recent gathering of friends, a few people fondly recalled Cannon Beach's "old days," when the North Coast was sparsely populated and tourists were relatively unfamiliar with the area. When the town's gnarly "characters" were welcome and the town's streets weren't filled with day-trippers. They agreed those days are long gone.

We can't — and don't want to — send all the visitors away. We

depend on them. Maybe too much.

My favorite season used to be summer. Now, it's winter. Especially January and February, the darkest time of the year. There are few cars parked on the streets. It's easier to drive on the highway. Local towns are quiet. Full-time residents turn to each other for company.

We may not be able to have that ambiance all the time here on the North Coast. But we need more conversations about what we do want here and how to plan for it.

We need to ask ourselves how much is too much.

Nancy McCarthy is a freelance writer who recently retired as editor of the Cannon Beach Gazette and the Seaside Signal. Her column appears monthly.

DEQ now seeking volunteers for groundwater study

The Oregon Department of Environmental Quality is offering free water testing for 60 or more wells in the Clatsop County area in the fall.

DEQ's North Coast study area includes the cities of Astoria, Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Nehalem, Manzanita, Wheeler, Rockaway Beach, Garibaldi, Bay City and Tillamook, as well as unincorporated areas in Clatsop and Tillamook counties.

The department will be analyzing well-water samples for chemicals that pose a potential health risk, as well as several common water quality parameters, according to a news release from DEQ. Tests will look for nitrate/nitrite, arsenic, pesticides and herbicides, general hardness from ion concentrations, selected metals, pharmaceuticals and personal care products and bacteria.

Samplings will occur during the fall of 2015 and spring of 2016 and results then will be sent to participants.

The study is being conducted with funds provided by the Oregon legislature in 2013 to help DEQ monitor groundwater across the state. The department identified "hot spots," or areas of concern, around the state, and concentrations of nitrates and shallow aquifers, as well as community interest, indi-

cated the North Coast as a potential groundwater "hot spot," according to DEQ.

While public water suppliers are required to test their water on a regular basis, homeowners who rely on a well for their water are not required to test unless they transfer property.

"For these reasons, DEQ is conducting a groundwater study to learn more about the quality of the groundwater and communicate any health risks to homeowners who rely on well water," the release states. "DEQ is looking for volunteers who are interested in having their drinking well water tested."

Testing will not cost homeowners.

All sample results are public record, but addresses and names are not included in the database available to the public, only the latitude and longitude of the well, according to DEQ.

To participate in the study, email groundwater.monitoring@deq.state.or.us or call (503) 693-5736 by July 12. Applicants will be sent a form with questions about their well, and participants will be selected based on location and characteristics of their well. All participants must have access to their well water before any treatment or filtration occurs.

For more information, visit www.oregon.gov/deq/WQ/Pages/Groundwater/GWProtection.aspx.

Angel's Variety Store opens in mall



SUBMITTED PHOTO

On Friday, June 5, the Seaside Chamber of Commerce celebrated a ribbon-cutting for new business and member, Angel's Variety Store in the Carousel Mall. Holding the ribbon (left) is Sunny Trapp. On the right is Angel Kavenaugh, owner, and her son, Shane, standing behind her and not shown. Angel also owns and operates Weddings by Angel and Angel's Mobile Notary Services, LLC, at this location.

Signal, Gazette win awards for excellence

The Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette earned four awards in the Northwest Excellence in Journalism competition sponsored by the Society of Professional Journalists.

The awards included third place in general excellence for the Seaside Signal. The awards, for work published during 2014, were presented Saturday, June 4, at the an-

nual banquet of the Oregon Territory Chapter of the SPJ in Albany. The chapter covers Oregon and Southwest Washington. The newspapers competed against nondaily newspapers in Oregon, Washington, Alaska, Idaho and Montana. Former editor Nancy McCarthy also earned third place in the best local column category. "I'm happy the Sigma Delta Chi judges recognized

the commitment, hard work and long hours put in by the Seaside Signal staff, which is dedicated to publishing a quality community newspaper," said Nancy McCarthy, who recently retired as editor of the Signal. McCarthy also won a third-place award for government and politics reporting category, for coverage of attempts to unseat Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop. Last

fall, the Seaside Signal won the "Small Business of the Year" award from the Seaside Chamber of Commerce.

"The Seaside community has greatly supported the Signal, and the staff appreciates that support," McCarthy said. "Without it, the reporters, sales representatives and the other staff members could not produce such a successful newspaper."

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