

Authors seek to chronicle Hood to Coast history



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Author Marc Spiegel’s 2016 Image team at the Ashore Hotel.

Got memories of Hood to Coast? The iconic 197-mile relay from Mount Hood to Seaside has brought hundreds of thousands of runners and their families to our city. Authors Marc Spiegel and Art Garner place the race in the league of great American sporting events. Its history offers a colorful path of personalities, endurance and community involvement. Those who compete often call it the “most magical” experience of their lives. The sense of team-building and accomplishment is akin to scaling a mountain.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX

“Art Garner and I are putting together an upcoming book, tentatively titled ‘Hood to Coast, An Oral History of the Mother of All Relays,’” Spiegel wrote in February. “It will tell the story of the relay through the words of participants, organizers, volunteers, spectators, media and others involved in the event that just completed its 35th year. We’re working together with the Hood To Coast organization, and we’re compiling short personal stories and remembrances of the event. Obviously, we would love to hear from individuals from Seaside and the surrounding areas that may have stories to share about their Hood To Coast experiences.”

At times, a rocky path

Anyone who’s spent late August in Seaside knows that not everyone is a fan of Hood to Coast. “It’s not been two years, not three years, but 15 years of continuous debate,” Seaside’s John Chapman said at a 2015 Hood to Coast workshop presented by the city. “I encourage you to listen to our business people.” In 2015, the city of Seaside came close to giving the storied race the boot, after merchants complained about rude, unruly crowds, litter and a lack of communication between city and organizers. The run was marred by heavy winds that diverted the finish line from the beach to the Prom — herding runners and visitors downtown. The conversation became so stormy that the city had to think twice before renewing their contract with race organizers. “Although the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and many of the area’s lodging facilities benefit financially, many of us year-round business owners feel that the overall impact of hosting this massive event during the busy summer tourist season is negative,” wrote 74 business owners in a letter delivered to the City Council. As trouble-ridden as 2015 was, 2016 went off without a hitch. Weather held and celebrities joined newly minted Prefontaines on the 197-mile track. Comedian and actor Kevin Hart ran on the Nike team and Olympians Ashton Eaton, Brienne Theisen-Eaton, Josh Cox and Lopez Lomong kicked up the sand for Team World Vision.

They were four of 17,000 participants in the race, quite a number considering Seaside’s regular population is less than a third that.

Inspirational documentary

A recreational runner, Spiegel first heard about Hood to Coast at the South by Southwest film fest in Austin, Texas, when the documentary “Hood to Coast” made its debut in 2010. “My wife said, ‘We have to do this event,’” Spiegel said from his home in North Carolina. “I said, ‘Sure.’ We applied and didn’t get in. On the third time, in 2014, we got into the race, and we decided to do it.” Spiegel has run each race since. “I think every year it gets better,” he said. He and co-author Garner liked the format of their previous book, “Indy 500 Memories: An Oral History of the Greatest Spectacle in Racing,” and were ready for a new project. When Hood to Coast organizers gave the project their stamp of approval, the authors began the process of collecting memories: from volunteers and spectators to journalists and celebrities. Their first stop in the project began with an interview with race founder Bob Foote, a 35-time marathoner and 13-time ultra-marathon runner. Foote’s concept was a run from Mount Hood to the beach. A group of Foote’s running friends and competitors would form relay teams, handing off every 5 miles, starting at Timberline Lodge on Mount Hood and finishing in Pacific City. Over the years, countless love matches have been made, Spiegel said, including a proposal at the finish line. A local restaurateur recalled preparing 100 pizzas in an hour. A mother and daughter shared their experiences of running together. Hood to Coast stirred excitement “from the first whisper of the event coming to Seaside,” the Signal wrote in 1989, with predictions of “enough visitors to populate a moderately sized city.” Between 12,000 and 15,000 visitors came to Seaside that year, after race organizers met with city officials in February for preparations. Among the novel features was the participation of more than 20 licensed massage technicians brought to the event by van, some of them from as far away as Roseburg. If you were there back then, you probably remember the dominance of a running team known as the Killer B’s. They won the race five of the first six years in Seaside. I hope one of their members steps forward with some stories.

Share your 500- to 1,000-word reminiscences and photos at hoodtocoastmemories.com or on Facebook, at www.facebook.com/hoodtocoastmemories.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Art Garner and Marc Spiegel at a book signing event in Indianapolis with former ABC-TV Indy 500 broadcaster Paul Page.

A library for everything

In honor of national library week just passed, I’ve gathered some things you may or may not know about libraries. The oldest library in the world still in existence today is Al-Qarawiyyin located in Fez, Morocco. It was opened in 859 A.D. and has books written on camel skin. One of the best known libraries of the ancient world was the Ancient Library of Alexandria, founded in the third century B.C. It was believed at its peak to have 200,000 to 400,000 scrolls. The library books were mostly written on large papyrus scrolls. The library had a reading room, meeting rooms, and gardens, among other areas for discussion and learning. The library burned down and most of the scrolls were lost. The exact cause of the fire or fires is lost in antiquity, but legend has it that Julius Caesar burned it down when he attacked Egypt. Perhaps some of the most unique libraries around the world today include the “graveyard library” in Krems an der Donau, Austria. The graveyard, which was desecrated and destroyed by the Nazis because it was a mainly Jewish cemetery, has a memorial in place that includes a series of bookshelves created by artists Michael Clegg and Martin Guttman. According to Grace Dobush, writing for quartz.com, books in the glassed-in bookshelves displayed in the cemetery are written in German, Hebrew, and English and are about Jewish philosophy and the history of death. In Argentina, a Ford Falcon has been converted to a tank like library called the “Weapon of Mass Instruction” or Arma de Instrucción Masiva. In the 1970s, Ford Falcons were used by Argentine death squads to kidnap victims. It is a sobering reminder that has been transformed into something useful that now educates and informs peacefully.

