

# Action now can change our lives for the better

On Monday, Sept. 17, the Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District hosted the first of our Community Forums. When the district's Board of Directors made the decision to move forward and ask the voters of the district whether or not they supported the district expansion project, we knew that there would be a great deal of our population that needed to be informed of the project details, purpose of the project and give the residents and guests of the district the opportunity to ask questions regarding this important topic.

The forum was well attended, and the room seemed to be full of residents that were passionate about the project, perhaps on both sides. District staff, Board members and supporters of bond Measure 4-196 came forward to help address those questions and provide accurate and fair information to our residents.

While it's not likely that everyone

**SKY BOX**  
SKYLER ARCHIBALD



left the forum ready to vote yes on the upcoming measure, the experience was clearly impactful for some. One individual approached Raven Russell, one of the leaders of the citizens committee that has emerged to support the bond, and shared a powerful message.

This woman attended the forum but was a quiet participant at least partly because she did not feel comfortable speaking. But she identified herself to Raven as a user of district programs and as a mother and she shared a powerful message about why, in her opinion, that this is an extremely worthwhile project.

Those individuals with young children in our community know the



SKYLER ARCHIBALD

**A young swimmer enjoys the Sunset Rec aquatic facility.**

story she shared all too well.

Kids need space, they need room, they need activity. We know that obesity rates in our country have increased by some 500 percent over

the last 50 years and Clatsop County rates (29 percent of the current population) are well above that of the average Oregon county.

Without facilities and programs for kids to get active, that dangerous trend will continue. Unfortunately, today's children have a shorter life expectancy than that of their parents, a particularly alarming statistical development despite all our technology and scientific advancement.

Along with the prevalence of obesity in our community we also have above average rates of alcoholism and drug abuse. It's clear that this community's overall health is in serious jeopardy and action taken now can completely change the likely charted course for the future of Seaside.

The woman remarked in her interaction with Raven about the need for increased safe and healthy spaces for children in our community to play. Those thoughts aligned with that of a

local coach who volunteers his time to coach sports throughout the year but sees negative health impacts on the kids he coaches particularly in the winter, when rainy weather and short days combine to limit activity time for kids.

The district Expansion Project aims to serve our community's greater health needs and meet the demand to provide more space for youth, seniors and families to recreate and restrain the negative health trends that prevail.

We invite our entire community to come to one of our upcoming forums scheduled for:

- Tuesday, Oct. 9, 6 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center
- Monday, Oct. 29, 5 p.m. Bob Chisholm Community Center

If you have questions about the expansion project, please go to [sunsetempire.com](http://sunsetempire.com) or contact me at [sarchibald@sunsetempire.com](mailto:sarchibald@sunsetempire.com) for more information.

## School superintendent shares once-in-a-lifetime experience

Everyday educators go to school to work with students. Whether we are teaching in a classroom, providing breakfast or transportation, keeping a building safe or providing multiple forms of student support, we all teach kids through our words and our actions. We have education in our field, on-the-job experience, continuing professional learning activities, and for many of us years (or even decades) of experience. And sometimes, maybe once in a lifetime, we find ourselves in a totally new world which was not mentioned in the educational textbooks. We build a new school.

Just about any adjective can fit into the description of this experience. Exciting, exhilarating, rewarding,

**GUEST COLUMN**  
SHEILA ROLEY

scary, confusing, fascinating, tiring, the list could go on. But perhaps one of the best words to describe the experience on a daily basis is enlightening. As educators we are committed to being life-long learners, and the learning curve that has been needed to be part of this project is undoubtedly the steepest most of us have ever encountered.

There are many people in this story, but the stars are you, our community. Without the support of so many individuals and organizations, none of this would be happening. Most importantly, you came to the polls two

years ago and cast your votes on behalf of the current and future youth of our community. Since then the Seaside city councilors, City Manager, members of multiple city committees, public safety personnel, and the truly awesome Public Works Department have worked together with us to make this a community effort. Many of you have served on our design advisory group, and our very dedicated Citizen Bond Oversight Committee has convened regularly to review plans, progress, timelines and the budget, to ask the tough questions, and provide input.

The story of small community tackling a very large task could fill a book. The challenges are many, but the commitment to solutions by everyone involved is making it happen. Yes, the

voters did approve a bond just under \$100 million and the initial estimates came back much higher, but with hard work by many people and creative problem solving most of that gap has been filled. We have learned the new vocabulary of "value engineering" which translates to figuring out how to do more with less, and we have never wavered in our commitment to build a school with the resources we were allocated by the voters.

