

LEAN IN TO LEARNING

Though she doesn't regret doing so, geologist Sheila Alfsen looks back with amusement on the fact that she moved to Oregon from California in 1970 to get away from earthquake country.

"Back then, Oregon was thought of as a solid block of granite," she said. "Not only have we learned a lot since then about how much higher the danger is of a cataclysmic earthquake here than there is in California, there isn't even any surface granite."

Alfsen is the first scheduled speaker for the Oregon Coast Learning Institute's fall semester, beginning Tuesday, Sept. 3 and continuing weekly through Nov. 19. Her talk "The Great Subduction Earthquake — A Collection of Evidence from the Oregon Coast," will be complementary to popular preparedness presentations, classes and workshops.

"I'll walk you through the scientific work that precludes why we think there is reason for concern," she said. "I also like to dispel some of the myths that are out there."

A professional geologist, college instructor and public speaker, Alfsen said an article published in the *New Yorker* in 2015 created not only a big increase in requests for her speaking engagements, but also the source of jokes for fellow geologists.

"We've been talking our heads off about this but it wasn't until the article by Kathryn Schulz came out that people started really paying attention," Alfsen said. "There was a quote about everything west of I-5 becoming 'toast' if we get a big Cascadia event. That led to a lot of toast related jokes, and also some amusement about fault lines following highways."

Ironically, most of Alfsen's talks have been given east of I-5.

"I've presented all over the state but this will be the first time I'm doing it on the coast," she said. "I'm actually excited to be doing it where it's a bit more pertinent."

Most of the weekday meetings of the OCLI, which take place at the Salishan Resort, include at least two speakers broken up by a non-hosted lunch.

Brenda Luntzel will be the next speaker on the first day of the semester, which will start with a free coffee and cookies reception at 9 am where visitors, new members and long-standing members can connect.



A collapsed building felled by Japan's 1995 Kobe earthquake.



Sheila Alfsen (left)

After a morning learning about something that might happen in your lifetime, the post lunch topic will cover something that unfortunately we cannot avoid; aging. Luntzel is an expert in helping people meet this eventuality head on with "10 Tips That Can Re-define the Way We Age."

"Brenda teaches us how to stay age gracefully with things like practicing balance," said OCLI membership chair Paul Brookhyser, who has attended classes Luntzel teaches at the Newport Recreation Center. "She is really good; she makes you use your brain and keeps you healthy by keeping you moving."

Luntzel will be showing some of those moves during her presentation, so guests should wear clothes that are easy to move in and comfortable, flat-soled shoes.

"Her classes are extremely popular," Brookhyser said. "If you don't get there early sometimes there won't be a space for you."

Aging gracefully is a guiding force at the OCLI, where members believe that there is no clock on learning, and where a variety of topics is guaranteed.

Some of the journeys you will go on with future speakers during the rest of the fall semester include learning about dyes made from plants that might just be in your own garden, following orcas and otters of

Oregon and viewing murals of India and Oregon, and photos and videos of the 2018 Kilauea eruption. The semester will wrap things up with a full agenda: four speakers on pear farming, coming events at the Lincoln City Cultural Center as told by the center's own Executive Director Niki Price, a novel approach to discipline in schools, and the history of the crèche.

Curious? Join the crowd.

Salishan Resort is located east of the traffic light at Gleneden Beach. The fall term starts on Tuesday, Sept. 3 and ends before Thanksgiving. The winter term will start on January 7 and end in late March 2020.

Annual membership dues of \$90 cover 12 Tuesdays in fall and another 12 in winter. Visitors can attend a full day of presentations for free.

For more information, go to www.ocli.us or call OCLI President Ric at 541-994-4810 or Membership Chairman Paul at 541-265-8023.