

# Gearhart students explore different cultures at fair

## School plans to make World Culture Fair an annual event

By Katherine Lacaze  
Seaside Signal

In Norway, children are said to be born with skis on their feet. In Mexico, people use an outdoor pila to wash clothes and dishes. In Finland, sauna bathing is a central part of the culture.

These are just some of the facts students learned June 9 during a World Culture Fair at Gearhart Elementary School. Each class from all grade levels took turns visiting the school's music room to hear 10-minute presentations on Norway, Finland and Mexico, given by teacher assistant Bjorg Spiliotes; Sari Esnard, the parent of a student; and ELD assistant Linda Robledo, respectively.

Principal Juli Wozniak said the event was to be an educational, celebratory event similar to Seaside Heights Elementary School's annual Celebration of the Arts event but with a different focus: cultural awareness and diversity. Third-grade teacher Suzi Reagan and second-grade teacher Emily Downes planned and organized the event. Only three speakers were available this year, but Wozniak hopes to grow the event next year.

Spiliotes presented a slideshow divulging information about Norway. She increased the popularity of her station by serving the students heart-



KATHERINE LACAZE PHOTO

**Teacher assistant Bjorg Spiliotes gives a presentation on Norway during a World Cultural Fair at Gearhart Elementary School on June 9. She touched on interesting animal signs, Norway's affinity for winter sports, the legend of trolls and other key aspects of Norway's culture during the event.**

shaped waffles, a ubiquitous treat in her mother's native country, she said.

Another popular aspect of her presentation was the portion about trolls, a prevalent legend in Norway and all of Scandinavia. The existence of trolls, Spiliotes said, has yet to be proved or disproved, but "we all believe in trolls." Some Scandinavians even say they have seen the creatures. Legend has it the trolls, who never die, will grow very tired as they advance in age, so they'll sit down to rest, Spiliotes told the students. As they sit there for a prolonged time, unmoving, they eventually petrify, forming stones

and even mountains, depending on their size.

Another icon of Norway, although more historical than trolls, is the Viking. Vikings were seafaring warriors whose homeland was primarily in Norway. The era commonly known as the Viking Age was from 793 to 1066 A.D. Some Viking ships, powerful in structure and exquisite in design, still exist and are kept at museums.

Spiliotes also touched on the country's current government system, a constitutional monarchy, which features a royal ruling family; a prime minister, who leads the cabinet; and the King's council.

Additionally, the students learned about the pervasiveness of winter sports in Norway. Every year, the government declares a national Children's Ski Day, for all students to participate in. Norwegians also are very proud of their Winter Olympic Games champions who collectively have helped Norway win more medals than any other country, Spiliotes said.

Finland rests in close proximity to Norway and shares several similarities. Notably, a portion of both countries sits within the Arctic Circle, which means they experience months of uninterrupted day-

light, as well as months of extended darkness, even during the daytime, said Esnard, whose maiden and Finnish last name is Nauha.

Finnish people also share the legend of trolls. Like in Norway, they do not have school buses and children walk, ride bicycles and ski to school, Esnard said. In primary school, students start learning English and Sweden, and they add a third foreign language in secondary school.

Esnard let the students peruse and handle some personal items representing the traditions and culture of Finland, such as Finnish comic books, dolls, handmade dresses and a sauna pail.

At the third station, Robledo shared how she, like most Mexican children, originally took two last names - the family name of both parents - to "honor both my mom and my dad." The practice also helps community members identify specifically which family a person is from, since extended family members often live close by to one another in the same village or city.

Robledo, who was born in California, talked about the cooking tools, such as hot plates and tortilla pressers, used by her parents, grandparents and great-grandparents. She even had a few in her collection of knickknacks from Mexico that she let the students shuffle through. She also told students about fruit native to Mexico, such as papaya, guava and passion fruit, and shared stories from her childhood and visits to Mexico.

Because she is from the states but her family is from Mexico, Robledo had the opportunity, like others, to be raised with exposure to different cultures, she said. Through that experience, she added, you can bring together the best from both cultures and combine them "to make your own culture."

The culture fair seemed to be enjoyed by and make an impression on the students.

"I want to live in Norway," one first-grader said to another as their class exited the building.

