

SignalViewpoints

‘They’re taking people’s dignity away from them’

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



After a city crackdown on Necanicum Drive near 12th Avenue earlier this year, residents in Seaside say that people living in RVs have moved across the street to Goodman Park.

The park’s popularity as a place to shelter grew after overnight street parking prohibitions and increased ticketing. Many nearby residents are incensed. They say the camp is illegal and endangers the area’s health, safety and property values.

Residents of the park say it is their right. The Signal spoke with D.C. Clouds, who lives in the lot and stepped forward to discuss her experience as a homeless person. We met at the Seaside Lodge and International Hostel on North Holladay Drive.

Q: How did you step up to become a voice of the streets?

A: I’m not trying to be, you know, “that guy,” but I just got tired of us not having somebody to represent us from the level of the streets. So I said enough, I’ll do it. The lack of representation from our level is fear. Fear for our safety, fear for, you know, where we might exist. This overwhelming fear between the community themselves and the police. There’s so many different levels that you have to be watching out for that it makes it just overwhelming. For somebody like myself, who does not have any addictions. I’m getting shoved in places that are filled with addicts. And it just becomes this state of misery. They’re taking people’s dignity away from them.

Q: Where are you from?

A: Originally Maryland.

Q: How old are you?

A: 36.

Q: What do you do?

A: I’m a groundskeeper here (Seaside hostel). I’ve worked with the street community. I’ve got a job I don’t get paid for I mean, I work my tail off.

Q: Do you hear success stories from others?

A: Sir, I used to be a drug dealer and now I volunteer in your community. I am the success story. Yeah. Straight out with it. We take care of ourselves out here, we really do. We are a street community. We are a community with or without the walls, with or without the doorknobs. We are a

community.

Q: Do you divide the people on the street that you can help and the ones that you can’t?

A: It’s not a division. You can help everybody to ascend.

Q: You just give them the services that they need in each particular instance is what you’re saying.

A: I sharpen the tools they already have. I dust off the stuff that they already know, but has just been piled upon with people’s opinions and perspectives of what the homeless community is. I’m not the only one out here with intelligence. I’m not the only one out here with the business license or the capability to come and speak to you or reach out to you.

Q: I first met you at one of the city’s homeless forums at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center.

A: That was a joke. This is the result of that. This is the result of draggin’ feet ... This is the result of “we’ll get to it next time.” So where do we go? What’s the other option here? Oh, there isn’t one. It’s survive as you can. A lot of people think that if somebody yells at us that we can just pack up our lives and move away. If you have a normal setting, yeah, that’s normal. But when your life is in this, you got to think about the money for the gas, finding somebody with the jumper box if you don’t have one. All these little things are time-consuming.

Q: When did you get here?

A: I landed back in town on June 27. I arrived in town with three outfits in my book bag, and a hope and a prayer that I can keep doing what I do. I slept on Seaside Museum’s property. And to the point I came down to this lot. I then obtained a car. So now I’m living in a car and then went from there onto that trailer.

Q: How did you end up in the lot on 11th Street?

A: The community kept calling us ugly and undignified and how horrible critters we have to be to be parked along the lovely Necanicum like that, because we’re blocking their million dollar river view, right? Not worried about the pollution in the trash that comes from the crabbing community and the tourist community here but the few folks that are just simply trying to be in a safe existence. They’re worried about the prettiness of it. I was the first person living in that gravel lot. I parked in that gravel lot with my book bag, my car and my trailer. I said, “You’re not going to shuffle me any longer.” I am done with you shuffling me. I am done with losing jobs, vehicles oppor-



R.J. Marx

Sharon Johnson, of Love on the Streets, and D.C. Clouds. They seek greater options for the homeless.

tunities, because every time I turn around, I can’t just go simply to work. I have to worry about you orange sticker-ing in my car or one of your city workers deciding to tell me that they’re gonna remove the vehicle themselves, because they don’t like it. I’m not here for what you like, I’m here to be a productive member of your society. And in the same sense being refused to allow to do that simple thing. There was no government officials really trying to help just wanting to talk a lot. This wasn’t CCA (Clatsop Community Action), CBH (Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare) or the homeless liaison people. I said, I’m not moving no more.

Q: You met with Police Chief Dave Ham about use of this lot?

A: I went across the chief’s mind with the whole idea, to stop ticketing us on Necanicum. “If you want this to look prettier, meet me in the middle. You stop the tickets, I’ll make it look prettier.” He stopped the tickets. It looks prettier. We’re a clean camp. We have people that have addictions, we have people who have disabilities. We have people that know where they’re wanting to go. We have people that don’t know what the hell they’re going. But

in the day, we co-exist. There are very minimal police calls to that lot. We’re trying to take away that stereotypical: “Oh, you must have done something horrible in life to be outside.”

Q: Do you have a message for the community at large?

A: I’ll be damned if I watch other people from the street community be bullied by your ignorance. Is it your own personal fear of how close you are to becoming homeless yourself that makes you act so negative? Not one person on the Necanicum is asking for a free ride. Before you go making assumptions about what exactly is happening please come talk to me, please. A little bit about this camp — it’s proof the street community wants to help themselves. That lot is an example of how multiple lifestyles and lifestyle choices can live together and coexist. I am asking for safety and basic human rights. Where is our humanity? And don’t dare say anything about importing homeless people. Those folks on that lot is y’all locals.

Q: How do you bridge the gap between the campers and the neighbors?

A: By doing what we’re doing right here.

‘WE ARE A COMMUNITY WITH OR WITHOUT THE WALLS, WITH OR WITHOUT THE DOORKNOBS!’

D.C. Clouds

NEWS NOTES

Northwest Piano Trio concert in Cannon Beach

Northwest Piano Trio returns to Cannon Beach to perform a free, all-classical concert, 3 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 10, at Cannon Beach Community Church, 132 E. Washington St. in Cannon Beach.

The concert, “A Family Affair” features music of siblings, Felix Mendelssohn and Fanny Mendelssohn. There’ll also be a little Beethoven in the mix. While most people are familiar with the music of Felix, the NW Piano Trio is excited to feature Fanny’s music, too! The Northwest Piano Trio includes Esther Shim on violin, Hannah Hillebrand on cello, and Susan McDaniel playing the 7-foot Steinway grand piano at Cannon Beach Community Church.

The Northwest Piano Trio, founded in 2014, is based in Portland, Oregon. Concert attendees are asked to wear masks. The concert is free and open to the public.

Preparedness event at convention center

Adults and teenagers are invited to join geologist Tom Horning for “Preparing for Tsunamis: How Soon and How Big?” on Oct. 12 at 7 p.m. in the Seaside Civic and Convention Center’s Riverside Room.

Horning talks about the geology of the Cascadia Subduction Zone, earthquakes and tsunamis



Seaside AAUW

Maureen Casterline and Carol Brenneman, co-presidents of Seaside AAUW Scholarship Foundation, receive checks from Alisa Dunlap, regional manager of Pacific Power Foundation.

Scholarship donation

Maureen Casterline and Carol Brenneman, co-presidents of Seaside AAUW Scholarship Foundation, received checks from Alisa Dunlap, regional manager of Pacific Power Foundation for \$2,000 for first generation women attending college and \$4,000 for women returning to school after an absence of at least five years.

This contribution is the largest donation our local Seaside AAUW Scholarship Foundation has ever received and will enable them to provide even more scholarships and larger awards to local women and girls.

Applications for returning students after an absence are being taken now; application forms at seaside-or.aauw.net or call 503-717-2353.

and how our community can be better “tsunami-prepared.” This free event is hosted by the Seaside Community Emergency Response Team.

Horning has a master’s degree in geology from Oregon

State University. After a varied career as an exploration geologist, he returned to Seaside in 1994 and became a natural hazards and geotechnical consultant doing business as Horning Geosciences. A Seaside native, he

experienced the 1964 tsunami as a 10-year-old and is now active in trying to save lives in the tsunami zones in and around Seaside.

There will be maps and materials to take home as well as an example of an easy-to-assemble grab-and-go bag. Additionally, the STARS Amateur Ham Radio Club will be on hand to display ham radio capabilities. CERT believes it is important to know the risks, learn what to expect and develop an emergency action strategy to plan ahead for disasters. The public is encouraged to come and join the discussion and new CERT members are always welcome. A Q&A will follow the presentation. Distancing and masking guidelines will be observed.

This event is intended for ages 15 and up. The Seaside Civic and Convention center is located at 415 First Ave.

Les Schwab, FFA team up for food drive

Since 2013 Les Schwab Tire Centers of Oregon has partnered with Oregon FFA in a Drive Away Hunger Initiative to help raise as much food and awareness as possible. The initiative will take place the entire month of October. Drop non-perishable food donations at any Oregon Les Schwab Tire Center, Wilco, or Grange Co-op store through Oct. 31.

The Oregon FFA is part of the National FFA Organization, formerly known as the Future Farmers of America.

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

TUESDAY, OCT. 5

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.

Seaside Library Board of Directors, 4:30 p.m., 1131 Broadway St.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 6

Seaside Improvement Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

Gearhart City Council, 7 p.m., cityofgearhart.com.

THURSDAY, OCT. 7

Seaside Parks Advisory Committee, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

MONDAY, OCT. 11

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

TUESDAY, OCT. 12

Gearhart City Council, special meeting, contractor hours, 6 p.m., cityofgearhart.com.

THURSDAY, OCT. 14

Seaside Civic and Convention Center Commission, 5 p.m., 415 First Ave.

TUESDAY, OCT. 19

Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., work session, 989 Broadway.

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

WEDNESDAY, OCT. 20

Seaside Tourism Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., 989 Broadway.

MONDAY, OCT. 25

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

TUESDAY, OCT. 26

Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center.

TUESDAY, NOV. 2

Seaside Community Center Commission, 10 a.m., 1225 Avenue A.



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