

SignalViewpoints

Vending machine can dispense life-saving information

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



Visitors to the Sunset Pool will soon find a new type of vending machine, dispensing DNA collection kits to determine inherited cancer risk of those who choose to participate. The testing — which can cost \$3,000 if paid for privately — comes to users without charge as part of the Healthy Oregon Program.

At “spit spots” like the ones coming to Seaside, voluntary participants will consent, create a secure account, and donate a sample using mouthwash. Users will receive a small cardboard box, a bottle and a 2-ounce tube to collect saliva samples. Specimens will be returned to a diagnostic lab for recording and analysis. All samples will be genetically screened for inherited syndromes in the current panel.

Participants fill out a questionnaire and their samples will be genetically analyzed for early detection research at no charge.

All samples will be genetically screened for inherited syndromes.

If a submitted sample is found to contain the genetic markers for inheritable cancers, that person will be retested and then provided with a consultation with a geneticist.

Clatsop County was recently selected as the pilot county for this unique study, which aims to detect early cancer and save lives in the process. The county was chosen for its population size, proximity to Portland, and “relatively compact” geography.

“With our coordinator Steven (Blakesley) in Clatsop County we have a good network that integrates our research portfolio with the population and the medical care providers in the county,” said Paul Spellman, Ph.D., professor in the Department of Molecular and Medical Genetics in the Oregon Health & Science University School of Medicine and co-leader of the Quantitative Oncology Program in the OHSU Knight Cancer Institute.

The program will have tables at the Astoria Sunday Market and Hood to Coast. Collection kits will be placed at Providence Seaside Hospital and at the Sunset Pool.

Participation is free and “completely voluntary,” Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Executive Director Skyler Archibald said at the district’s June board meeting.

According to Spellman, about 1% of the



OHSU
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REC DISTRICT TAKES THE LEAD

A test for cancer that aims to save lives — or an invasion of privacy of little practical value?

Members of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District held this debate before approving participation in the OHSU Healthy Oregon Project to detect inherited risk of cancer.

“This is a good opportunity to help people in the area,” the district’s executive director Skyler Archibald said at the district’s June meeting.

Clatsop County shows a higher rate of diseases and

cancer particularly, he added.

Board members showed concern for the potential of false positives, privacy breaches — and the question of how participants might respond to results, especially those who might not have the financial resources for treatment. In addition, district staff may be unprepared to answer questions or guide users, he said.

The board voted 3-1, with one abstaining, to move forward with the OHSU vending machine for cancer research.

population could have an inherited cancer risk — and of those, only 20% are aware.

“If you have hereditary breast and ovarian cancer, your lifetime risk of getting ovarian cancer is about 40 or 50 percent and your risk of dying from that ovarian cancer is extremely high if you were to get it,” Spellman said.

“The pilot project is to test specifically for a small fraction of the population that is very high risk,” Spellman said.

While the vast majority of the population will not test positive for hereditary cancers, he said, for those who receive a positive test, there will be “very specific concrete and impactful changes” to their medical care: increased screenings; screenings at an earlier age; or potentially surgeries that could dramatically cut the risk of dying from disease.

“Right now we have interventions that cut that risk by more than 90%,” Spellman said. “These interventions are not necessarily fun. We don’t do them for people who don’t have these syndromes. But for people who have these syndromes, it’s important for them to know it so they can make an informed decision themselves. They are extreme interventions that we do for people who have very high risk.”

For some individuals with the inherited colon cancer syndrome, the guideline would call for colonoscopies at an earlier age and more frequently.

“Instead of having a colonoscopy every 10 years, it’s to have a colonoscopy every year,” Spellman said. “There’s not a lot of people who ask to have a colonoscopy every year. The guideline is in place because it turns out it matters. If

you identify the polyps that develop in the colon early and remove them, you cut your risk of developing cancer later on.”

Future studies could help provide early determinations of other types of cancers, including environmental, genetic or medical features. For those who do not have the hereditary gene, Healthy Oregon may provide information about healthy lifestyle activities.

