



PATRICK DUHACHEK

Trains get a makeover for their return at the new Wheel Fun Rentals facility coming to Seaside.

Wheel Fun gets on track

Former Signal columnist Claire Lovell would be happy. Lovell, who often lamented the passing of what she lovingly referred to as “old Seaside,” wrote in 2015: “Why doesn’t the person who owns the little train on Broadway either fix it up or remove it so someone else can use the space?”

Lovell, of course, was the long-running columnist and chronicler of old Seaside. Lovell died at age 96 in 2017. “I see little children with their fingers clasped in the fence, look longingly at the little choo-choo and wish they could take a ride,” she wrote. “Now there are the carousel, bumper cars and a bucket on the beach. Whoopee!”

Recalling Claire, I think that was a sarcastic “whoopee” on her part.

But her longing for the return of the miniature train, which ran for years on Broadway on the site of the former Strand Theatre, will soon become a reality.

Patrick and Denise Duhachek are redeveloping their South Holladay Drive property and adding a quarter-mile miniature rideable railway.

“It makes you feel like you’re 13 again,” Patrick said in early June.

“It’s Pat’s hobby,” Denise added. “He loves it. He has so much fun restoring stuff.”

Family affair

In years past, visitors to Seaside enjoyed classic rides like the Octopus, Rock-O-Plane, an ornately decorated carousel and a roller coaster called the Wild Mouse.

The Duhacheks purchased the half-acre South Holladay Drive property on Avenue C from the estate of Denise’s father, Jimmy Rogers. Rogers owned Wheel Fun for 25 years before his death in 2013.

Now the couple plan to build a storage barn and retail facility, adding the miniature train — purchased from the Mark and Marci Utti, owners of the Times Theatre, Finn’s and Twisted Fish among other downtown properties — as an added amusement.

Designs show a motorized vehicle

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



rental and storage facility, along with the outdoor amusement ride.

With Planning Commission approval in early June, the Duhacheks now have a go-ahead.

The showroom will be one of four Wheel Fun locations in Seaside. Their two downtown shops offer pedal-powered vehicles: surreys and bikes “and stuff that goes on the beach.”

Another location offers paddle boats on the river.

While the train will attract the kiddos, the surreys remain Wheel Fun’s most popular attraction.

“We rent more of the double surreys with the two bench seats than anything else,” Patrick Duhachek said. “There are some specialty bikes each offers, but each has a niche of what they might offer.”

Working on the railroad

To learn the ins and outs of railroading, Patrick Duhachek has been taking his studies seriously by visiting amusement parks with similar attractions, participating in online railroad forums and reading specialty publications.

At its former location, the train ran on aluminum track. The new rails will be made of steel.

“I still have a bit of a learning curve for putting down train track,” he said. “I’m learning as fast as I can.”

Duhachek is not sure yet what the scenery around the track will look like, whether it be old Seaside — or whatever. “We know we have to have a tunnel,” he said. “There will be some landscaping, a water feature — we’re kind of making it up as we go along.”

The battery-operated train will be followed by six cars and a caboose. The conductor will sit in the second car and run the train around a quarter-mile track. The new showroom, with three 18-foot glass-paned garage doors for



R.J. MARX

Denise and Patrick Duhachek of Wheel Fun Rentals.

public viewing, will offer surrey bikes, bicycles, mopeds and motorized electric golf course, along with a small shop for bicycle repairs.

The storage area will shelter train cars at night, along with boats, surreys and other vehicles.

All aboard!

Wheel Fun’s newest venture will join a surge in local amusements, from the Seaside Inverted Experience, the Seaside Shootout and the laser tag arena at the Seaside Carousel Mall.

The Duhacheks hope to open next the new facility next summer. “I have a lot of people who are grown-ups now and remember riding the train, and they’re excited to have their children ride it,” Patrick Duhachek said.

For the rest of us, whether we remember “The Little Engine that Could,” “Chitty Chitty Bang Bang” or “Thomas and Friends,” the train will be a nostalgic nudge to put us all on track.

“We’re excited to get going, to have a new building,” Patrick Duhachek said. “We’re excited with the support from friends and support from the city.”

He would get a nod of approval from our former Signal columnist.

