

The championship team that launched Seaside Kids



FILE PHOTO

Seaside won a national championship in 1956 and spawned the organization Seaside Kids.

The year 1956 represented a time when baseball was America's national pastime and every kid had a mitt with the signature of Mantle, Mays or Aaron. In Seaside, young players started not only for the tournament-bound Gulls' baseball team, but the Connie Mack American Legion team, with kids age 17-19. The pitching was so good, Seaside's Ed Rippet said, that Jim Dickson — a future major-leaguer with the Kansas City Athletics — played second-fiddle to ace Garry Holmes. Seaside Kids' President John Morris and members Rippet and Jim Auld paid a visit to the Signal offices recently. They were each children when Seaside Kids was founded in 1956, and the experience was so profound they helped create and sustain a program that provides athletic time and team experience for kids to this day. "Active youth today, active leaders tomorrow," Morris said.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Ed Rippet, Jim Auld and John Morris, lifetime participants and supporters of Seaside Kids.

"We followed that team, we watched every game they ever played," Auld said. "That was the age we were. We lived at the ball park." Seaside's Connie Mack Legion team played competition from Portland, Forest Grove and Eugene, culminating in a three-day tournament held in Seaside. Seaside won three games in the finals, all of them by shutouts, earning the right to represent the state in the national finals held in San Bernardino, California. Holmes won two and Dickson won one, including a six-hit shutout in a 1-0 thriller. Bill Fague managed the squad, assisted by coaches Chet Bowser and Bob Paschall and trainers George Gray and Leo "Pop" Leard. "Bill Fague was very active in the youth of baseball and the American Legion," Auld said. When the Connie Mack team won the tournament in Seaside, Fague began a round of fundraising to get the team to the tournament in San Bernardino, California. "He said, 'Well, let's see if we can get some money and we'll fly them down there,'" Auld said. "He went through town and people started giving him money, and he recorded every bit of money he received and from who. They got an airplane, got the kids to Portland. None of them had ever been on an airplane before, and flew them down to San Bernardino for this tournament, billed as the West Coast World Series." Amazingly, Holmes threw two three-hit games, defeating teams from Burien, Washington, and Stockton, California. Pitcher Hugh Springer won game two in a 1-0 shutout. Dickson, while not on the mound, stayed in the lineup and joined Bob Canessa and Eric Blitz in the run-producing department. The team hit .374 in the series.

Seen from Seaside

Maybe you remember those old baseball movies where fans back in the day waited around for telegraph operators to post the scores. Such was the scene in Seaside. "You didn't have a lot of information going back and forth, other than somebody phoning information about the games and positing it in the drugstore windows," Auld said. "People knew the inning and what was going on. When they won that thing, everyone was elated." Seaside American Legion collected 16 hits and 11 runs in the finale against Stockton. After the team plane arrived back in Portland, the squad

returned to Seaside for what the Signal called "an all-out welcome." Hundreds of fans were waiting to greet them at the Junction to escort the "Pacific Coast champions" to the Elks Club for a reunion and celebration. After the party — including a chicken dinner for 165 people — Fague found he still had money left over from the city's generous contributions. "He said I can't figure how to give it back, so let's use that money to create a Seaside kids' youth baseball program," Auld said. "From 1957 on, we operated as 'Seaside Kids Inc.' No kid would be charged to participated in our youth programs. From that point on, it ran itself." Fague remained in charge until his death in 1985.

Back to the future

Seaside Kids, Inc. is launching its 61st year with a membership drive. Funds provide programs for more than 600 South County kids. Activities include summer baseball and softball, recreational swimming, third- to sixth-grade football, fourth-to-sixth-grade volleyball and boys and girls basketball clinics. Games are played in Cannon Beach, Gearhart, Seaside and Jewell. Older teams play against teams in the Astoria league and the organization continues its affiliation with the Oregon Junior Baseball Association. Full uniforms are provided, and every athlete is guaranteed playing time. "It used to be most of our programs were in the summer," Rippet said. "Now they're more concurrent with school. We'd like to think we're doing things for kids in their spare time." Seaside Kids sponsors free swims in the summer months. Auld, Rippet and Morris made a pitch for adult volunteers — coaches, concessionaires, even umpires. New programs, like bowling, require reliable staffing. "We need an adult person to step up and say, 'I'll organize it,' oversee it on a Saturday morning," Rippet said. Big days for Seaside Kids include the Ducky Derby, the Sausage and Pancake Feed and the golf tournament, auction and dinner. And everybody is invited to support the organization. "We get the people that send money in are often older people who don't even have kids in the program," Auld said. "They continue to send that check in. They recognize the value of Seaside Kids. For us, we can all say it gave us something to look forward to and activities to participate in. It's very important to get kids out and get them involved in some activities and learn teamwork."

