

Bollywood: Dance group inspires kids to get out of their seats and onto the floor

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Dancing in groups during weddings, festivals or other events is an important part of Indian culture, but far from prevalent in the Pacific Northwest.

"Here in our culture, we're not touching each other very often, we're not moving our bodies together very often," said Mary Bess Gloria, the local naturopathic doctor and artist who orchestrated the

Bollywood experience for Seaside students. "So much of what these children are doing is sitting still and having to fight their innate urges to move and fidget."

As such, she sees dancing and movement as an instrument to address violence in schools, which she believes stems from "the isolation people feel."

"To me, dance is a way to bring people together that doesn't involve words or

ideology," she said. "They can connect on a different level. And once we connect to someone, we're much less likely to want to hurt that person."

In the fall, she pitched the idea of hosting Bollywood dance workshops for students and a public dance party to the parent-teacher organizations at the elementary schools and middle school. Students and their families work hard fundraising for the

PTOs, and this seemed like a way "to give back to them," Gloria said.

The party included not only music and dancing, but also a photo booth, funded by Bruce's Candy Kitchen; curry-flavored popcorn; and temporary henna tattoos. Everything was free to the public.

The dance instructors themselves had several meaningful experiences throughout their two-day

stint at the schools, such as introducing hundreds of students to an unfamiliar style of dance and music — including Indian hip-hop — and seeing their positive response to the exposure.

"There is something to this music — it's very infectious and joyful," Kakad said. "It just inspires me to see people get into it."

For Newton, the experience was a homecoming of sorts. She attended elemen-

tary, middle and high school in Seaside and both danced with and instructed at Encore Dance Studio.

"It's such a treat to be able to give back to any community and do this, but especially my community that I grew up in," she said, adding her work as a professional dancer can also demonstrate to students what's possible: "You can do whatever you want, you can follow your dreams, and you can give back."

Forum: Residents will get to hear from this year's school board candidates

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Signal editor R.J. Marx will moderate.

Two of three open seats will see competitive races in the May 21 election.

Three candidates — John Dunzer, Sondra Gomez and Jeremy Mills — have filed for the Zone 5, Position 1 seat.

Seaside's John Dunzer, a



retired corporate executive, is now employed as a greeter at Walmart.

Jeremy Mills, a Seaside

resident, has 11 years as an agent with State Farm Insurance. He is currently a member of the board of directors of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District.

Sondra Gomez is a local operations manager at Vacasa and served in the consulting office at the Seaside School District from 2016-18.

Shannon Swedenborg is the sole candidate in Cannon Beach's Zone 1, Position 1. Swedenborg filled the board seat after Patrick Nofield stepped down in Cannon Beach. Over the past two years she has been a substitute teacher at the Heights Elementary School and Broadway Middle School. She taught high school biology in the Renton, Wash-

ington, School District for 10 years.

Also in an uncontested race, Mark Truax, president of the board and holding 20 years experience with the school district, is running for Zone 4, Position 2, based in Seaside. He is a Seaside High School graduate and Astoria firefighter.

Gould said she hoped to hear ways in which board

members could help meet the needs of underfunded schools and to value education locally.

"What I'm hoping for are candidates and board members, as we've always been fortunate to have, who are very focused on the best interests of all of our kids," Roley added.

The election takes place May 21.

Gym: School district alters elementary gym plan

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an outdoor classroom area between the building and new classrooms.

The elementary school's former gym space will be reconfigured into classrooms.

The changes were driven by a 7 percent escalation in construction costs every year, Roley said. "Any way we looked at it, the original plan was not going to be within our budget."

The changes required city approval as "major modifications" to the school district plan, Henry said.

"We reviewed it with (Planning Director) Kevin Cupples and he thought it was enough changes moving the building and the amount of square footage that he thought it would be worthwhile for the Planning Commission to hear it," Henry said after the meeting.

