

# The man who brought Hollywood to Oregon

By Rebecca Herren  
For Seaside Signal

It all begins with the sound of the clapperboard and the director saying, "Action!"

The world of filmmaking is magical. It evokes emotions of wonderment, love, sadness or fear, and grants the audience the freedom to laugh. Movies bring to life stories that entertain, as did the presentation Mac Burns gave at the March 30 History and Hops speaker series.

Burns, who is the executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society, gave an account of the history of filmmaking in Clatsop County and illustrated the relationship Oregon has had with Hollywood, or "Hollywood North" as it is often referred to in the movie industry, said Burns.

## Early filmmaking

One obscure person who was key to making movies possible and popular in Oregon was William Selig. "He's probably the most important person in the history of Hollywood that know one has ever heard of," said Burns.

Selig was the son of Polish immigrants. He was raised in



REBECCA HERREN/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

**Mac Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society spoke at the History and Hops speaker series.**

Chicago and became a vaudeville performer as a magician known as Selig the Conjurer, traveling the country with his troupe of performers.

In 1894 while performing at the Texas State Fair, Selig came across an exhibition of Thomas Edison's kinoscope. This enthralled him and upon returning to Chicago, Selig opened a studio and became involved in optical trades. To get out of paying Edison patent rights or buying Edison equipment, Selig began to modify Edison's kinoscope. "This happened a lot during this time period," said



SUBMITTED PHOTO

**The Glam Tram is a restored 1963 people mover from the Los Angeles Zoo, originally opened as the Selig Zoo in 1913.**

Burns, causing Edison to sue people over the years. Two years later, Selig started the Selig Polyscope Company in Chicago and released his first movie called "The Tramp and His Dog."

In the early years of commercial filming, Burns explained why movies were 15-minutes in length. Print rolls were 1,000 feet which were approximately 15 minutes of running time; movies were shown in vaudeville houses and most vaudeville performances were about 15 minutes; projectionists were

not trained on how to do reel-to-reel changeovers; and, lastly, "it was determined to be the average attention span of the average American."

After "The Tramp and His Dog," Selig's company made what was called "actuality shorts" or industry documentaries. He made more than 60 of these films including travel logs, agriculture and livestock shorts. In 1908, Selig opened the first studio in Los Angeles, and that same year, made his first narrative film "The Count of Monte Cristo." Soon, the company was

widely known for its early Westerns and authentic looks using wild animals, shooting outdoors, historical subjects, and using movie extras and Native Americans; everything to make his movies more realistic and authentic.

Selig made stars out of Roscoe "Fatty" Arbuckle and cowboy Tom Mix. He was the first American to make a horror movie in 1908 — "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," and in 1910, he made the first film production of "The Wonderful Wizard of Oz." He popularized the first cliffhanger in 1913 with "The Adventures of Kathlyn," and pioneered the second unit film crew.

Overall, Selig made more than 1,000 films in his career beginning with 15-minute shorts to full-length features, including 14 experimental talking movies. He is best known for "The Spoilers," a 1914 two-hour feature and Selig's first talkie.

"Probably one of the reasons why this is his best-known film is that it still exists," said Burns. "Most movies from this time period have disappeared, nitrate dissolves the film, they've been lost, or theaters threw them away; but this is an earlier one

that actually survived."

## Clatsop connection

There have been 400 movies made in Oregon, nine in Clatsop County: "Come See the Paradise," "Free Willy," "Kindergarten Cop," "Short Circuit," "Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles," "The Goonies," "Ring Two" and "The Road."

After the overwhelming support from the 20th anniversary celebration of the movie "The Goonies," plans got underway to create a film museum. Seven years ago, the old county jail in Astoria became home to the Oregon Film Museum.

In addition to the old county jail and the Goonies house as popular movie attractions, the Glam Tram has a direct connection to Selig. Abandoned and left for scrap in a junkyard, Jeff Daly of Astoria, found, rescued and restored a 1963 people mover from being crushed in 2015. Before that, the tram was used to transport people around the lot of the Los Angeles Zoo, which first opened as the Selig Zoo in 1913 to house the exotic animals Selig used in his movies.

And, that's a wrap!

## SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

# Kids get feet wet in environmental program

## Grant provides funds for boat-to-school program

By Katherine Lacaze  
For Seaside Signal

Fifth-graders at Seaside Heights Elementary School are receiving exposure to economic and environmental sustainability in a tasty, fun way during the 2016-17 school year.

During the Seaside School District Board of Directors meeting March 21, fifth-grade teachers from the Heights presented on the school's year-long partnership with the Oregon Albacore Commission, a part of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, for an educational boat-to-school pilot program.

"It's been a really, really exciting program," fifth-grade teacher Laurie Dougherty told the board. "I wish it wasn't a pilot, and we could keep it going on and on."

Funded by an approximately \$15,000 farm-to-school grant from the Oregon Department of Education, the program connects students to local seafood and fishers. The purpose is for students to learn about the importance of seafood to the state's economy, as well as "where their food comes from, and that they can eat healthy and enjoy it," Nancy Fitzpatrick, executive director of both the salmon commission and the Oregon Albacore Commission, said in a Grant's Getaways video on the program shown to the Seaside board.

Fitzpatrick spearheaded the boat-to-school program along with Christa Svensson, an export and marketing manager at Bornstein Foods, and retired teacher Robin Timmons Malony.

Since October, the program has featured four dif-

ferent segments on wild and locally sourced seafood and the individuals who catch and produce it.

The program started with salmon in October; the school was visited by guest fishers and speakers from the Oregon Salmon Commission. According to fifth-grade teacher John Meyer, the segment included a sample of freshly caught salmon, smoked right on campus, for all the fifth-graders. They also received activity books — featuring projects that applied mathematics, artistic skills and vocabulary — and dinner kits with fresh fish, other ingredients and recipes to use.

The same components were incorporated into a rockfish segment in December, a Dungeness crab segment in January and an albacore tuna segment in March. The program will wrap up with a pink shrimp segment in May. The idea was to cover "all the major (seafood) exports from Oregon," Dougherty said.

The program also financed a trip to the Nehalem Fish Hatchery for the students, where they got a more hands-on experience with live fish and a deeper understanding of biology and conservation. The program coincided with the release of coho salmon fry into the river, an activity Meyer has conducted for his fifth-graders for several years.

During their presentation to the school board, the Heights' teachers shared a testimonial from a fifth-grader's parent, who wrote, "I believe that teaching a kid to cook is a vital part of growing independent and healthy. And it's so fantastic the school is supporting this, while also supporting our local community and fishermen."

In the Grant's Getaways video, Fitzpatrick said she hopes this program "can go all over the place," even outside of Oregon.

## 'It's so fantastic the school is supporting this, while also supporting our local community and fishermen.'

A Seaside Heights Elementary parent

"All of our coastal states have their own seafood, so maybe we can be the template for other areas to develop something like this," she said.

In other news: • After a public hearing, the board unanimously approved a resolution exempting the school district from the competitive bid process when hiring a construction manager/general contractor for the new school campus construction project. Mike Day, with owner's representative DAY CPM, discussed how the exemption will not lead to favoritism and will result in cost-savings for the district. It is "the commonly used contracting method by local governments for larger, complex projects," such as Seaside's new \$100-million school campus, Day said. With the approval, the procurement should take place in April. Community members attended a meet-and-

greet on April 4 at Seaside Heights Elementary School, where they interacted with staff from the district DAY CPM and DOWA-IBI Group, the architecture firm, to learn more about the construction project.

The board unanimously approved a resolution to accept a \$4 million matching grant from the department of education's Oregon School Capital Improvement Matching Program. Business Manager Justine Hill said Seaside originally was a runner-up but after another district's bond measure didn't pass, Seaside became eligible to receive the grant instead. The resolution authorized Superintendent Sheila Roley to sign an agreement with the education department. The grant will be distributed as reimbursements for payments made on anything related to the project up to \$4 million, Hill said.

The board approved the calendar for the 2017-18 school year. It is similar to previous calendars, with school starting Sept. 5, the day after Labor Day, and a two-week winter break. One change, Roley noted, is parent-teacher conferences for kindergartners have been scheduled on the same day as those for first- through fifth-grade students. In the past, having the conferences on different days caused "a hardship on some of our families," Roley said.

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