

Views from the Rock

# From editor to civilian in Cannon Beach

**CANNON SHOTS**

R.J. MARX



It's hard to write a farewell column when I've only been here four years. That's less than the lifespan of some razor clams.

My first experience in Cannon Beach was at Bill's Tavern.

I was sitting at the bar after an interview in Astoria for the job of editor of the Gazette and Seaside Signal. A gentleman was sitting next to me; we struck up a conversation. I told him I was thinking of moving here to edit the paper. He said, "Do it!" As I was leaving I was informed that "Jim" was the owner of Bill's.

My first City Council meeting in Cannon Beach owes a great deal to Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn. As the meeting was about to get underway, I heard a voice address the room: "Does anyone in the audience have a car parked in front with New York plates? Your lights are on."

Yes, that was my late, lamented Audi A4, vintage 2004 that somehow survived the cross-country trip. I gratefully thanked the chief for saving me the opportunity of meeting the Moons of Gary's Service Center that same night.

**Insider knowledge**

I was lucky to have some real live Cannon Beachers to show me the ropes. Primary among them was my predecessor, the brilliant and accomplished Nancy McCarthy, now a city councilor.

She was, and is, tuned in to almost everything in Cannon Beach. From the start, she gave me the 4-1-1 on the "presidential streets," Tolovana bunnies, the Coaster Theatre, dory fishing.

Nancy introduced me to the local scene at Wave Crest and informed me the real dialogue was happening at Cheri's.

Elaine Murdy at the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum made available her archives and her considerable wisdom, helping to bring the characters alive outside of the bound volumes of back issues I pored over those first months.

Rex Amos, the city's very unofficial artist-in-residence (and that's going some, considering the great talents in town) provided an ongoing angle on the characters, customs and styles of this unique city — including the great author Ursula K. Le Guin, whom I was fortunate enough to have corresponded with before her death last year.

I love Sleepy Monk's Rachel and Rebecca and Jason at Sea Level. For anyone to get the flavor of the community, get a cuppa.

My friends Laura and Gregg introduced me to all the great restaurants in town and provided convivial dinner dialogue.

Of course I'll still be eating with them and in the same restaurants, I just won't be snapping photos of the appetizers.

My wife says it will be a relief walking



R.J. Marx

I've got to number this beached whale in Falcon Cove as a highlight in my Gazette career.



Lady Gaga and friend in Cannon Beach, as posed on Twitter.



Courtesy Rex Amos

Rex Amos, among the artists and literati that make Cannon Beach great.



Rita Goldfarb/For Cannon Beach Gazette

Kindergartners get a tour of Haystack Rock. What a treat in Cannon Beach!

into Cannon Beach and not having to hear someone say, "This is off the record."

But it's not like I'm moving away.

I'll still be in the same office on North

Roosevelt in Seaside as the Signal goes weekly on May 10.

I see that as a tremendous opportunity, a goal from the start — I believe that

community newspapers are best served with a weekly continuity.

**Lady Gaga slept here**

What is best about Cannon Beach is its level of discourse, quality of life and community, with a populace as eloquent, elevated and inspired as the denizens Santa Fe, Aspen or Jackson Hole.

And like those cities it carries with it an international cachet and its own branding, courtesy Mother Nature: Haystack Rock. No wonder "Lady Gaga slept here."

But that's just Cannon Beach from the outside. The only way to get to know a community is to cover it on a day to day, week to week, year to year basis. I had the rare opportunity of following this forward-thinking community as they led the way — and lead the way — in addressing threats posed by the Cascadia Subduction Zone.

I have watched the struggle to provide affordable housing for an ever-growing workforce in the midst of a countywide crunch. I've witnessed the Cannon Beach Academy grow from the seed of an idea to a full-fledged, accredited elementary school program meeting a critical need for families in the community.

I've seen the city's status as a haven for craft beer, wine and spirits from the local scene to the national stage — from Puffin to Pelican to Public Coast.

Whether in Cannon Beach for a lifetime or if you've come for a few days, everyone has the feeling that the city is "their own." People will make "must stops" at galleries, bookstores, boutiques and now, cannabis shops. I'll be able to say, one day, "I remember when Cannon Beach voted to permit dispensaries."

**Looking ahead**

It was cool to experience it from the inside. But like an open-ended drama, what's next?

Will Cannon Beach build a shadow city at the Southwind site or elsewhere?

What will be the result of dune grading discussions — a topic debated since the 1980s?

How will Cannon Beach's popularity with tourists balance with critical environmental concerns?

Of course these questions won't be answered tomorrow and probably not the next day.

That said, it's going to be bittersweet for me. I know the Gazette is in good hands with publishers Steve and Carol Hungerford, editor Joe Warren and his mighty team.

