

SignalViewpoints

Pastor Dan honored at North Coast Family Fellowship

North Coast Family Fellowship celebrated Pastor Dan Dunn Day on April 7, a special gathering to celebrate the legacy of Dunn, and Patty, his wife of 54 years, and their work with the community. Dunn, who “just turned 73,” is recognized for his decades of service as a minister to children, families and senior citizens, from ministries in the Southwest, a teaching career at George Fox University, and pastor at the Seaside’s Family Fellowship. We met up with him at his church office.

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



Q: We’re with Dan Dunn of the North Coast Family Fellowship. We’re recording.
Dunn: (laughs) Uh-oh! You’ll catch me with my really big whoppers.
Q: How long have you been with North Coast Family Fellowship in Seaside?
Dunn: I’ve been associate pastor for about 22 years now. I did children and family ministries for about 17 years, and for the last five years, I’ve done senior ministries, visitation, counseling in the area of those who are dying, and hospice.
Q: How would you like to tell your story? Is it about Seaside, you, the legacy of the community, relationships?
Dunn: All of that.
Q: Were you born and raised here?
Dunn: No, I’m from the Spokane-Pullman area.
Q: What was growing up like?
Dunn: I wouldn’t call it privileged, but middle class.
My father deserted my mom. He left her when I was about six and my middle brother was maybe four. Mom was pregnant with my youngest brother.
I didn’t grow up with a bad taste in my mouth about my dad because that was Mom — she raised all three of us to remember him and respect him. He was a World War II fighter pilot and decorated. But he wasn’t there, and that was his choice.
Q: Was it forgiveness, or did she say “just move on.”
Dunn: It was more than that. It was her attitude too.
Though my father wasn’t around, my



Dan Dunn in his office at North Coast Family Fellowship in Seaside.

grandfather was, and my two uncles. They were my role models, so I was blessed with that.
Q: Tell me about them.
Dunn: They were wheat farmers. We lived in Spokane and I spent summers, weekends, spring break on the farm. Their interest in me was huge. Garbage didn’t roll out of their mouths, and they stood their ground. They weren’t Sunday school teachers by any means, but they were men. Between John Wayne and my grandfather, golly! They don’t get much better than that.
Q: Describe your time as a youth pastor.
Dunn: I was in youth ministry working with middle school, high school and college for 20-plus years in Phoenix and Glendale (Arizona), starting youth ministries, watching them grow into large youth ministries of 200-plus kids.
I’m not a pied piper — I haven’t gone street witnessing to pull them in. But the word gets out.
Q: How do you make it click for kids to take the right path?
Dunn: It’s not easy. When I was that age I didn’t always make the right choices.
So being with those kids and understanding and letting them know I get the struggles and things they wrestle with.

That came through and they saw that.
My wife was very much part of the team. We did it together, and that grew and flourished.
Q: What brought you to Seaside?
Dunn: (While) I was involved with ministry in the Phoenix area, I was helping another close friend get a business going.
I was making a call in San Diego when I had a brand new Ford Explorer stolen. It was full of samples: jewelry, silver and pottery. By the time the police got to me five hours later, they said: “Your car’s either in Tijuana or it’s in a chop shop up in L.A. somewhere.”
We had friends who had contacted us a week before. “Have you ever thought about coming back? We’ve got a brand new cabin out at Sunset Lake that we just restored. You could rent it if you want.”
Both my boys had come back to the Northwest to go to school. We came back here to become closer to them.
Pastor John (Nagle) was here and he heard about me coming back to the Northwest. He reached out and said, “Let’s talk,” and kind of dangled the carrot.
I called Patty and said: “Let’s go back to the Northwest.”
Q: So all the pieces came together?

