

# Plans for new motel on the Prom cut close to home



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Front yard of Inn at the Prom. The building would be replaced with the Pearl of Seaside.

Antoine Simmons and his wife Rocio want to build a 48-room hotel on the Prom. The neighbors think it's too big and intrusive. At the end of the Aug. 22 Seaside City Council meeting, Councilor Jay Barber made a plea for conciliation.

"I'd like to hear everyone come together to find ways to make these plans work," Barber said. "You are good neighbors, clearly. I challenge you to work toward a solution."

From all accounts, the neighbors — Susan and Dan Calef, Avrel Nudelman, Antoine and Rocio Simmons — are good friends, and spent many a sunset together enjoying the bounty of a great view and a beachfront property. They came through for each other in a pinch.

"I am friends with my neighbors," Simmons told councilors. "We watch each others' homes."

But neighbors do sometimes go against neighbors, and friends against friends, especially in the world of real estate development.

What seems to have started as a cozy corner of Seaside residents near the beach and the Prom in now a matter occupying the agendas of the planning commission, which approved a variance for the 48-room Pearl of Seaside, and the city council.

Simmons and neighbors laid out their cases at the council's appeal hearing.

For Simmons, it was an opportunity to share his vision for the Pearl of Seaside, a 48-room motel to be built at 341 South Prom.

For many in the audience, it was a chance to vent about a process they see as far from a done deal.

## Hard work pays off

Simmons told councilors he and his wife Rocio "followed a dream" in 2000 by moving to Cannon Beach. They purchased and managed the Blue Gull Inn on South Hemlock. "We worked there 24 hours a day, seven days a week, doing everything. It was a labor of love."

Their hard work paid off.

In 2003, the Simmonses acquired the neighboring nine-unit Inn at Haystack Rock and the couple formed Haystack Lodging.

They acquired the Edgewater Inn in Seaside in 2011, transforming it into the 15-room Inn at the Prom, Simmons said.

"It was in disrepair," he said. "We took it apart, put it back together and in six months opened."

In 2014, the Simmonses acquired the neighboring Gilbert Inn.

"We were lucky to get it — just an amazing piece of history," Simmons said.

The former home of Seaside founding father Alexandre Gilbert — built in 1885 and expanded in 1892 — was turned into a romantic getaway, a bed-and-breakfast for adults over 18. Today it is lovingly maintained by the Simmonses.

## Pearl of Seaside

The Pearl of Seaside, as developed by David Vonada of Tolovana Architects, will feature three floors of lodging with a penthouse capped by a tower roof and spire.



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Owner Avrel Nudelman fears his home could be enclosed or blocked by a new hotel on the Prom.

The need for 51 parking spaces "is really the nut of all of this," Simmons said. "If I could build the property 8 feet from Avrel's property, we wouldn't be here today," he said.

And that's the problem. "I'm not opposed to a development," Nudelman said. "I'm opposed to it being 3 feet from my property line. I don't know why we have this zoning ordinance if we're going to go against it."

Dan Calef said his grandfather inherited their duplex home in the 1930s from the photographer William Montag, who built the duplex as a companion property to a larger 1912 home.

"My sister and I have lived here every summer of our lives," Calef, 62, said. "We are concerned about the size. It will dwarf our property, completely shade our property, and be much taller than our house and put us in a dark, dank hole."

"I agree, Mr. Simmons does an outstanding job on his motels and his properties," Eldon Wexler, a builder, said. "But that doesn't preclude him from doing things under city ordinance to protect the small person."

Several in the audience pointed to an obvious answer: negotiation.

"There's a win here," Seaside's Pat Golding said. "It takes a little bit more money. You have to plan a little better. The extraordinary circumstances are, there's not enough property. You either get enough property, or you look for property elsewhere."

"Either scale down the project or pay Mr. Nudelman for the land," Marc Golding said.

Whether they'll be receptive to negotiations remains to be seen.

"I don't think either Avrel or I are particularly interested in selling," Dan Calef said after the August meeting.

"We realize we are a small residential unit in a resort residential area, and can expect to have expect to have motels around us, but something smaller we can live with, that doesn't tower over us," Calef said.

Regardless of what happens at the next City Council hearing, Sept. 12, "I know we're going to remain friends," Simmons said of his neighbors. "That's just the way it is."

# Remembering the glamor days of Jean Harlow and Clark Gable

It was fun to see the film on OPB about the University of Washington's rowing team in the 1936 Olympics while I was still reading "The Boys in the Boat." It's really a page-turner. What a story, but reading is more difficult for me these days. Getting at it, that is.

