

# Volunteers make world of difference at holiday time

## SKYBOX

SKYLER ARCHIBALD



Perhaps no quote better embodies the spirit of Thanksgiving in 2020 than this one from Ernest Hemingway: "Now is no time to think of what you do not have. Think of what you can do and with what."

One of the harshest realities beset by the pandemic is our inability to find ways to serve, give back and deepen relationships within our community. The challenge of gathering, working together and even staying positive has been insurmountable at times.

Such has been the case with many of my favorite activities and events and some of the work of the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District. As we were planning for our annual Community Thanksgiving Meal, we made the decision to shift the meal to a "to-go" service this year.

Typically, we have 150-200 diners in the Bob Chisholm Community Center and a host of volunteers to serve them. It's a wonderful experience and a highlight of this time of year for all that participate. We also get the opportunity to serve and give to those that often need it the most: the elderly, the lonely, the forgotten and overlooked in our society.

While an in-person meal experience would have been preferred, it wasn't possible this year and we adapted on the fly. Volunteers were activated, pumpkin pie and rolls were accumulated and the plan for delivery of the meal was organized.

As can be expected, there were a

number of complications that arose in the days and hours preceding the meal. No event seems to ever go perfectly and this was no exception.

Due to factors outside of our control, we cooked the turkey, mashed potatoes and stuffing for the meal this year, the first time that's ever happened.

I felt lucky to spend the evening before Thanksgiving preparing 100 pounds of mashed potatoes with an especially dedicated community volunteer.

On the day of, we worked through all the potential challenges including cooking enough box stuffing for the diners and figuring out how to serve hot gravy in a to-go container, while keeping it separate from the pumpkin pie. That was a challenge I hadn't anticipated.

Luckily we had many hands contributing, all wearing masks and doing our best to socially distance. This year we had volunteer representatives from Miss Clatsop County, the Seaside Chamber of Commerce and Ambassadors, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District and a horde of eager students from Seaside High School, through the Key Club and the Associated Student Body programs. What a treat it was to have that chance to interact through service with some of the best people in our community!

We served a bit more than 100 meals to those that drove or walked to the community center but there was plenty of food remaining. Then something remarkable happened. An informal meeting was held about how to get more food out, particularly to those that need it and action was taken.

We had a group of volunteers load their trunk with meals and take



ABOVE: Shelly Owen, Caitlin Hillman and Melissa Ousley provided dinners for families on Thanksgiving. BELOW: Alan Evans and Skyler Archibald don their turkey headgear.

them out with hopes of delivering to some of the people who are homeless in our community. They were successful. Other volunteers drove around and encouraged folks to come to the Center for a delicious meal. And everyone was awed when Seaside police officers and folks from the Seaside Fire Department came by, loading up with dozens of meals each with hopes of delivering them out safely to our community.

While the event was untraditional in its delivery and certainly not without some memorable challenges, it was such an amazing way to spend my Thanksgiving and gave me pause at how much I have to be grateful for.



# Bill of Rights remains vital document today

## GUEST COLUMN

KEN PAULSON

Dec. 15 marks a hidden holiday, as uncelebrated as it is unappreciated. It was 229 years ago today that the United States ratified the Bill of Rights, ensuring unprecedented freedom for the people of an emerging nation.

Bill of Rights Day has actually been a national holiday since Nov. 28, 1941 when President Franklin Delano Roosevelt designated Dec. 15 "Bill of Rights Day." Roosevelt had big plans, envisioning flag-flying and ceremonies nationwide. Roosevelt observed that Adolph Hitler feared "our freedom of speech, press and religion." Unfortunately, the attack on Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7 erased all the ambitious plans to mark the date. There's no time to celebrate freedom when you're fighting to preserve it.

That was almost 80 years ago, and America continues to take the Bill of Rights for granted. At just 500 words, it packs more than 20 rights into 10 amendments to the U.S. Constitution. Moreover, a promise of a Bill of Rights was the key to getting the Constitution ratified in the first place.

Given that there won't be cake or gifts or greeting cards, the best way to celebrate Bill of Rights Day is simply to reflect on its importance. And depending upon your personal priorities, some liberties may loom larger than others.

The National Rifle Association touts the Second Amendment as America's "first freedom." That's either bad math or poetic license, but you get the point. If our government took those freedoms away, you might have to wrest those back with "the right to bear arms."