Poetry, found even on a Seaside utility box

April is National Poetry Month, a celebration introduced in 1996, organized by the Academy of American Poets.
The point of having a national poetry month is to increase appreciation and awareness. One of my favorite quotes about poetry is by James Tate who said, “Poetry is everywhere; it just needs editing.”
Poetry has long gotten a bad rap, although rap is a form of poetry.
The first poem I tasked myself to learn was “The Village Blacksmith” by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.
I remember memorizing it and reciting it in front of my fourth grade class. The teacher seemed alarmed by my recitation. She had no idea I’d chosen it because it was a poem about a blacksmith and therefore related to my obsession with horses, which was already out of hand.
“Under a spreading chestnut tree
The village smithy stand;
The smith, a mighty man is he,
With large and sinewy hands;
And the muscles of his brawny arms
Are strong as iron bands.”
By high school I had moved on to the poetry of Langston Hughes and Nikki Giovanni. I read Sylvia Plath.

In college I discovered James Dickey and Ray Carver, although I always admired Carver’s short stories more than his poetry.
My English major friends introduced me to the poetry of Denise Levertov and LeRoi Jones. I had a friend who exclusively read William Carlos Williams. In a structured college setting I read Lawrence Ferlinghetti, Wallace Stevens, Robert Frost, and T.S. Eliot.
After college and grad school I forgot about poetry. By then I was employed 40 hours a week in a nonfiction publishing house and after that editing magazines. I had no time or interest to read anything that wasn’t on my desk. Any free time I had was spent in art museums where I could stand in front of an original Picasso, or Pollock, or Rothko, work that spoke to me more directly at the time than poetry.
Poetry didn’t re-enter my life until years later when I started cleaning horse stalls. This was during a period of my life when I was profoundly unhappy. The barn manager, a moody if undeniably attractive man 15 years my junior, was a poetry major in



Eve Marx

You can find poetry everywhere, even on public utility boxes like this one in the Cove.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



college. He was a big fan of the Irish poet Seamus Heaney.
Since the barn manager was not just reading, but also attempting to write poetry, I accompanied him a few times to an open mike poetry slam at a local café.
My intention was to give him moral support, but he even though he wrote his name on the sign up sheet to read, he never did.
These days if I feel like reading a poem, I turn to the work of Charles Bukowski. Bukowski wrote dozens if not hundreds of poems. He gave readings on college campuses where he stood at the podium with a couple of six packs of beer at close hand. He steadily drank while he read, and if anyone in the audience ticked him off, he hurled empty

cans at them.
My favorite Bukowski poem is called “Slim Killers.” Copyright laws prohibit me from posting it in its entirety, but it begins with the lines, “There are 4 guys at the door All 6 feet four And checking in at Around 210 pounds, Slim killers. Come in, I say, And they walk in with their drinks And circle the old man — So you’re Bukowski, eh?”
In the poem, they proceed to get drunk and pass out on the floor. Bukowski gives each of them a pillow and a blanket.
He observes in the morning they are just big kids, heaving in the bathroom.
Then they’re gone.
Bukowski ends it with the lines, “Readers of my poems I can’t say that I disliked them.”
April is National Poetry Month. Read a poem, why don’t you?

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 16

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, Bob Chisholm Community Center, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin. Seaside.

Seaside Planning Commission, work session, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Wednesday, April 17

Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Thursday, April 18

Seaside Transportation Advisory Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Monday, April 22

Seaside City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, April 23

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, coastal resilience plan, 698 Pacific Way.

Wednesday, May 1

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

Thursday, May 2

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Tuesday, May 7

Community Center Commission meeting, 10:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Seaside Library Board, 4:30 p.m., Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway.

Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Thursday, May 9

Community Center Commission meeting, 10:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside.

Gearhart Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.



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Seaside Signal

The Seaside Signal is published every other week by EO Media Group, 1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, OR 97138. 503-738-5561 seasideignal.com Copyright 2019 © Seaside Signal. Nothing can be reprinted or copied without consent of the owners.

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The Seaside Signal welcomes letters to the editor. The deadline is noon Monday prior to publication. Letters must be 400 words or less and must be signed by the author and include a phone number for verification. We also request that submissions be limited to one letter per month. Send to 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside, OR 97138, drop them off at 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive or fax to 503-738-9285, or email rmarx@seasideignal.com

Subscriptions

Annually: \$40.50 in county • \$58.00 in and out of county • e-Edition: only \$30.00

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