“I always believe old Seaside was a lot more fun,” Lovell wrote in 2015.

If it’s Tuesday, this must be Old Town

Because visiting the Georgia O’Keeffe museum has long been on my bucket list, we took a vacation this month to Santa Fe. Years ago, my father in law (who lives in Michigan) gifted me with the book, “Georgia O’Keeffe” by Tanya Larson; a decade ago I read “Georgia O’Keeffe: A Life” by Roxana Robinson, a New York Times Notable selection, but there’s really nothing like seeing the work and appreciating O’Keeffe’s life in New York and New Mexico up close and in person.

They were experiencing a heat wave in Santa Fe, but the museum was cool inside. Our hotel was conveniently located just off the historic plaza and only a few blocks away. The museum is dedicated to the artist’s legacy, her life, and American modernism.

It’s a relatively new museum, opening in 1997. Walking around in a daze for an hour, I regretted we weren’t delving deeper and traveling to Ghost Ranch, O’Keeffe’s Abiquiu house.

Our days in Santa Fe passed as though in a dream. It was hot, very hot, and we’re not used to heat. We got up in the morning and walked to the Iconik Coffee Bar on Galisteo Street. We

poked around in the shops. We spent a lot of time at La Casa Sena Cantina and Wine Shop in the Sena Plaza where we split a BLT with avocado and drank alcohol. I developed a taste for Marble Brewery Pilsner, an Albuquerque beer. In the afternoons we hit the hotel pool before moving on to dinner. We had a nice meal at the Rio Chama Steakhouse and a divine one at L’Olivier. An old friend I knew in New York who relocated to Santa Fe took us to her favorite hole in the wall haunt, Tune Up, on Hickox Street. I had a soft shell crab sandwich minus the bun and a crazy good salad of butter lettuce, peaches, blueberries and chevre I’d love to duplicate at home. While we were there, the skies opened up and from the safety of the restaurant, we experienced what I read the next day in the New Mexican newspaper was a 1,000-year storm. Down the rain came violently for about 40 minutes, dumping more than 3 inches of water that overflowed the arroyos, causing major flooding. My friend, who is used to New Mexico weather, remained unperturbed.

On her advice, we spent a few hours at a spa called Ten Thousand Waves. I could have stayed there all day. We opted for the private (read: you go naked) hot tub and sauna with a plunge pool when the heat became too much. They reputedly have a killer Japanese restaurant, although it is closed Tuesdays, the day we were there.

Feeling utterly relaxed we were in better shape to deal with the Santa Fe traffic with its five lanes across highways and the 75 mph speed limit. I’ve owned a couple of signed and limited edition photographs by the noted Santa Fe artist David Michael Kennedy for about 20 years and was incorrectly under the impression the arty outpost is a quieter and more serene place.

Our last day was a bit of hassle as we had to check out of our Santa Fe hotel at 10 a.m. but our flight out of Albuquerque wasn’t until 7 p.m. That left a lot of time to kill, so we hit a mall and then a movie theatre. The multiplex where we saw “Sorry To Bother You” had BarcaLounger-style reclining seats. The film was mind blowing. I totally recommend.

On the way to the airport our GPS led us astray. Much to our horror, we were directed to the Kirtland Air Force Base, adjacent to the Albuquerque International Sunport. To say this was a shock is an understatement. After a terrifically awkward encounter with a person wearing full-on military gear, we arrived at our proper destination, desperate for margaritas.

I’d like to return to New Mexico one day, but preferably not in a heat wave. Meanwhile if “Sorry to Bother You” comes to the Seaside Cinema, go see it.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



EVE MARX

“Barn Dog,” a steel sculpture by Don Kennel, on the corner of Grant and Federal in Santa Fe.

25 YEARS AGO

Aug. 5, 1993

• Daring rescue saves life of 15-year-old boy: A 15-year-old Washington state boy swimming with his youth group was saved from drowning by U.S. Coast Guard personnel Friday, July 30, off of Gearhart. The Coast Guard launched an HH-65A Dolphin Helicopter to rescue the boy

• Police reports: An 11-year-old Seaside girl and 12-year-old Cordova, Alaska girl were arrested July 29 on a charge of third-degree theft, a Class C misdemeanor. According to police, the two stole \$13.90 in Mickey and Minnie Mouse mugs and different types of candy.