Americans with a deep and abiding faith are grateful for the freedom to worship and be free of government interference with their faith.

Those who treasure personal privacy and the sanctity of their homes would be thankful for the Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable searches and seizures.

Those who have been accused of a crime would welcome the fair trial guarantees contained in the Sixth Amendment.

All of these liberties are critical to the kind of nation we are, founded on freedom and fairness.

I am particularly grateful, though, for the one-two punch of freedom of speech and freedom of the

press. Together they protect our free expression and safeguard the entire Bill of Rights.

The preamble to the Constitution set forth the goal of "a more perfect union." The phrase was both aspirational and wise. There was no way a fledgling country could get everything right, let alone draw up a blueprint that would guarantee the liberty of every American.

And of course, the Constitution didn't. Slavery was left intact and women were left without a voice or vote. As lofty as America's ideals were, there were still inequities and injustices to address.

It would take centuries of free speech and press to illuminate and address the needs of this imperfect union. Although critics of the contemporary press — which includes newspapers, radio stations, television stations, websites and every other form of informational media — like to use phrases like "fake news," the truth is that the newspapers of 1791 were far more biased than their modern descendants.

They were largely political organs full of outrage, exaggeration and lies. Yet it was in that very environment that the American people demanded a free press be a part of the Bill of Rights. They saw it as a

check on a new and powerful central government and a protection against abuse of the Constitution and yes, the new Bill of Rights. Journalists who do their jobs well today are fulfilling the mission set forth for them in 1791.

The most impressive thing about the Bill of Rights is that a document written 229 years ago remains so vital, vibrant and essential.

The aggressive journalists empowered by the First Amendment have gone on to monitor and irritate every president from John Adams to Donald Trump. The assembled citizens who spoke out against slavery and demanded universal suffrage have contemporary counterparts demanding racial justice today. Those 10 amendments have served us well.

Of course, when it comes to patriotic holidays, none rival Independence Day. But that holiday recalls a nation just starting out, committing in general terms to a nation founded on liberty.

On Dec. 15, 1791, the first generation of Americans fulfilled that promise. We could love our country, but also voice our concerns about its actions and priorities. That honest exchange of ideas — fueled by freedom of

press, speech and assembly — can make for dissonance and division in our politics. But it also makes for the strongest and most enduring nation on the face of the earth.

Ken Paulson is the director of the Free Speech Center at Middle Tennessee State University. Learn more about the First Amendment at [free-speech.center](http://free-speech.center).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tarred and feathered

Thank you Randy Frank and Tita Montero for your informative guest column articles.

As taxpayers, we have felt this pulling the wool over our eyes all along just disgraceful.

The abuse of power for

this town is not only unacceptable but downright robbery of our dollars and vote — an insult to our intelligence

Very serious business playing with our senior fixed income. How dare you Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District.

Carol Pankin-Hanisch  
Seaside

### Transparency

Purchase of the Broadway Middle School: why purchase the school when it has been deemed unsafe and there is a new school out of the tsunami zone? We all know that people are struggling to make ends meet and have little or no discretionary income.

We know there would be a tax increase for Seaside tax-

payers regardless of what Dave Ulbricht stated.

If you are concerned read all the information collected on the Facebook page named Transparency for SEPRD Taxpayers. Also, please sign the petition by searching for Transparency for SEPRD Taxpayers at [change.org](http://change.org).

Anne Thomson  
Seaside

# Seaside author debuts 'Call of the Columbia'

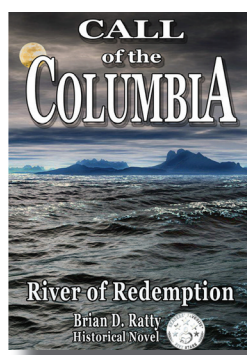
Seaside Signal

Dec. 20, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. each day.

"Call of the Columbia" is the story of three unlikely souls that set sail for their fortunes on the shores of the Columbia River in 1869. With the era of the cowboy reaching its zenith and the age of industrializa-

tion marching on, America found its way into her turbulent Gilded Age. This was a time of lost prospects and renewal for hopes of a brighter future.

The Artisan Market and book signing are open to the general public, with coronavirus restrictions.



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