Keep rates low

On Wednesday, April 12, upwards of 50 State Farm agents from all over the state will descend on Salem for our annual Day on the Hill. A day where many other Agents and I, from communities both small and large, meet with our elected officials. We meet to discuss and fight for legislation up for vote that will directly affect each of our communities. These events are an opportunity for each of us to speak for our clients, friends and families on bills and laws

that can either help or hurt our day to day lives. In the past we have struggled against legislation as varied as required increases in coverage, protection for citizens while using companies such as Uber and bills that allow people to be sued even after their insurance companies have been sued. This year there are two bills up that I feel especially strong about. • House Bill 2858: A bill that will give lawyers a virtually unrestricted ability to file two lawsuits for one

insurance claim in court. Not only will this drive up insurance rates for all Oregonians but it will overwhelm already overburdened courts with new lawsuits. • Senate Bill 487: This bill will jeopardize our already strained healthcare system in rural Oregon by increasing costs to the Rural Medical Liability Reimbursement Program by increasing the limit on recoverable limit on non-economic damages. This is a program that ensures

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R.J. MARX PHOTO

Elk pull into a Gearhart neighborhood "cafe."

A trip to Gearhart to see elk?

By Eve Marx
For Seaside Signal

If you're coming to Gearhart just for elk, stay home, OK? A woman called me up on the phone just as I was struggling with my email. I've got a Hotmail account even though everyone says a Hotmail account is a signal that I'm old. Hey, I graduated from AOL, didn't I? For some reason, the thing wouldn't let me sign on, which distressed me.

"Is this Eve?" a female voice said. "This is so-and-so from Salem." "Oh, yes," I said. I'd been expecting her call, just not at that moment. A few days before I'd gotten a message on Facebook Messenger from a childhood friend that her sister-in-law through marriage who lived in Salem might be contacting me. She said her sister-in-law and her husband were planning a trip to the coast. They hoped to come to Gearhart and see elk. In fact, that might be their entire reason for coming.

GUEST COLUMN
EVE MARX



"I hear you're a lifelong friend of Lisa P.," the voice on the other end said. I agreed. "She said you've posted quite a lot about elk in your yard. My husband and I watched a show on Oregon Public Broadcasting about the Gearhart elk and how they just walk right through town. But Lisa says you have them in your yard. My husband and I are meeting friends over the weekend in Cannon Beach, but we want to see elk, so we thought we'd come on over to your place to see them." "I haven't seen any elk in about two weeks," I said. "There's no guarantee you'll see them." "Oh," the woman said, sounding crestfallen. "Why not?"

"Well, because they're not around 24-7," I said, feeling a smidge exasperated. "They come and then they go. There's more of them around in the fall when the males are in rut. In the summer, when there's more tourists around, they make themselves scarce. This time of year, you might see them on the dunes. You can get to Gearhart easily enough from Cannon Beach, but there's no guarantee you'll see elk." "Oh," the woman said again. There was a pause in the conversation as I fussed with my email server.

"Is there anyway we can call the elk to us?" the woman said after a bit. "What would happen if we used one of those elk call things like they use for hunting?" "Well, my husband did buy one of those elk calls a couple of years ago at the Astoria Sunday Market," I said. "He used it and elk did show up. They hung around for an hour and he played his saxophone for them." This information got the woman a little excited.

"I have to warn you, however, that the elk aren't that friendly," I said, feeling suddenly concerned what havoc I might have inadvertently started. A fantasy flashed through my mind about this completely innocent couple blowing elk calls and the entire herd showing up and possibly charging or trampling them. It would be my fault of course. "They're Roosevelt elk," I said. "They're quite large. And there is some concern the tourists are getting too close to them trying to take pictures. Somebody could get hurt." "My husband says he won't come to Gearhart if we're not going to see elk," the lady from Salem said. By now her tone had turned flat, almost mean. I sensed she was a bit angry with me for not telling her what she wished to hear.

"There's a lot of great reasons to visit Gearhart," I said soothingly. "Gearhart's beach is one of the most beautiful on the coast. There are a number of adorable gift shops in town to browse. There's the Pacific Way Café, which has excellent pastry. There's a new ice cream shop and wine bar. And a pub just opened. And you might see elk."

The woman didn't seem appeased in any way by this information. "My husband says he wants to see elk," she said sulkily. At this exact moment, my Hotmail account miraculously returned. I was thrilled. "Well, then maybe you should skip Gearhart," I said gaily, thinking her loss was the town's gain. I mean, really, if the only reason you're coming to Gearhart is elk, you've come to the wrong place. Our conversation concluded with the woman saying that if the weather was fine, they might just stay home in Salem and work on their garden. "Good idea," I said.

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