

# In the age of tech, visitors center takes a new role

The Visitors Bureau was short-staffed recently so I — the relative North Coast newbie — was out at the front desks fielding questions and phone calls alone on one of our busiest days of the year.

There was a couple from Arkansas who left with a veritable library of tourism-related reading materials and “Official Candy Taster” buttons for their grandchildren. There was a family from Washington who came out to Seaside every year for seven years and hoped for seven more. There were parades of RVs in need of parking spaces, hikers in need of trails, and walkers in need of lunch. There were both seasoned travelers seeking hidden wonders and those that needed help

**FROM THE DIRECTOR'S CHAIR**  
JOSHUA HEINEMAN



locating the ocean itself.

It was nonstop and, honestly, it was great fun. We have so many resources onsite that most questions were easily answerable given a little digging on my part (yes, I found the ocean). I also just generally love talking about travel and hearing short snippets on the daily lives of people from all over the world. The information exchange went both ways.

The other thing there was: mobile internet. Nearly every single

adult was either referencing information from their phone or actively using a phone during our interaction. Even for my part, I instinctively went to SeasideOR.com to find digital content when I couldn't find relevant guidance in print form.

Which brings me to my point. The undeniable fact is tourist information centers are seeing less and less walk-in requests for information over time. Here at the Seaside Visitors Bureau this year, we've had six extremely busy days with more than 100 walk-in visitors. Last year we had 14 days above that metric. In 2015, we had a staggering 42 days. See the trend?

Meanwhile, our marketing efforts bring Seaside to more people than ever. By far. It's not even

close. Our website alone has had 100,000 more unique readers this year than the last. As of July, hotel occupancy in Clatsop County has now nudged above state and regional levels. The Seaside Chamber of Commerce just wrapped a string of some of the most successful (and well attended) summer events in history. Not to mention the traffic. People are coming to Seaside in droves.

So while the “tourist information center” of memory is arguably a relic from a time before information literally was so readily at hand, I believe the Visitors Bureau has an important role to play with regard to visitor experience going forward.

Those travelers that venture into the building with the big orange

chair out front often leave with adjusted itineraries, customized suggestions, insider tips, and other necessary ingredients for a remarkable experience. More than a few elsewhere-bound travelers have even decided to spend the night after a conversation with our staff this summer.

Which makes sense. All of the digital content in the world will never amount to one single hour of lived experience. And travel is ultimately about experience. We'll continue to explore the best way to provide that service to visitors in the information age.

*Got a tourism-related comment, tip, or project? I'd love to hear about it. Write me at jheineman@cityofseaside.us.*

## A celebration of the Seaside Library

There's no place like home. Dorothy Gale in the book the Wizard of Oz said this phrase three times as she clicked her heels together and wished to be sent home to Kansas from the mysterious yet dangerous land of Oz. Often when people are traveling they wish for a place like home and there is no better place that feels close to home than visiting your local library. People love the library because it truly does feel like a home away from home. Wander into any library, there is a good chance you will find a cozy area to sit with a book or quietly work on your laptop using the free Wi-Fi. According to Mason Cooley, reading gives us a place to go, when we have to stay where we are. But everyone remembers their favorite book and that can give a sense of home and belonging no matter where you go.

**BETWEEN THE COVERS**  
ESTHER MOBERG



As we prepare to celebrate the ten year anniversary of Seaside Public Library being in the Donald E. Larson building at 1131 Broadway here in Seaside, I'm reminded of the library's humble beginnings in the first public bathroom in the city. The matron of the public bathrooms back in 1913 made sure the bathrooms were neat and clean and also took care of the reading room both for visitors arriving off the train from Portland and Seaside residents alike. Since then, Seaside Library has moved five or six times in the past 105 years.

Some of the places included the Moose building, the Soldiers and

Sailors Club during World War I, and on Roosevelt in the building that holds Cleanline Surf Shop.

The last location of the library on Roosevelt was where the Surf Shop is now. The library was built in the 1960s and upgraded in the 1980s.

People kept using the library more and more and the library was outgrowing the space. Programs included everything from baby chicks at storytime to summer reading programs but there was simply no space for anything larger than 20 people meeting together in the building and it was time to grow.

