

Answering the question: ‘What do you do again?’

What exactly do you do again? I remember when I started in the tourism industry after graduating from the University of Utah in the fall of 2000. A year prior, possibly even six months earlier, I could not have told you what a convention and visitors bureau was. It’s likely I could have deduced a definition based on the words convention and visitors, but the real answer was that I truly had never heard of one.

There are several careers and jobs in society that without a direct connection to them, you’re probably in the same boat I was with a CVB (that’s the shortened version of convention and visitors bureaus — and probably even more confusing to people) when I joined the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau after completing an internship with the Utah Hotel and

SIDE RAIL
JON RAHL



Lodging Association. Wow, that’s a lot of words that start to describe the two organizations that led me down this tourism path.

Over the years, many CVB’s have shortened their names to something that ultimate describes what they do in a little cleaner context. Travel Portland’s predecessor organization was the Portland Oregon Visitors Association, or POVA if you were in the industry and wanted to shorten it up a bit. My first career employer, the Salt Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau (often referenced as Salt Lake CVB), now does business as Visit Salt Lake. Both examples give a

much more direct link to what organizations like mine — and theirs — do. Quite simply, these DMOs — destination management or marketing organization (I really didn’t intend to write about acronyms for this column) — exist to help foster economic growth through business, meetings and leisure travel. That’s the simplest definition.

In Seaside, we have two municipal departments that do work similar to that of a Travel Portland and Visit Salt Lake. The department I spend the bulk of my time in is the Seaside Visitors Bureau. This department is directly charged with advertising and marketing Seaside, Oregon and driving individual and group leisure travel to Seaside. The departmental budget — which comes from a portion of the 10 percent lodging tax paid by all overnight stays in Seaside — also covers management of a Visitor Informa-

tion Center and we have three full-time staff as well as one, part-time employee. My other municipal department, the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, also receives a portion of that same 10 percent lodging tax. The convention center employs 11 full-time staffers and works to book meetings, conventions, conferences and events that also drive overnight stays.

The Seaside Visitors Bureau and the convention center have the same goal of putting “heads in beds” — a phrase often used to describe the sales and leisure process that keeps us sustainable. Quite simply, overnight visitors — whether they come for leisure or a meeting — help us repeat the cycle and create future budgets for both departments.

Ultimately, we are organizations and departments that operate to support and drive more business to

the myriad hotels, vacation rentals, restaurants, attractions, retail shops and more. The advertising and marketing decisions we make — through the use of radio, print, transit and digital advertising, as well as public relation efforts and visitor support in our information center — are designed to create interest and awareness of Seaside. I hope this helped describe in some simple detail what it is we do. At a minimum I suppose I may have helped my daughters with some context if they are ever asked to describe what dad does for work.

Have a thought or a question about tourism in Seaside, or maybe an idea for a future column? Drop me an email at jrah1@cityofseaside.us. Jon Rahl is the director of tourism for the Seaside Visitors Bureau and Assistant General Manager of the Seaside Civic & Convention Center.

Ghost conference held in Seaside

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the Kids Paranormal Zone, where they were invited to make spooky crafts, learn about ghost-hunting equipment, take pictures with the Portland Ghostbusters or, if they dare, attend a haunted toy show-and-tell.

Aaron Collins, a lead investigator at NW Paranormal, showed youngsters a variety of electromagnetic field detectors and lasers professional ghosthunters use to try and identify spirits.

“I love teaching kids,” Collins said. “I love their eagerness. They ask such intelligent questions. They are truly curious — when they ask something they truly want to know.”

Two of those kids were Luna and Autumn Rodgers, the daughters of Stacy Rodgers, a fellow ghost hunter at Big River Paranormal based out of Portland for the past six years.

“I’ve always had an interest in ghosts,” she said.

Stacy Rodgers came to participate in this year’s conference and decided to bring the kids to the paranormal zone based on their interest in the subject matter. She has never had plans to teach her passion of ghost hunting to her kids deliberately. Instead, she said her daughters seemed to stumble across the interest themselves after one of her



PHOTOS BRENNIA VISSER/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Luna and Autumn Rodgers plug their ears as Aaron Collins, an investigator with NW Paranormal, turns on a spirit detector that emits a loud noise at the Oregon Ghost Conference.

daughters started seeing a spirit in the hallway, she said.

Stacy Rodgers hopes educating her kids about ghosts will eliminate some of the fear that is often associated with them.

“I like to have my kids be open-minded. I want to give them to tool to make the decision for themselves whether it is real or not,” she said. “I wanted them to know that if it does happen, if they do have an experience with a spirit, that it’s not an experience based in fear. I don’t want them to be scared of it.”



