

More fitness space needed for our quality of life

Early in 2012, the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District began the process of working to meet the physical and spatial needs of our residents and guests more adequately.

Although the Sunset Pool has wonderfully aged throughout its 40 years, there are many other ways that we know we should be meeting the health and wellness needs of our community.

The biggest challenge in meeting those needs, is a lack of indoor physical space.

That glaring lack of space has manifested itself throughout my time with the district many, many times. Please allow me to illustrate just a few of those examples.

We have fitness classes that are stuffed to the brim and often held in the same space that our drop-in fitness participants use, making it difficult for both to occur at the same time.

The fitness center located to the north of Sunset Pool has a total of five cardiovascular machines and, at peak times, all are used by patrons of the facility.

Other fitness classes are held in the Bob Chisholm Community Center and that provides some interesting challenges with the other users of that space.

On a recent weekday a lunch meeting at the center backed right

SKY BOX
SKYLER ARCHIBALD



up against one of the weekly yoga classes offered. The traces of lunch wafted throughout the space as the participants engaged in their warrior and tree poses.

Another experience had our weekly dance fitness class occur at the same time as a local non-profit Board Meeting. Although the meetings occurred in two different rooms in the center, the music from the dance fitness class permeated the entire building, and rightfully so as in that class the experience is greatly aided by the fun music and lively environment.

Although our staff takes every precaution and does a great job in managing the space, these overlapping conflicts are bound to occur in the sharing of a space that was not designed for such purposes.

One other blatant lack of space that the district suffers from, is the absence of indoor gyms. Without a gym to program activities in, the community in which we serve does not have a space to participate in many of the healthy activities that are not only popular but would also enhance their individual wellness



Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District play set.

and create a greater sense of community here.

Activities such as basketball, volleyball, pickleball, racquetball and many, many others are left to forage for programming time for those activities on their own, and those results are typically unsuccessful.

Consider that even the district, with desires to serve the entire community, is only able to utilize one of the gyms at the middle school for two hours each week for open gym basketball programming. The gyms owned by the Seaside School District

are extremely busy with physical education classes, school programs, concerts and other activities, not to mention the many community groups needing rental space for their gym activities.

So that process, begun in 2012, was quite important for the district in helping us meet those needs of our community. We've continued that discussion and have progressed the conversation to where we are now.

We've gathered important public input and are getting closer to understanding the benefits of adding space

for the District which, of course, includes the financial implications of doing so.

One question that has been asked of me several times goes something like this: "Why does our community need this (more space)?" My answer has always been the same.

Just as other public services like water, sewer and public safety are essential to the lives of residents, so too are parks and recreation programs. These programs and the facilities that house them help ensure the health of families, adults and youth. Simplistically, we need more space to help bring about greater health to this area, to our residents and our guests.

When I travel to other parts of our great state and region, I pay great attention to what I can perceive as the factors of life that contribute to quality of life for the residents there. How is the community laid out, how is it maintained? Is it desirable to live there based on controllable factors?

Those communities that have desirability, at least to me, are those places that have an abundance of both programs and spaces for the community residents to recreate. Parks, trails and greenspace is aplenty here in our area, but we are working hard to meet the need of providing more physical space for our residents so that they can continue to have every opportunity to P.L.A.Y.!

Author finds inspiration from Seaside

BETWEEN THE COVERS

ESTHER MOBERG



This month for my "Between the Covers" article, I am pleased to present the second installment of a short story written by local author Melissa Eskue Ousley. Melissa is an award-winning author living on the Oregon coast with her family, a neurotic dog, and a piranha. Among other awards Melissa has received, her debut novel, "Sign of the Throne," won a 2014 Reader's Favorite International Book Award and a 2014 Eric Hoffer Book Award. Her suspense novel, "Pitcher Plant," was published in May and is set in Seaside. When she's not writing, she can be found walking along the beach, poking dead things with a stick.

I am presenting this short story as a tie-in to the upcoming fundraiser for Libraries ROCC and the Library Foundation, a joint fundraiser to support children's library services across Clatsop County. The fundraiser will be held at 5 p.m. on Saturday, March 31, at the Seaside Convention Center and will include local author book signings, an author extravaganza, silent auction, and a live auction that includes little free libraries and a book written and signed by Ursula K. Le Guin and donated by the photographer who worked with her on the book "Blue Moon Over Thurman Street." The book in poetry and photographs tells the story of the street in Portland where Le Guin lived for years.

Now, without further ado, here is an excerpt from the story titled "Ghost in the Stacks."

