

Basketball tourney is a slam-dunk for kids

If you’ve spent more than one winter in Seaside, you’ve likely witnessed the droves of cars that show up in Seaside on weekends between January and early March. Drive your car along Highway 101, past Broadway Middle School and Seaside High, and you’ll see both parking lots filled with Chevrolet Suburbans and SUVs from Washington, Oregon and even Idaho.

These cars and their occupants represent the families, coaches, and players from the nearly 500 teams that come to Oregon’s North Coast each year for Pacific Basketball League Tournaments. It’s a staggering number when you think about it. Seven weekends, as many as 96 teams (and support crews) per week and a nearly built-in guarantee that local hotels, shops and restaurants will have a great weekend.

Now running tournaments for the 25th year in Seaside, I was interested about the history of this wildly successful venture, so I spoke to PBL Director Kerri Januik by phone last week to learn how it all got started. Surprisingly, it came because of a new found need in our community. With the expansion of Broadway Middle School in the early 1990s, sixth-graders from Cannon Beach, Seaside and Gearhart would move to the expanded school. This move meant fifth and sixth grade athletic teams, which once closely mirrored the middle- and high-school’s year-round programs — were planning to be eliminated. Larry Elliott, Seaside High basketball coach at the time, was particularly concerned about developing future Gulls and keeping sports a part of their lives.

Januik and her husband, Frank, were still fairly new to the area and both were already involved in sports. Frank was a phys ed teacher and



SIDE RAIL
JON RAHL

local coach, while Kerri was coaching eighth-grade girls basketball and teaching classes with her fitness management degree. According to Januik, a local group that included teachers and business leaders got together to discuss the concept of running a few tournaments. But they desired a leader. “They’re all teachers, busy and doing their thing,” remembers Januik. “And everyone turned their head and looked at me.”

Without a full-time job at the time, and the support of Frank, they decided to give it a try. A nonprofit was established and Januik was named as the paid director.

“Our goal was to try to get about 16 teams each tournament (that first year)” said Januik. They tried some tournaments that first fall of 1993, but quickly realized that was simply too early in the season. With Portland schools also slashing sports from program budgets, there was a true need for tournaments like the ones they had developed, and more teams started doing club type sports. This past weekend, 94 teams participated from grades five-through-eight. Some of the tournaments include fourth grade but all cap out at the eighth-grade level. Januik told me they’ve had as many as 108 teams.

It’s not just Seaside that benefits from the influx of hoops teams. “In the ‘90s, we had a few big tournaments where we started to use Camp Rilea and Warrenton schools,” said Januik. “It’s probably been in the last seven years that we’ve partnered with Astoria.”



JEFF TER HAR/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Eighth-graders from Seaside take on a team from Olympia, Washington in PBL action at Broadway Middle School. The PBL tournaments draw as many as 96 teams each week from grades four-through-eight during a seven-week stretch each winter.

And it’s not just gymnasiums (up to eight gyms with 12 teams per site) and cash registers in the communities that balloon on Saturdays and Sundays. Januik also partners with the school programs (not just sports) in Seaside, Astoria and Warrenton.

“It’s a huge win-win,” said Januik. “They (the kids and coaches) want to do it, and I need somebody to do it. It’s a great fundraising opportunity for all these kids when budgets have been cut for different activities.” The groups work the gym, keep score and run the game clock, with coaches and teachers supervising the

efforts. Each weekend, these efforts result in money going towards a plethora of school programs.

Teams have arrived all the way from Alaska and California for the tournaments and inquiries have come from as far as Hawaii. Much of it, the result of a group of community leaders realizing a need for its children.

“It’s been a good thing for everybody,” Januik told me as we wrapped up our conversation. “You know, it’s a good thing for me and a good thing for my family. I could be a stay-at-home mom (to her three

children). They got to be a part of it on the playing side and also on the working side of it later in life, and it’s good for the community. It’s good for our teams. I just think there’s really nothing bad about it and it has been a real blessing.”

Have a thought or a question about tourism in Seaside, or maybe an idea for a future column? Drop me an email at jrahl@cityofseaside.us. Jon Rahl is the Director of Tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and Assistant General Manager of the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.

Helen Gaston left a lasting mark

Seaside Museum and Historical Society
Seaside Signal

The Seaside Museum and Historical Society devoted much of its latest newsletter to honoring Helen Gaston for her many years of devotion to the museum. Gaston died Nov. 9. At a 2016 museum event, a proclamation was presented to Gaston by Mayor Don Larson on behalf of the city for her preservation efforts and presentation of local history. As a museum board member, Gaston served on the board for 27 years, writing grants to obtain funding, researching, planning and designing many of the museum’s exhibits.

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Helen Christobel was born on July 17, 1931, in northern Wisconsin, in Rhinelander, a town of about 7000 that was involved in the logging industry. Helen was a twin sister, and one of several siblings. After growing up, she moved to Astoria during or soon after World War II where she met Robert Gaston.

They eventually married and settled down in Seaside, buying a house on Avenue S four blocks from the Prom. They raised three children, Nannette, Renee, and Robert, spending a short period of time in Eugene where Robert picked up his teaching credentials.

Back in Seaside, they ultimately traded residences with Robert’s mother and moved to that more spacious house along the Prom. With the kids raised and after Robert’s passing, Helen sold the Prom house and built a beautiful new home in the hills east of



SEASIDE MUSEUM AND HISTORICAL SOCIETY

Plaque commemorating the achievements of Helen Gaston.

Seaside, well above even the worst tsunami, something she always worried about.

Helen had various interests, which included many volunteer positions as well as paid positions throughout her life. Change seems to be the constant.

She worked at CITA in Astoria for several years helping special needs adults obtain employment. Near the end of her life, she was still helping less fortunate people find work in the area.

