



HRAP welcomed puffins in April.

WILL CHAPPELL
Gazette Editor

Cannon Beach saw an eventful year in 2025, perhaps most notably as construction began on a new city hall in midtown and police station at the south end of the city.

Voters also restricted the city's ability to borrow money in May elections, and a full slate of arts, cultural and historical events



Annual Sandcastle Contest was held in June.



Ex-Mayor Sam Steidel passed away on January 12

WILL CHAPPELL
Gazette Editor

Following voluminous constituent feedback about poor outcomes in Washington County family court, Oregon State Senator Suzanne Weber is working to raise awareness about the issues in the system.

Weber said that she believes family court judges are given too much authority and that the special courts may need to be abolished in favor of letting regular courtrooms handle the cases, though she acknowledged that somebody else will have to take up the cause after her time in the legislature concludes following 2026's short session.

"It has to be something that someone will take up in the long session and carry through, but at least we've done the groundwork to be able to express the concern we have for our children," Weber said. "Because It's not only our children right now and what is happening to them, it's how it is affecting their futures."

Family courts are administered by individual states but regulated by numerous federal laws that

See **WEBER**, Page A4

PIERCE BAUGH V
for the Gazette

As 2025 comes to a close — and as the world moves deeper into the third decade of the 21st century — there is much to reflect on.

For the Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP), 2025 was a year defined by endurance.

At the beginning of the season, HRAP had to contend with a poacher. A man staying at a local hotel was found collecting mussels during low tide. After being informed by HRAP staff that poaching is illegal and given the relevant regulations, he continued to do so. Police were contacted, but the man returned the following day and attempted to collect mussels again. The situation eventually escalated, and the man was cited and barred from returning.

It was also another difficult year for Cannon Beach's black oystercatchers. The birds failed to raise chicks again this season. After a third nesting attempt, eggs hatched but were later preyed upon. Black oystercatchers nest close to public areas, making them highly visible to visitors. HRAP monitors the birds closely and uses their presence as an opportunity for public education.

Black oystercatchers are classified as a species of concern and are considered an indicator species — meaning their struggles can signal broader environmental health issues.

“So that was pretty traumatic,” said Lisa Habecker, director of HRAP. “Visitors get to see them regularly, and we call them our soap opera birds — like, ‘What’s happening in the trials and tribulations of the black oystercatchers today?’”

A kingfisher — a bird known for its bright blue and orange plumage — has taken up residence in the area, an unusual choice for a species that typically inhabits rivers, lakes and estuaries rather than ocean shorelines.

"It's quite unusual to have one at the ocean," Habecker said. "In fact, nobody's ever heard of a kingfisher here before."

In addition to wildlife monitoring, HRAP expanded its public safety role this year by partnering with local lifeguards during king tide events. King tides, the highest tides of the year, typically occur between November and January.

HRAP members assisted lifeguards by educating visitors about water safety and helping keep people out of hazardous areas.

"That's been a really great partnership," said HRAP member Jenny Gooldy. "Helping keep people safe and aware of all the hazards during king tide."

“We had over 150 people collectively between November and this past king tide that we spoke to about water safety and assisting the lifeguards,” Habecker added.

Looking ahead, HRAP is actively recruiting volunteers, particularly for the busy summer season. Opportunities include joining the Beach Interpreter team, participating in community science projects, and supporting partner organizations. The volunteer program is open to all ages, with a junior volunteer option available for those under 18. No minimum time commitment is required, and training is provided. Volunteers are required to complete a simple background check.

"We're all looking forward to getting the season started again," Habecker said. "Our team members are chomping at the bit."



The newly constructed Legacy Place will exclusively serve residents of the new Spruce Point Apartment Complex.

WILL CHAPPELL
Gazette Editor

Work is well underway at the new Spruce Point apartment complex in Manzanita and on pace to bring 60 new affordable apartments online by next fall.

The project is being led by Home First Development Partners and supported by a \$21.4 million grant from Oregon Housing and Community Services, as well as grants from

the Tillamook County Affordable Housing Grant program.

