



R.J. MARX/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

This humpback whale washed ashore in the Falcon Cove area of Arch Cape before being drawn back out to sea.

## WHALING DAYS

Thanks to Court Carrier of the Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce for rousting me from an end-of-week stupor with the news that a dead whale was making its way toward Arch Cape.

Carrier graciously offered us a parking spot at his house — which in Arch Cape is a big deal.

But just as we were winging past Tolovana, Carrier texted to say the whale had been swept south. He advised me to go through the tunnel and take it from there. You can never really tell where a whale will come to land.

So my intrepid spouse — did I mention this was our 28th wedding anniversary? — accompanied me through the Arch Cape tunnel in the early evening mist seeking a dead whale driven in the tide.

I figured my best bet was to turn right to Cape Falcon, not far past the southern end of the bridge. You don't really understand how rugged and deep this terrain is until you drive it in the dark. We drove to where we could see to the ocean, parked the car and I winged it down to the shore.

In the Cove, don't take anything for granted. If you can find an entrance to the beach, you have to slip and slide on your butt or take a flying leap from the sideline. Don't ever trust a branch or root to hold your weight. The cobble beach is slippery even when the tide is out and you need to dance a ballet on tiptoes. While I was scrambling around I heard voices and was joined by a couple more curious folks. Word traveled fast. All we were missing were tom-toms.

We skirted beyond the cobbled rock and onto the sandy beach.

At 7:30 the light was so dim I couldn't get a good shot with my iPhone. Even with binoculars, all I could see was the blurry horizon. But everyone saw the lumpy gray blip in the water. In that dim weird light what we saw was what looked like a latex rubber giant hot-air balloon bouncing on the waves and getting bigger, bigger — much, much bigger.

As we were backing up to the cobble rocks again as the sand receded and the water inched closer and our socks got damp, the big latex balloon was looking

### CANNON SHOTS

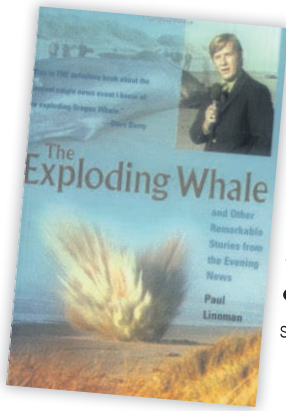
R.J. MARX



more and more like ... a giant rat. Dead or alive, I didn't want to be within 50 yards of this thing.

Little did I know it could have exploded.

There was nothing to do but skittle back to safety and come back in the morning.



Paul Linnman's contact with the "exploding whale" was to define his career.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

### The next day

What I saw at 9 that morning was pretty incredible. It was the inverted belly of the whale all puffed up into a balloon-like sac.

Would it, could it explode?

Seaside Aquarium's Keith Chandler has been chasing whales, dead or alive, for decades. In 2003 a 17-ton gray whale washed to shore just as the Seaside Volleyball Tournament was about to close. Chandler was there. In February 2004, the head of a sperm whale washed up on Indian Beach. In late January this year, a dead 24-foot humpback whale washed ashore Sunday in Seaside. Chandler was there too.

"The bloating is the gas that built up inside," Chandler said on the day of the latest beaching. "Is that a risk? Could it explode? It could. They have in the past. Not saying it will, but it's always a possibility."

I was completely unaware of the legendary Portland television news reporter Paul Linnman, who in 1970 was showered with whale carcass after the humpback was dynamited by the state highway department to get it off the Florence, Oregon, beach. Linnman wore that story as his signature until his death in 2013.

And there are no shortage of graphic videos on the Web, including the 2004 Taiwanese incident when a decomposing sperm whale splattered onlookers in an explosion as it was being transported for a post-mortem examination.

That early Saturday morning, I snapped as many pictures of the freaky-deaky whale as I could against the incoming tide, blissfully unaware of the worsening bloat and its potentially dire consequences. And equally unaware of the tide licking at my feet, enough to make me scamper up the rocks and through somebody's backyard to the street.

Lo and behold, shortly after leaving the beach, that belly did burst — whether it was with a bang or a whimper I don't know — mounds of undigested krill deposited in the shallow waters of Cove Beach.

By mid-afternoon, the tide pulled the dead, now deflated whale back into the water and back to sea. All that was left was a pile of krill and fish remains. I am told that the stench lingered.

Two days later, the whale was swept to Short Sand Beach in Oswald West State Park, 2 miles south of where the whale had washed up over the weekend. Chandler and researchers finished taking tissue and blood samples a few days later. The necropsy took place on the beach, where the whale carcass will remain.

"There's really no way to get it off that beach because you can't get equipment there, and you can't get enough sand to bury it," Chandler said.

Will it smell?

"It will have an odor," Chandler said. "But I've smelled worse."

So now I've got a whale story of my own. Is it up to Paul Linnman's? Maybe not, but that's OK. There are certain experiences far better seen on YouTube.

## Puffin hones its pinot pedigree

### UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

STEVE SINKLER



The calendar has turned to October, the temperatures are cooler and the leaves are falling. All signs point to the same conclusion, fall is here.

In wineries across the Pacific Northwest, the 2016 harvest is mostly complete and grapes which were on the vine not long ago are now safely in oak barrels or stainless steel tanks. At Puffin wines, things aren't any different. All of fruit has been picked and fermentation has begun. The wines smell great and we're expecting 2016 to be another stellar vintage. I look forward to pouring those wines for you in a few months (or years). Until then, we'll have to continue enjoying the Puffin wines we made during the past couple of years.