Helen volunteered at church, as well as for the Girl Scouts and Brownies, and was on the boards of museums in Seaside and Clatsop County. She spearheaded the conservation and relocation of the Butterfield Cottage from near Broadway and Columbia to its present site at the Seaside Museum, escaping imminent demolition.

She was deeply involved with Camp Kiwanalong; also forest conservation along the lower Youngs River, particularly with a large tract that she and Robert had purchased

decades earlier, conveying it to the North Coast Land Conservancy about 10 years ago. She helped set up and lay out the Neawanna Natural History Center at the north end of town. She managed the books for the Seaside Native American Project and was a driving force. She served on the Seaside Planning Commission from 1977 to 1987 and was its chair from 1979 to 1981. She also served on the Seaside City Council and on the Miss Oregon Pageant steering committee.

Helen was an avid reader and an expert in genealogy and several history subjects. She wrote grants, organized volunteers, and, if necessary, stood in the rain and wind for hours boiling sea water for its salt for living history programs. She wrote a highly regarded teaching curriculum on native peoples of the north Oregon Coast, laying the groundwork for students to know their cultural history better. More than once, she dispatched fellow board members into the forests to obtain sheets of suitable old-growth

cedar bark, so she could process it into cloth, ropes, and hats, of the type used by the Clatsop people.

Helen adored people and welcomed strangers. When she was at home with her small children, she hosted foreign exchange students and traveling high school bands. She welcomed people that stopped by her house on the Prom to fill their canteens with water.

After putting on both of her daughters’ dream weddings, Helen helped with friends’ weddings, which eventually turned into a wedding and catering business. She was at one time referred to as the “Martha Stewart of Seaside.”

Her curiosity about others later turned into Gaston’s Beachside Bed and Breakfast, known for its hearty breakfasts and dining room view of the ocean, an idea that had yet to catch on with the larger motels and restaurants. It was recognized by the prestigious Northwest Best Places. She learned and mastered the art of French cooking before it became popular, hosted many events, and could build gorgeous bouquets from just about anything.

Later in life, she was able to travel to many different countries to satisfy her interests, visiting Spain, Italy, the Baltics, New Zealand, and Australia, plus family in Germany and friends in Holland.

She loved decorating and entertaining and did so even up into her 80s with the help of friends and family. Just before her passing, she was busy decorating her apartment in the retirement home with her daughters for the Christmas holiday.



CURLY TAIL PET MESSAGE

Kim Tews at work with a client.

Design a massage plan specific for your pet

Pets from Page 1A

end of the session, I will discuss and design a massage plan specific for your pet,” Tews said.

A maintenance massage is \$50 for 30 to 60 minutes. Each session is customized to your pet.

“Maintenance massage is great for helping your pet stay at their peak level of health for as long as possible,” Tews said. “It’s also a great tool for monitoring and early detection.”

Tews’ practice also includes the specialty manual lymphatic drainage massage which is \$65 a session, a session lasting anywhere from 60 to 80 minutes.

“Manual lymphatic drainage massage is a great immune booster and benefits pets of all breeds and ages,” Tews said. “Consider a MLD massage for your pet a few days prior to going in for surgery, or even dental

work, or before going to an overnight boarding facility or traveling. MLD massage can help your pet be in their best health for whatever they may encounter.”

Rehabilitation massage sessions are also available. Session time is dependent on the pet’s needs. “Rehabilitation massage aids your pet’s natural healing and should complement the treatment program initiated by your vet,” Tews said. “It’s also a great tool for relieving boredom and tension for a pet who may be on restricted rest. It helps their muscles stay strong and healthy. Rehab needs are as varied as the conditions of each pet; each rehabilitation massage plan is different. Contact me to discuss your pet’s needs,” Tews said. She works on cats as well as dogs.

Call 503-805-1319 or email Kim@curlytailpm.com to make an appointment.



BIZ KIDS

Biz Kidz participate in events throughout the county.

Biz Kidz Boot Camp ahead

Seaside Signal

Working with Clatsop County 4-H, the Young Entrepreneurs Club provides an opportunity for young people to make and sell their own product at Astoria Sunday Market.

The Biz Kidz Boot Camp teaches kids the steps to choose what to create, how to market and brand their product, how to price and budget their product and how to prepare their booth display to sell at the Market. Astoria Sunday Market provides tents, tables, and chairs. Biz Kidz provide their table display, product

and effervescent smiles and personality.

Boot Camp takes place from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, March 10, in the Coho Room at the Columbia Center. Any child grade K-12 in Clatsop County can attend free of charge. The program includes lunch for participants and an hour training just for parents. Organizers are Cyndi Mudge, director for Astoria Sunday Market and Sandra Carlson, Coordinator for Clatsop County 4-H. They collaborated in 2009 with Clatsop Community College to create the program.

Mind Up tackles bullying

Middle schoolers pay attention when Seaside Jiu Jitsu Academy instructor Anthony Alexander asks a question at Warrenton Grade School. He is leading a Bully Proofing workshop for The Way to Wellville’s Mind Up program, which is an extension of Clatsop Kids Go.

Clatsop Kids Go, for third-through fifth-graders was developed in 2016 by The Way to Wellville to create a culture of positive attitudes, knowledge and behavior around nutrition, physical activity and emotional well-being.

Mind Up is designed for middle schoolers and shifts from fun and games, and focuses more on goal setting, confidence and mindfulness, says instructor Sarah Brown. It incorporates more yoga and the jiu jitsu workshop. The pilot program at Warrenton is funded by a Community Wellness Investment Fund grant from the Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization.

“There is no striking in jiu jitsu,” Alexander says. “We don’t seek to hurt anybody, but we want to protect ourselves.”