They do a stellar job in Tillamook County and newspapers throughout the Northwest. Joe's a longtime newsman and understands the community's heartbeat.

The Hungerfords owned the Gazette previously — they know and love Cannon Beach. They'll be taking stewardship of this beat — and it is a stewardship — as the city moves forward. You'll see new faces holding reporter's notebooks at the meetings and maybe some of the familiar ones as freelancers or staff.

As a newsmen, I can't help but wonder what I'll be missing.

But then I can always read about it, in print and online, in the Gazette!

## My mother, ever the ghostly prankster

**VIEW FROM THE PORCH**

EVE MARX



Eve Marx

Gerry would have loved Cannon Beach. Here she is with friend Charlie Cotton in Atlantic City in the mid-1960s.

A couple of weeks ago, my husband misplaced his glasses. His very expensive prescription glasses, I might add, not his cheap drugstore readers. After turning the house upside down a few times looking for them and engaging in some Marie Kondo-level tidying, he proclaimed the eyeglasses hopelessly lost and said he was going to order new ones.

Not so fast, I said. They must be in the house somewhere.

A few days later he was pouring himself a bowl of cereal as an after dinner snack.

"This box is pretty much empty," he said, preparing to ditch it in the bin under the sink. "Nothing left in here but crumbs." I took the box from his hands, making some noises about the value of recycling. The box seemed a bit heavy.

"This doesn't feel empty," I said. I removed the cellophane bag inside the box, which did indeed hold crumbs. Between the liner and the cardboard walls of the box, guess what I found?

"Aha," I said, holding up the glasses.

"This is your mother's doing," my husband said.

My mother left the planet 32 years ago

this April. It was a few months after her boyfriend of 10 years succumbed to liver cancer. She was already talking about taking a cruise and getting a facelift. On the day she died, she was all set to meet a friend for lunch. She never made it out of her apartment due to a sudden and conclusive cardiac episode. I doubt she knew she had heart disease, or if she did know something, she wasn't talking. For as long as I can remember, she wasn't shy, however, about talking about death. One of her favorite things to say on the topic was that when she was gone, she wouldn't really be gone. She intended to show up for annoying haunting purposes.

My mother is an effective ghostly pres-

ence. Sometimes I hear her voice in my ear, and I've definitely felt her energy. If she's going to make herself known to me, I wish she'd relay useful information, like stock tips. Instead she seems to enjoy amusing herself playing harmless tricks and pranking my husband. My mother and my husband only met a couple of times in real life before she passed away. Not that I was asking for her blessing, but she made it very clear at the time she didn't think he was the husband she had in mind for me. Years ago, during a period when he wasn't exactly being the best husband, he was in a car accident that could have turned deadly. I remember when I picked him up at the hospital, the first thing he said was, "Right before the car flipped over, I saw your mother in the passenger seat."

"Did she cause the accident," I asked,

"Or did she save your life?"

"I'm not sure," he said.

Every year I try to pay special attention to my mother's death anniversary. On that day, I post her picture on Facebook and recall her favorite things. She liked Chinese food, real jewelry, and going to the movies. I get a sense she likes to be remembered more on her death day than her birthday. She wasn't keen on getting older and didn't really like her birthday.

What she loves is playing naughty tricks, like hiding car keys or expensive and necessary eyeglasses.

I've learned you don't have to believe in ghosts to be haunted by one.

**PUBLIC MEETINGS**

**Thursday, April 25**

Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Friday, April 26**

Emergency Preparedness Committee, 9 a.m., 163 E. Gower St.

**Tuesday, May 7**

Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Thursday, May 9**

Cannon Beach Academy, board meeting, 5:30 p.m., 3781 S. Hemlock, Cannon Beach.

**Monday, May 13**

Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 188 E. Sunset Blvd.

**Tuesday, May 14**

Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Thursday, May 16**

Parks and Community Services Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Cannon Beach Design Review Board, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Monday, May 20**

Ecola Creek Watershed Council, 4:30 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Publisher** Kari Borgen  
**Editor** R.J. Marx  
**Circulation Manager** Jeremy Feldman  
**Production Manager** John D. Brujin  
**Contributing writers** Joseph Bert, Eve Marx, Nancy McCarthy, Dave Fisher, Rain Jordan, Cara Mico

**CANNON BEACH GAZETTE**  
The Cannon Beach Gazette is published every other week by EO Media Group.  
1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, Oregon 97138  
503-738-5561 • Fax 503-738-9285  
CannonBeachgazette.com • email: editor@cannonbeachgazette.com  
**SUBSCRIPTION RATES:** Annually: \$40.50 in county, \$58.00 in and out of county. Postage Paid at: Cannon Beach, OR 97110

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to Cannon Beach Gazette, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103  
Copyright 2019 © Cannon Beach Gazette. Nothing can be reprinted or copied without consent of the owners.

THE NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING

