

# Big dig lets the spirits loose, or Hood-to-Ghost



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

## Vendors at the Ghost Conference.

To the guy who slapped the Trump bumper stick on the back of my 2004 Audi A4, ha ha ha. Who's outside of Sunset Family Fitness in Seaside at 7 a.m. with an inclination to do such a thing? I came out of my half-hour workout to find "Trump: Make America Great Again" affixed to my rear bumper.

Maybe he got confused and thought it was his car. If you want to talk to me more about Trump, please contact me at the Signal office, as we've been looking for the Trump supporter in Clatsop County. Or you may want to consider Clatsop Community Health Care.

By the way, knowing Donald as I do, he could well have a team of campaign workers placing guerrilla bumper stickers on people's cars.

## Lucky coins

If that was a lousy way to start the day last Thursday, but things got better fast. First of all it was beautiful in Seaside, the kind of day like those spring days when I arrived here a little less than a year ago, all sun and blue sky and clean air and temps near 70.

Then I won the pot — that's the raffle winnings — at the Seaside Downtown Development Association breakfast — and heard some fun stuff about the big dig, that is Holladay Drive. Everybody's getting pretty sick of the delays and inconvenience, sure, but City Manager Mark Winstanley assured us that the project is still on schedule to be completed prior to Memorial Day weekend.

This week they're working on the curbs, the last step prior to asphalt going on.

The big dig has exposed roadway hidden beneath the surface, "like it must have been in the early days," Winstanley said.

The original road was put down 90 years ago and exposed a vast infrastructure beneath the surface. "We think we know where everything is," Winstanley said. "We don't."

My friend Ryan Wolslagel was the big winner: He found a pre-Civil War gold coin underneath the surface.

## Hood to 'ghost'

Also looking for treasures of a different kind recently were attendees of the Oregon Coast Conference.

Rocky Smith brought the Oregon Ghost Conference here from Oregon City for its first year at the convention center. He and other occultists were poking around Seaside's mystical past, present and future in a fair that presented astrologers, spirit communication, haunted history and a panel of paranormal investigations. At times it felt more like Sedona than Seaside.

Smith embraced Seaside history prior to his arrival and quickly learned of the city's ghostly lore — enough so that he was able to lead tours through town showing visitors spots of interest.

The group trawled around the city, including two late-night tours, one from the Convention Center to the Ebb Tide and a second along the Promenade.

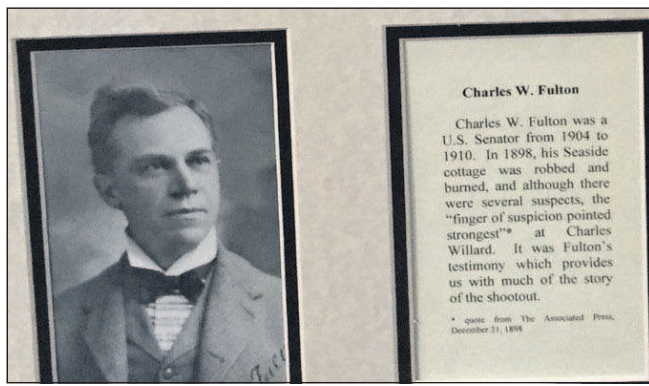
"The Grimes Hotel was one of the original hotels," he said. "There's a whole section north of Broadway, an area referred to as 'Grimes Grove,' Seventh, Eighth Street near Downing," Smith said.

He recounted the horrifying 1898 shootout involving a county sheriff, a Seaside constable and his deputy.

With a little help from the Seaside Historical Society, Smith gleaned the story of an itinerant named Charles Willard. Willard was investigated for a series of thefts and even the arson of the home of a U.S. senator, Charles Fulton. When the sheriff came to bring Willard in, Willard, who was known to carry a Winchester rifle, shot him instantly.

"Just shoots him," Smith said. A shoot-out ensued — at 11th and Franklin. Willard held on with ferocious tenacity, refusing to fall and still firing.

"The deputy tries to intervene and gets shot, and doesn't die, but is mortally wounded," Smith recounted. "So you have the deputy still fighting for his life off to the side, the constable got shot in the leg — then Willard gets back up. They were finally able to get his rifle. Fulton wants to find more help, but each time they realize Willard's hanging on. They end up finally killing him."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Charles W. Fulton, a U.S. senator who played a role in a shootout in Seaside in the late 19th century.

## Seaside ghosts?

The area remains haunted, so much so that author Dave Oester and his wife Sharon Gill were inspired to write a best seller about their experiences after moving into a haunted house on 12th Avenue in Seaside.

"The spirits that haunted the Seaside cottage on 12th Avenue were friendly spirits," Oester said in a 1999 interview. "The most common prank they pulled was to take an object, be it a book or something else, and not return it for several days."

The first night in their Seaside home, they discovered their short-wave radio unplugged and playing "Waltzing Matilda" over and over.

Oester, who died in November, told the interviewer the experiences of living in a haunted house motivated him to begin collecting ghost stories from people, which he turned into his book "Twilight Visitors: Ghost Tales Vol. 1."

"The house on 12th is still haunted today," Oester told the interviewer.

More on Dave's story — and tragic end — can be found on ghostweb.com.

Other ghosts may roam our community, Smith suggested. He told late-night ghost tour attendees the aquarium "has mixed stories."

"Though the owners don't think it's haunted, there are myths associated with the history of the building," Smith said.