• Births: Spencer Raymond Maine. Spencer Raymond Maine was born to Michael and Sandra Maine of Seaside on July 18. He was 20 inches long and weighed in at 8 pounds. He becomes the brother of Dallen Maine, age 5, and the grandson of Neal and Karen Maine of Gearhart and Avery and Dora Russell of Seaside.

• Classified ad: Divorce \$68*

All types of uncontested Divorce situations — including one signature actions, children, property and missing

SEASIDE SIGNAL

TIME MACHINE

FROM THE PAGES OF THE SIGNAL

spouses.

Bankruptcy \$68*

*Excludes gov’t. fees

50 YEARS AGO

Aug. 1, 1968

• Sunday traffic jams on Sunset. Three special events in Clatsop County — the Oregon Republican convention and the annual Clatsop County Rodeo, both in Gearhart, and the Oregon Coast Invitational Match Play golf championships at Astoria Country Club — combined with prospects of cool temperatures at the beaches while there were high ones in the interior and normal vacation travelers to create a traffic jam on Sunset highway at the Wilson River highway junction and on the single east-bound lane to the east Sunday night.

It got so bad at about 8:30 p.m. that the string of cars, campers, and camping trailers and boat trailers was slowed to about 20 miles per hour.

State policemen of the West Slope

station moved in to relieve the congestion and diverted traffic south on highway 47 to Forest Grove and thence east through Hillsboro to Portland for about 20 minutes until the peak of traffic had passed.

• Accident victim, reported better after struck accidentally on the forehead by a golf club in a neighbor’s yard July 19. The man’s family was to leave for Norway, Sweden and Denmark July 22. The trip was cancelled. The family will leave by plane for Norway August 23.

75 YEARS AGO

Aug. 5, 1943

• City takes first place. Seaside won first place for traffic safety in Oregon for cities of its population class for the quarter just ended, according to word from the office of the secretary of state. Seaside has ranked high in traffic safety for several years.

• City blacked out. Rumors spread thick and fast Tuesday night when lights went out throughout this area at 10:46 o’clock. They remained out until about 1:30 a.m. Wednesday. A break in the power line between Seaside and Warrenton was responsible for the blackout. It was repaired just as rapidly as possible after the break was located.

• Shell man here. J.C. Morgan has arrived in Seaside to take charge of the Shell Oil company plant here. He succeeds Hal Eustis, who is now in the navy and on recruiting duty in Astoria. Mr. Morgan, who has had many years of service with the Shell company, comes from Myrtle Point.

• Graham Drug Co. ad:

Woman lost 52 lbs. That’s what Mrs. C.D. Wells, Ft. Worth, says the AYDS Candy Plan did for her. Writes “I weighed 170 lbs. when I started the Ayds plan and now weigh 118 lbs., can wear size 14 again.” The experience of Mrs. Wells may or may not be different than yours, but why not try the Ayds Plan. Look at these results. In clinical tests under the direction of Dr. Von Hoover, 100 persons lost 14 to 15 lbs. average in a few weeks with the Ayds Plan. (Sworn to before a Notary Public.) It’s an easier way to reduce. No exercise. No drugs. No laxatives. Satisfaction Guaranteed. Only \$2.25 the large size, 30 days supply Graham Drug Co., Broadway and Holladay

100 YEARS AGO

Aug. 1, 1918

• Gets Big Flag. A United States flag, measuring 20x30 feet, was pur-

chased by the Hammond company through Lipman & Wolfe last week and will be placed on the large flag pole at the Hammond camp on the Cannon beach road. The flag is the largest now floating in Clatsop county.

• United States Food Administration ad:

“Beat Germany Support every flag that opposes Prussianism

Eat less of the food fighters need Deny yourself something Waste nothing.”

• Soldiers’ chances: An official bulletin, just issued by our government, states that the individual soldiers’ chances are as follows, based on mortality statistics of the allied armies:

• Twenty-nine chances of coming home to one of being killed.

• Forty-nine chances of recovering from wounds to one chance of dying from them.

• Only one chance in 500 of losing a limb.

• Will live five years longer because of physical training.

This official information will be a great comfort to anxious parents.

SEASIDE
Signal



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