# Muscle cars come to Seaside

Cars from Page 1A

While 28 awards were given out among the entries, Montero said, they were not highly competitive, but rather sponsored awards and those with "titles that reflect the flavor of Seaside," such as the Purely Beachin' award, and other fun categories, such as Hottest Flames and Class Act.

Winners are picked by an independent group of people who are kept anonymous, because "it keeps the politics out of a family friendly event," SDDA Special Events Coordinator Laurie Mespelt said.

The awards were distributed during a closing dinner ceremony at the Best Western Ocean View Resort, for car owners and their families, after the Downtown Cruise. During the dinner, Del Sol sponsored a 50/50 drawing to benefit the South County Community Food Bank. The pot was \$240, and the winner of half, a man from Hillsboro, donated his winnings to the food bank as well.

In addition, car show entrants had the opportunity to win prizes and \$300 in cash in the Downtown Treasure Hunt. Thirty merchants participated in the Treasure Hunt. Each business was given a number, and car owners were also given a number. Their task was to find the merchant with the matching number for a prize. Mike Sasso, of Astoria, won the \$300 grand prize.

This year's Muscle and Chrome featured more cars than last year but less than some years past. Additionally, there was no Vendor Alley at this year's event. In general, Muscle & Chrome is smaller in comparison to SDDA's fall Wheels & Waves car show, which features all vehicles from 1965 on and is a four-day event.

The show does not bring in revenue for SDDA — the organization is happy to break even on the event, Montero said — but it does help the association achieve its goal of

"enhancing the environmental and economic viability of downtown Seaside for the local community and visitors," she added. Without numerous sponsors, the event would not be possible.

The event also relies on participation from volunteers, particularly the Rod Squad, a group of about 15 people from the Portland and Vancouver, Wash., area whose love for classic cars has compelled them to help SDDA put on Muscle and Chrome for a few years, Mespelt said.

The 2015 Wheels and Waves show is scheduled for Sept. 10 through 13. For more information, visit [www.seasidedowntown.com](http://www.seasidedowntown.com) or call (503) 717-1914.

### And the winners are ...

Below is a list of winners and their vehicles:

Beach Books: First Lt. Matthew Zedwick, 1966 Ford Mustang

Café Latte: Bob Wiggins, 1967 Ford Galaxie 500

Dels Chevron: Vere Wynn, 1963 Chevrolet Nova

Mary Anna's: Vern & Rosalie McCleary, 1966 Chevrolet Impala SS, 2-door

Phillips: Wes Holthusen, 1968 GMC K-10 Pickup

Ocean Front Motel: Mike Borst, 1969 Pontiac Firebird

The Buzz: Steve Ownby, 1969 Ford Mustang Mach 1

The Natural Nook Flower Shop: Tod Tolan, 1968 Olds Cutlass

The Man Store: Rick Walker, 1966 Chevy Corvette

The Jewelry Box: John Carpino, 1969 Chevy Nova

One Cool Ride: Grant Carpino, 1969 Plymouth Barracuda

Painters Passion: Carl Roy, 1959 Chevy Truck

The Intimidator: Rick Neimann, 1971 Chevrolet RS Z28

Car Crazy: Alex Schwartz, 1967 Dodge Dart GT

Papa's Pick: Carl Morrison, 1960 Chevy BelAir

Founder's Pick (Dolna Mespelt): Richard Phipps, 1964 Chevy Chevelle SS

Founder's Pick (Gary Diebolt): Bob Carlson, 1966 Ford Mustang

Beautiful Build: Steve Schalk, 1966 Chevy Nova II

Street Sweeper: Larry &

Shirley Martin, 1964 Buick Riviera

Club Participation: The Unlimiteds

Fast & Furious: Marilyn Clulow, 1973 Chevy Camaro

Show & Go: Steve & Lynda Newell, 1960 Chevy Corvette

Purely Beachin': Gary Austin, 1953 Studebaker Truck

Tireless Traveler: Steve Kelsey, 1970 Chevy Chevelle

Class Act: Ken & Barb Verboort, 1965 Mercury Comet

Bad to the Bone: Mike Groff, 1970 Dodge Charger R/T SE

Hottest Flames: Jerry Lamp, 1967 Chevy Chevelle

Dare to be Different: Bob Rumion, 1975 Dodge D100 Pro Street

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