

SignalViewpoints

For Rivera, dreams destroyed in an instant

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



Family of Gabriel Rivera

Gabriel Rivera, 20, was found dead in north Portland in the early morning of Dec. 2 of gunshot wounds. Rivera was the 48th homicide victim in Portland this year.

His family wants to make sure he is more than just another unsolved homicide.

“Even though Gabe died as a young man, he will always be a child in my eyes,” his cousin Nourah AlJaber said.

Rivera lived in Seaside in his teens and attended Seaside High School where he made many friends, his grandmother, Rochelle Paputsis, said.

Rivera moved to Portland in mid-October with his fiancée, Ashlee Ruppert, to be closer to their families.

“We thought coming home would be good for him,” Paputsis said. “He was coming home to his family. We didn’t expect this at all.”

Rivera worked 10-hour shifts as a forklift driver as well as doing deliveries for Door Dash.

“He had dreams and plans, and set to work on building a good life and future,” his grandmother said. “He wanted babies. He said, ‘I don’t want just one baby, I want lots of babies.’”

Rivera left the Pier Park area on foot in the early morning hours of Dec. 2 and was discovered near North Columbia Boulevard and Bank Street, not more than a mile from his last known location.

“My daughter called me a little bit earlier and asked if Gabe had made it,” Paputsis said. “I said no.”

The first report of the homicide came at 7 a.m. on local TV news.

Officers found a man’s body while con-

ducting a welfare check not far from Paputsis’ home.

The family spent hours of uncertainty before confirming Rivera’s identity at the city morgue.

Rivera lived with a family friend in Seaside as a teenager while attending school. He enrolled in December 2014 and transferred in 2016.

He liked to mountain bike, skateboard and had a love of animals and nature.

“Seaside provided the comfort of a small and safe community,” Paputsis said.

Rivera was supposed to visit his father in Mexico for the Christmas holiday, Paputsis said.

His father was “really excited, and he (Rivera) was really excited about going there,” she said. “Then this happened, so his father requested that we send his body to Mexico where he would be buried nearby.”

Family members started a fundraiser on GoFundMe to help with the cost of sending the body to Mexico and burial costs, including embalming, transportation to the city morgue, the service and casket.

Since Rivera was born in the United States, the funeral director sent a petition to the Mexican Embassy seeking repatriation for the burial. The family is awaiting response.

As a “Plan B,” Paputsis said, a family friend donated a plot locally in case he is unable to be buried in Mexico.

The funeral, which was private, was held Dec. 19.

The Portland Police Bureau’s last update on the Rivera case was posted Dec. 3.

“We have nothing further to release at this time,” a spokesman said.

The family still seeks answers for the motive and suspect.

“We just don’t know,” Paputsis said. “We have no idea. He was alone. It was dark. He was a target, that’s what I’m thinking. I’ve seen so many shootings here.”

Guadalupe fur seal pup found abandoned on the beach

SEASIDE AQUARIUM

WENDI AGALZOFF



Seaside Aquarium got a call at 9 a.m. last Saturday morning about an abandoned seal pup stranded along the shore in Cannon Beach.

The pup ended up being a Guadalupe fur seal, a threatened species of pinniped with an estimated population of only 34,000. The seal was thin, dehydrated and a bit out of its normal range.

After coordinating with National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration and SR3, a rehab facility in Des Moines, Washington, Seaside Aquarium staff successfully recovered and helped bring the seal to treatment.

Guadalupe fur seals are a rare sight to see on the Oregon Coast. The species is native to the Pacific coastal waters of northern Mexico and southern California.

However, young fur seals can travel long distances follow-

ing warm off-shore currents and become cold-shocked by northern ocean temperatures along Oregon and Washington coastlines.

Endemic to Guadalupe Island off the west coast of Mexico’s Baja Peninsula, the threatened species of Guadalupe fur seal (*Arctocephalus townsendi*) has an estimated population of only 34,000 individuals. Throughout the 1800s the species was hunted to near extinction for their thick layer of fine fur. Since the 1950s the species has been protected by United States and Mexico law and is protected under the Endangered Species Act and Marine Mammal Protection Act.

Guadalupe fur seals are considered a species of sea-lion, characterized by their long front flippers and ear flaps. The “eared seal” is not social while at sea and typically does not migrate or travel far from the breeding waters of Guadalupe Island. However, during seasonal changes, young pups follow warmer currents and can become stranded in the cold waters off the Oregon Coast.

