

Drumheller was a hospitality industry leader

Key figure in South County tourism

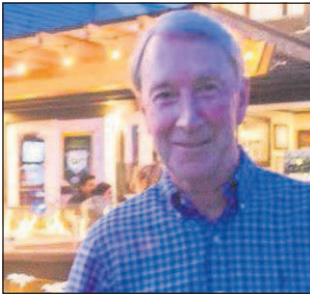
By R.J. Marx and Brenna Visser
Seaside Signal

Tom Drumheller, chief executive officer of Escape Lodging and co-owner of Tom's Fish & Chips, died on Sept. 10 at his home in Cannon Beach after a short illness. He was 64.

Drumheller, a former chairman of the city's Tourism and Arts Commission, played a key role in the region's hospitality industry and beyond, serving on the board of directors of Travel Portland and most recently as founder of the 62,773-square-foot Columbia Point Hotel in Tri-Cities, Washington.

"I've known Tom for 30 years, and we've been business partners since 1999," Patrick Nofield, the president of Escape Lodging, said. "There's nobody like him. It's a huge void — not just for those who loved him, but for our community, and the people of eastern Washington where he grew up."

According to Nofield, Drumheller was diagnosed with metastasized colon can-



Tom Drumheller, a key figure in Cannon Beach tourism, died on Sunday, Sept. 10.

cer in August. "When they were in the hospital they found cancer was all over his body," Nofield said. "It was totally unexpected."

Nofield said Drumheller did not want to spend his last days in the hospital, so he returned to home hospice in Cannon Beach.

He had friends and family members come from all over the Northwest, Nofield said. "For the last week of his life it was like one continuous party. Tom was greeting everyone, engaging people, meeting with employees, sharing stories, sharing humor."

Career in hospitality

John Thomas Drumheller, known as "Tom," was born and raised in Walla Walla, Washington, on Aug. 15, 1953.

'Tom was the most hospitable person to anyone, whether it be a housekeeper at one of our hotels, or... a billionaire developer.'

Patrick Nofield,
president of Escape Lodging

Drumheller's family worked in the hardware business for generations.

Growing up, he watched how his father used humor and respect to develop strong relationships with customers.

That set the foundation of his philosophy toward the hotel and restaurant industry, where he worked for 25 years before establishing his own business.

A key experience came when Tom turned 9; he was hit by a baseball, Nofield said.

The ball concaved his skull and he lost all ability to talk. "They were able to do surgery and put the skull where it needed to be, but he had to reattach himself to talk," Nofield said.

His mother, a schoolteacher, read him the Dr. Seuss classic, "Thidwick, the Big-Hearted Moose."

The incident inspired Drumheller's future career direction, Nofield said.

"Thidwick always wanted to take care of his guests, and

of all the people I have ever met, Tom was the most hospitable person to anyone, whether it be a housekeeper at one of our hotels, or whether it be a billionaire developer," Nofield said. "He treats them all the same. All with love and all with encouragement."

Escape Lodging

After graduation from the Carson College of Business at Washington State University, Drumheller participated in the Hyatt Hotel management training program before establishing Escape Lodging of Cannon Beach as its chief executive officer in 2001.

Escape Lodging also owns the Ocean Lodge, The Inn at Cannon Beach and other lodging properties and restaurants in Oregon and Washington state. Drumheller served on the Oregon Restaurant and Lodging Association Board of Directors, Washington State University Hotel and Restaurant Advisory Board of Direc-

tors and Travel Portland Board of Directors.

In 2014, Drumheller and Tom Krueger teamed to open Tom's Fish & Chips restaurant at 240 N. Hemlock St.

Drumheller said in a 2014 interview his goal was to "try to make it really, really cozy, especially during the offseason for the locals."

Drumheller and Krueger opened a second location in Seaside this summer.

"I was very fortunate to have some great mentors I admired and learned a great deal from," Drumheller said in an alumni magazine profile. "When one of them passed away, it spurred me, along with my future business partner, to take what I had learned and start my own company. It was both very scary and exciting. The risk-to-reward ratio has been better than I could have imagined."

