

# GETTING THE MESSAGE OUT WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS

In case of emergency, start here. Ham radio is at the heart of our region's safety efforts when the Big One hits.

"We know it's going to happen," said Hal Denison, President of Seaside Tsunami Amateur Radio and a licensed expert radio operator. "We've been training for that on a daily basis."

Amateur radio is the last resource in an emergency when there is no other means of communication.

"That's what we prepare for and back up for," Denison said. "There may not be phones. There may not be cell phones. We don't really know how many are going to survive. But we know that the amateur radio is running."

The more operators, the greater the possibility of having people who can help, Denison said.

Local radio enthusiasts watched with great interest the response in Texas and Florida after a season of hurricanes and floods.

"From a ham point of view, we know those were the only communications down there," Dana Gandy, president of Sunset Empire Amateur Radio, said.

## Broad-based community

Radio operators in the region range from age 8 to older than 90.

"They all jump in and work together," Irv Emmons, a former communications professional and amateur radio operator said. "If anyone has any issues, we all jump in and try to resolve them."

Terry Williams received her license 10 years ago when she moved to Seaside.

She got hooked after making radio communication with a radio operator in Scotland. "I've been on the radio ever since," Williams said. "I love it."

Since then she's served as an officer of the Seaside Tsunami Amateur Radio Society and continues to introduce other women to the hobby.

The women hold a practice session every Sunday night at 8 p.m. and a "hams" brunch" at the Uptown Cafe in Warrenton.

## A power boost

Users find a wide range of technology, from basic packages to sophisticated gadgetry.

A hand-held battery offers low, medium and high power capabilities, Denison said.

On high power, a battery will be dead in one day. Medium power provides two to three days of communications. Low power lasts longer — up to four days — but limits broadcast reach.

Capabilities are rapidly being enhanced, Denison added.

Solar power, backup generators and car-size batteries can provide many days of power after an emergency event.

One operator uses a bicycle power to generate power.

A self-sustaining repeater site in Arch Cape operates on solar power with no connection to the grid, bringing coverage from Nehalem to Warrenton.

## Far and wide

Repeater and EchoLink sites allow licensed operators using a computer or smartphone to connect to repeater sites anywhere in the world.

Gearhart approved a repeater site at the city's September council meeting.

The site, including pole, electrical communications and equipment, is budgeted at about \$5,000, and will provide amateur radio service from the



Ham radio operators Dana Gandy, Irv Emmons, Doug Barker, Carl Yates and Hal Denison.

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**Hal Denison,**

President of Seaside Tsunami Amateur Radio

Arch Cape area to the northern tip of the Long Beach peninsula.

A site in Seaside at the water treatment plant has battery backup and two separate generator backups, Denison said.

A remote message system site in Seaside, located at Seaside Heights Elementary School, uses a laptop capable of sending emails over radio waves.

Global positioning systems capabilities can provide specific information about a user's location when other means fail, helping to identify victims who may be trapped or isolated.

"If you get in trouble, and you have no other means of communicating, you can type in a code in an emergency with your exact location," Gandy said.

He said GPS capabilities have so far been sporadic, but will be brought into all of the county's radio sites.

## Training

Training in procedures and communication are not only essential but mandatory, as all operators must be federally licensed.

Amateurs are licensed by class, from the entry technician level to the intermediate general license and the top level of "extra class," a distinction held by Gandy and Denison.

"The higher you get in, the more complicated it is, but the more benefits you have," Denison said. "You have more frequencies to operate on."

Gandy, a former information technology professional, said there are more than 600 members in the area's two clubs, and the teaching group has

R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Local author Shannon Symonds and Mayor Jay Barber.

# Domestic violence and sex trafficking more prevalent than you think

Last Tuesday evening I skipped book club to attend a program hosted by the Seaside Branch of the American Association of University Women held at Beach Books. The topic was domestic violence and sex crimes, subjects that have captured my journalistic interest for a very long time.

The meeting was a "get-acquainted" get-together. Following opening remarks by Cindy Gould, AAUW's local chapter president, Shannon Symonds, author of the novel, "Safe House" and part-time advocate of domestic and sexual assault victims. Symonds was joined by Seaside's Mayor Jay Barber, an advisor for

Shared Hope International, an organization dedicated to ending sex trafficking.

Symonds, who by day is the outreach manager for the Foster Club in Seaside, said she became a domestic violence advocate years ago after working at Head Start.

There are two types of abusers, Symonds said. One is a "cyclor," a person whose triggers are known and who almost predictably goes off the rails; the second and more deadly type is the abuser who often has no prior documented history of abuse. "There may have been no red flags," she said.

These abusers are power motivated and are control junkies. "They are the ones who are most likely to commit a homicide," Symonds said. The most dangerous time for the victim is when she decides to leave.

