

Seaside's latest innovation is a topsy-turvy experience



KEITH BAKER/SUBMITTED PHOTO

The author takes a ride at the Inverted Experience, a new business that is the product of Keith Baker's imagination.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



Viewing the world upside down

If the world seems to be a little upside down, you're not alone. Keith Baker first imagined a topsy-turvy outlook as a kid watching TV shows upside down while lying on the living-room couch. During the long months as a commercial fisherman in Alaska, he would let his imagination run as he gazed over the horizon.

Back in Seaside, Baker has turned his longtime vision into a reality at the Inverted Experience, appropriately located at the former location of the Ferris wheel on Broadway.

Today, the room is decorated like a Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers Hollywood stage set, with fixtures on the ceiling and upside down on the walls. Barstools are upside down at the "inverted saloon" and on a side wall, a 1950s kitchen scene hangs from above.

Reactions are "unbelievable," Baker said. "It's steamrolling."

He developed the concept about 10 years ago, during those long moments on a fishing boat in the Bering Sea. "When you are isolated on a boat you have a lot of time to think," Baker said. "You don't have a lot of influences, TV or internet."

The Inverted Experience is the product of Baker's imagination and his love for Seaside.

A \$6 admission fee gains entry; a family pass is \$20 for four. Visitors



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Roscoe Baker, left, takes photos of Reed and Cooper Helvey of St. Louis, Mo., at the Inverted Experience in Seaside. The attraction, owned by Keith Baker, features sets that are upside down.

pass their phones to an attendant, who snaps and rotates the shots so people appear to be hanging, floating, running or scrambling upside down.

The surreal images hang like a Salvador Dali in cyberspace. The emporium's Facebook page is filled with children "diving" into a toilet bowl, families blown in the wind clinging to bicycle handlebars or holding onto a lamppost in midair.

New technology

Baker, who lives in Gearhart, is a fifth-generation North Coast resident. His grandfather was stationed at Camp Rilea Armed Forces Training Center, and family members remain.

He recalled the memorable upside-down Astaire dance scenes and the 1980s Lionel Richie video, "Dancing on the Ceiling."

A Google search revealed a house in Orlando, Florida, made to look like a

mansion uprooted by a tornado. Other than those, he said, he hadn't seen anything like this before.

"It's only come to light in the last four or five years," Baker said. "Everybody has a camera. You just invert that on your phone. That is the nature of the experience."

Baker designed the room at 111 Broadway himself, and called on friends to help install props.

Images include the Prom, a sidewalk, the "inverted saloon" and a vintage kitchen.

Baker plans on changing it up this winter and adding a mural. Decor will be changed at Halloween and Christmas to reflect holiday themes. He hopes to make it a family-friendly destination suitable for birthday parties, receptions and reunions. Next door, the Pacific Pearl Coffee Co. sells T-shirts reading "The Inverted Experience" and "Inverted Lives Matter."



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Kevin the Octopus, by Karynn Kozij.

Artist transforms marine debris

GEARHART—In the interest of full disclosure, my husband, Mr. Sax (RJ Marx), made contact with Karynn Kozij, the Gearhart postmistress, 2 1/2 years ago, a few weeks before we moved to the area.

"You're really going to like her," he said after speaking on the phone to her at length as he set up our new mail-receiving situation. It would be my first time having mail delivered to a Post Office box. Knowing my penchant for becoming cozy with the folks who handle my mail, he rightly projected Karynn and I would become friends over the Post Office counter.

Last spring, Karynn mentioned her participation in

the Cannon Beach Earth Day 2016 celebratory art contest and juried show held in the Cannon Beach Chamber Community Hall. I went to the event and that was the first time I saw her art. I stood in front of her "Octopus's Garden Family Reunion at the Beach" and was awed. By the end of the evening, Karynn was crowned with the people's choice award winner and took third place in the judged Steve McLeod award.

Karynn doesn't just collect beach debris and cleverly arrange it. Her gift is creating characters, real personalities she breathes life into. There's Fritzzy, Aunt Kay, Neil, Kim, Kevin, and Gary, to name just a few. Great-great-grandfather Kraken, fashioned from what looks like an old bell buoy, says his arms don't work too well. Mike, born of old rope and plastic, is a MacGyver fan who spends his time scouring the beach for potential disguises and useful tools. Kevin, a self-described loner, was created from debris plastic and marine rope.

Months ago while writing for this newspaper about another art endeavor, Beaver Tales, I mentioned Karynn's work to Denise Fairweather who has a gallery in Seaside. I told Denise, "You probably already know her; she is the Gearhart postmistress." So I was very happy to learn of Denise's promotion of Karynn on the Fairweather House & Gallery blog under "Findings: Karynn Kozij's marine debris art." Or, as Denise put it, "Found While Picking Up Mail."

