

Carrier delivered papers for over 50 years

By **TOM HALLMAN JR.**
The Oregonian

Time had taken a toll on Conley Vaughan's body, not unexpected for an 80-year-old. He tolerated the aches in his shoulders, the doctor telling him it was a rotator cuff issue, and he never missed a day of work.

What bothered him were his eyes. Years earlier he'd had cataract surgery, which had helped. But his eyesight was growing weaker, making it difficult for Vaughan to see clearly while driving early in the morning, long before sunrise. He told his family he was fine and to not worry. Finally, though, he faced his own brutal truth about his future.

Last December he retired. If he'd had a career with a corner office, a brilliant resume and title, there'd have been a party. A speech from the boss. Stories from co-workers. A couple of toasts, his moment to thank them all, basking in the applause and waving goodbye as he walked out the door.

He got nothing. And why should he? He was, after all, just a paperboy.

Back in the day, in an era that no longer exists, a paper route was a kid's entree into the work world. Maybe a buddy had a route. So, a boy would promise his parents he'd be responsible. He'd show up at the district paper station, get a bag and start the next day.

When I was in the seventh grade, I delivered the Oregon Journal, Portland's afternoon newspaper. At the time, the paper was how adults learned what had happened during the day. The paper folded in 1982, the

assets being taken over by The Oregonian.

My parents subscribed to both papers, and I was seduced by a recurring Journal ad saying they were looking for paperboys. A boy who sold enough subscriptions could win an all-expenses-paid trip to Disneyland. The earning potential, at least the way the ad promised, would allow me to eventually buy a mini-bike. I got a route that took me, on my bike, into southwest Portland neighborhoods. Selling was tough. I got bit by a dog. Too many customers stiffed me when I came to collect.

After eight months, I quit.

Vaughan worked his route for 52 years.

He delivered The Oregonian, seven days a week, from Astoria to Seaside. The circulation department at The Oregonian couldn't find a record of any newspaper carrier in company history who had a tenure matching Vaughan's.

"People get their news on the computer," said Mark Larson, Vaughan's supervisor and The Oregonian dealer in Astoria. "Once, papers were a big deal. We used to deliver 4,000 papers here. Now we're down to maybe 250." Even the term paperboy no longer applies the way it once did. Men and women, not grade school kids, deliver the paper these days. No one uses a bike. They have to have a car and proof of insurance. The official job description is "newspaper carrier," which makes no sense to Vaughan, who, even up to the last day on the job, always called himself a paperboy.

Vaughan grew up in Gearhart, graduated from

Seaside High School and married at 21. By the time he was 28, he and his wife had three kids. He worked in a Seaside grocery running the cash register and stocking shelves.

The sole supporter of the family, he was always looking to make extra money. One day the man who delivered The Oregonian got to talking with Vaughn in the grocery. He said he was leaving the area and his route would be open.

Vaughan took it over. He later left the store and worked at a local plywood mill. He divorced and remarried — he and his current wife have been together for 43 years and had two children. He now has eight grandchildren and three great-grandchildren.

The only constant in his life was the paper route, which he gave up in 2019, a few weeks before Christmas Day.

"When his route ended," said his daughter, Susan Vaughan, "something in my father died."

As the one-year anniversary of his retirement approaches, Vaughan is learning to adapt to his new life.

"Sometimes I wake up at 3 in the morning and almost jump out of bed thinking it's time for the route," he said. "Then I remember. People might not understand, but I'm a little down every morning. By the afternoon, I'm back to normal, but those mornings are tough."

Susan Vaughan remembers tagging along with him in the summer and riding with him in his car.

"People would literally be looking out the window," she said. "They were watching for my father."



After 52 years of delivering The Oregonian on the North Coast, Conley Vaughan, now 81, is adjusting to retirement. "Sometimes I wake up at 3 in the morning and almost jump out of bed thinking it's time for the route," he said. "Then I remember."

They were waiting for the paperboy.

Vaughan always enjoyed a good car. Over the years he had family station wagons, as well as some high end cars, a Chevrolet Corvette and a vintage Plymouth Road Runner.

And then he had The Route cars.

"As a teenager I was horrified of those cars," said Susan Vaughan. "They were all old beat-up cars. All my dad cared about was they got good mileage. He took out the passenger seat to stack his papers on the floor."

