

Council to continue in Larson's tradition

Change came quickly in Seaside. Don Larson presided over his last meeting only two weeks before his death. Now that is dedication to service.

The day after he died the council swore in a new mayor, Jay Barber.

Larson would have applauded the efficiency and the devotion to civil service. He was dedicated to it the moment he began service after moving to Seaside on his retirement from the National Guards civilian team. In 2006 he won re-election unopposed and proudly supported a \$4.65 million water tank, which succeeded with 75 percent of voters.

In 2008, his role in bringing a new library building to Seaside was so significant the Seaside Public Library is now called the Don Larson Building. In 2009, Larson won the Small City Award from the League of Oregon Cities.

Larson ran unopposed in 2010, but in 2014 he found himself with two challengers. Larson gained 62 percent of the vote against Angela Fairless and John Dunzer. At the time, he urged expansion of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, a goal he saw to fruition earlier this year.

In the years to follow he also undertook the North Holladay Drive improvement project, recently completed and an aesthetic transformation for the roadway. Mayor Larson was there with the ceremonial scissors for the ribbon-cutting, despite the obvious impediments of his own medical hookups.

Larson wasn't afraid to cast a dissenting vote, as he did earlier this year in a land dispute involving a proposed hotel plan. Larson was the sole councilor to side with the hotel owner in that decision. During a lot-line dispute, Larson was the lone vote for a homeowner on the basis of precedent.

Yet he could change his opinion on an issue, becoming a strong advocate of the passage of this year's bond to move Seaside's schools out of the tsunami zone.

Concerned about the impacts of cannabis legalization, he and councilor Dana Phillips voted against medical marijuana facilities in 2015, but ultimately joined council members in permitting its recreational licensing in Seaside. Their opposition led to restrictions keeping pot shops out of the city's downtown core.

The ability to "get out and talk with people" was an aspect that carried him through his entire political career in Seaside. "I'll just try to do my best," Larson told the Signal after his first mayoral election in 2002.

In an event overshadowed by the dramatic turns the city witnessed over those two days, Councilor Don Johnson was awarded with recognition from the community and his fellow councilors.

"We were lucky to have the foundation of our past councilors," Johnson said. "Don (Larson) and the councilors were able to implement their plan, their foundation."

Johnson described it as an "honor and privilege" to serve the community.

Larson's longtime friend and fellow councilor Barber, a pastor, former college president and seasoned public speaker, movingly eulogized Larson in City Hall



Jay Barber is sworn in as Seaside mayor by City Manager Mark Winstanley.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



and in the church. In an emotional meeting held the day after Larson's death, councilors unanimously endorsed Barber to fill the city's top spot.

Barber promised to continue Larson's legacy and commitment to the city.

"It's a great honor to be the mayor of any city, but particularly of a city as well-managed and run as this city," Barber said.

His words were both a eulogy and a state of the union, in which he praised the community and its volunteerism.

Barber said he seeks to maintain the parity among the mayor and board members.

"I want to say no single one of us has more power than the other," he said. "Not the mayor, not the council president — we work as a body. When we make decisions we support that decision. We may not always agree, but when we make a decision, we move forward."

Barber laid out six priorities.

"The No. 1 priority that I would like to continue: Mayor Larson's legacy of civility, his love for our city and his openness to our citizens," he said.

Barber urged support for Seaside's police and fire departments, important ingredients of the city's quality of life.

Looking ahead, he gave a nod to Tom Horning, the Seaside geologist who won election to his first term, on a platform of tsunami preparedness.

Barber said he is concerned that the next urban renewal project has an opportunity to find funding for bridges, many of which are vulnerable to flooding or



Councilors Don Johnson and Jay Barber at a council workshop.

collapse in a Cascadia Subduction Zone event.

Part of the tsunami protection will begin with the new Seaside High School campus in the Southeast Hills. In order to start the project, the city will need to expand the urban growth boundary to provide utilities and roads.

Barber indicated he may seek to bring more land into the urban growth boundary not only for emergency shelter, but to open buildable areas buildable areas for low income and affordable housing. "It's a high priority for the people who live and work here in our tourism industry," Barber said.

It is a tribute to the spirit and collegiality of Larson that he was able to preside over such a board of like-minded civic leaders. There will be plenty of shake-ups through natural events, but having a steady hand at the helm is something to be valued at all levels of government.

"I want to continue the legacy Mayor Larson has started over the last 14 years," Barber said at his first meeting as mayor. "His model of civility and community service is one we can all work to preserve."

"I have no more power than the other six members of the council, we have to work together to get things done, and that will be my goal to provide leadership in the two years we have left to get things done."

Everyone's a winner at holiday dinner

SCENE & HEARD
CLAIRE LOVELL



Happy New Year! Things are looking up! Dec. 11 was the occasion of the annual Christmas dinner offered by the service clubs at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. It was a big turkey dinner for the middle of the day; so much of mine came home in a box for later. We had a congenial group. I missed a drawing by one number — the story of my life — though two of our tablemates were winners.

Brian Owen of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce was MC and Pastor Rob Sachs of Our Saviour's Lutheran Church gave the invocation. We were entertained during dinner by the Tsunami Skippers and rope jumpers who are so clever, a far cry from what we learned in school. Some were outstanding and had been to a competition in Florida. Stacey Dundas introduced them.