Construction crews broke ground on August 12, after the property was cleared of trees and a new street, Legacy Place, which intersects with Necarney City Road between Clipper Court and Pine Ridge Lane, constructed to serve the development.

The 60 apartments will be spread across three three-story buildings and two two-story

buildings, and the complex will also feature a community center with a leasing office and community area, common courtyard with a nautically themed playground and 96 parking spots.

There will be 14 one-bedroom, one-bathroom apartments, 23 two-bedroom, one-bathroom, and 23 three-

See **SPRUCE POINT**, Page A2



Construction began on a new city hall in midtown and police station.



Ground was also broken for the new \$15.3-million city hall and \$10.4-million police station.

YEAR IN REVIEW

From Page A1

kept locals and visitors alike busy.

The year started off on a sad note, when ex-Mayor Sam Steidel passed away on January 12, at the age of 66. Steidel moved to Cannon Beach in 1958 with his parents and went on to run Steidel Art for decades, also serving as the city's mayor from 2015 to 2023.

In February, a split council awarded \$125,000 to the Haystack Rock Awareness Program (HRAP) to cover a budget shortfall caused by decreasing volunteer hours and a concurrent rise in staff costs. Council also approved a \$212,000 up-

grade to the city's Coastal Outside Warning System, which alerts residents and visitor to distant tsunamis using a series of speakers around the city. The work was completed in May.

Discussions also began about how to proceed with the Cannon Beach Elementary School rejuvenation project, after a 2024 vote failed to gain voter support for a major renovation of the site. Discussions continued throughout the year, with councilors eventually agreeing in November to hire a park designer to help with planning for the site as a community park, without the existing school or gymnasium buildings.

That decision was informed in large part by voters' passage in May of a ballot measure requiring the city government to seek voter approval to incur debt above 50% of gov-

ernment activity revenues, or around \$5.9 million. The measure was put forward by Cannon Beach Together in response to concerns over the financing approach used for the city hall and police station projects and passed by a narrow margin.

Ground was also broken for the new \$15.3-million city hall and \$10.4-million police station in April, with grand openings scheduled for July 2026 at city hall and June 2026 at the police station.

HRAP kicked a busy season of conservation activities on the beach into high gear with their annual Puffin Welcome Celebration in mid-April, and Cannon Beach hosted the Spring Unveiling Arts Festival in May, signaling the arrival of the busy summer season.

That energy contin-

ued with the 61st annual Sandcastle Contest in June, where throngs of spectators turned out, despite an unseasonal rainstorm dampening proceedings.

A late July quake off the Kamchatka Peninsula in Russia triggered a tsunami watch in the city, and HRAP sounded the alarm about human activity interfering with wildlife on the rock after a video surfaced of a person aiming a powerful laser pointer at the rock.

In September, following growing frustration with his party's lack of support, Cannon Beach's state representative, Cyrus Javadi, switched party affiliations from Republican to Democrat, shortly after breaking with his old party and voting in favor of a gas-tax increase in a special legislative session.

The Cannon Beach His-

tory Center and Museum hosted its 22nd annual Cottage Tour September 13, spotlighting homes in the Tolovana Park

neighborhood, before the Stormy Weather Arts Festival rounded out the city's cultural calendar in November.



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The Cannon Beach History Center and Museum hosted its 22nd annual Cottage Tour in September.



Stormy Weather Arts Festival was held in November.



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Correction re: Haystack Hill property

An article in last month's Gazette inaccurately described the role of the Oregon Coast Alliance in the donation of a Haystack Hill property to the city. The Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) is not working with the Holland Family Trust to coordinate the donation but serving as the financial administrator for the city in the proposed transaction. Also, the statements attributed to an ORCA representative in the article were in fact made by Beth Holland, a member of the Holland Trust, which owns the property.