The Route — it deserves to be capitalized — was a character in the family.

Vaughan wasn't interested in traveling, taking a vacation or going anywhere that would make him miss delivering the paper. Once, he was in his route car delivering papers when his car was struck by a drunk driver.

"It happened on a Friday," said his daughter. "His face was black and blue, and he had a concussion."

He told his family he was going to deliver the Saturday paper.

"We argued with him," said his daughter. "But he was adamant he was going. We finally agreed on the condition I would drive him."

Vaughan picked her father up at his home. Before getting the Saturday paper, he said he had to make a stop.

"He had me go to the impound lot where his route car had been towed," she said. "The car was full of Friday papers. He hauled them out of his wrecked car and put them in mine. He told me he was going to take the Friday and Saturday papers to his customers. I thought he was insane."

They were delayed and customers, wondering why the paper was late, were

waiting, irritated that they'd missed their Friday paper. Then they saw Vaughan's battered face. He told them what had happened. He handed them two papers.

That was his job. He was, after all, a paperboy.

Vaughan is a relic, an anachronism.

Maybe — in this fast-paced, digital-first, keyword, search engine, website, click, get it on your smart phone world — that's where we're all headed, no matter where we work, what we do or where we live.

A man of habit, Vaughan is up about 6 a.m. The paper has been left at his front door of his house in Gearhart.

He reads it while he has his breakfast.

"Without the paper," he said, "it would be a wasted day for me."

Tom Hallman Jr. is a senior reporter at The Oregonian.

Ratty releases eighth historical fiction novel

By **BRIANA ALZOLA**
Coast Weekend

When two men, hired to protect workers on the First Transcontinental Railroad, make their way into an Indian camp and find a 12-year-old girl being held prisoner, their job turns into a rescue mission.

After rescuing the girl, the men set out to bring her to a new place so she can find a home and they can find their fortune.

By the time they arrive in Astoria in 1869, a bond has formed between the three that lasts throughout their lives.

Such is the tale of "Call of the Columbia: River of Redemption" by Brian D. Ratty.

The book follows the three main characters through struggles as they each find their own way in the area. It tells the stories of coal min-

ing, gold mining, salmon canning and logging.

The book brings together many different aspects of regional history, Ratty said.

Ratty released the book in December at the Seaside Artisan Market. The book, published by Sunset Lake Publishing in Warrenton, is available to purchase on Amazon and in local bookstores.

"Call of the Columbia" is the eighth historical fiction book Ratty has written about the North Coast.

Ratty often focuses on historical topics because he loves history but he isn't — and doesn't want to be — an expert on all of history. So instead, he focuses on different topics and angles of local history and folds them into books.

Instead of focusing on specific historic events, data and facts, he focuses on characters. His goal is to keep people hooked on the story.

"I want to make history come alive," he said.

Instead of a matter-of-fact tale that comes across as dull, he lets the characters take the lead and finds the story within the story.

"That's the fun part," he said.

The best part about writing the books are research trips. While writing "Call of the Columbia," Ratty and his wife, Tess, spent time in Coos Bay, visiting the museum there and learning about the area's history with coal and gold.

They both love to read, so they poured over stories and shared them with each other, Ratty said.

When Ratty was working full time, he worked as a professional photographer and worked on commercial and corporate videos. He was around writers for his entire professional life but didn't

know he would become one himself.

Then, after retiring, Ratty needed something to do.

"I don't play golf, I don't build furniture," he said.

