



Parker leads Seaside cross-country, choir

By GARY HENLEY
Seaside Signal

If Kimber Parker's life was an album, the title track would be something like "Seeking Seaside."

It's the perfect place, right now, for Parker and her husband, Jesse. The Parkers moved to Seaside in 2017, when she landed a job as choir teacher at the high school.

Music has been a big part of Parker's life, along with running. And it's all come together in Seaside, where Parker is also the new cross-country coach for the Seagulls.

Kimber Parker, Seaside High School's choir teacher, is also their new co-coach in cross-country.

Running and music, music and running. Parker grew up with both, and now — just four years out of college — she is teaching teenagers both subjects. Her dream jobs come true.

"I come from a running family," she said. "I've been running since I was old enough to walk."

She ran for coach Billy Snow at Sweet Home High School, just east of Corvallis, where the family moved from Los Angeles when Parker was 12.

As an athlete at Sweet Home, Parker said, "One of my fondest memories was running the 3-Course Challenge," the annual event at Camp Rilea, hosted by the Gulls. "I always associated Seaside with a really fun race."

Parker and co-coach Brett Duer — who built a strong cross-country program at Neah-Kah-Nie — took over the coaching duties in Seaside after Frank Januik stepped down last spring.



Kimber Parker in a 2016 Oregon State University production of "Kiss Me, Kate."

The Gulls have a small team this season — just seven runners — but it's a good year to break in a new coach and a new school, and possibly a new course.

"We're working out at the new campus, which is really awesome," Parker said. "There's some really nice hills here, so we're getting a lot of hill workouts. There's still a lot of construction going on, so we haven't taken full advantage of the trails. Hopefully, we'll get to this fall. We'd like to eventually have a 5K course up there."

That's the outside part of the new campus.

Inside, for Parker, it's

time for music — which also runs in the family.

"My dad is an incredible pianist — he can pick up any instrument," Parker said. "I learned to play the piano early, and started singing in a choir. My first year in choir was the seventh grade. I decided then that I wanted to be a choir teacher."

Along the way, Parker sang at Oregon State University with Bella Voce in chamber choir. Parker taught men's choir for a term and was in opera and musical theater. She is active in music at her church.

While Parker was also

working on her athletic career as a triathlete at Oregon State, she was well on her way down the music road.

Looking for work after graduating, a job interview for choir teacher brought Parker to Seaside.

"My husband and I saw that Seaside had a job opening," she said. "We thought, 'Seaside's fun, let's just go for the interview and spend the day.' (Principal) Jeff Roberts offered me the job the next day. We thought about it, and decided it was the best move for us. Jeff was ultra helpful. He said he really wanted us as part of their school community."



Kimber Parker

Kimber Parker, Seaside High School's choir teacher, is also their new co-coach in cross-country.

His coming to me and asking what we needed was so reassuring."

And now Parker teaches choir for both Seaside middle and high school students.

The choir numbers at the high school are smaller this year — 40 students, down from 65 — most likely because of more online schooling.

"We go back for in-person on March 16, but we won't be using our brand new choir room," Parker said, "so we'll be singing in the auxiliary gym, which has ample spacing between singers," along with good acoustics.

Meanwhile, Parker's husband works at the middle school, is head life-guard for Cannon Beach in the summer and volunteers with the Cannon Beach fire department.

Both love the outdoors,

and Parker will love it even more as the Gulls get deeper into the cross-country and track seasons.

The view from the new track is "gorgeous," Parker said. "If you run counter-clockwise around the track, it's the most beautiful curve, and it feels like you're running straight off a cliff towards the ocean. It's a million-dollar view up here."

The rest of her family remains in the Willamette Valley.

"My parents (Scott and Miriam Swanson) bought a small weekly newspaper in Sweet Home," said Parker, explaining the reason for the move from Los Angeles to Oregon. "My dad was a journalism professor, and now runs two weekly newspapers in the Willamette Valley. I grew up in a newspaper office."

Rzewnicki runs in Pac-12 championship

NEIL BRANSON
For Seaside Signal

Bradley Rzewnicki became the first runner from Seaside High School to compete in the Pac-12 cross-country championships, held last Friday on a blustery day at Chambers Creek Park, south of Seattle, for the COVID-delayed championship event.

Rzewnicki was the individual state 4A cross-country champion in 2015, leading Seaside to the team title. Rzewnicki competed for Gonzaga University for

three years.

After three years he decided it was time for a change. Though he enjoyed his team at Gonzaga, cold winters made for challenging training. After due consideration, he entered his name in the transfer portal and went looking for another university.

Several schools wanted Rzewnicki to join their squads, most notably the University of Nebraska, where he would be jumping from the icebox to the freezer, and the University of Arizona. He chose the warmth.

At Arizona, Rzewnicki encountered what he described as "an insane semester trying to navigate college athletics in this time (COVID)" and "my coaches are now gone," with the head coach retiring and the assistant not returning.

The plus side, five-time Olympian Bernard Lagat stepped in as the interim coach. After an easy 5K time trial of 15 minutes and 35 seconds Rzewnicki said, "I haven't been this excited about running in quite some time."

Following the time trial,

Rzewnicki placed third for Arizona at the Dave Murray Invitational, running the challenging 8K course in 25:48.7.

The Pac-12 had three teams ranked in the top nine nationally (Stanford, Washington, Colorado) so there was no doubt the race was going to be fast as teams fought for the conference title and the opportunity to compete in the National Championships on March 15 in Oklahoma.

Rzewnicki got out decently, yet could not hold a strong pace. He finished 66th in 26:06.

Warrenton defeats Seaside in volleyball

Seaside Signal

Warrenton outlasted Seaside in a lengthy non-league volleyball match last Saturday at Warrenton, 23-25, 25-19, 25-20, 19-25, 15-8.

The Warriors held a 2-to-1 lead in sets before the Gulls won Game 4 to force a fifth set.

After losses to Seaside every year since 2016, Warrenton won Game 5, 15-8, improving to 2-0 in the first of seven home matches in

the shortened season.

In their first victory over the Gulls since 2015, Warrenton's Avyree Miethé pounded out 16 kills to go with 29 digs and five saves.

Teammate Mia McFadden added nine kills and four ace serves to lead the offense while Brenna Bemus had a team-high five of Warrenton's 13 aces.

Jaime Annat had 18 assists and Bemus finished with 10 assists and nine digs.

The Gulls were set to play Thursday at Banks.



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