This spring he was inducted into the inaugural class of the Carson College of Business Hall of Fame.

The city mourns

Friends and family gathered in his last days to salute the man they had grown to know and love.

Robin Risley was among the founding members of the

arts commission when Drumheller served as chairman.

"He was such a fun person to have at the meeting," Risley said. "He did things with a sense of humor. We didn't all come from the same place, but he was so inclusive that most of the decisions were made were fair and forward thinking. I just appreciated him so much. He always had such a twinkle in his eye."

Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn knew Drumheller as a member of the Tourism Advisory Committee.

"When I started with the city five years ago, the city manager at the time said, 'There's a list of people you need to meet,' and he was at the top of the list," Schermerhorn said. "He always had a smile on his face, and very generous when he gave back to the community."

"He was a huge rock here in Cannon Beach," said Court Carrier, the executive director of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce. "He was important — a hospitality executive for decades."

Drumheller and his wife, Christy Lynn, have two adult daughters, Brook Burnett and Britney Drumheller.

A memorial service will be scheduled.

City Council honors first responders



Mayor Jay Barber and Police Chief Dave Ham at Monday's City Council meeting. The mayor delivered a proclamation recognizing the contributions of first responders.

Responders from Page 1A

him to a safe environment to get the help he needed."

Ongoing training is considered one of the department's highest priorities.

The city's proclamation, read by Councilor Randy Frank, recognized the state's career and first responders, including law enforcement officers, firefighters, emergency medical technicians, 911 dispatchers and rescue personnel.

The proclamation declared Sept. 25-30 First Responder Appreciation Week

and recognized the role of first responders in times in crisis and as volunteers for schools and community organizations.

"Acts of kindness and appreciation from citizens provide first responders needed encouragement and support to confront the dangerous and uncertain situations they face every day," states the proclamation.

"A great way to express that is to, when you encounter first responders, to tell them how much you appreciate that service," Barber added.

Rescued olive ridley turtles get second chance

Trio is returned to the ocean

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

Three olive ridley turtles discovered comatose along the Oregon and Washington state coasts after winter storms returned to ocean waters in early September.

Solstice, Tucker and Lightning returned to the ocean after treatment at SeaWorld in San Diego. Olive ridley sea turtles are listed on the federal endangered species list as threatened.



Underwater photo of the turtle named Solstice.

Tucker, a male olive ridley turtle between 15 to 20 years old, was found at Cannon Beach after storms in December 2015. He had a 40-degree body tem-

perature when rescued. Staff at the Seaside Aquarium rescued the male olive ridley sea turtle after it washed ashore south of Tolovana, likely pushed into colder waters by strong winds, aquarium administrative assistant Tiffany Boothe said at the time. Juvenile olive ridleys sometimes travel in warm currents offshore.

Tucker developed severe pneumonia and had to be treated in a hyperbaric chamber because he developed air in his tissue and a buoyancy problem.

He was transferred to the Seattle Aquarium after

his initial care then flown to SeaWorld San Diego by the Coast Guard in April 2016.

Lightning is a female olive ridley turtle that was stranded in Pacific City, suffering from hypothermia, buoyancy issues and injuries to both eyes.

After treatment at the Oregon Coast Aquarium, Lightning, along with Thunder, an olive ridley found in Gearhart, were escorted by the Coast Guard and a rehabilitation team to SeaWorld. Thunder died while completing her final rehabilitation stage before release into the wild.

Annual beach cleanup hauls in about 36 tons of trash

Seaside Signal

Hundreds of volunteers in the South County came to Cannon Beach, Gearhart and Seaside beaches Saturday, Sept. 23, for the annual SOLVE Beach and Riverside Cleanup, presented by the Oregon Lottery.

More than 4,600 volunteers

joined for the event, which collected an estimated 72,000 pounds of trash and marine debris were collected from 140 project sites including rivers, neighborhoods, parks, historic cemeteries, and other natural areas across the state.

According to SOLVE, cleanups took place along all 362 miles of the Oregon Coast.

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