We as a community are on our way and writing our story of creating the best learning place for our children, within our beautiful coastal home. Not all of the chapters of this epic tale are written yet, but the adventure is underway. The topics I hope to discuss with you in the coming months

include: passing the bond, selling the bond, and creating and maintaining a budget; assembling the team; early design; land use, expanding boundaries, annexation, permits, permits, permits; preparing the site; collaborative partnerships; advanced design; technology, safety and emergency preparedness; elementary planning; further development of the campus; the logistics of moving 1,600 students and 200 adults; bringing us all together — a new mindset; educating into the future — Seaside School District Strategic Plan.

Writing a book is always a challenge, and with the scope of this project it will likely be a page turner to find out what happens next. Our goal is that it will be the best book you will ever read.

### LETTERS

#### Letter demeaned director, board

I am writing in response to a letter that the Seaside Signal published Sept. 14. This letter was an appeal to voters to vote no on the proposed bond measure to expand the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District. The entire argument for a vote down was a personal attack on the executive director, calling into question the credibility of the entire board and a complaint about the bathrooms.

SEPRD serves as one of the very few places that children can go for preschool care, after-school programs, workout facilities open to the public, public health programs, access to a community kitchen and event space and not to mention the only public pool for nearly 30 miles.

Executive Director Skyler Archibald is a community advocate, investing time and resources in programs across the area that support the health and well being of all of our children and adults. I have worked with him and his staff on multiple projects and am always impressed with their willingness to collaborate.

Please, if you vote no don't let it be because of your lack of trust in Skyler or the board. They are an educated and passionate group that does not deserve the type of slander published Sept. 14. Attend one of the community forums, next on Oct. 9.

**Sarah Brown**  
Warrenton

#### Bad decisions in Seaside

After more than 10 years, Seaside's "leaders?" are getting around to discussing earthquake and tsunami safety and community recovery. Seaside's Current Tsunami Evacuation Map shows how residents and visitors are to evacuate in the event of a tsunami. His first priority to improve bridge safety needs further analysis. There is a high probability that the newer bridges (Broadway and 12th

Street) over Neawanna Creek will withstand a Cascadia earthquake and will allow evacuation of those residents and visitors who are on the east side of the Necanicum River to reach high ground evacuation sites.

Evacuation means walking briskly, not driving, which will be impossible. Humans walking very briskly can walk 5,000 feet in 15 minutes (the expected minimum time between the Cascadia earthquake and tsunami). Following the city's designated evacuation route map, the majority of the highly developed areas of Seaside west of the Necanicum River are too far (Seaside's dirty little secret) from the evacuation sites to allow resident and visitor to escape regardless of bridge condition.

Residents and visitors who are on the west side of the Necanicum from about Avenue N can evacuate south to Tillamook Head without the need to cross a bridge. Seaside has continued to pour your money into improving the Avenue U Bridge over the Necanicum even though it has no use in a tsunami evacuation.

The only rational conclusion is that the city needs to build a vertical escape structure (as recommended by the Federal Emergency Management Agency) over the downtown parking lot next to the convention center. This facility would allow all of Seaside's residents and visitors to safely evacuate (including the kids during the 70 percent of the time they are not in school). Bridge improvements over the Necanicum River are useless in terms of tsunami evacuation.

During preliminary planning of the expansion of the convention center it was suggested to the city (by this writer on paper with design drawings) that this improvement could do double duty (convention center expansion and vertical escape structure) and be funded by the \$16 million convention center expansion bond. Their answer was, "we don't like your ideas," much like their answer to Mr. Horning which was, "tsunami planning is unimportant." In a

similar manner, existing "Seaside leaders" refused to even look at the Seaside school relocation option of upgrading Broadway School which would have met all seismic and tsunami requirements and saved the taxpayers 80 million dollars as well as eliminated the need for Seaside taxpayers to shell out another \$30 million (surprise folks) for the unfunded sewer, water and road improvements for the schools. The upgrading of the Broadway School would also have met all the needs of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, which is now asking for another \$20 million of your money.

You voters simply don't elect competent leaders.

**John Dunzer**  
Seaside

#### Consider merits of rec bond

The letter of Sept. 14 titled "Vote no on Rec District ballot measure" was disturbing to me as one who has worked with the people served by Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District for over 20 years. First of all, this ballot measure is being put forward to the voters in an effort to better serve the various health and recreation needs of the community. The improvement projects were selected by representatives of the community after numerous and varied opportunities to gain input from the community. I hope voters seriously consider the opportunities being presented.

