

Lum, Stelson elected; fire levy passes

The Seaside School District Board of Directors showed two competitive board races May 16. In final unofficial results, in Gearhart's Zone 3, Position 1, Lori Lum took 75 percent of the vote over A.J. Wahl, with 1,425 votes to Wahl's 527 in filling the seat vacated by Lynn Ulbricht. Director Zone 6, Position 2, the other contested race, showed incumbent Hugh Stelson taking 57 percent of the votes, with 1,063, votes to Karen Custer's 775.



Lori Lum-Toyooka



Hugh Stelson



Brian Taylor



Michelle Wunderlich

Two other seats were uncontested. Michelle Wunderlich received 1,517 votes in Zone 7, Position 1 in running

for the vacated at-large seat of Tom Maltman. Brian Taylor received 1,520 votes in Cannon Beach's Zone 2, Position 2.

Three seats, held by Chairman Steve Phillips, Vice-chairman Mark Truax and Patrick Nofield of Cannon Beach were not up for election on the sev-

en-person board.

"I appreciate the chance to keep working with the other board members and the district staff to improve educational opportunities and outcomes for all our kids," Stelson said Wednesday. "The next few years are very exciting for new

facilities, but a bit treacherous from the state funding and PERS perspective. As usual I expect we will try to make the best of wherever we find ourselves."

"I'm so thankful and thrilled to be elected to the Seaside School District Board," Lori Lum said. "I feel fortunate to be able to work with the administrators, teachers and parents to ensure the growth and development of our children. These kids are our future."

Directors will begin their four-year terms in August, Superintendent Sheila Roley said at Tuesday's board meeting, as

there is no July meeting scheduled.

Seaside Fire

Seaside voters endorsed Local Option 4-186, approving \$2.018 million over five years for fire equipment and personnel, to be split three ways: for self-contained breathing apparatus; a new ladder truck; and funding for the department's training and safety officer. The measure passed by 72 percent.

SEPRD

In Seaside's Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, Veronica Russell defeated

Kindwyn Hoge with 74 percent of the vote for Position 1. Hoge had said before the election she would decline the role if elected due to a threatening letter sent to her opponent.

Other directors in the district, Michael Hinton in Position 3, Jeremy Mills in Position 2; Edward Hassan in Position 4 and Alan Evans in Position 5 all won seats unopposed.

District board members serve four-year terms. Hassan and Evans, who filled unexpired terms, will serve two years and could run for re-election in 2019.

Seaside author ponders the question: 'Where is the body buried?'

Ousley unveils new paranormal thriller novel at Beach Books

By Heather Douglas
For EO Media Group

One thing becomes clear after spending time with local author Melissa Eskue Ousley: She is a very productive woman. In addition to being a full-time academic adviser at Clatsop Community College, she is a mom, a freelance editor and an award-winning novelist.

Eskue Ousley unveiled her fifth novel at a Lunch in the Loft event May 17 at Beach Books in Seaside. Her new book, "Pitcher Plant," a novel set in Seaside that, like many of the author's other works, centers around the paranormal.

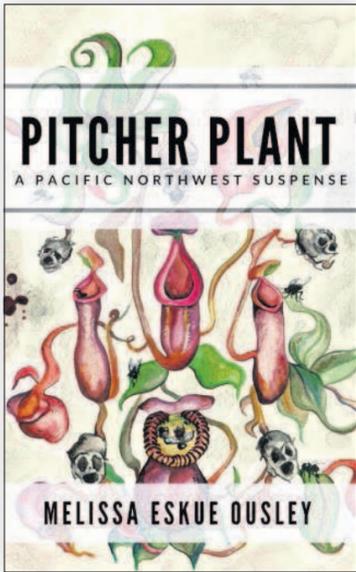
Though Eskue Ousley and her family are Seaside residents, "Pitcher Plant" is in no way autobiographical.

The inspiration came when she and her husband, Chris Ousley, were looking at a fixer-upper in Seaside.

"The book is based on an actual house in Seaside, although I don't want to reveal the location to protect the new owners' privacy," Eskue Ousley said.

When they checked out the house, the first thing they saw was a dead rat in the kitchen sink.

"I thought, 'Wow, that is really bizarre,'" she said. "There was a story behind the rat and this house; there are little things that people leave behind. You wonder: Who lived there? What was their story? Because I'm a horror fan, I think, 'Where is the body buried?'"



Seaside author Melissa Eskue Ousley's new book comes out this month.

Delving into darkness

"Pitcher Plant" tells the story of Tawny Ellis, a woman who spots a fixer-upper in Seaside, and, with her husband, jump at the chance to own a house at the beach. The couple moves in, along with their daughter, who begins to see an imaginary friend that bears a striking resemblance to the daughter of a drug-addicted woman who squatted in the house when it was vacant. Both former inhabitants have gone missing.

While Eskue Ousley enjoys delving into darkness, she has compassion for people who have experienced real-life horrors such as drug addiction and homelessness. In fact, she has a master's degree in counseling.

"One of the characters is schizophrenic, but there is a supernatural piece within the plot of 'Pitcher Plant': There's a ghost, but I also wanted the reader to question which parts are supernatural and which

'Each job is a chance for me to improve my craft, and I feel that I've developed as a writer. It was the first time that I wrote a full novel in first person, and it was a personal challenge for me.'

Melissa Eskue Ousley

are psychological. It was important to leave that somewhat open-ended."

'Escape through writing'

Eskue Ousley's path to writing began during a previous career while she

was doing academic research, which required a lot of work with numbers, data and analysis.

"It was interesting, but my brain needed something else to think about," she said. "I love to write. It's what I do for fun. I could escape through writing."

Eskue Ousley started out writing short stories in college. Later, she was inspired by a writers' workshop in Cannon Beach. She also serendipitously met a woman from Portland — a "book shepherd," which is similar to a book agent but one who focuses on a specific book or job.

Together, they created some proposals, which culminated in the opportunity to publish her work with a small Pacific Northwest press. Her first book, "Sign of the Throne," became the first book in the Solas Beir Trilogy, a series that won several awards.

Her last book, "Sunset Empire," is a fantasy set in Astoria that blends history with local legends and features prominent Astoria locations. The book debuted in a young-adult boxed set that became a bestseller in the UK. The novel was later released as a single volume.

'Risk-taker'

"Each job is a chance for me to improve my craft," she said. "Pitcher Plant" is her fifth book, "and I feel that I've developed as a writer. It was the first time that I wrote a full novel in first person, and it was a personal challenge for me."

Asked if she found writing her first novel intimidating, she said, "I've always been a risk-taker, and if I want to do something, I go for it. I don't think too much about it. The first book I was writing for myself, just to see if I could. That sort of writer's high was driving me — 'Oh this is fun.' I thought it would be cool to be published, but it wasn't my main motivator."

Eskue Ousley teaches writing workshops and classes, and believes in giving back to the community. For each copy of "Pitcher Plant" sold the week after its release, she will donate \$1 of profit per book to the community college's Lives in Transition program, which promotes a supportive academic environment for students overcoming life barriers.

Despite her positive attitude and can-do work ethic, Eskue Ousley doesn't mince words about the challenging side of writing.

"Rejection: It's half the job, really," she said. "You have to just keep putting yourself out there, keep improving and stay persistent. I'd rather put myself out there and take the risk than never try."

Mayor, former mayor back Gearhart short-term rental rules

Residents divided over regulations

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal



Mayor Matt Brown

As some residents and property owners seek to "repeal and replace" Gearhart's short-term rental rules, others, including Mayor Matt Brown and former Mayor Dianne Widdop, came to the defense of the city's regulations.

They strongly disagree with the concept of repeal, as well as the way the rules are characterized.

"We are in full support of the current ordinance and are looking to make sure people keep it in place," Jeanne Mark of Keep Gearhart Residential said.

A summary of a ballot

initiative to "repeal and replace" the legislation underwent changes as a result of a decision issued by Circuit Court Judge Dawn McIntosh earlier this month. The ballot measure would repeal special regulations on vacation rentals related to off-street parking, residential appearance, garbage service, septic capacity inspections and cesspool requirements not required of other Gearhart residents.

Proponents of a repeal called it a "huge win."

"The judge agreed with us, that they were 99 percent wrong," property owner David Townsend said in announcing the result.

Widdop said Townsend's statement was a "gross exaggeration."

"If you go down word for word, there are so few changes it's unbelievable," Widdop said. "We like the way the ordinance has been written. It's a wonderful compromise."

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MEETINGS	
Thursday, June 1 Seaside Parks Advisory Committee , 7 p.m., City Hall, City Hall, 989 Broadway.	Wednesday, June 7 Seaside Improvement Commission , 6:30 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.
Tuesday, June 6 Seaside Community and Senior Commission , 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.	Gearhart City Council , 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.
Seaside Library Board , 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway.	Thursday, June 8 Seaside Convention Center Commission , 5 p.m., Convention Center, 415 First Ave.
Seaside Planning Commission , 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.	Monday, June 12 Seaside City Council , 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

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