

Riding coast to coast to address housing need



SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX

Riders from around the nation gathered in Seaside Saturday for the kick-off of a cross-country cycling journey. The event, sponsored by the Atlanta, Georgia, based Fuller Center, aims to raise money and awareness for the Fuller Center for Housing's aim to build and improve housing for those in need.

Riders, who will stay overnight at churches, expect to arrive in Portland, Maine on July 31 — 10 weeks from their departure.

Accompanied by a van, cyclists can take breaks or get transport, depending on road conditions or if they have an issue with their bike or anything like that, Becky Mitchell, the group's photographer and social media intern said. "They're riding almost every single mile as much as they can," she said. "That's the goal, ultimately, to be able to do as much as they're able."

The riders, from around the country, gathered May 20 at the Our Lady of Victory Church in Seaside.

Their first stop was Astoria, before heading onto the open road on Monday for a 60-mile trek into Washington.

Along their journey they will work with local builders or communities to pitch in for construction or repairs. "We call them 'build days,'" Mitchell said.

Neil Mullikin, the group leader, has made the cross-country ride before, from east to west, solo. This will be his first trip eastward.

"Not only are we going to have some gorgeous destinations — East Glacier, Niagara Falls," he said. "We're also going to see families and have the opportunity to serve families. It always starts off about the ride for most people, and it ends up being about the people that we meet."



Bicyclists prepared for their cross-country trip, leaving from Our Lady of Victory Church in Seaside.

R.J. Marx

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Neil Mullikin, the group leader

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Step forward

While I am disappointed with the outcome of the fire station bond measure, I am encouraged by the large number of residents who voted no, and yet expressed strong admiration and gratitude for our volunteer firemen and women and acknowledged the obvious need to replace our present 60-year-old structure. I appeal to this specific group of residents to step forward and lead the project to achieve the replacement of our outdated facility.

I agree with Teddy Roosevelt who famously said that "it is not the critic who counts, but rather the doer of deeds." I want to acknowledge and thank those many residents who have devoted countless hours with the goal of meeting a critical need of our community which scores of city leaders have been promoting since 2006. The cost of delay has been enormous.

**Gary Gillam
Gearhart**

Support rainforest conservation plan

I've lived on the North Coast for 33 years. As the owner of NW Women's Surf Camps and Retreats, I have the pleasure of teaching people to catch their first wave along the Oregon Coast, looking from the ocean onto the beauty of our beaches and forests.

As a business owner, I understand that it is the health and beauty of the forests, rivers, estuaries, ocean, and wildlife that draws people here to spend their income and time in our restaurants, retail shops, hotels and on the water. That's why I support a strong conservation plan for the Tillamook Rainforest.

The Tillamook Rainforest stretches across more than 500,000 acres of state public forest lands between the North Coast and Portland. It supports wildlife, sequesters carbon, filters water for 500,000 Oregonians, and provides recreation like hiking, mountain biking, summer swimming, mushroom gathering, hunting, and fishing. These activities, the cool moist air, and the sense of beauty people experi-

ence beneath the forest canopy are not just unique experiences for many, but a unique economic asset.

The Western Oregon State Forests Habitat Conservation Plan would protect habitat for 17 threatened and endangered species on the North Coast like the coho salmon, marbled murrelet, and slender salamander. The plan would also provide assurances for timber production outside dedicated conservation areas. This plan is fair and balanced.

We have the opportunity to weigh in on a Tillamook conservation plan by June 1, and I encourage you to do so today at for-estlegacy.org.

**Lexie Hallahan
Seaside**

Slow down

Sorry to see the Gearhart firehouse bond fail. That's not my issue, however. I live on an arterial street that 4,000 to 5,000 cars and trucks a day use. That may be an exaggeration, but not by much. I can promise you that speeding is alive and well on that street. No one is slowing down at all. To watch the driving habits of those drivers one would think that gasoline was free.

Most drivers are monkey-see, monkey do, behind the wheel. There are a few "pace cars" who observe the posted 30 mph speed limit, but if the leader of the pack is running 45 mph, you can bet the rest will follow. There are no sidewalks here, and there is no routine police presence on this street, as there are no shoulders where an officer might pull a speeder over. Doing this would create another traffic hazard.

The only viable solution to this quality of life issue is to post radar signs every quarter mile facing north and south for the entire length of the road. Instead, the County added a lift of fresh asphalt and new striping, a facelift it could be called, rendering the "WahannaBahn" into alternate U.S. Highway 101. Go figure. Life is cheap here on the fogline.

