



Gearhart turns

In Gearhart, a whale of a time

City celebrates 100th anniversary with parade

By Jack Heffernan
Seaside Signal

As scores of people lined Marion Avenue in Gearhart for a Fourth of July parade, Liam Goodwin, 6, sat on a rocker atop an American flag-themed trolley. Coincidentally, the rocker was designed to look like a whale — an animal that also adorns the beach city’s centennial anniversary logo.

“We didn’t even realize the whale was on the logo also,” said Michelle Monroe, Goodwin’s mother. “It was all just a happy coincidence.”

Monroe could be forgiven for not spotting the parallel.

The small parade subtly recognized Gearhart’s 100-year anniversary. But, sticking with a sentiment kept by residents since its founding, the parade was not much different than in years past.

“It’s everybody being on the same page of being carefree and frivolous and showing off for each other,” said Jamey Hampton, a Portland resident who owns a home in Gearhart and has visited since he can remember. “It’s like a little place frozen in the 1950s despite the change that’s taken place.”

Members of the Gearhart 100 Year Committee — wearing centennial shirts, sweatshirts and pins — walked toward the front and held a sign commemorating the anniversary. Flanked on the front and back ends of the parade were Gearhart Volunteer Fire Department



JEFF TER HAR

What will the next 100 years bring? Miila TerHar and Joey Stricklund mull the question at this year’s Gearhart Fourth of July parade.

trucks.

Considering the city’s roots, the trucks were a fitting escort.

Before 1918, Gearhart was a destination for family vacations. The people who lived here year-round were

mostly workers at hotels and other tourist attractions, said Bill Berg, the town’s historian, who serves on the centennial committee.

Two large hotels — one in 1913 and the other in 1915 — burned down, and cottages were catching fire. To prevent further incidents, locals incorporated the city in 1918 largely so that the area could have a fire department, Berg said.

“It’s part and parcel in the foundation of the city,” he said.

Unlike larger parades in more populated cities, including Warrenton, the procession did not have sizable floats. Some people brought camping chairs to view the festivities, but not many.

Rather, the attention was on children in Radio Flyer wagons tossing candy and others in holiday-themed costumes. With a number of beach homes lining the route, many watched the parade while sitting on front decks.

Some even decided to host lemonade stands and yard sales. Pat Oser, who has owned a home in the city for 35 years and switches time between here and Fort Lauderdale, has hosted his yard sale for six consecutive years to raise money for his grandchildren.

“They want to go to Harvard University, so it takes a lot of garage sales,” Oser joked.

Following the roughly 20-minute march from Eighth Street and Marion Avenue to the Gearhart Fire Station, firefighters stood and began handing out 1,200 free hot dogs.

“It’s super relaxed. It’s nice,” Lt. Josh Como said.

“They just kind of jump in, paint their bikes and ride on down to the station for some lunch.”

The more things change, the more the people stay the same



R.J. MARX/SEASIDE SIGNAL

Matty Brown at Highlands Golf Club.

By Matt Brown
For Seaside Signal

Folks ask me this question all the time... “What was your favorite part about growing up in Gearhart? Was it the quiet residential nature? Was it the beautiful scenic views of the Pacific Ocean and the Necanicum estuary? Was it spending time in the many forested and natural areas near the ridge path and Neacoxie creek?” I tell them the same answer every time: It was the people that I loved most

about my hometown and it’s the people that continue to make Gearhart such a special community.

I have many fond memories growing up in the only home I’ve ever known. My parents built our house in 1975 and they still live there to this day on Fourth Street near the Ridge Path. It was a wonderful area of Gearhart to grow up in and I spent many a day exploring the wooded areas between the ridge path and the creek, riding my bike to the grocery store to buy

some candy, or meeting friends at the corner gas station before heading to the beach. Maybe if I saved enough of my allowance I could even ride to the bowling alley for one of their famous slices of homemade pie, marionberry and chocolate cream being my two favorites.

A lot of the things that I enjoyed about those days have changed a bit. There is no gas station on the corner any longer, and the grocery store and bowling alley are under new ownership. Some of the wooded areas

around my parent’s house have been cleared to build homes. The character of parts of Gearhart has changed.

But then I remember why I loved Gearhart so much back then and I why I love it even more today. It’s “the people” that I remembered the most from my childhood. It was saying hello to Jon Blissett every day at the gas station. It was chatting it up with Randy Curs at the grocery store as he was

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GETTING DOWN IN DOWNTOWN GEARHART

Street dance celebrates Gearhart’s 100th anniversary

By Brenna Visser
Seaside Signal

Dancers, booming music and a delicate network of lights filled the otherwise sleepy streets of Gearhart Friday, July 6, at the town’s first street dance. A block of Pacific Way was closed to accommodate about 100 visitors and residents for the Gearhart Downtown Street Dance to celebrate the town’s centennial.

The dance was put on by the Gearhart Centennial Committee to bring people together, committee member and longtime resident Melissa Eddy said.

“It’s something I’ve always wanted to do,” Eddy said. “What better time than for the centennial?”

The event was one of many this centennial season.

Gearhart residents and visitors from throughout the region and be-



BRENNA VISSER

Janine and Cory Graff of Seattle swing dance at the Gearhart Street Dance. The couple came to town to celebrate the Fourth of July.

yond came to Gearhart on Memorial Day Weekend for the annual Gearhart Volunteer Fireman’s Ball. With Gearhart celebrating its 100th anniversary year and perfect weekend weather, attendance and spirits were high. This was the 57th year of the ball, held in the firehouse.

Volunteers manned gaming stations, served beer, wine and champagne, and sold special anniversary sweatshirts — at \$50 a hot-ticket item and sold out early in the evening. Dancers joined the fun rocking out to the band 24/7, with music from the ’60s, ’70s and ’80s.



SUSAN CODY

Gearhart Elementary School Principal Juliann Wozniak.

The making of a very special place

By Juliann Wozniak
For Seaside Signal

Gearhart Elementary School is a very special place. As principal of Gearhart for the past four years, I’ve gotten to experience firsthand how truly special it is. You may be thinking, what is so special about our little Gearhart School? That’s easy. It’s the people. It’s the

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