

# Ghost Conference taps into paranormal

**SEEN FROM SEASIDE**

R.J. MARX



Rocky Smith of the Oregon Ghost Conference.

Rocky Smith, organizer of the Oregon Ghost Conference, presented the first conference in his hometown, Oregon City, in 2012. In 2016, he brought the conference to the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, with exhibits, psychics, authors and tours of haunted Seaside. This year's conference was held last week, with Zoom events and socially-distanced walking tours in Seaside and Astoria. The Signal spoke with Smith at the convention center about the conference.

**Q: In 2020, you canceled the Oregon Ghost Conference at the last minute.**

**Smith:** We had thousands and thousands of dollars of tickets and events. You don't want to take the risk that someone got sick at the ghost conference. It's not worth it. We were two weeks before the event. That's when everything was canceled. It's just horrible to spend a year working on an event and then it all just goes.

**Q: How did you plan this year's conference?**

**Smith:** I was reluctant to put months and months of planning into another event if I didn't know what was going to happen. So I waited, and right around January, everyone was still in really high risk.

**Q: Does Zoom technology encourage communication with spirits?**

**Smith:** I did a virtual seance with (mystic and conference presenter) Yitzhak Schlomi. I felt like I met a spirit connected

with Oregon City's past. I can't really explain it.

**Q: How do you open yourself to see or experience ghosts?**

**Smith:** I think people don't take into

consideration their gut feeling. People just disregard that a lot. People need to be aware of what happens when they walk from one room to another. Does the temperature change? Does the feeling change? Not that that could all be related to the paranormal, but it starts getting you in tune with where you are going. There are some rooms that I've walked into that it just hit you so hard: 'Oh my gosh, what happened in there?' You just know something was wrong.

**Q: Who has psychic or paranormal abilities?**

**Smith:** I think everyone does. But I think people have a choice to how much they want to open themselves up to it.

**Q: Are you on call as a ghostbuster?**

**Smith:** I don't like the idea of doing paranormal investigations as a job. That's hours and hours and hours of watching video tapes, hanging out at a place, and then you write a report. I don't want to write a report. I have an interest in history and people ask me to check things out. If someone says, 'Hey, come check out our house, we want to know if there's something going on here,' I can do that. I have enough friends who not only know if something is here, but can say 'this is who they are.'

**Q: What are your plans for next year's conference?**

**Smith:** Yesterday we signed a contract (with the convention center) for the next five years through 2025. So we're kind of invested in staying in Seaside. We miss being here. Next year's dates are March 25, 26 and 27, 2022.

# A focus on children's play equipment and play space

**GUEST COLUMN**  
PAULINA COCKRUM



Last month I received a letter from Berkley Sturgell, a 9-year-old Gearhart Resident, about the lack of play equipment for kids in Gearhart now that the play structures have

been moved to Pacific Ridge Elementary. She was heartfelt in her request for some playground equipment for the children of Gearhart. Her letter got me thinking, why not purchase some equipment now, then wait until the parks plan is completed to acquire any other equipment or structures.

After several conversations with both the Master Parks Plan Subcom-

mittee and the City Council, I am proposing a temporary new playground be established at Trail's End (Centennial Park) at the town center to serve Gearhart kids and families.

While the master parks plan is under development, this location will be considered temporary while the committee looks for alternatives or deems this location the perfect place for a play center permanently.

I am proposing a 50-50 split on cost sharing with tax-deductible donations from residents and taxpayer dollars from the city. My goal is to raise \$50,000 to fund the equipment and wood chips for the area. A fund has been established at Gearhart City Hall (make check out to City of Gearhart-play equipment fund). We have already received pledges for more than \$5,000.

Donations may be placed in the water bill slot at City Hall or mailed to the city at P.O. Box 2510, Gearhart, OR, 97138.

I know the pandemic has caused a lot of hardships, but if you can please donate now, we will have some play equipment in place hopefully by summer.

*Paulina Cockrum is mayor of Gearhart.*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**Michael Hinton seeks your vote**

My name is Michael Hinton and I'm a candidate for the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District board of directors Position 3.

I'm asking for reelection with this fine group of individuals; board president Katharine Parker, Celeste Bodner, Erika Hamer Marshall and Su Coddington. The board is proud of our decision as we move to the next phase of planning for the abandoned Broadway Middle School, now Sunset Recreation Center. A request for proposals has been released to guide our vision which began in 2014 with community charrettes.

The RFP is to evaluate the highest and best use and has been issued as we enter a new period of public engagement toward three priorities:

- 1: Increase desperately needed preschool, child

care and after-school activities.

2. Expand indoor recreation for all citizens.

3. Contribute to local economy with sports tourism strategy.

The immediate need is clear. Entering into the COVID-19 emergency child care programs were established to expand and consolidate stressed kinder care and preschool gatherings into smaller cohorts ensuring safety for the children and staff. All of challenges for the district board falsely claim many things.

Staff has spent many weeks now cleaning and mitigating identifiable issues. Both gyms are being rented and utilized by the COVID-19-emerging Pacific Basketball League. The school is planning to use our locker rooms. Please stick with us. Reject the irresponsible challengers who "seek to throw out the baby with the bath water!"