The library director Reita Fackereil started looking around for a new place for the library and thanks to her work and that of the Friends of the library working tirelessly along with numerous other volunteers and community members, the idea of a new library took shape.

Thanks to this group of library loving citizens, a tremendous amount of work happened to fundraise and promote moving the library. In 2007, the new Library property was purchased and the official groundbreaking happened on November 2007. Mayor Don Larson was instrumental in helping get the new library building project going and was there for the groundbreaking on Sunday, Nov. 4, 2007.

Sadly, he passed away before celebrating the 10-year anniversary with us but I am sure he would have been overjoyed to see us celebrating ten years in the building. We honor his memory with the building having been named in his honor in 2017. In September of 2008 the new Library officially opened. Hard to believe, but the Seaside Public Library has now been open at 1131 Broadway for 10 years and



we are celebrating that anniversary during the week of Sept. 18. We will be holding a Love Your Library event all week

with craft events, giveaway prizes, and live music in the library. We will also be holding an anniversary celebration on Saturday, Sept. 22, at 2 p.m. Everyone is welcome and cake and light refreshments will be provided. We would love you to come and celebrate the library both past and present with your memories of what you love about the library both in the current building as well as the other building of the past and please come and enjoy the “Love Your Library” week long events. You can also view our new quilt show, “Quilter's Choice,” which is now on display in the library's lobby and community room.

*Esther Moberg is executive director of the Seaside Library.*

## LETTERS

### Vote yes on Ballot Measure 105

In my third-of-a-century in law enforcement — which includes almost 14 years as sheriff of Clatsop County — the most important thing I've learned is this: Respect for the law, among citizens and noncitizens alike, is indispensable to a free society.

That's why I urge Oregonians, in November, to vote “yes” on Measure 105 and repeal the state's, illegal immigrant sanctuary statute.

The statute undermines respect for law in significant ways. It tells illegal immigrants that at Oregon considers immigration-law violations so inconsequential as to be unworthy of police and sheriffs' attention. In doing so, it legitimizes those violations and encourages more. As well, the statute invite the contempt of U.S. citizens and legal residents, whom Oregon expects to, abide by all laws.

Certainly, immigration-law violations are federal offenses. But they are precursors to other crimes illegal immigrants routinely commit in their efforts to conceal their illegal presence — crimes, like identity theft, that harm everyday Oregonians at the local level.

Such crimes are well with in local police and sheriffs' purview. But Oregon's “hands off” sanctuary statute works to keep law enforcement from pursuing many of the people who commit them for the very reason that they are here illegally and innocent Oregonians, pay the price.

Most often the common intersection with illegal immigration and alleged criminals and alleged criminals is your County Jail.

This is an additional strain on the system which should not be happening in the first place. To have the ability to work with our federal partners would alleviate the inconsistency and stop the erosion and ineffectiveness of these sanctuary laws.

Mollie Tibbetts' recent murder has refocused attention on the violence and heartbreak illegal-immigrant criminals can visit on Americans and their families. Tibbetts' killer “was here because our government neglected its responsibility to

keep him out,” writes Agnes Gibboney (whose son, Ronald Da Silva, also was murdered by an illegal immigrant). Oregon's sanctuary statute not only compounds that neglect, but issues a de facto invitation to illegal immigrants to settle in our state.

Another pro-sanctuary argument is that the statute's repeal would make illegal immigrants afraid to report crimes. Oregon Sen. Michael Dembrow, for instance, has argued the statute is needed so if illegal immigrants “have to call the police ... they don't have to worry about state law enforcement turning them in” to U.S. authorities for deportation.

More nonsense. Can any sanctuary supporter, cite a single instance of an illegal immigrant being deported for reporting a crime? To the very best of my knowledge the answer is no and always has been. When people step forward to volunteer information about criminal activity, law enforcement officers are not going to look a gift horse in the mouth by inquiring into their immigration status. Certainly no prosecutor I've ever known would want to deport witnesses who could help them obtain convictions.

More, when they provide information that helps prosecute criminals, illegal immigrants can qualify for federally-issued nonimmigrant visas (the “S,” “T,” “U” and “VAWA” visas) or deferred action or parole.

Illegal immigrants, without disclosing their identities, can easily report crimes via law-enforcement agencies' anonymous telephone and online “tip lines.”

