



R.J. MARX

Getting on and off a carousel is difficult if you're a furry.

LIFE IN THE FUR LANE

What kind of person gets in a fur suit and travels across the state for a good cause? For these costumed folks, every day is Halloween. And for others, it is a lifestyle. Louis Lamp (pronounced "Louie") is a member of a group called the "Pool Party," originally intended to spoof the political system. Now the group has grown and brought its membership to Seaside. Earlier this month, members of the group descended on Seaside to spread cheer and to help raise funds for children's swimming lessons and children's theater.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



Mouse takes off his head and swigs a bottle of water. It's all over.

Q: How many members do you have?

Lamp: We've got about 35, including a few couples and teens.

Q: What are some of the other careers of group members?

Lamp: We have some in the military, a lot of folks involved in art, sewing, illustration, outside the cottage industry side of things, a lot of IT folks, firefighters, EMTs, first responders. Then you have the folks who work at Burgerville.

Q: What are some of your favorite causes?

Lamp: For conventions it will be for no-kill animal shelters, conservation efforts, things along those lines. In Seaside, for this year, our pet causes are the Clatsop Children's Theatre Company and the Sunset Rec Foundation. We're raising money for sponsoring swimming lessons for kids who need to learn how to swim but aren't able to afford it.

Q: What is your costume?

Lamp: Mine is a gray-and-lavender dragon. What we call a "partial." I have a head, paws, tail and feet. I have to wear long sleeves underneath because I don't have a body suit.

Q: What's that?

Lamp: That covers the neck from the ankles. I have a fur-suit head.

Q: How are you generally received?

Lamp: Some people are indifferent. If they want space away from us, that's OK. Out in public most of our time is making we don't step on people's toes — kidding — but getting on and off the carousel is harder than people would think.

Q: How do you communicate with the audience at an event?

Lamp: When we're in public there are a number of us who are not in costume, we call them handlers because there are number of characters who might not speak or communicate via barks or chirps. We make sure to have a couple of people on hand to welcome the public, answer questions and make sure no one gets hurt.

Q: What sounds does a dragon make?

Lamp: I get tired of "Roar!" After 15 minutes my throat is raw, I'm still finding my voice, so to speak.

Q: What does the costume say about the person?

Lamp: A lot of times it will express who we want to be. A lot of folks are very reserved in public. They don't want to perform or talk with people they're paralyzed with anxiety. When you are in suit, all of that disappears and is off to the side, very much like an actor in a role, in character. Whereas an actor has training in becoming that role, for those who have no experience with that, it's a very easy mental cue. It's important for their identity.

Q: Have you ever fallen?

Lamp: When I was bowling in a previous fur suit. It's retired now. It had felt on its feet. On a bowling alley it was like a cartoon, the feet shuffling back and forth.

Q: I understand you work with children in area hospitals.

Lamp: Some of us to a children's hospital every month to visit the kids.

Q: What's that like?

Lamp: Nobody goes to a hospital to have a good day, especially kids who are in patient, 5 to 15 years old. That's the kind of giving back money can't buy. I wouldn't quite put it in the realm of a higher calling, but for a few minutes, when they are interacting with us and getting photos, they're not thinking about insurance, diagnoses, prognoses or how it will affect their lives going forward. It's really nice.

Q: How do kids respond?

Lamp: Almost universally they are overjoyed to see us. And when they're not, they very clearly don't want to have anything else to do with us.

If I had a tip for parents that encounter us in public, it's happened a few times, if your kid is not clearly interested in being around us, don't force them. "But they're so cute," and this baby wailing. We try to nonverbally communicate, sometimes the handler will intercede, a picture would be nice but another day. I would hate to be that kid.

Q: Same with dogs. How do they look at you?

Lamp: They look at us like we're weird humans.

Q: How will you be spending Halloween?

Lamp: I usually answer my door in costume. Some of us trick or treat.



Louis Lamp in Seaside.

R.J. MARX

A customized massage for your aches and pains

I was feeling stressed and achy and my sciatica was acting up. I needed a vacation but I only had sixty minutes. So I went on line and booked a massage with Aleshia Ryan Boucher at Seaside Massage and Spa, located in the heart of downtown Seaside.