Unlike our local pinnipeds

(sea lions and seals) the fur seal lacks a layer of blubber to regulate body temperature in colder waters. Once sluggish and cold, these warm-water pinnipeds are known to become tangled in rope and debris.

Thankfully the local Marine Mammal Stranding Network is actively working with Guadalupe fur seal experts to help recover wayward fur seals that are found on our coastline.

Since 1995 Seaside Aquarium has spearheaded the Southern Washington Northern Oregon Marine Mammal Stranding Network, a collaboration of experts and volunteers to respond to stranded sea mammals along the southern Washington and northern Oregon Coast. Through this program, locally stranded Guadalupe fur seals are able to be recovered and transported to a rehabilitation center in southern California.

According to the Marine Mammal Center, release back to the wild is the ultimate goal for every animal.

To be released, animals must pass final examinations, proving



Tiffany Boothe

Once stable the Guadalupe fur seal will be transferred to a rehab facility in California and if all goes well eventually released.

they are able to successfully forage for fish.

All animals receive a flipper tag; some that are released may receive satellite or radio tags so their progress can be tracked.

As for the fur seal found in Cannon Beach last week, after a brief nap at the Seaside Aquarium, the

seal was given fluids and transferred. Once stable, the seal will be transferred to a rehabilitation facility in California, and if all goes well, eventually released.

For more information about the Marine Mammal Stranding Network please call the Seaside Aquarium 503-738-6211.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Where’s the business plan?

Serving on a government board is very difficult. The knowledge required is immense plus the time to research and analyze all sides of an issue. The role may also lead to sleepless nights trying to decide what is best for all.

I asked each of you several months ago to stop and research the proposal to purchase Broadway Middle School thoroughly and get the public (taxpayers) involved but it appears you are proceeding ahead without doing this.

Where is Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District’s business plan for the property and district,

the strategic plan (being worked on now), and is this something your bosses (taxpayers) want? Maybe they do or would after they have all the facts.

Over the past few months, more information has been uncovered. It seems many discussions have been held behind closed doors and we, taxpayers, would appreciate having the information. Ideas have been floated that maybe your employees haven’t thought of, i.e., asking the school district to split the property. Private individuals, who wish to use the gyms for their private financial gain, could purchase them. The school and SEPRD could rent the space as needed and the prop-

erty would be back on the tax rolls. Also, removal by a private developer of the old school and new construction for commercial use, could be another opportunity.

Please listen and talk to us. We all wish what is best for our community so let’s work together.

Margene Ridout
Former SEPRD board member

Vacation rentals hurt our quality of life

In response to a letter to the editor from members of the Seaside Vacation Rental Association.

In their letter one statement was “More specifi-

cally, we were never successful in getting data from you supporting the primary concerns you all expressed of significant negative citizen complaints.”

I do not live in Seaside, I live in Gearhart and believe me, neighbors here do not like vacation rentals.

Vacation rental owners may contribute financially to the city or county, but you are not the only source of revenue. So are permanent homeowners. Permanent homeowners who live here full time are a lot more invested in their community than temporary vacation home renters and owners that live elsewhere.

Vacation renters do not care, they may not ever stay here again. I person-

ally have three vacation rentals directly behind my home and they are a constant nightmare.

Every night we must endure bright outdoor flood lights shining at our house. Why do vacation home owners think they must install bright lights on the outside of their houses? Do they not understand that surrounding neighbors must put up with those bright lights that renters never bother to turn off?

We are unable to sit out and enjoy our back patio in the evening because of the lights, and that is only a small part of what we endure. There is loud music, parties out on the vacation rental decks that face us and even fireworks

being shot off. These are not little sparklers but commercial type fireworks. And not just on the Fourth of July, but anytime a renter happens to bring them.

There is no way these vacation homeowners are present to address these problems and the renters know that so they don’t care. They are only here for their own enjoyment and it’s not their neighborhood.

And I can assure the Seaside Vacation Rental Association my neighbors don’t like your rental houses either, but we feel like we are powerless and our only option is to sell our home and move.

Sharon Robinson Gearhart

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

MONDAY, Dec. 28

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5 p.m.,

special meeting, sunsetempire.com.

TUESDAY, Dec. 29

Gearhart City Council, 6 p.m., work session, 670 Pacific Way.

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.

SEASIDE Signal

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