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Merkley, Wyden, Hoyle secure written commitment from Coast Guard Acting Commandant Lunday that Newport helicopter will remain

Follows Merkley placing his hold on Lunday's nomination to lead Coast Guard, joint efforts to advocate for this essential rescue helicopter

On December 12, Oregon's U.S. Senator Jeff Merkley, along with

Senator Ron Wyden and Congresswoman Val Hoyle (OR-04), announced that they secured written commitments from Admiral Kevin Lunday, Acting Commandant of the U.S. Coast Guard, to ensure the rescue helicopter located at the Newport Air Facility remains in the community, as well as a pledge from Lunday to visit the Newport area within one year. "After hearing from countless Oregonians about the importance of the search and rescue

helicopter in Newport, I led the charge to secure written confirmation from the Coast Guard that the helicopter would remain in the community, consistent with the law I wrote in 2014. For fishermen and coastal communities, this is a huge win, especially during winter crab season and in the face of cold-water conditions," said Merkley. "I am lifting my hold on Admiral Lunday's nomination and look forward to his forthcoming visit to Newport and to a productive working relationship going forward." "I'm gratified that Acting Commandant Lunday today wrote in plain English the verbal commitment he made last week to Senator Merkley and me over the phone - namely that the Coast Guard helicopter will remain right where it belongs in Newport," said Wyden. "This is great news for fishermen and

both residents of -- and visitors to -- the central Oregon Coast. Thanks to the Newport Fishermen's Wives and all the local officials who worked with Senator Merkley, Congresswoman Hoyle and me to achieve this victory for public safety, the law and common sense." "I want to thank Acting Commandant Lunday for his letter today committing to us to keep the Coast Guard helicopter in Newport," said Hoyle. "It is a huge win for our coastal community, and it wouldn't have happened without the collective effort of Senators Wyden and Merkley and every Oregonian who raised their voice. When our community stands together, we get results." Merkley, Wyden, and Hoyle worked together to keep the rescue helicopter in Newport, leading a coordinated series of efforts that ultimately succeeded.

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39 Rely on
42 1998 Masters champion
44 Beach sites
45 HTWORG
50 Eases
51 "Ex's & —" (2014 Elle King hit)
52 Toronto loc.
53 Ruby and garnet
57 Large crucifix
58 PDQ cousin

60 Scale amls.
61 Creepy
62 Stew or coffee holder
64 DOIREP
69 Sweet bun
73 Minor error
74 Was a threat to
75 POLFPILF
78 "My Gal —" (classic song)
79 S-shaped moldings
80 Fizzle out
81 Not at all firm
83 Has no entity
87 Belgian river
88 Parl of SPF
89 Grayish hue
92 Ebb
94 ECNADIUG
97 — Harum ("A Whiter Shade of Pale" band)
101 Truly loves
102 Filmmaker
Jonathan or Ted
103 LAISUM
106 Gab
109 Old Russian
space station
110 Shoemakers' tools
111 — chi

112 China's Long March leader
114 Authoritative declarations
117 One of the singing
Braxtons
119 TIUCRIC
125 Bother badly
126 Affected sort
127 Small naval vessel group
128 Shell out
129 Suddenly regain focus
130 Kind of bicycle

15 Wagner's "— Rheingold"
16 Big name in taco shells
17 Encloses
In a border
18 Layout
19 Vows
24 "You — one!"
29 Sporty scarf
31 Doing battle
32 Retort to "Am not!"
34 Says "OK" to nonverbally
36 Long stretches
37 U-Haul unit
38 Long stretch
40 "Five-card" or "seven-card" game
41 Erstwhile flight inits.
43 Prefix with skeleton
46 Christie of mysteries
47 Dwelling place: Abbr.
48 "Licence to Kill" actress
Talisa
49 "To recap ..."
53 Take revenge
54 Stonestreet of "Modern Family"

55 Light coin
56 Bird feed bit
59 Throb
60 Brown songbirds
61 Poet — St. Vincent Millay
63 "Love Me, I'm a Liberal" singer Phil
65 J. Cole's music
66 "Consider This" network
67 "— recall ..."
68 Curl up cozily
69 Guy into hip-hop, in old slang
70 Tattered garb
71 Slush Puppie alternative
72 Finish
76 Prehistoric beast, in brief
77 Simple card game
82 Not at all near
84 Safe to take a dip in, say
85 Tennis player
Osaka
86 Jazz pianist
McCoy
88 Break up