Connor Johnston of Warrenton uses an electromagnetic field detector designed to detect spirits at a show-and-tell section of the Oregon Ghost Conference.

LETTERS

Harden school facilities, put aside hysteria

The recent shooting at the Parkland school in Florida could have been avoided. But for the various levels of government, shooter Nikolas Cruz was able to carry out this tragedy.

Local police were sent to Cruz’s residence 36-45 times. This was due to his threatening behavior, and he was never arrested.

Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida, expelled Cruz because of his violent and threatening behavior, yet this was not reported to the police.

This could have been in part with the Obama administration’s “Promise Program,” also known as “restorative justice.” Participating schools who did not report multiple crimes following the Promise Program guidelines received federal monies. Most likely, this is still in a school near you.

Cruz’s social media rants and specific threats were also ignored by the school and local police.

The FBI was warned. However, the person who received the

warning failed to pass on the critical information to higher management. Because of these unreported crimes and incidents, and a bungling FBI employee, Cruz was able to pass a series of FBI firearm background checks. Given this information, it is utter nonsense to blame the NRA, guns and any other inanimate object for the horrible crimes Cruz committed.

The rational solution? Harden the schools. After students arrive, lock the one entry door, and let no one in or out once school starts; except for fire, police, or medical emergencies. (This system is already used in many federal buildings, such as the Bonneville Power Administration building.)

Install metal detectors at the one entry door, and allow concealed carry for qualified and participating teachers and other school personnel.

Let us put aside hysterical emotions. Enforce the thousands of gun laws within our country.

Terry Johnson
Seaside

Peterson puts purpose to her passion

Peterson from Page 1A

of the yarn and the molding of a product. To share these with people has just been great.”

Peterson and her husband moved to Portland about 20 years ago, and then transferred to the coast six years later.

“It was the best move my husband and I made,” she said, adding they “fell in love with the area.”

When the storm of 2007 took the roof off their house, they interpreted the event as a sign to move into Neawanna by the Sea, a facility they had been eyeing for a while. When her husband became ill and Peterson had to seek additional care for him, the couple moved to a facility in Hood River. Upon his death Peterson was faced with the tough decision of whether she would stay or move back to Seaside. That was when she talked to the administrator at Neawanna by the Sea and discovered her old residence was available.

“I said, ‘that’s it,’” and moved back home to the coast in March 2016, she said. “I’m in the same cottage my husband and I lived in.”

Knitting for a cause

It was upon her return she started knitting with the intent of donating proceeds from her business to Alzheimer’s research. Her mission spread to a few other knitters who also contribute items — including scarves, cowls and hats — to collectively put on a few sales



KATHERINE LACAZE/FOR SEASIDE SIGNAL

Residents of Neawanna by the Sea display various hats and scarves knitted by Mary Peterson (back row, left). She appreciates getting to see the products she makes used and enjoyed by friends and their loved ones.

each year. Most of their products sell for \$10 to \$15, or what people can afford, and all the proceeds go toward the cause.

Peterson also hosts an informal knitting class at the facility at 10:30 a.m. Thursdays, offering her assistance to anyone who needs help. Sometimes a few of residents will “just get together and knit,” she said.

While knitting only has two primary stitches — the knit stitch and the pearl stitch — there’s a wide range of techniques or ways to use those stitches, Peterson said. Add in the different weight, density and texture of yarn, and the craft offers even more variety to its artisans. Although Peterson prefers softer, high-quality yarn, she

acknowledges “there’s a place for everything.”

“We knitters try to keep the whole world happy,” she said.

She enjoys working on projects that don’t take much time to complete, such as hats or scarves. However, she also has a few long-term projects — such as a lace shawl — on which she’s gradually investing time. In general, she said, she gears her knitting toward what she believes people will enjoy, or “what will tickle their fancy.”

“I’m always on the lookout for new patterns,” she said. “I especially like it when someone will send off a piece to somebody and they’ll send back a note saying, ‘it’s so gorgeous,’ and send a picture. It’s always good to see, to know it’s being used and enjoyed.”

MEETINGS

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.

THURSDAY, April 5
Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

SATURDAY, April 7
Gearhart Emergency Preparedness Town Hall, 3 p.m., Fire Hall, 670 Pacific Way.

MONDAY, April 9

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, April 12
Seaside Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Avenue.

Cannon Beach Academy, 5:30 p.m., 3718 S. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 698 Pacific Way, Gearhart.

TUESDAY, April 17

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

WEDNESDAY, April 18
Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

THURSDAY, April 19
Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

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