

Jay Barber is named mayor of Seaside



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL
Jay Barber is sworn in as Seaside mayor by City Manager Mark Winstanley.

Don Johnson steps aside

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Jay Barber became mayor Monday, Dec. 12, following in the footsteps of former Mayor Don Larson, who died a day earlier.

At the council's last meeting, Barber put his name forward to fill Larson's unexpired term. City Council President Don Johnson did the same. But before a City Council vote was held, Johnson withdrew his name from consideration.

"There comes a time to step back and let others carry the torch as Mayor Larson and I have done for many years," Johnson said. "I believe it is now time for me to pass that torch. It pleases me to nominate Jay Barber to fill the mayor's term."

That nomination was seconded and unanimously endorsed by councilors.

Barber then took the oath of office, administered by City Manager Mark Winstanley.

"I'm humbled to sit in this chair," Barber said. "Don Larson served in this chair for 14

years. He not only served in this chair, but he served in this community in a way I don't think anybody in the city of Seaside has been able to do. I'm honored to have the opportunity to serve the community and with this great council."

California mayor

Barber, a retired college president, foundation director and ordained minister, served as a councilor and two-term mayor in Red Bluff, California, a position which, he said, gave him experience dealing with the public.

He and his wife Jan have lived full time in Seaside since 2006.

Barber was selected in 2009 to fill the unexpired council term of the late Gary Diebolt. Barber won election for Ward 1 in 2010 and again in 2014.

"I think we will be very well served with Jay," City Councilor Tita Montero said, a sentiment echoed by councilors Randy Frank, Seth Morrisey and Dana Phillips.

Among his first order of business, Barber presided over the third and final reading of an ordinance raising Seaside's

lodging tax. The increase hikes the rate from 8 percent to 10 percent and will be used to fund renovations at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

Johnson, who served his last meeting after his loss to Tom Horning in the November election, was honored by councilors for 18 years of service with a plaque and remembrance.

"Thank you for your exceptional knowledge and willingness to give so much time in making Seaside a better place now and in the future," Barber said in presenting the plaque to Johnson.

Who will guide campus project?

School district considering leaders for building project

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

The Seaside School District intends to hire a project manager to oversee construction of the new school campus by the end of January.

"It's really the first big step," Superintendent Sheila Roley said during the board of director's meeting Dec. 16. "Once you have the project manager, they're the one that really pulls the process together for us."

On Dec. 12, the district held a required meeting at Seaside Heights Elementary School for any firms interested in submitting a request for proposal for the project manager job. Four Oregon-based firms attended the meeting. They must have their requests submitted by Dec. 27.

Roley described the project manager as "our third-party agent who is really an extension of the district and who has the expertise of large construction projects to oversee this for us." The project manager works with the city of Seaside for permitting, the architects, the construction company and other participating entities.

"It's someone who really just runs the show in consult with us, who is overseen by a steering committee that we'll put together," Roley said.

After the requests are submitted, the information will be reviewed by members of an interview committee, who will meet with potential candidates in early January. The committee should have a recommendation regarding the hire to present to the board for its approval at the Jan. 17 meeting.

In addition, school board members discussed and unanimously approved two resolutions that also will help the new school project move forward during the 2016-17 school year.

The first resolution granted approval for the district to issue general obligation bonds in the amount of \$99.7 million for construction of the new school. The district already has met with a group for counsel on the matter, Roley said. The bonds should be issued in late February or early March, at which point, the funds will be available for the project, she added.

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The Spirit of Christmas



PHOTO SUBMITTED BY SUNSET EMPIRE PARK & RECREATION DISTRICT

Santa pays a visit to Seaside

By Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

The spirit of the season was palpable at the Bob Chisholm Community Center as children enjoyed a variety of holiday crafts and visits with Santa Claus during the annual Children's Holiday Celebration.

Garlands, lights and other traditional wintery decorations served as a backdrop for the event, which was put on by the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District on Dec. 10.

Santa's elves were on hand to greet approximately 350 attendees that rotated in throughout the afternoon to partake of the festivities.

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Gingerbread Tea transports guests back in time

Katherine Lacaze
For Seaside Signal

Every year, the Butterfield Cottage is dressed in its holiday best to welcome guests for a Victorian era-inspired Gingerbread Tea that highlights both the spirit of Christmas and the history of Seaside.

The annual tea is a longstanding holiday tradition of the Seaside Museum and Historical Society.

Throughout each afternoon of the event, the organization's board members and other volunteers bustle about serving guests a selection of tea, cider and hot cocoa and plates of gingerbread — or gingerbread cookies for the children.

The interior of the historic home, which was built in 1893, is warm and inviting, with period table settings, antique silverware and cups, traditional

decorations and an emphasis on gingerbread ornaments. Local musicians — including Linda Nielsen and the Northcoast Ukulele Strummers — add to the ambience with acoustic renditions of well-known Christmas tunes.

"We try to make people feel like this is how it would have been if you had come to Seaside at the turn of the 20th century and were welcomed into the Butterfield Cottage for tea," said Kimberly Reef, a board member who served as the chair for this year's event.

The Butterfield Cottage was given to the museum and moved to its present location in the 1980s. According to the organization, it has been interpretively restored to depict a beach cottage and rooming house of 1912. During the Gingerbread Tea, guests could tour the upstairs rooms, which also were specially adorned with Christmas decorations.

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Kimberly Reef,
Seaside Museum and Historical Society board

Although the gingerbread tea is tagged as a fundraising event, it more or less pays for itself. With respect the tradition, however, the organization continues to host it as a sort of "community service," Reef said.

The first tea is traditionally held the first Saturday after Thanksgiving to herald the commencement of the

Christmas season. Reef has been told numerous times by locals that the event is a well-loved part of helping them get into the holiday spirit.

"The say, 'we wouldn't dream of missing it,'" she added.

On average, about 45 to 50 people attended each Gingerbread Tea this year.

Alison Craig, of Astoria, was there Dec. 17 with a friend and each of their daughters. The women remarked on the gingerbread theme and decorations, describing them as "adorable."

"It's a very inviting place," Craig said. "Everyone is so friendly."

The event, which was sponsored by Safeway, also featured a raffle, with prizes donated by local business, including a gingerbread house from Three Little Birds Bakery. Guests

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