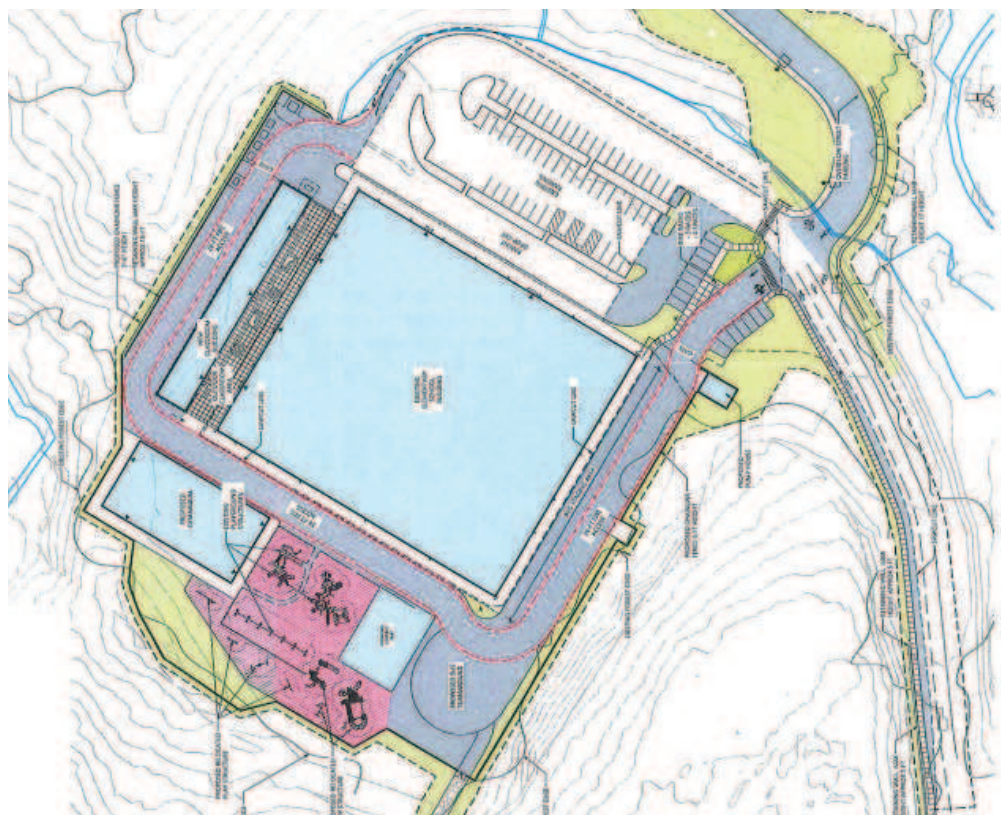
The goal is still to provide one elementary school of approximately 800 students for the district, architect Dan Hess said in a memo to the commission.

By taking away the gymnasium and remodeling that into classrooms, a freestanding gym will be built at "considerably less cost," Roley said. "From the beginning we have been looking at the plans as we go and adjusting the plans as needed — you have to trim or cut back."

The district could save up to \$500,000 on the gym alone, Henry added.

Commercial-level building projects throughout the state and region have created a shortage of skilled labor, Roley said. "We have a great team of our major players, but subcontractors are now in such high demand they can set their rates and go where they want to go."

To fill construction needs, the district has recruited teams



Seaside School District

TOP A conditional use permit was granted to the Seaside School District for revised plans at Seaside Heights. The new gym is at lower left, in blue.

BOTTOM Architect's rendering of the new freestanding gym to be built at Seaside Heights Elementary School.

from around the country, including a concrete masonry unit from Florida and sheet-rockers from Alaska.

"It's put us in a daily exercise of how do we maximize the funds we have,"

Roley said. "We don't have the option to go over budget. It's meant we've had to trim some things along the way."

Planning commissioners unanimously approved the modifications.

Construction at the elementary school is scheduled to begin after spring dismissal.

"We're getting pretty close to having the final plans all dialed in," Roley said.

Henna: Five Star Henna gets new location in Seaside

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painting to a venerated art form; henna is incorporated into their lavish wedding festivals as well as religious ceremonies.

The plant the dye is derived from grows naturally in Africa, northern Australia, and southern Asia. Palmer gets her henna directly from a lady in India.

Once henna is applied, results, which fade gradually, can last up to four weeks.

While young females on vacation make up the lion's share of Palmer's business, she also gets people who are considering a tattoo who want to test drive a henna version first for placement.

Palmer says it's not unusual for a group to come in here on a weekend afternoon, all wanting the same design.

Call it a tribal thing.



Eve Marx

Incense, sage sticks, and 3-D tapestry are for sale at Five Star Henna in Seaside.

That's where the party atmosphere kicks in.

"It can get really busy in here on a weekend afternoon," Palmer said. "This is a fun place to be."

Patrons select a design from a wide array of suggestions provided by Palmer. I showed her a picture on my phone and she duplicated it.

The price of henna appli-

cation depends on the intricacy and detail of the design.

Palmer commented on how there are myriad recreational opportunities in Seaside for those 21 and up. Henna is something everyone can enjoy, age regardless.

For years, I've fantasized about getting a tattoo, but so far haven't been brave — or committed — enough. I asked Palmer draw the classic reiki symbol, cho ku rey, on the back of my hand. It's lasted two weeks so far.

I couldn't be happier. I'm definitely going back to do it again.

Five Star Henna is located at 600 Broadway in Seaside, right next to the Broadway Bridge. Hours of operation are daily from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m. The phone number is 541-220-8285. Be inspired by their Facebook page or just walk in to check it all out.

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