Our Puffin chardonnay 2015 is a perfect white wine for fall. This isn't your typical chardonnay, as it combines tropical flavors of mango and papaya with notes of hazelnut. This slightly creamy wine reminds me of a white burgundy, which is typically 100 percent chardonnay. Enjoy this wine with grilled chicken and roasted root vegetables or creamy cheese ravioli.

For those of you who prefer something red in your glass, Puffin has several delicious options for you this fall, starting with our Puffin pinot noir 2013. This elegant pinot was the result of a challenging growing season, but it continues to amaze me. Silky smooth, this pinot noir has smoky earth flavors combined with dark fruit to more closely resemble a burgundy premier cru than a Willamette Valley wine. Puffin pinot noir is a perfect companion to roast turkey, game, salmon, pork roast or portabella.

The newest release in our portfolio is Puffin red blend (non-vintage). Released in late September, winemaker John Derthick has combined Walla Walla syrah, merlot and malbec with Dundee Hills pinot noir to create a delicious fruit forward wine. This easy drinking red wine offers you robust flavors of red cherry and raspberry that begs for grilled burgers, pizza or pasta with marinara sauce. We only made 100 cases of this red blend and based on customer response so far, we should've made a lot more.

2013 was the first vintage of Puffin cabernet sauvignon and it's been a smash! This delicious single vineyard Walla Walla cab sauv has been really popular with customers. Packed with big red fruit flavors with slight notes of black tea, this wine's mouthfeel has softened a bit since it was first released, but it's still big enough to let you know it has a Walla Walla pedigree. This wine goes nicely with roast beef, rib-eye or just a cool evening. We are coming to the end of the 2013 vintage, but our 2014 Puffin cabernet sauvignon should be ready for release later this fall.

So as the weather changes and the temperatures drop, Puffin has a lineup of wines that are perfect for fall. This fall, you'll get a couple of opportunities to taste this entire lineup. Based on customer feedback, I plan to pour the Puffin lineup during our Saturday wine tastings a bit more often than in the past. You can find The Wine Shack's Saturday tasting room schedule on our website, [www.thewineshack.wine](http://www.thewineshack.wine), our Facebook page "Cannon Beach Wine Shack" or in our Cannon Beach Gazette advertisement.

We look forward to seeing you at The Shack. Please remember to drink responsibly.

## LETTERS

### Vote for schools

Our community must come together to pass the proposed Seaside School Bond to build a safe, secure place for children today and into the future to learn. I urge you to visit the [www.voteyesforlocalschools.com](http://www.voteyesforlocalschools.com) website to see for yourself the deplorable condition of our schools. How can we retain and recruit the best teachers? How can students possibly feel that we value their learning? Yes, the tsunami is also a serious concern. But even if it were not a factor, our school facilities are woefully inadequate.

The American Association of University Women strongly advocates for quality education for all children. As a member of our local group and a retired educator, I also place a high priority on education as a child's path to a productive and positive future. This bond is not only about our youth, it is about you. You are likely to attend concerts, plays, sporting events, adult education or community gatherings in our school facilities. Shouldn't all of these events happen in a safe place? Shouldn't

we have a structurally safe place to go in the case of an emergency?

We all count on our schools and now they are counting on us. Vote yes for the school bond. It is urgent, and it is the right thing to do.

Jane McGeehan  
Seaside

### Vote yes on school bond

I write today urging everyone in our Seaside School District to vote YES for the bond issue for our local schools. As a retired senior citizen, I have not had a child in these schools for many years. My grandchildren have all been educated in other places where others have paid the taxes to educate them. I know it is my turn to step up to the plate and carry forward what the members of our community did for my generation and me in the 1950s.

Yes, I attended Broadway Middle School in the early 50s when it was new and in good condition. This is no longer the case. I recently visited Broadway Middle School as well as Gear-

hart Elementary School and the high school, and was astounded at the deteriorating walls, roofing and heating issues. And, I learned that nearly \$500,000 a year is being spent beyond the normal maintenance budget to patch up the most pressing problems. What a waste to spend this kind of money and still have unsafe facilities that no longer meet the needs of education in the 21st century.

We are fortunate to be in a position where the land for the new buildings have been donated by Weyerhaeuser and when we can take advantage of some of the lowest interest rates we have ever known. The State of Oregon will also contribute \$4 million as a one-time contribution if the bond passes this November. In addition, Seaside has three of the four schools in the state that are in the tsunami zone. And although it is uncertain when that could be an issue here, the probability is very high in the next 50 years.

These are some of the reasons that Seaside AAUW (American Association of University

Women) has chosen to support this measure this year. Our children are our investment in the future. Our organization is one that values and supports education as a means to a better future. It is our time to step forward and insure that our children receive the education they need to be successful. They deserve it. Please give them your support.

Carol Brenneman  
Seaside

### Cannabis in Cannon Beach?

Let's take a different look at this issue. Some are so against it that we will actually have to vote again on this subject. They seek to prevent the sale of cannabis here in Cannon Beach. Is that really a smart thing to do for our town?

Cannon Beach was founded years ago by two groups. There were loggers first and then the hippies came along. Both groups had plenty of surfers. Both groups by and large embraced

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