I also find it disturbing that personal attacks upon Skyler Archibald and the entire board of directors are occurring in the paper. I don't believe that personal attacks are necessary or appropriate. Clearly and respectfully stated concerns, questions and differences of opinion makes for

better decisions in most cases. My past interactions with SEPRD staff and board members has consistently shown that approach works. I encourage those with concerns to reach out for a discussion rather than attack individuals who have been found to be qualified and working on behalf of the community. Attacking people does not encourage open mindedness.

**Dan Gaffney**  
Astoria

#### Rec District is welcoming

I was extremely surprised when I read the letter from John Huisman regarding Skyler Archibald's management of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District. I am not a swimming patron, but a gym/workout patron. Since Skyler has been director there has been a marked improvement in the scheduling as well as the quality of our classes. Before Skyler came the classes had to have at least six participants to be run. One of the first changes he made was to that program. If the class was listed in the schedule it was a go. Because of this continuity our class rarely has fewer than eight or ten and often has quite a few more. I have noticed the same increase in other classes.

This continuity is very important. But for me what is even more important is that when I have had questions and concerns the staff as well as Skyler have been open to my thoughts. They have not always been able to solve the issue, but they have followed through with me about my concern. So, I know that when I have communicated with them, walked into their offices or called I have received good customer service. Please, if you have questions, respectfully go and talk. I think you will

find an open reception.

**Susan Deshon**  
Seaside

#### Role of women in Gearhart's history

As a member of the committee that planned Gearhart's centennial gala on Sept. 1, I appreciated and enjoyed the Seaside Signal's coverage of the event, which led off with the following historical note:

"The city, formerly part of the town of Clatsop, was incorporated after a vote in 1918. P.A. Lee was elected mayor; F.L. Hager, author and police judge; and D.B. Schroeder, treasurer. At the time, Gearhart's population was counted at 128."

Those bare facts are true, as far as they go. But that standard account doesn't reflect the fact that the City of Gearhart was created in spite of wartime conditions when most of the eligible male voters had been drafted and were unable to vote for incorporation.

Back in June, I was asked by the Signal to write a column, limited to 1,000 words, on the Gearhart vote of 1918. That article was duly published in the Signal's July 20 edition. Though I'd kept the words to less than 1,000, I, along with others, were surprised to find that a section had been cut — the section that I'd considered the most important. No doubt the cut was made owing merely to space limitations, however, it might be worth restoring it here:

"With the military draft in effect since the previous year, the younger men were away in the stinking, disease-infested trenches of France. The First World War was still raging and wouldn't be over until autumn when those who'd survived the shells and bombs and bullets and, worst of all, the Spanish

influenza would come home again to Gearhart — far too late to vote for its independence. But we can assume that many, perhaps event most, of the Gearhart voters were women. Although women couldn't vote nationally until 1920, they'd been able to vote in Oregon since 1912. So, the decision to create the City of Gearhart was likely to have been in large measure the choice of women."

We Gearhart citizens owe a gesture of gratitude to those great-grandmothers for our existence as an independent community. Let me offer it here, at last.

**Bill Berg**  
Gearhart

#### Support for Skyler Archibald

I am responding to the recent Letter to the Editor from John Huisman (Signal, Sept. 14) regarding Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District's executive director, Skyler Archibald, and his management capabilities. I have had the pleasure of working with Skyler on several different projects both in his official job capacity and as a dedicated Rotarian. Never have I ever felt anything but total respect for his decision-making, listening and leadership skills. He has built an outstanding and committed team of employees at SEPRD and I can only imagine what amazing innovations he will bring to our community in the future. I would never have a reason to doubt his competence in managing and directing the expansion of the present facilities. I am proud to call Skyler a friend, and I am even more proud of his professional accomplishments. I would definitely support him wholeheartedly in all current and future SEPRD endeavors.

**Laura Freedman**  
Cannon Beach

**Fall Festival**

**Saturday, September 29, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.**

Silent auctions for Cannon Beach hotel stays  
Gift certificate drawings for Cannon Beach shops  
Homemade crafts & baked goods sale, 10-5, Sept. 29

**Cannon Beach Library**  
131 N. Hemlock, Cannon Beach (503-436-1391)  
Place bids & buy drawing tickets at library, Sept. 1-29

powered by

music first

**SEASIDE AMERICAN LEGION**

**CRAFT FAIRE**

**October 6th/9AM - 5PM**

Come meet our crafters and local businesses. Bake goods, candles, clothing, fabric items, etched glass and more!

*All proceeds will go to the local back pack program*

**1315 Broadway in Seaside**

WELCOME