**SCENE & HEARD**  
CLAIRE LOVELL



The Pearl of Seaside, a hotel in the embryonic stage, will not be on Beach Avenue, since we don't have one. That path is called Beach Drive, in harmony with Roosevelt Drive, Holladay Drive and Necanicum Drive. Ah, well — need I reiterate that streets run north and south, and avenues go east and west, while drives are special places one just learns, though they are north and south as well.

I spent the evening of Aug. 5 watching the pageantry of the Parade of Nations in the Rio Olympics. Gee! How many countries were there? Wasn't it a little ironic that this year's theme was the environment? As always, it was a thrill to see our team come onto the field. I think they said over 500 contestants, but every group was colorful and exciting. Some of the countries I'd never heard of and I missed the explanation of the trees carried in by the children. Probably they will be planted to mark this special year. Each of the athletes seemed elated and it's at such times one has hope for the world. Especially gratifying was the refugee team. The whole production was fabulous, overlooked by Christ of the Andes.

One day I actually used the TV Guide to determine my televiewing. I had decided to watch "Red Dust" with Jean Harlow but slept through it and came instead to an oldie called "Reckless." It was not terrific but good enough to keep my attention 'til the end. When I was about 14 years of age, I saw a movie at the Strand Theater entitled "Hold Your Man," a picture starring Jean Harlow and Clark Gable. It so moved me that I wrote Jean my first fan letter and she replied. My kids always speculate on the autographed photo she sent me as probably more valuable than it is. Formerly a 9-by-12 glamour shot, one of those kids tore it so that before framing, I had to do some serious trimming. Still, its value to me is considerable. I was so thrilled to get it and her life was so short.

Holladay Drive, hastening toward completion, was known as 7th Street when I was a kid. It may even have been called Main Street, initially. My street, North Lincoln, was once 11th Street because people do like to rearrange the furniture. Outlanders often misspell Holladay, sometimes omitting one "L" or other times, as if it were Christmas or Easter. It's a small sin. Ben Holladay for whom it was named might not be so generous. Ben had a hotel and racetrack south of the Putter Room.

The "In One Ear" picture of the old Cannon Beach road brought back memories. (Doesn't everything?) I could almost feel the turns and felt like barfing. To add realism, one would have to change a tire about every three to four miles. We've come a long way. The old pictures in The Daily Astorian are always fun, too. I like the 1920 view of the turnaround just a year before the promenade was built. It looks so flat.

## Laugh line

Old is when you see a pretty girl and your pacemaker causes the garage door to go up!

## LETTERS

### Get government back to 'we the people'

We need to get the government of this country back into the hands of "we the people." We need a Constitutional Convention now, to get our country back into our hands. Some of the most important issues to address are as follows, in proposed amendments for the U.S. Constitution:

No. 28: Elected officials shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. After being out of an office for at least one term, the voters may reelect a person back into that office. Elected offices were never intended to be lifetime careers.

No. 29: Appointed officials shall not serve in office for longer than one and one half times the length of time that the person making the appointment serves in the office from which the appointment is made.

No. 30: Elected officials shall not pass any law, rule or tax that does not apply equally to all citizens of the U.S. Congress and the president should not be above the law of the land.

No. 31: All laws not specifically included in the Constitution shall have an expiration date. Laws currently on the books shall be assigned an expiration date by the body which originally passed the law, not to exceed 50 years in the future. Laws approaching expiration, if deemed appropriate to continue, may be assigned a new expiration date, by a simple majority vote of the sponsoring body, unless otherwise challenged.

No. 32: Any child born in the U.S. to parents who are not in the country legally shall not be considered a citizen of the U.S. unless proper naturalization processes are followed (modifies Amendment XIV).

No. 33: No person, who is not in the U.S. legally, shall be entitled to benefits derived from public money, including but not limited to, schooling, welfare aide and medical assistance.

Cleve Rolfe  
Seaside

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

**Tuesday, Sept. 6**  
**Seaside Community Center Commission,**  
10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.

**Seaside Library Board,** 4:30 p.m., 1131  
Broadway.

**Seaside Planning Commission,** 7 p.m.,  
City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Wednesday, Sept. 7**  
**Seaside Improvement Commission,** 6:30

p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

**Gearhart City Council,** 7 p.m., City Hall,  
698 Pacific Way.

**Thursday, Sept. 8**

**Seaside Convention Center Commission,**  
5 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.

**Gearhart Planning Commission,** 6 p.m.,  
City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

**Monday, Sept. 12**  
**Seaside City Council,** 7 p.m., City Hall, 989  
Broadway.

**Wednesday, Sept. 14**

**Seaside Tree Board,** 4 p.m., City Hall, 989  
Broadway.

**Thursday, Sept. 15**

**Seaside Transportation Advisory Com-  
mission,** 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

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