Ghosts and spirits may linger in the region from some of the shipwrecks, current and past, associated with the lighthouse, Terrible Tilly, Smith said. A shipwreck took 16 lives only a week before Tilly was completed in January 1881.

Is there more or less ghostly activity in Seaside than other places, we asked?

Smith isn't sure yet, but he thinks it is ripe for psychic exploration.

"I'm kind of new to Seaside," Smith said. "Part of Oregon City that makes it so active is its connection with its history, both Native American and pioneer history."

"Seaside definitely shares that," he added. "You have this theory that places that are connected with water — Oregon City has the falls, creeks and falls, here you have the river, the ocean — there's some geological things that can cause a place to be more active."

Wait a minute. It's becoming clear now. The Donald Trump bumper sticker.

Who would be up at 7 a.m. and do such a thing — slap a bumper a sticker on an innocent bystander's car? That's right out of the "Waltzing Matilda" playbook.

Just the type of mischief you'd expect from a disembodied spirit released from beneath the pavement during the construction on North Holladay Drive. I wish I'd found the gold coin instead!



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Rocky Smith at the Ghost Conference. He says places like Seaside near great bodies of water tend to have more ghostly activity.



R.J. MARX PHOTO

I'd like to know who affixed this to my rear bumper.

# One hawthorn tree, free to good home in Seaside

Trying to navigate around the lake from Jerry Hoyt's too flat street, a very nice young man who was passing by walked in the water, took my hand and led me past the puddle to dry land. My personal Sir Galahad. Surely he'll get another star in his crown.

SCENE & HEARD  
CLAIRE LOVELL



With the advent of every spring season, I've deplored how irksome it is to have a wide, deep slough between the pussy willows growing along the highway and myself. When they were accessible, I used to mix them with wild current blossoms. Imagine my pleasure when some good fairy left an armful of the little gray blooms on my back steps. This time they'll share space with camellias or daffodils. What a nice surprise. Thank you, whoever you are.

When did the politically correct people change "lying-in state" to "lying in repose" (which means a state of rest and tranquility)? Justice Scalia died. He was not "resting" in that casket. After all we heard the following few days about the contributions of this exceptional man, I believe that he had already gone to his reward, which should be considerable.

Sunday afternoon, Feb. 20, I went with Alvis Porter to the North Coast Symphonic Band concert in Astoria. It's always such a pleasure. Conductor David Derek is truly a master of the baton. He's so full of suppressed energy; so precise in his starts and stops — always a thrill to watch. This time, two of our doctors were in the group: Wally Shaffer and Jeff Blanche. Cool! The band is great. I especially liked the flute section, whatever it's called and there was a visiting clarinetist Marten King, whose fingering was so excellent I was very thankful to Alvis for the enrichment of music. Chrislynn Taylor of "Shanghaied in Astoria" sang three of the numbers from that show — quite a diversion.

Did you see a while back on TV the story of a little boy who jumped on his aunt's bridal train as it passed him in the church? Could that be the modern version of a hobo hopping a freight?

Who told me the Kiwanis pancake feed had already been and gone a couple of weeks ago? It was probably a Fat Tuesday event somewhere. At any rate, I went to the annual pancake and sausage supper on April 5. I ate the verboten food with enjoyment and hurried home to have some regrets later since pancakes are not something on my diet list. Mostly this occasion is a social outlet. One sees people not in her usual visiting circle and it's always fun in that respect. I did meet the head of Public Works, Dale McDowell with whom I had a phone conversation about a downed sign on Roosevelt. I wanted to talk to him about the cause, etc., but didn't get the chance.

Does anyone want a hawthorn tree before it's too large to dig up?

## Laugh Lines

A guy went out on the highway to test his new Corvette. He began at 60 mph, and then was doing a modest 75 on the freeway. Soon he passed 100 mph. Suddenly there was a siren and a state policeman pulled him over. "Going somewhere?" asked the officer. "What's your excuse for exceeding the speed limit by 20 miles?"

Fast driver: "My wife ran off with a cop a couple of weeks ago and I was afraid you were bringing her back." (Courtesy of John Hage.)

Something good happened on the Holladay Drive project. I heard a guy with a metal detector unearthed a five dollar gold piece.

## LETTERS

### Support Goldthorpe

I am proud to support David Goldthorpe for Clatsop County Circuit Court Judge. David guides the District Attorney's participation in retiring Judge Phil Nelson's drug court, assists in child support enforcement and is a skilled trial lawyer for a wide variety of cases, from impaired driving to armed assaults.

In all these areas, David has exhibited some of the strongest qualities attributed to "judicial temperament" that I have witnessed in the many fine lawyers who I have hired as deputies — compassion, fairness, commitment to equal justice, decisiveness. It is an elusive but critical quality for a judge.

Judges run for election every six years on a non-partisan basis. Even the most dedicated voter may not mark the ballot for a judgeship, because it can be hard for those who haven't worked with a particular lawyer to assess their skills as a judge.

I have a unique view of all three of the current candidates since all three applied for and were hired as Deputy District Attorneys. I admire them all and respect their differing strengths.

Those concerned about whether a former deputy DA might not be even-handed when dealing with the DA's office don't give the candidates enough credit for separating personal feelings from professional ones, something that the women and men of law enforcement and the justice system do several times every day.

Treatment providers, co-workers, the Seaside Police Association, Sheriff Tom Bergin and many others who have worked with him or know him and his family endorse David. All point to the belief that "Dave" will make a fair and unbiased judge for the people of Clatsop County.

I urge you to vote for David Goldthorpe.

Josh Marquis  
Astoria

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