

A life in the cannabis trade

Wayne Zallen, 64, is the owner of Hi Dispensary and a partner in Mystic Roots Cannabis on Highway 26 near Seaside. He is the owner of a cannabis-friendly RV park in Josephine County, “Smoke on the Water Lake Selmac” and has been profiled in national publications for his role as consultant and chief executive officer of Grow Condos, Inc. As a business owner on the North Coast, Zallen has made his goal to be part of the community, dedicating a portion of funds once a month to charitable organizations.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



Q: Where you from?
Zallen: I’m from Mineola, New York. I grew up in Ohio, moved to the Bay Area and then up to Medford, Oregon, where I raised my family.
Q: Were you a long-time advocate of cannabis?
Zallen: I have been smoking pot since I was 16.
Q: You started in Ohio? It was illegal at the time.
Zallen: Oh God, yes — it was the ’70s.
Q: Did you ever get caught?
Zallen: I dropped two pounds off at a guy’s apartment in Columbus when I was in college. I was on my walk back when I was busted. I didn’t even have a seed on me. I did have some cash, but I didn’t have a drop of marijuana. So they got me for conspiracy to possess. They thought I was going there to buy instead of to sell. So they had nothing on me. The records got expunged.
Q: Did you move into a more traditional career?
Zallen: Yes, I had a totally traditional career. I graduated college with a degree in advertising and marketing. I went out to San Francisco to try to find my way and started an ad agency that dealt with car dealers only. I made a lot of money. The car dealers in the Bay Area were very receptive. I got bored with that, and then I went into the financial services.
Q: In what way?
Zallen: In the late ’70s and early ’80s, I got into the mortgage banking business. At the time mortgage rates were 19 percent. I made a fortune doing that. Then I went into the restaurant business in Alameda, California. I sold all-beef Vienna hot dogs. All businesses are tough, but to make money in the hot dog business at a buck a hot dog, you have to sell a million of them. I sold it and the new owners turned it into a Chinese restaurant. I moved to Medford in 1992, where I was an Allstate agent for 15 years.
Q: When did you get into the marijuana business?
Zallen: Me and a friend of mine would go in on pounds in northern California. We did that for decades. It was pretty crazy.
Q: How did it play out?
Zallen: I sold my insurance agency, got a whole bunch of new money from that, and then I went out and bought a rafting company because I love to be out on the river. Marijuana was medically legal in Oregon — this was when Obama said he wouldn’t go after the medical people — so I started an indoor-grow



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Hi Dispensary in Astoria undergoes renovations.

warehouse in southern Oregon.
Q: How did you go about it?
Zallen: Basically, I had to get patients and cards. We bought seeds on the internet from seed banks. We sexed them, sprouted them. We did that for nine years. Then the laws began to change. Everything began to change.
Q: Why did you open a dispensary?
Zallen: It was vertical integration.
Q: What’s that?
Zallen: It means I just moved money from one pocket to the other. Instead of buying from you, I’m buying from me.
Q: It’s like growing and selling corn?
Zallen: It’s like having a vegetable stand.
Q: Why did you choose Astoria?
Zallen: Good question. I do love the Oregon Coast and I love the fish. When we first became OLCC licensed, I tried to buy a dispensary in Portland. At the time, Medford, in Jackson County, where I lived, had a ban on marijuana facilities. The owner had two, one in Portland and one in Astoria, and the one in Astoria did better than the one in Portland.
Q: So he was selling his two shops?
Zallen: Yes. I made him an offer and his lawyer said write it up, so I wrote it up. Now I’m remodeling the whole thing. That’s why I am here.
Q: Why did you start the other store in Seaside?
Zallen: I started that with another gentleman from Seaside. He had an ad on Craigslist that he needed a partner. I said the only way I am going to make this work is to have a vested partner that lives in the area. He is there most days.
Q: You are the first person to open a pot-friendly RV park?
Zallen: The people I bought it from had been there for 11 years. They lived in Palm Springs, California. I bought it from them, and we are open year-round. Even in the dead of winter my RV park is full.
Q: Why is that?
Zallen: Because all around me there are hundreds of pot farms. The trim workers need a place to stay, so they stay in my park. We sometimes call them “trimmigrants.” They need a place to stay while they are trimming the weed for the farms.
Q: What’s a trim worker?
Zallen: They cut the buds off the sticks. They sit there for eight hours: trim-trim-trim-trim-trim, all day long. All they need is scissors. They make \$10-\$15