Biblioburros in Colombia is run by a primary school teacher, Luis Soriano who brings books to children on two burros, bringing books to children in drug and war torn areas of the country on the weekends. According to Kimberly Turner on litreactor.com, in the Norwegian Fjords, a book boat travels to about 250 small communities from winter to spring with about 6,000 books. The librarians on board bring the books to people who are snowed in for months on end. In the summer, the boat is a leisure cruise ferry. In Kenya, traveling librarians take their camels and books across the desert to the communities they serve. The Kenya National Library service uses the nine camels of the book train to serve 5,000 to 6,000 people. Some of the most unusual jobs librarians hold have nothing to do with books. Wine librarians often work for private libraries to collect, catalog, and store rare wines for private individuals. The Nike shoe and sports apparel company in Beaverton has a library of fabrics and other materials to aid in the design process and each year brings in different collections to look at to get their creative juices flowing. Previous collections displayed at the Nike campus have included high end designer furniture and luggage. Not every library is of books!

Law librarians will pull court cases or other archived reference materials for lawyers and law students. Across the nation, seed libraries to preserve and replicate heirloom seeds have sprung up in nearly every state in the United States. These are reminiscent on a small scale of the Svalbard seed vault that holds below freezing seeds representing nearly every vital food source across the planet. Held for a “doomsday” scenario, these seeds could literally save the planet someday. Some libraries even loan out gardening tools and makerspace tools, everything from sewing machines to ukuleles. So many libraries may surprise you with what they lend out or let you use. A library may own collections of items that aren’t the typical type of information, in books, as you would expect, but have a proven usefulness to the community it serves. Libraries keep redefining themselves while keeping their goal of access to information and resources the community wants and desires that it serves, remains the main priority.

BETWEEN THE COVERS

ESTHER MOBERG

The little min-pin puppy with the sorrowful eyes

A year or so ago, while out and about with my better half on a random Sunday drive, somewhere on Highway 101, just north of Gearhart, we saw a sign. The sign said, “Min Pin Puppies Here Today.” Before I could squeak out a horrified “What are you doing?” my spouse was steering his way in. This would be a good time to say my husband has a thing for min pins. Min pin, in case you’re not aware, stands for miniature pinscher. You might know the breed. These are tiny dogs but they are ferocious. My husband also has an affinity for Chihuahuas, the meaner and more disagreeable the better. A few years ago he sweet-talked me into adopting a 10-year-old Chihuahua whose picture he saw in the newspaper. The dog, who we promptly named Rinaldo, is sweet

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX

and loving one moment and barking and snarling the next. Luckily he has hardly any teeth; otherwise he’d be a holy terror. After easing down a long and somewhat bumpy driveway, we pulled up in front of a low-slung ranch house. A beautiful lady of a certain age sporting white-blond hair a la Debbie Harry and wearing turquoise cowboy boots and a bedazzled jean jacket stepped out. “Hi, I’m Elaine,” she said. “You must be here to see the pups.” Over the next hour, we learned Elaine was in her 80s. A longtime breeder of American Kennel Club

quality miniature pinschers, she only breeds the red ones described by the AKC as ‘red stag.’ She showed us around the back of the house to a heated shed where she had two litters. I sat on the floor and a herd of 9-week-old min pins ran towards me. Picking up a roly-poly frisky male, my husband said, “How about this one?” “If I have to have another dog, it’s got to be a girl,” I said. In addition to the Chihuahua, we also have another male dog, an elderly Lhasa Apso called Basil. After a few minutes, I indicated I was ready to interact with litter number two. “They’re only 6 weeks old,” Elaine warned. “That’s very young.” I said I was an experienced dog owner and could handle it. She opened a crate and half-dozen squirmly puppies tumbled out. They were very rowdy



EVE MARX/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Lucy as a puppy. and playing roughly with each other save for the tiniest one. She came right over and placed her front feet on my legs. I picked her up and held her close. We gazed into each other’s eyes.

This is the one, I told my husband. Not too long after, a man I’d just met in Gearhart at the By The Way gift shop showed me the pup he’d just purchased from Elaine’s 9-week-old litter. He said he was naming the dog Mary after his favorite sister. Since our little Lucy came into our lives, I’ve only seen the “Min Pin Puppies Here Today” sign one more time. Someone mentioned she might have moved away. Sometimes the whole experience — the temporary sign on the highway, the shed behind the house, Elaine’s Debbie Harry hair, her rhinestone embellished jacket and turquoise cowboy boots, her dozen tiny pups — seems a dream. When people ask where we got our dog, I love saying it all happened because of a Sunday drive. It strikes me as a perfect North Coast kind of yarn, how our lives were changed by a highway sign.