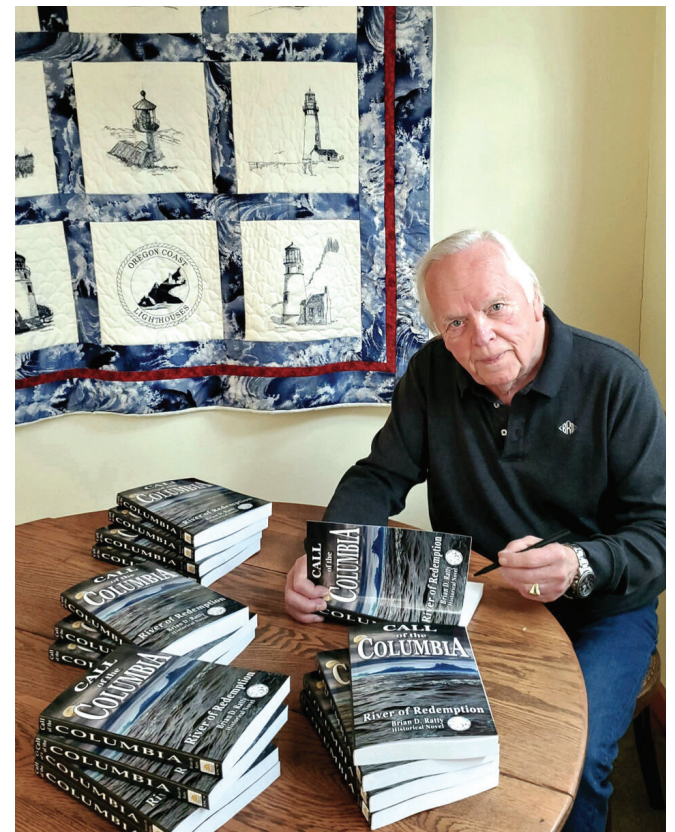
So, he turned to writing.

Ratty started writing for his first grandson. Quickly, his collection of books started to grow.

"There's a sense of accomplishment when you finish a book, whether it's the first time or the eighth," Ratty said.

Ratty said he tries to write every day and treats it like a job, so he can stay focused and keep going.

He said the real secret to writing eight books is his helpers, though. He has had the same editor for all eight of his books. Without her and without his wife (who helps with his self-proclaimed terrible spelling), the books would not be possible, he said.



Author Brian Ratty signs copies of "Call of the Columbia."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Vacation rentals are a privilege

It seems that vacation rental owners have forgotten that they are operating businesses in residential zoning, and that it is a privilege, not a right.

When our neighborhoods began being depop-

ulated by them it was necessary for the city to create ordinances to address the myriad problems they imported. Complaining about any fees, licenses or fines smacks of undeserved entitlement at best.

Sandy Rea
Seaside

Students make honor roll at Oregon State

Seaside Signal

Local students made the scholastic honor for the fall 2020 term at Oregon State University. A total of 8,378 students earned a B-plus or better grade point average (3.5) to make the listing. To be on the honor roll,

students must carry at least 12 graded hours of course work.

From Gearhart, honor students included Bradley McCabe, a senior majoring in business administration, and Hunter L. Thompson, a senior majoring in forest engineering.

Seaside honor students

include Jacob J. Brien, a sophomore majoring in music; Parker C. Conrad, a computer science major; Alicia J. Cruz-Lilly, a freshman with a major in business administration; Darren E. Garnett, a freshman majoring in general engineering; Andrea B. Harris, a sophomore, major-

ing in human development and family science; Heather S. Hirsch, a senior with a major in microbiology; Gage E. Mergel, a sophomore music major; Anna Peon Marin, a freshman majoring in general engineering; and Chelsea M. Woods, a senior English major.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

TUESDAY, JAN. 5

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., workshop, virtual meeting at sunsetempire.com.

TUESDAY, JAN. 19

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225

Avenue A.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., www.seaside.k12.or.us/meetings.

TUESDAY, FEB. 16

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District Board of Directors, 5:15 p.m., 1225

Avenue A.

Seaside School District, 6 p.m., www.seaside.k12.or.us/meetings.



PUBLISHER
Kari Borgen

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Jeremy Feldman
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Sarah Silver-Tecza

PRODUCTION MANAGER
John D. Bruijn
SYSTEMS MANAGER
Carl Earl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Skyler Archibald
Darren Gooch
Joshua Heineman
Rain Jordan
Katherine Lacaze
Esther Moberg

Seaside Signal
The Seaside Signal is published every other week by EO Media Group, 1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, OR 97138. 503-738-5561 seasidejournal.com Copyright © 2020 Seaside Signal. Nothing can be reprinted or copied without consent of the owners.

Letter policy
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@seasidejournal.com

Subscriptions
Annually: \$40.50 in county • \$58.00 in and out of county • e-Edition: only \$30.00
POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Seaside Signal, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103. Postage Paid at Seaside, OR, 97138 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright © 2020 by the Seaside Signal. No portion of this newspaper may be reproduced without written permission. All rights reserved.