Ghost in the Stacks

"OK," she called, as she flicked the switch for the lights. "I really am leaving this time." No sooner had she spoken, she heard three sharp slams in quick succession—bang, bang, bang. Rebecca sighed and turned the lights back on.



Visitors to the library foundation's 2017 fundraiser take a look at Little Free Libraries.

"What now?"

This time the books were in the last aisle in the fiction section, which held novels by authors whose last names started with a W, X, Y, or Z. Three books had been placed in the middle of the aisle. The sound Rebecca had heard must have been the books landing on the floor. Had they fallen from a shelf, they would have been scattered like the other books. These books had been neatly stacked on top of one another. A chill crawled up Rebecca's spine as she looked up and down the aisle, searching for whoever—or whatever—had placed the books there. She saw nothing, but had the distinct impression she wasn't alone. Something was watching her. Her usual sense of peace dissolved, and for the first time, Rebecca was afraid of being in the library.

She was tempted to run for the front doors and not look back, but she steeled herself—ghost or no ghost, she wasn't about to be chased away from a place she loved. She forced herself to take a step toward the books, then bend down, slowly and deliberately, and pick them up. Although she wanted to leave the library, she took pains not to hurry, to show the ghost she couldn't be scared away. As she shelved the books (Cain, Chelsea; Asimov, Isaac; and Rice, Anne), Rebecca

thought about the rumors she'd heard—strange noises, odd shadows, lights turning off and on by themselves—and found that the stories didn't seem so far-fetched now. Maybe there really was something supernatural lurking in the library.

After putting the last book away, Rebecca felt lighter, triumphant at not running away screaming. It was as though she'd been given a test and passed. Smiling to herself, she hit the lights and turned toward the doors. Then, she froze.

There was a man standing there, outside the front doors of the library. He eyed the sign listing the library's hours, and then leaned against the glass of the door, cupping his large hands around his eyes to peer into the darkness. Rebecca stepped back, into the shadows of the circulation desk. She didn't recognize the man as a regular patron. Why was he here at this hour? Clearly, the library was closed.

He just stood there. Staring. Rebecca took another step back, away from his predatory gaze. The hairs on the back of her neck tingled. Had he seen her? The man had to know someone was still in the library, since she'd just turned off the lights. Was he waiting for her?

The man stared a moment longer, and then lowered his hands. He turned toward the parking lot and looked around, and then walked away from the library. Scared but mesmerized, Rebecca stepped out of the shadows and moved toward the doors. What she saw next turned her blood cold....

Reading outreach

I hope you enjoyed this excerpt from Melissa's story. If you want to know how the story ends, come to the Seaside Public Library Foundation and Libraries Reading Outreach fundraiser March 31, doors open at 5 p.m. Tickets are available for sale at the Astoria Public Library, Beach Books, Lucy's Books, Seaside Public Library, and the Warrenton Public Library. Attendees will have a chance to bid to have a name or character placed in the short stories. See you there.

LISTENING TO THE LAND

Wildlife biologist Kim Nelson shares insights into the enigmatic marbled murrelet in Oregon

On Wednesday, March 21, the Necanicum Watershed Council Listening to the Land series hosts Kim Nelson, research wildlife biologist at Oregon State University. Nelson will discuss the enigmatic marbled murrelet in Oregon, a dove-sized seabird that lives primarily at sea and returns to nest in mature conifer forests. Land conservation as well as ocean-based protections, like Oregon's five marine reserve sites, house the potential to benefit these birds greatly.

Nelson moved to Oregon in the mid-1970s to be closer to the ocean, forest, and mountains. She works as a research wildlife biologist in the Department of Fisheries

and Wildlife at Oregon State University, focusing on the ecology and habitat associations of seabirds, specifically using modeling and habitat data to better understand and help resolve wildlife conservation and management issues.

The Listening to the Land speaker series is offered January through May by the Necanicum Watershed Council in partnership with the Seaside Public Library. This year's theme explores "living on our dynamic coastal edge." Presentations are held the third Wednesday of January through May and start at 6 p.m. at the Seaside Library, 1131 Broadway. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. Events are free



Kim Nelson posing with a marbled murrelet.

and open to the public. For more information, visit www.necanicumwatershed.org/events/listening-to-the-land.

MEETINGS

Tuesday, March 20
Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin, Seaside.

Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Wednesday, March 21
Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Monday, March 26
Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, March 27
Seaside Airport Advisory

Committee, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, April 3
Community Center Commission, 10:30 a.m., 1225 Avenue A., Seaside.

Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway, Seaside.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Wednesday, April 4
Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., 698 Pacific Way, Gearhart.

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