Wayne Zallen

an hour. They’re coming from California and around the state. They even come from the East Coast to be in the weed business for six months of the year, then they go away.
The only thing we don’t have in the RV park is the weed. But I’m working on that. I have an application for that with the OLCC.
Q: Have you ever had any contact with organized crime?
Zallen: No. We are too small on the big scale of things.
Q: Where do you see the pot business going or growing in the South County? Do you see people coming here for cannabis?
Zallen: You see cruise ships coming into Astoria. There are people maybe our age and they haven’t smoked pot since college or whenever: “Oh, honey, it’s legal here in Oregon!” So they buy some weed, smoke it or eat it. We can see a huge spike in our numbers when the ships come in.
Q: Do you have a business philosophy?
Zallen: One day a month we donate a percentage of our proceeds. We see huge spikes on that day. We’ve donated to the hurricane fund, we’re donating to the Oregon firefighters, and then in November we will donate to the food bank in Astoria. It’s just like any other business. We’re just like mom-and-pop. I want people to see this as a normal business.
Q: Is there camaraderie in your business?
Zallen: I asked my manager if he would set up a meeting with the other dispensary owners. They didn’t want to do it, but that’s how I do things.
Q: Where do you see the cannabis business headed?
Zallen: I see prices going down. I don’t know how much on the retail level, but on the wholesale level. A week or so ago distributor came by and was asking for \$1,700 a pound. My manager said to me the same guy, same weed, was \$1,400 a pound a week later.
Q: What’s the secret to your success?
A: I am just a businessman who happens to be in the pot business. And really most of the people in this business are not businessman.

Attorney General Rosenblum comes to grips with elder abuse

I’m not being morbid when I tell my husband that when it’s time to go, I get to leave first. It’s no secret I’d be lost without him. He knows all our online passwords. I admit to not looking forward to being an elderly person. Being as old as I am is hard enough. I dread outliving our money or being a burden to my son. Also elder abuse is on the rise. According to information gleaned from the second annual Attorney General Rosenblum’s Elder Abuse Conference held Oct. 26 at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, last year in Oregon 35,800 crimes against seniors were reported. For every crime reported, 14 more aren’t.

When I hear the words “elder abuse,” I think about helpless, frightened, old people, reduced to eating cat food. But elder abuse these days is most likely to be financial. The average Oregonian can expect to live about 84 years. Things look pretty good for most folks until the last five. That’s when older people are most likely to have their bank accounts emptied by their own family members to whom they’ve given power of attorney. These are also the years older people are most likely to be targeted and exploited by scammers using lottery schemes, construction scams, even scam dating sites. The majority of elder abuse victims are women between the ages of 80 and 90. Who are their abusers? 40 percent of them are women. And 66 percent of elder abuse takes place in the victim’s own home.

We all know or are related to someone who is very old. Some of these folks are fairly self-sufficient and live alone. These are the people most likely to be taken in by phone scams. Criminals who prey on older people often start with a cold call. They tell their victim they’ve won a lottery, or a gift card. They pretend to be the IRS, or even police, invoking an imaginary warrant. Some come to the door on a phony welfare check. There are ghost cab scams. One of the saddest and most prevalent scams are the so-called “sweetheart” scams that woo and entrap vulnerable older women eager for one last shot at romance. At the conference, most of the attendees worked in law enforcement. They came from all over the state to attend workshops on how to secure medical and financial records; dealing with cognitive issues in victims and witnesses; crime scene forensics; how to investigate and gather evidence in domestic violence cases; how to assess and document physical indicators of intentional abuse; workshops on how to build their cases. I don’t know if you’ve ever watched the Law & Order TV series, “Special Victims Unit,” but it struck me that the attorney general’s elder abuse unit is a real life special victims unit. There is one permanent, full-time, elder abuse resource prosecutor, and two permanent full-time investigators. Many police departments in Oregon don’t have the resources to have their own detective or investigator. The Elder Abuse Unit is important because it increases the capacity to stop elder abuse by providing training, technical assistance, and legal expertise to district attorneys, law enforcement, basically anyone working with older Oregonians. Art Linkletter once famously said, “Old age is not for sissies.” Or maybe Bette Davis said it. Besides losing their eyesight, hearing, stamina, and mobility, advanced seniors shouldn’t have to fear from their own family members and caregivers, or be targeted by heartless financial schemers who see them as easy prey. Statistics tell us that one in 10 elderly people will be victims. Do what you can to make sure you or someone you love isn’t one of them.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



‘Statistics tell us that one in 10 elderly people will be victims. Do what you can to make sure you or someone you love isn’t one of them.’