Last and most nonsensical and insulting of all to the men and women who have sworn to preserve the peace — is the assertion that sanctuary repeal would unleash a wave of profiling against Hispanics.

First, all across the State, law-enforcement officers undergo formal rigorous training which includes anti-profiling training. More importantly however is this: People who choose to devote their lives to law enforcement are people of uncommon integrity. From their first day on the job, when they raise their right hands and take the oath, they commit themselves to treat everyone equally un-

der the law. This commitment is at the core of their professional being and informs all their professional actions. I can honestly say that I have never witnessed an instance of racial profiling from any of my deputies. They serve and protect all who need assistance regardless of race, origin or creed. Whatever the outcome of Ballot Measure 105, they, and law enforcement officers everywhere throughout Oregon, will continue to do their jobs with integrity and don't believe for a minute, they won't.

In November, please join me in voting “yes” on Ballot Measure 105 to repeal the illegal-immigrant sanctuary law.

**Tom Bergin**  
Clatsop County Sheriff

### Repairs, cleanup sought

To Alan Evans, Chairman, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors:

I understand that the district recently sent its department managers on a white-water rafting trip. I would like to know what that trip cost taxpayers.

I would also like to know when the dirt around the stainless steel perimeter of the pool will be cleaned. When I asked (executive director) Skyler Archibald about this matter he told me that the district was looking into an appropriate cleaning product. That was several months ago and the filth still remains.

Finally, I would like to know when the floor in the men's locker room will be repaired.

**Marti Wajc**  
Seaside

### Vote no in Seaside

The board of directors of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District is seeking to raise your taxes significantly through a ballot measure to fund an aquatic center addition this fall. Please vote it down. Let me tell you why. I use your pool at least three times per week and I have been doing so for the past six years.

The aquatic center used to be well managed until the

arrival of Skyler Archibald two years ago. Archibald's only experience was managing intramural sports teams for a local college. He had no preparation for the job he is in and has shown no desire to learn it in the two years he has been here. Your SEPRD board seems to have no clue. None of them use the aquatic center. Please vote out any SEPRD incumbent seeking re-election. They continue to reward Archibald for doing a lousy job.

Archibald destroyed a beautiful men's locker room last year that had six shower heads and a great design. Now we have four shower heads and an incredibly poorly designed locker room with black mold growing on the floor of the shower stall. The flooring installed last year failed to adhere. As a result we have a concrete floor that is difficult to clean at best. Stop by and take a look.

As recently as two weeks ago, patrons were turned away from the pool as no lifeguards were available. Apparently, not enough people are willing to work there. This should tell you about Archibald's management ability as well as that of the board of directors.

The pool surrounds are now always filthy. They used to always shine!

Have you ever considered attending a board meeting? They make it almost impossible for most folks to attend by having them at 5:15 p.m. on the third Tuesday of the month. If they really wanted citizen participation, these meetings would be held at 7 p.m. to allow those with families to attend. They clearly do not want citizen involvement. This is just another good reason to vote against the ballot measure as well as board members.

Please, wait for a competent, involved board of directors that will not tolerate the obvious incompetence of their current Executive Director.

**John C. Huismann**  
Cannon Beach

### Budget overrun

The Seaside Convention Center expansion project is being completed on budget.

The Seaside school project is already almost 25 percent over budget.

Is this \$23 million underestimate because either the school planners are incompetent or they lied to us in order to get the tax measure passed?

I fear it is the latter. Either way, shame on them.

**Anna Perrault**  
Seaside

### Small crabbing miracle

My wife and I have been crabbing in Seaside for over 20 years and have never experienced what we did this last week. We threw three crab pots in at the 12th Avenue bridge near the cinemas just before high tide. Came back at low tide and you can see my trap is going nowhere with a gigantic drift log sitting on my line. My brother tried to walk out to free it, but the mud/sand was too deep. Thought of cutting the line but that would have left the pot in the water killing who knows how many crabs in the future. Decided to let high tide come back in to see what happens thinking for certain my setup would be destroyed at best. After returning, the log was gone, my trap was free and no damage. No keepers, but glad to have my setup back. Small miracle!

**Alec and Ronda Herold**  
St. Helens

### Preserve Gearhart's livability

The purpose of this letter is to address certain criticisms directed at my effort to run for Gearhart City Council,

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## Booster club

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