**Michael Hinton**  
Seaside

**District ignored will of taxpayers**

The board of directors of Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, has decided to move young, vulnerable children entrusted to their care, to what they call Sunset Recreation Center. This is the very same asbestos-contaminated, black mold-infested Broadway Middle School that the board purchased without taxpayer approval. The only thing that's really changed is a small, sad banner at the front of the building claiming that it's now a recreation center.

Is this the best that we can expect from this board of directors? They are placing the young children of this community in a building that has been professionally identified as having asbestos, black mold and lead paint among other problems. They are actually moving the children out of a clean and safe building in favor of Broadway Middle School. Is this what you would want

done with your children? Are you going to allow this outrage to continue?

The board of directors has placed you \$2.5 million further in debt without your consent. You own a building that will not be safe and usable unless you spend, in my estimate, at least twenty million dollars more. We can't know for sure, as the board didn't do the part of due diligence where you figure out what it will cost to rectify all deficiencies before making a purchase decision. They did a fine job of identifying the many faults and then completely ignored them and made the purchase.

So, where do we go from here? I believe that the people of Seaside need a new board of directors that will not only listen to the taxpayers, but will also make it easier for them to participate and contribute to the operation of the district. This will begin with having board meetings at an hour that an average citizen can participate. Five-fifteen is the per-

fect hour to hold a board meeting if you want to prevent citizen participation. This is the board that you have now.

I am a candidate for the board of directors of SEPRD. I oppose Celeste Bodner. I am working with the following people as I am concerned about how SEPRD is being run. I support their candidacy for the SEPRD board as they support mine. They are; Al Hernandez, Jackie Evans, Patrick Duhacheck and Stephen Morrison. Please vote for us in the May 18 election. The future of SEPRD is in the balance.

**John Huismann**  
Seaside

**Use tariffs to improve our air**

Joe Goffman, President Biden's assistant administrator of the Environmental Protection Administration's Office of Air and Radiation is attempting to sneak around Congress a further

tightening of carbon monoxide standards by tightening ozone standards.

Congress has been deliberately passing legislation since 1992 strengthening clean air rules.

Between 1980 and 2019, Co2 emissions dropped 75% with an 85% improvement in air quality according to the EPA's own data.

Sneaking around Congress isn't the way to do this.

Try this instead: Impose a tariff on all goods produced in countries not meeting American EPA standards. This will reduce Co2 plus sulfur dioxide, arsenic, mercury, and other poisoning particulates emitted from dirty pacific rim coal.

Domestic companies struggle to compete with production in India, China, Vietnam, and others largely because they abuse the environment. If we bring production back to America, the EPA can monitor it.

The whole world wins.  
**Wayne Mayo Scappoose**

NEWS NOTES

**Trail ambassador volunteers needed**

This spring, volunteers who possess knowledge of Gorge, Mount Hood and North Coast trails are needed to serve as trail ambassadors.

Volunteer trail ambassadors hike trails on weekends during peak season; engage with the public to answer

hiking and recreation-related questions; promote responsible hiker ethics; and direct people to useful resources.

Taking an online training is required before signing up to volunteer; those who complete 24 hours of volunteer service earn a Northwest Forest Pass.

For details, and how to sign up, go to trail-

keepersoforegon.org/trailambassadors.

**Bonamici announces art competition**

U.S. Rep Suzanne Bonamici, an Oregon Democrat who represents the North Coast, is accepting submissions for the 2021

Congressional Art Competition, which is open to any student in grades 9 through 12 who lives in or attends school in Oregon's 1st Congressional District, which includes Washington, Yamhill, Clatsop and Columbia counties and part of Multnomah County.

Local artists will select the winning student artist, whose artwork will be dis-

played in the U.S. Capitol building for a year. All students who participate in the competition will be invited to a virtual reception with Bonamici, during which time the winner will be announced and all submissions will be shown.

The deadline to submit art is April 30. Entries can be mailed to U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici,

12725 S.W. Millikan Way, Suite 220, Beaverton, OR., 97005.

Staff will be available to receive art outside the front entrance to the building from 8 to 11 a.m. April 28 and from 2 to 5 p.m. April 30.

For information, rules and guidelines and how to participate, go to bit.ly/SB\_Art.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 6**

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 7**

**Gearhart City Council**, 6 p.m., work session, cityof-gearhart.com.

**MONDAY, APRIL 12**

**Seaside City Council**, 7 p.m.,

cityofseaside.us.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 20**

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

**Gearhart Small Business**

**Committee**, 6 p.m., cityof-gearhart.com.

**WEDNESDAY, APRIL 21**

**Gearhart Parks Master Plan Citizens Advisory Committee**, 5:30 p.m., work session,

cityofgearhart.com.

**MONDAY, APRIL 26**

**Seaside City Council**, 7 p.m., cityofseaside.us.

**TUESDAY, APRIL 27**

**Sunset Empire Park and**

**Recreation District Board of Directors**, 5:15 p.m., 1225 Avenue A.

**TUESDAY, MAY 4**

**Seaside Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.



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**Seaside Signal**

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**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: \$51.00, monthly autopay is \$4.25 e-Edition only: \$4 a month

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