“Our hope is everything we do we return value to someone,” Spellman said. “After we pilot in Clatsop County, our goal is to go statewide, probably launching region by region. The ultimate goal is to get hundreds of thousands of Oregonians enrolled in the Healthy Oregon Project to participate with DNA, as well as surveys and potentially other research projects in the future.”

Close encounters in Seaside bring smiles

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



Three weeks ago I was walking Lucy, my young dog, on Avenue U past The Osprey Café when I noticed a young man on the sidewalk doing a sun salutation. Beside him on the ground was a large and fairly new looking backpack; a large dog was guarding it. I was startled when he called out, “Have a beautiful day!” and called back, “You, too.” I thought that was the end of it.

Twenty minutes later and four blocks north, emerging from the beach to the Prom, the man and his dog were right there. As he was clearly about to start foraging cans from a bin, I tried hard not to look and slunk past.

“Find any strawberries?” he said. “I did.” He held out his hand, offering me a berry. Five or six berries were nestled in a somewhat grubby looking cotton handkerchief in his hand.

“Thank you,” I said, accepting one. “But I feel badly taking this as I have nothing to give you in return.”

“You could talk to me for a few minutes,” he said. “People turn away when they see me. This life is so lonely.”

So I did talk to him.

A week later I was working at my desk when a car rolled up out front. Two older women were in the front seats. They were pointing at my house. I think I frightened them when I opened the front door. I called out, “Can I help you? Are you looking for someone?”

They said they were sisters who grew up in Astoria. Now they live someplace else. They were back in town for a family reunion and decided to drive around. My house, they said, decades ago, belonged to their aunt and uncle. I asked if they wanted to come in and take a look.

Inside, they marveled at the remodel, which was done long before I bought



Eve Marx

the house. They confirmed what is now the master bedroom was at one time the garage. They described exactly how the original kitchen was. They said all their family gatherings were held at this house. They had lots of happy memories of being in the house.

The house does have a good vibe.

Last week I was walking both dogs past The Osprey Café. A couple having breakfast at an outdoor table began talking to me. It actually started when the man called out, “Hey, is that dog double jointed?” referring to Basil’s twisted leg. I explained he was born crippled. That made them sad. They said they drove to the Oregon Coast from Tennessee. This was their first time in Seaside. They were loving the weather. The husband wanted to know where he could shoot elk, to which I replied, “It’s the wrong season, they’ve recently calved, and nowhere right around here anyway.”

For a week the house next door has been filled with a large family of vacation renters. No rules have been broken regard-

ing parking or noise, but yesterday the trash bin overflowed on to the street and the crows were having at it. It’s my custom to attempt eye contact or at least say hello to anyone who rents the house, but this time I was feeling a tad unfriendly, at least until I met their happy and excited Chihuahua, whose name is Titan.

Two young women came to the gate the other day. They said they were from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. They were looking for good works to do and did we need assistance.

“Doing what?” I asked.

“Yard work, moving furniture, painting, whatever someone needs,” one of them said. “I love your belt, by the way,” she added, referring to the silver skull at my waist.

I said I didn’t need any help at the moment but accepted the card they gave me. It had a bit of scripture printed on it from Acts 10:38.

“HE Went About Doing Good,” it said. If you do need help, dial 503-468-9086 and ask the missionaries.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, July 29

Seaside City Council/Planning Commission, work session, vacation rental dwellings, 6 p.m., City Hall, 989 Broadway.

Thursday, Aug. 1

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

Tuesday, Aug. 6

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.

Wednesday, Aug. 7

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

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

Thursday, Aug. 8

Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., Seaside Civic and Convention Center, 415 First Ave.

Monday, Aug. 12

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

Thursday, Aug. 15

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

Tuesday, Aug. 20

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

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

Seaside School District Board of Directors, 7 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin, Seaside.

Wednesday, Aug. 21

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

Monday, Aug. 26

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



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