89 Page or golfer
90 Exit angrily
91 — Majesty
93 Kind of PC screen
94 Comic punch response
95 Devoid of joy
96 Indoor design
97 China pieces
98 Cover again, as a gift
99 In recent days
100 Diagnostic med. image
104 Lawmen
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105 Use as a bed
107 Confuse
108 Attach with string, e.g.
113 Farm-related prefix
115 Army beds
116 Voyage
118 "— be a pleasure"
120 Airport uniform abbr.
121 Sales agt.
122 To the rear
123 Land in eau
124 Itty-bitty bit

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WEBER

From Page A1

have created requirements for the courts' dockets and processes. Residents of Tillamook, Clatsop and Linn Counties all use family courts located in Washington County, and Weber said that over the past year she has heard numerous horror stories about the court's decisions. While avoiding specifics, Weber discussed a case in which a custody decision from another state had been reversed and another in which child staying with a grandparent was removed and given to a parent without a stable place to stay. Weber also criticized the practice of charging parents hundreds of dollars for visitation with their children. Weber said that she believes the issues with the courts stem from a lack of jury trials and oversight or accountability for judges, who have little to fear outside of costly, time-consuming recall elections. "I think that they have a little kingdom and no one can really challenge them or their decisions," Weber said of family court judges. To solve the issues, Weber believes that the best answer might be abolishing family courts and challenging the constitutionality of federal laws governing them. Weber traveled to a national conference in Washington D.C. on the subject family court reform in November and said that she learned several states on the east coast as well as Idaho and Arizona are moving to either abolish the courts or make serious reforms to them. Weber, who is ineligible to run for reelection after participating in a walkout in 2023, said that she wants to address the issue but recognizes that it is too complicated to solve in next year's short session. Weber said that she has talked with Senate President Rob Wagner about the possibility of forming a study group on the issue and that he promised to circle back to the discussion before the session.

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AT THE LIBRARY



Time for New Year's Resolutions

By PHYLLIS BERNT
Library Volunteer

It's the new year—when many well-intentioned folks resolve to try new things and develop new habits. The library (131 N. Hemlock) can help with those resolutions. People resolving to try something new may want to participate in the annual Writers Read Celebration. Sponsored by the library's NW Author Speaker Series, the Celebration, now in its eighth year, invites authors and aspiring authors to submit their writing on a specified theme. This year's theme is "From a Distance." Authors of all ages and geographical locations are encouraged to submit up to three entries, no more than 600 words per entry. All genres will be accepted—poetry, essay, short story, etc. A panel of judges will select 10 to 12 entries to be read, either in person

at the library or via Zoom, on Friday evening, March 6, 2026. Entries must be in word format and emailed to info@cannonbeachlibrary.org. Authors should include a separate cover letter with their name, email address and phone number but should not include their name or identifying information on their submitted work. The deadline for submissions is Monday, February 2. People resolving to develop new habits might consider joining the Cannon Beach Reads book club. Cannon Beach Reads started in 2007, which means 2026 will be its twentieth year. Each year, in late fall, club members nominate and then vote for book selections for the following year. The resulting list of books tends to be an eclectic mix of titles: an equal number of fiction and nonfiction books, classics and current works, and a book or two involving the Pacific Northwest. Through all types of weather, and even a pandemic, Cannon Beach Reads participants have gathered at the library on the third Wednesday of each month. The group met via Zoom during the pandemic, and participating through videoconferencing remains an option for those who cannot get to the library. The only obstacle that