**Gary Durham
Seaside**

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Contact local agencies for latest meeting information and attendance guidelines.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 1

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

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

THURSDAY, JUNE 2

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

MONDAY, JUNE 6

Seaside Housing Task Force, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

TUESDAY, JUNE 7

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

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

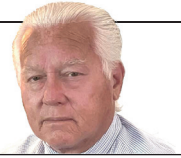
Seaside Planning Commission, 6 p.m., 989 Broadway.

OP-ED

Wake-up call in Gearhart

GUEST COLUMN

JACK ZIMMERMAN



Last Tuesday Gearhart City Hall was handed a stinging defeat at the polls. After more than six years of preparation for the largest municipal project our little town has ever conceived, voters said "no."

We said "no" in spite of a highly-organized promotional campaign by the city, a campaign that included a generously-funded political action committee, ample media support, a blizzard of letters and endorsements, and an online propaganda blitz. We saw all this, and still said "no" in numbers that were loud, clear, and overwhelming.

Was this a surprise? No, anybody who knows and understands Gearhart knew this would happen. It happened because those leading this town are no longer in sync with the Gearhart community, our silent majority, and its needs, wants, and values. They no longer represent their electorate on this issue. Let's review.

Despite the fact that the community soundly rejected city hall's preferred location for the new fire station, Lesley Miller Park, proponents continued to speak out in favor of that location, including a current city councilor and a member of the citizen firehouse committee. They believe that if the park were "still in play" that our problems would finally be solved. How wrong they are.

Despite a survey in which the Pacific Way station received over 360 votes as the No. 1 preferred location, the only location in the survey that survived scrutiny, the city scrapped it and disregarded the now majority of Gearharters who prefer it, and who believe it could be easily funded with a combination of grants, donations and a modest bond levy.

Despite the fact that long ago Gearhart, in defense of its visual beauty, prohibited the use of large political banners, our current mayor and two councilors decided that the ends justify the means, and defied the ordinance by erecting the largest political banner Gearhart had ever seen, right at the center of town. I think that sign alone, and the hubris that made it, was enough to convince most Gearharters to vote "no."

Disparities Gearhart's tradition of respect for its hard-working families, with city council's

unanimous approval the city manager signed a land-swap agreement with a developer while hiding the city's negotiations position from public view.

As a result, the city gave away millions of potential profits to a developer, a portion of those profits could have been part of the land swap and used to build the firehouse rather than our community's tax dollars. Does the city think the average Gearharters is so financially secure that they should be prohibited from sharing a portion of this transferred wealth?

The city decided to create its own Facebook discussion page about the fire project, and invited the community to participate, a promising idea, except the councilor who runs the page decided it was his own personal group, and deleted, censored, and blocked views or citizens he disagreed with, while allowing these citizens, representing

the vast majority of Gearhart, to be jeered at, taunted, called "Nazis," and told to get out of town. City hall's endorsement of this group and its content remains prominent on its website.

After rejecting the Highlands location as too far from central Gearhart, too isolated after a tsunami, too close to the Hertig station, and with too long response times, city hall promised a series

of town halls, on the record, featuring panels of experts, that would explain to everybody's satisfaction why these reasons for rejection suddenly no longer apply. However, town halls never materialized, and instead we were invited to drink coffee with the mayor, and enjoy barbecue at fire station open houses. Here, off the record, we were lectured, scolded, and patronized, with words that were heavy on emotion but light on logic.

We attended and spoke up at city council meetings, to no avail. These examples are just a few of many that indicate that city hall does not represent the majority of Gearharters anymore. They show a lack of trust in our judgement, our values, our intelligence, and our expertise. They believe that they know better than us, and deserve to dictate to us what we should be willing to pay for, what we should not be willing to risk in our lives, and what the best future is for Gearhart and its values. They know better than the overwhelming majority of us, their electorate.

We disagree, and in response to their disregard, we handed them this defeat. Will city hall wake up? No less than a profound transformation is needed, for the sake of the future of Gearhart.

THOSE LEADING THIS TOWN ARE NO LONGER IN SYNC WITH THE GEARHART COMMUNITY.



PUBLISHER
Kari Borgen

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

CIRCULATION MANAGER
Shannon Arlint
ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER
Sarah Silver-Tecza

PRODUCTION MANAGER
John D. Bruijn
SYSTEMS MANAGER
Carl Earl

CONTRIBUTING WRITERS
Skyler Archibald
Joshua Heineman
Katherine Lacaze
Esther Moberg
CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHER
Jeff TerHar

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