"I like to talk with my clients and design a massage specific to their own needs and pains," Boucher said. I remarked that ordering a massage is not unlike ordering a pizza, meaning it can be customized.

Seaside Massage and Spa opened a few months ago in the Westport Winery building.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



You enter through the shop called Rust & Dust and head up to a mezzanine level. Seaside Massage and Spa is the first door on the right.

Seaside Massage and Spa has a full menu of sub-aritic offerings including Swedish massage, hot stone massage, traditional Thai massage, pregnancy massage, and massage for couples. They also wax. There's a full menu of therapeutic facials, essential I believe, for a person like myself who has eschewed more radical interventions like injectables and Botox. The spa also offers premiere treatments like the Couples Ocean Escape, a 75 minute luxury experience that includes hot towels, aromatherapy, and light refreshments. Enhancements can be added on to any regular massage such as aromatherapy, cupping (using silicone cups, not fire) and CBD balm.

I decided to spring the extra \$20 for the CBD balm add-on. Alishia offered two versions; straight up CBD and one that's infused with arnica. Both choices are THC-free, which means you won't get high, but you will get pain relief/inflammation reducing relief. Since my left knee these days is just bone grinding on bone, and I've had success before treating pain with arnica, I went for that.

This would be a good time to say Alishia gives a world class massage. There was judicious use of hot towels; she did a little stretching of my neck muscles; I asked for more pressure, not less. Soothing unguents were meticulously worked into my flesh. Unfortunately Alishia and I talked the whole time. We have a nice connection. Next time I'm going to lie there like a blob.

After an hour of professional rubbing, I crawled off the table feeling light and floaty. I went in with a stiff neck, aching shoulders, sciatica, and a sore knee, but after my massage, nothing hurt. Best of all, the positive effects lasted many days.

My friends were all curious about the CBD.

Most of them wanted to know did I get high, which just goes to show you how far we have to go educating people about cannabis. Without THC, the psychoactive cannabinoid found in the marijuana plant, you don't get high or stoned. I understand that could be disappointing.

The use of CBD oils continues to gain momentum in medical and healing circles with good reason. Scientific studies support the belief CBD is effective in treating anxiety, depression, chronic pain, even acne.

In a perfect world, I'd get a massage every week. I'm sure I'd be a much better person. Whose disposition and attitude isn't improved from being free of pain and rubbed into euphoria?

The CBD balm doesn't hurt. In fact, I totally recommend it.

Book your own hour of rest and relaxation at book-seasidemassage.com or call 971-320-0624. Outcall service is also available. Psst. A gift certificate makes an excellent holiday present.

LETTERS

Elk matters in Gearhart

The Oct. 2 article in The Daily Astorian, "Gearhart council candidates take on key issues" needs clarification.

1. The elk herd is not a City Council issue as portrayed by the paper and candidate Jack Zimmerman, but falls under the purview of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife. This has been explained in council and informal public meetings.

2. The ODFW did not allow Costco and Walmart or urban sprawl to push the herd out of its environs and into city streets.

3. Most egregious is Zimmerman's statement that the elk herd has hoof rot disease. I have seen elk with this debilitating disease, the symptoms of which are very apparent. The herd spent Oct. 2 in my yard and I can say that none have this disease. ODFW has confirmed that the herd does not have hoof rot, so I decided to correct the record.

It is disturbing that a candidate would be misinformed and spread misconceptions. The current council is pursuing a citizen's suggestion to prohibit feeding of wildlife.

They continue to provide information to citizens for ways to discourage elk from feeding on landscaping. They post warning signs on how to stay safe from aggressive elk behavior.

These actions are within their responsibilities and helpful to the citizens.

I am one of the citizens who considers the elk an enjoyable part of our natural environment. I don't believe I am the only one holding this view.

John Green Gearhart

Affordable housing goals

People who work on the Oregon Coast should be able to afford to live on the Oregon Coast. But

See Letters, Page 5A



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