The center looked really nice. I am always puzzled that they can't afford a clock. There's a nice spot to the right of the stage to hang one, which would make it look like the auditorium at Central School.

I was so disgusted with Dorchester moving to Salem because it's "easier" to reach. Politicians never have real trouble getting where they want to go. I've already written about their increasing exclusivity, shutting out the locals who used to attend keynote speeches. I was so sorry to have missed Tucker Carlson who is really cool.

Dec. 18, a group from the United Methodist Church composed of the choir and other members went caroling. It was mostly to shut-ins and residents of nursing facilities. Our first visit was to Necanicum Village where choir director Debbie Vail led us upstairs and downstairs to sing. Residents welcomed us and often joined in. There followed about three private homes of church members, then on to Neawanna by the Sea and Suzanne Elise. Wherever we went to sing Christmas, after a few numbers, residents began to come out of their rooms and share in the familiar carols. It was surprising to see an old man join in with gusto, very familiar with all the tunes and loving every minute. At Suzanne Elise, I met a great gal who once worked with me at Ocean Park Nursing Home as well as a favorite former neighbor. It was a heart warming and body freezing experience to kick off the week before Christmas.

We finished the evening with a meal at the home of Pastor John and Bee Tindell. We enjoyed a robust offering of hot chili made by Ann Santo Pietro with lots of "carne." Our hostess Bee had many other tempting foods. We were also further filled: good food; good will; good cheer; good fellowship and everyone went home refreshed by the true spirit of Christmas.

Miscellany: Anis Amri, Isis dispenser of perfidy in Berlin recently, looked like Marlon Brando to me.

Laugh lines

A termite walked into a bar and asked, "Is the bartender here?"

Ah, well. The oldies are often the goodies.

A look at great books of 2016 you might have missed

As we leave 2016 behind and look toward a new year, I thought I might review some great books that came out in 2016, just in case you missed them.

One of the things I get asked a lot as a librarian, besides if my first name is Marian (from "The Music Man"), is whether I enjoy sitting around reading all day. Many people assume librarians get to sit around all day, book in hand, perhaps reading aloud from time to time to small children. In fact, the number one thing people want to volunteer to do at a library is read aloud to children. Most librarians never get to read a book at work, and much more planning goes into Storytime than just reading aloud!

I can only think of a handful of times I have more than skimmed a book for a book review at work in the 12 years I've been a librarian! Our work as librarians is to immerse ourselves in book culture, but we are also far too busy to sit around and read while on the

BETWEEN THE COVERS

ESTHER MOBERG



clock. For most librarians, customer service is on the job, and reading is recreation at home after hours. Most people who work in libraries DO love books and love to read them so here are a few of the books I read this past year (some new, some not) including some off the best seller list of 2016.

I just recently got into a fantasy series by Terry Brooks. The TV series called the "Shannara Chronicles" is based on his "Elves of Shannara" series. The books and the TV series don't have a lot in common, since the TV series is loosely based on just one of the books. These books can be pretty dark with a world set after our time that has self-destructed, with the people, elves, and demons in them

both courageously good and very evil. If you like elves and humans interacting in a post-apocalyptic future world that also has magic, then these books are for you. This series can be confusing because many people start with the sword of Shannara trilogy with the first title, "Sword of Shannara." However, there are books before and after the "Sword of Shannara" in chronological order so for those looking for an intense series that has multiple books in the series, I would recommend trying Terry Brooks.

A nonfiction bestselling book this year, "The Soul of an Octopus" by Sy Montgomery is not only interesting but some people find it fairly controversial. The author went to several different aquariums and observed the octopuses there, even holding them and watching them for long periods of time. While she didn't observe these octopuses out in the wild, she did make some interesting observations about octopus behavior. So much of

what the octopus can do, how they behave and act is mysterious to the human. I learned a lot of fascinating facts about the octopus and found the real life octopus far more interesting than I ever knew. Right after I read this book, an octopus was in the news on the east coast for trying to make a run for it out of its aquarium tank. Sadly, it died. This book has some interesting observations regarding these strange and mysteriously beautiful creatures that I believe most readers will enjoy.

Our children's librarian told me about a young adult book called "Orbiting Jupiter," by Gary D. Schmidt. It's definitely a page-turner. I think I read it in an hour without putting it down. It's very sad, gritty, and real. An eighth-grade boy who is also a father. Coming from a hard life followed by juvenile detention to live in foster care, his options seem low and his future bleak. Without giving too much away, there is a lot to this book that will make adults and teens alike

really enjoy it and even cry.

Another young adult book, "An Ember in the Ashes," that both teens and adults will enjoy, is written as a fantasy combined with a dystopian world story. Set in a world similar to the Roman Empire, the story of a girl and a boy, a slave and a soldier from birth, neither one free. Both know disobedience ends in suffering or death, but what happens when their two conflicting worlds collide and they find themselves both at odds with the empire. Can two mere cogs in the great wheel challenge even the empire itself?

My favorite genre is mysteries and there were a lot of great mysteries written in 2016. Some of my favorite authors, Charles Todd, M.C. Beaton, and Anne Perry all come out with new books this year.

I'm looking forward to new reading treasures to share with you in 2017! Come and visit us at the Seaside Library where many more new books await!

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