the club hasn't been able to overcome so far is a lack of electricity. The December meeting was canceled because of an extended power outage. As a result, two books will be discussed at the Cannon Beach Reads meeting at 5 p.m. on Wednesday January 21: "Turning to Stone: Discovering the Subtle Wisdom of Rocks," by Marcia Bjornerud, and "The Plague," by Albert Camus. This will be a hybrid meeting with participants able to take part in the discussion in person at the library or virtually (contact book club coordinator Joe Bernt, berntj@ohio.edu, for the Zoom link). "Turning to Stone" is both a memoir and a geology primer. Each of the book's ten chapters focuses on the formation and significance of a specific type of rock, while also describing an important period in Bjornerud's life as a geologist. More about the book and information about Marcia Bjornerud can be found in last month's column. Albert Camus's "The Plague" is set in the 1940's in the French Algerian city of Oran. The citizens don't realize at first that rats are spreading the plague in the city. Bernard Rieux, a local physician, tries to warn the authorities, but they are slow to acknowledge there is a

problem until the death toll rises; eventually the authorities are forced to declare there is an epidemic and they quarantine the city, Violence and looting break out, martial law is declared and the dead are buried in perfunctory funerals. Camus explores the various responses to the plague, from Dr. Rieux's efforts to treat the sick, to a journalist's plans to escape the city, to a priest's use of the plague to persuade residents to turn to religion, to a criminal's amassing of great wealth through his smuggling activities. "The Plague," which was originally published in 1947, is often read as an allegory about the spread of Nazism in France. It was a critical success when first published and experienced a resurgence of interest during the COVID pandemic. Albert Camus was a French philosopher, novelist, journalist, dramatist and political activist who joined the French Resistance during WWII. He was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1957. His other works include "The Stranger," "The Myth of Sisyphus," "The Fall" and "The Rebel." Mary Lloyd will lead the discussion on "Turning to Stone" while Joe Bernt will be the discussion leader for "The Plague" on January 21. Coffee and cookies will

be provided at the library. New participants are always welcome. "The Plague" is the first Cannon Beach Reads selection for 2026; the other eleven works cover a range of topics, geographical locations, and time periods. The other five fiction titles include "Jane Eyre," by Charlotte Brontë, the British classic about a poor governess who makes her way in the world; "Elmer Gantry," by Sinclair Lewis, a satirical novel about religious hypocrisy; and "To Build a Ship," by Don Berry, a historical novel about early settlers in Tillamook Bay, The remaining two fiction books are "The Magician's Assistant," by Ann Patchett, the story of a widow who learns of her late husband's lies and secrets; and "The Pelican's Child," by Joy Williams, a short story collection about misfits and dreamers. The six nonfiction books include works about two fascinating women: "All That Remains: A Renowned Forensic Scientist on Death, Mortality, and Solving Crimes," by Dame Sue Black, and "The Confidante: The Untold Story of the Woman Who Helped Win WWII and Shape Modern America," by Christopher Gotham. Also included are two books of regional interest: "Eruption: The Untold Story

of Mount St. Helens," by Steve Olson, and "Beaverland: How One Weird Rodent Made America," by Leila Philip. And books about two very different men: "Marco Polo: From Venice to Xanadu," by Laurence Bergreen, and "Tuesdays with Morrie: An Old Man, A Young Man, and Life's Greatest Lesson," by Mitch Albom. Patrons may also resolve to make a habit of attending the NW Author Speakers Series, beginning with a presentation at 2 p.m. on Saturday, January 24 by nonfiction writer, teacher and editor Zoe Bossiere (they/she). Bossiere is graciously stepping in for Portland writer Charlie J. Stephens who had to cancel for medical reasons. This will be a hybrid presentation; patrons can enjoy the talk in person at the library, or from home via the library's website. Bossiere's debut book, "Cactus Country: A Boyhood Memoir," chronicles the author's experiences growing up as a trans boy in a Tucson, Arizona, trailer park. The book was on the 2025 Southwest Books of the Year list. Bossiere is the managing editor of "Brevity: A Journal of Concise Literary Nonfiction" and co-editor of the anthologies "The Best of Brevity" and "The Lyric Essay as Resistance: Truth from the Margins."