Headlines from the past tell human story of Seaside

Seaside saw some wild times in the 1930s. Yet there are some great parallels to more recent times too!
From the headlines of the Seaside Signal:
In 1930, arrests in Seaside jumped well over 100 percent from the previous year. There were over 130 arrests, with only 50 arrested in 1929. The Signal recorded that In December 1930 there were nine arrests. Two for drunkenness, three for staying out after hours, two for speeding, and two for disorderly conduct. 10 transients were given a place to sleep.
Cougars were an issue around Seaside just as they are today. The bounty for killing cougars was \$25 each, but you had to go to Portland to collect it. Most of the farmers who were known to be good cougar hunters were reluctant to take the time to go into the big city for the reward so the paper was urging them to kill the cougars anyway since they threatened livestock.

BETWEEN THE COVERS
ESTHER MOBERG



In 1931 the city was looking for ways to improve the library. At this time the state librarian came and talked to the Seaside ladies’ group about ways they could help to develop the library. Shortly after this talk, 50 books were presented to the Seaside library by George H. Crandall, a local resident. The books were received by the librarian Mrs. Sophia Johansen for the library. The books included “Lives of Illustrious Men,” by Plutarch, and an “Outline of History,” by H.G. Wells. (While the library does not own these original books anymore, you can still find Plutarch on the library shelves today.)
While today we have more concerns about drones on the beach, back then it was requested at a meet-

ing in 1931 that the north end of the Seaside beach be roped off for use by airplanes for barnstorming and as a taxi area for takeoff. The city council of the time said this would be more of a nuisance than an asset since there were already complaints about planes flying over the beach.
Also in the 1930s, two fishing piers were built at Tillamook Head over a period of three years, and each time winter storms or floating logs tore them down. The last pier built floated into the cove after being knocked into by a log or some other large object in a storm. Apparently fishing piers just weren’t meant to be built in the cove area.
Hikers traveling from Indian Beach to Tillamook Head frequently got lost in both January and February of 1931. Apparently the trail to circle bridge was fairly hidden since hikers were often unable to find it and would spend hours wandering around before finally making their way out of the woods. The second pair mentioned as lost that year

were two teenage girls who finally made it out after following animal trails for hours. They had originally intended just a short hike to the “hermit’s hut.” They caught a ride back to Seaside just in time to meet up with the search party that was forming after concerns for their delayed arrival. Another man had spent all night wandering around and had finally hiked out midday the next day.
Back in the day, dairy farmers felt threatened by the incursion of margarine into the markets. All thirteen merchants in Seaside agreed to not sell oleo margarine to keep local dairy farmers in business selling butter. Gearhart and Astoria store merchants all entered into the agreement as well so that the farmers would have no fear of competition or lack of butter sales.
Dynamiting stumps around Seaside took a turn for the worse when a stump was lifted high enough in the air to tear away power lines requiring repairs and resulting in a

power interruption throughout town until the lines were repaired. This is reminiscent of Seaside’s more recent incident with a Mylar balloon taking out the power on the Fourth of July here in Seaside. Power was out until shortly after the fireworks finished on the beach around 10:30pm, just in time for folks to return safely to their homes.
Two men who carved their initials into signs at the turnaround in 1931 were turned into the police and given a choice of paying a fine of \$5 or spending two days in jail for defacing property. They elected for jail time and were put to work first watering Mrs. Hensaw’s flower beds (pocket gardens on Seventh Avenue for the general public that had been planted with dahlias and marigolds) before spending the remainder of their two days in jail. It was noted they were released without incident after serving their time.
There have been a lot of changes since the 1930s, but perhaps some things do still stay the same.

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