Symonds said victims least likely to seek help are women of means. "The more you have to lose, the less you will tell," she said. Maintaining personal privacy is the primary reason victims don't report; there is also concern the abuser may lose his job and stature in the community. Victims in these cases rarely report abuse or follow through to press charges when police become involved. That's because they love their abuser and keep hoping for the best. These victims customarily play down the severity of the abuse, claiming even serious injuries as minor.

Barber told the audience I-5 is the principal thoroughfare for sex trafficking in this part of the country. "It's a hotbed," he said. He spoke of his work with Shared Hope, an organization offering legal counsel to victims, and boosts initiatives such as the Protected Innocence annual report on state child sex trafficking laws and Traffic Stop, which examines state agency responses to trafficking. Sex trafficking, Barber said, is America's fastest growing crime. He quoted an expert on the subject who called trafficking "the new slavery."

In Oregon, to target victims, traffickers use social networks that appeal to teens. Victims tend to be 14-16 years of age, although girls as young as 9 have been known to be trafficked. Many victims, and they are not all female, are victims of prior sexual abuse, are in foster care, or are runaways. He cautioned people shouldn't think sex trafficking can't happen in Seaside.

Symonds said no shelter or safe house currently is in operation in Clatsop County for victims and their children of sex abuse or domestic violence. More money, she said, has been raised or allocated to animal shelters. But the need for a human shelter in this area is very real.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness month. "If we can help one person at a time," Symonds said, "That's a victory."

**VIEW FROM THE PORCH**  
EVE MARX



**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**  
R.J. MARX



trained more than 900 hams since the region's 2007 storm, which brought the need to the fore.

Investment is about \$35 plus a \$15 license good for 10 years.

Denison teaches "everything there is to know" to pass the beginning FCC license classes.

Club members help new hams get started, make wise decisions about what they purchase and give them hands-on experience leading to licensing, Gandy said.

Carl Yates attended a class shortly after relocating to Seaside and earned his technician's license.

"I'm kind of a novice," he admitted. "But I'm an example of somebody who can start from scratch and go from there."

## How to train

Clatsop County Auxiliary Emergency Communications presents a ham radio licensing class Friday, Oct. 20, from 4:30 to 9 p.m. at Clatsop Community College's South County Campus in Seaside, and all day on Oct. 21.

A similar course takes place Oct. 28 in Astoria.

Groups like STARS check in on a weekly basis by giving their names and information.

A South County check-in — for the communities of Arch Cape, Seaside, Cannon Beach, Gearhart and Warrenton — takes place Wednesdays.

"It's a great hobby," Emmons said. "I've been in it since 1960."

"We're all hams first," Gandy said.

## LETTERS

### Vote no to short-term rental measure

I have received a lot of questions on the short-term rental repeal and replace ordinance that will be on the ballot this fall and is financed by a political firm out of California and a vacation rental management corporation. I want to be perfectly clear on what Measure 4-188 will mean for the residents of Gearhart.

A yes vote will allow unlimited short term rentals in our single family residential zones, no septic regulations, and will get rid of state

certified safety inspections for fire and life safety.

A no vote will continue our current laws which include; a balanced and responsible cap allowing all STR owners to continue to rent, adequate septic regulations to protect neighbors from high commercial use, and certified safety inspections mandating legal fire escapes to keep children, families, and visitors safe.

Our current laws also allow citizens to rent multiple rooms or their entire homes for 30 days or more at anytime, and allow funds from STR permits to go towards our police and fire departments through proceeds

from our general fund.

I campaigned last year on keeping Gearhart the quiet residential community we all know and love. As your mayor I made a vow to protect our citizens and I will continue to fight along side you. Our residential property values, quality of life, and sense of community are at stake.

With a no vote on Measure 4-188 we have the opportunity to end the divisiveness, keeping Gearhart from becoming an investment property community that would allow outside corporations to buy unlimited properties on any neighborhood street.

Please contact me anytime and I will go over our current law next to the repeal and replace ordinance line by line with you. I won't try to convince you how to vote but will give you the facts so you can make the best choice for our future. Thank you.

**Mayor Matty Brown Gearhart**

### Thanks to Sen. Johnson

Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook counties are truly fortunate to have a powerful and compassionate advocate in Sen. Betsy Johnson. Because

of her tireless commitment to meet our needs, Oregon lawmakers made decisions that protect and provide resources for our most vulnerable neighbors.

Community Action Team staff and board members wish to express deep gratitude to Sen. Johnson for asking the hard questions, seeking our input regarding community needs and for carrying that information to the legislative arena.

Senator, please accept our many thanks for your unshakable loyalty in serving all of us.

**Lenne Murray St. Helens**

**SEASIDE Signal**



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