Wind damage closes Hangar B

WILL CHAPPELL
Gazette Editor



A windstorm caused a hole in the roof of Hangar B at the port of Tillamook Bay.

the hole and that the port needed to secure the hole to prevent future storms from bringing the entire structure down, adding that any temporary fix would require a rigid cover for the hole. Port of Tillamook Bay General Manager Michele Bradley said that the incident had caused a tent owned by the port to fill

with water and collapse, but that none of the planes underneath had been damaged. Bradley also said vehicles, including RVs, boats and cars, that are usually stored in the area where the damage occurred have been relocated. Lofton said that he recommended the port find a crane to allow him to better



Hangar B is closed indefinitely as a fix is determined.

evaluate the damage, remove the hanging debris and devise a temporary measure to repair the hole and minimize further damage. In the long run, Lofton said that he believed the correct approach was to erect scaffolding around the hole to work on a permanent repair. The scaffolding would need to reach 180 feet into the air, span the entirety of

the 200-foot hole and stand 80-feet wide, which Lofton said would cost at least \$178,000 based on an initial quote. Lofton said that the hole was too high for most cranes in the region to access and that there were no anchor points on the roof, making scaffolding the best option for accessing the damage. Port commissioners instructed Lofton and port

staff to continue fleshing out the possible solutions and set an emergency meeting for December 22, to discuss next steps for both the short- and long-term repairs. With the risk of additional debris falling posing a risk, commissioners also decided to close the hangar until further notice for the Tillamook Air Museum and its other tenants.

PHOTOS COURTESY PORT OF TILLAMOOK BAY

Rockaway walking tour under development

WILL CHAPPELL
Gazette Editor

awareness of it. While the workshops ended up focusing on larger projects like renovations to Lake Lytle and the city's wayside, Dhein said that she met other people who were also interested in promoting the area's history. The group learned that neighboring communities had volunteer nonprofit groups that helped to manage cultural attractions like the Garibaldi Coast Guard Boathouse and historic Wheeler Hotel and decided to pursue that model for Rockaway Beach. The group found a home with the Rockaway Beach Chamber of Commerce, which has a nonprofit arm under which they formed a committee to work on projects, with a goal of honoring the city's heritage. Dhein said that the group has been leveraging the chamber's membership in the Oregon Main Street Alliance to help identify available grants and optimize their communications. In late November, grant writing efforts paid off when the Roundhouse Foundation

awarded the group \$4,700 to help fund interpretive signs that will serve as the basis for the planned walking tour. Dhein said that numerous residents and visitors have already contributed photographs of the city throughout the years, memorabilia from past restaurants and businesses and stories, and that the committee has been working to decide the best way to organize and present them. "It's been really just like a big puzzle and each piece that somebody contributes adds to understanding the picture," Dhein said. "So, my take-away to date has really been that it's enriching to share a place in history and it also builds pride in this collective future that we all have here together." The grant will fund 12 two-by-three-foot panels like one already at the caboose by the wayside, featuring black-and-white photos and text, and designed to withstand the coastal elements. Dhein said that the signs will mainly focus on Rockaway Beach's resort heyday, starting with the arrival of train service from

the Willamette Valley in 1912 and continuing through the roaring 20s when the town featured a natatorium, dance pavilions and card rooms. To guide those on the tour, the group is also developing a flyer that will be available at the caboose and online and feature a map of the different panels and additional stories to enhance the experience. "The walking tour itself really brings this history to life," Dhein said. "We have firsthand accounts from some of these founding families, band members who played at the dance pavilions and this day in the life of the prohibition style. So, that will be shared in stories that are really compelling and through the people we'll draw people door to door listening, learning and seeing. Dhein said that the committee hopes to secure funding for additional panels in the future and that they also hope to secure funding for a cultural center that would offer further opportunities to showcase the city's history. Dhein said that the committee is also still looking

for more photos or stories from the city's history from residents or visitors and that the project would be more impactful as more people participated.

"Its success and its joy will come from it being a cooperative and collaborative thing with anybody and everybody that wants to do it," Dhein said.

Super Crossword

Answers

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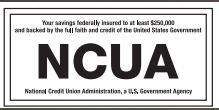
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- 3 Disposing of food waste, fats, oils, and grease in the garbage