Karynn says her artistic vision was developed when she was growing up in the province of Saskatchewan, Canada, on a farm. She spent a lot of time perusing her father's stash of materials kept in myriad sheds, outbuildings and barn.

To this day she has a tough time passing up stuff other people might call rubbish. I know she drives and walks the beach in all weather, searching for who knows what.

Last March, after spring storms dumped marine debris across our coastline, she found so much trash on the shore disheartening. For days she took it on herself to drive the beach after work to haul away carloads of trash. Unable to abandon so much good rope, she began considering what might be done with it. Finding inspiration in the old Beatles' tune, "Octopus's Garden," she found a treasure trove of potential art. The rest, as they say, is history.

I'd like to be under the sea, in an octopus' garden in the shade

He'd let us in, knows where we've been, in his octopus' garden in shade.

"Octopus Garden Family Reunion" is on display through the month of August at Fairweather Home & Gallery in Seaside located at 612 Broadway. Or check out fairweatherhouseandgallery.wordpress.com.

LETTERS

Initiative underway to form utility district

Last Tuesday night another power outage blacked out all of coastal Clatsop County for three hours. The night was peaceful and rain had not fallen in two months. So it came as somewhat of a surprise.

The cause of the outage according to Pacific Power was the failure of a single pole transformer in Seaside. Chalk it up to "a bird or a chemical reaction after rain," says the Wyoming-based Pacific Power. "It's the same idea as the breaker box in your garage," Pacific Power stated.

I hate to be the bearer of sad news but in 2017, the failure of one of the thousands of pole-mounted transformers

should not cause this level of outage in a well-designed power grid. It may be a trivial problem to Pacific Power but it is evidence that the electrical grid in this area needs a lot of attention and modernization to become more fault-tolerant.

Please consider carefully the initiative now about to circulate to form our own People's Utility District (Cascadia PUD).

We can join all our neighboring communities in Oregon and Washington who already have successfully operating PUDs. They enjoy local management and because PUDs have access to Northwest Bonneville Power, a 30 percent reduction in your monthly electric bill. In addition, Cascadia PUD has plans to construct a

local renewable power generator, which Pacific Power rejected because they plan to build wind farms in Wyoming and make us pay to have it delivered 1,500 miles so its cost to us will be another 30 percent higher.

Cascadia PUD will save everyone in the community hundreds of dollars a year, require no increase in property taxes to operate and will create local jobs. In the event a Cascadia event does occur, it will be located and designed to provide electrical service to our communities immediately instead of our homes not having electricity for a projected six-month outage with the current system.

John Dunzer, Seaside

Three wise monkeys

Regarding the connection between the dwindling rental housing stock in Seaside to prolific short-term vacation rentals, the Seaside City Council remains willfully blind to the impropriety or the consequence of such commercial activity in residential areas.

"Who's going to enforce more restrictions? We don't have the staff," bursts City Councilor Dana Phillips ("Wanted: Long-term rentals in Seaside," The Daily Astorian, July 19). Who needs any restrictions where zoning laws have no efficacy?

Seaside is a tourist free-fire zone. The city is addicted to its lodging tax revenues, and now it appears to rely on Airbnb to police itself and to collect the city's lodging tax revenue ("Seaside inks tax deal with Airbnb," Seaside Signal, June 20). Be my guest. On the honor system. See no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil ...

Gary Durham, Cannon Beach

SEASIDE
Signal



PUBLISHER
David F. Pero

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

CIRCULATION
MANAGER
Jeremy Feldman

ADVERTISING
SALES
Brandy Stewart

PRODUCTION
MANAGER
John D. Bruijn

SYSTEMS
MANAGER
Carl Earl

STAFF WRITER
Brenna Visser

CONTRIBUTING
WRITERS
Skyler Archibald
Rebecca Herren
Katherine Lacaze
Eve Marx
Esther Moberg
Jon Rahl

Seaside Signal

The Seaside Signal is published every other week by EO Media Group, 1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, OR 97138. 503-738-5561 seasidesignal.com Copyright 2017 © Seaside Signal. Nothing can be reprinted or copied without consent of the owners.

Letter policy

The Seaside Signal welcomes letters to the editor. The deadline is noon Monday prior to publication. Letters must be 400 words or less and must be signed by the author and include a phone number for verification. We also request that submissions be limited to one letter per month. Send to 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside, OR 97138, drop them off at 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive or fax to 503-738-9285, or email rmarx@seasidesignal.com

Subscriptions

Annually: \$40.50 in county • \$58.00 in and out of county • e-Edition: only \$30.00

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Seaside Signal, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103. Postage Paid at Seaside, OR, 97138 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2017 © by the Seaside Signal. No portion of this newspaper may be reproduced without written permission. All rights reserved.