



Yes, there really is a Santa Claus

JEFF DALY told the Ear that the 1948 CLOWN CAR and the newly restored GLAM TRAM (which also has a fireplace!) were out and about Christmas Day. The SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF AN ASTORIA CLOWN played elves and Santa to spread smiles and Christmas cheer around local retirement homes.

"Christmas for children is hoping that Santa will visit and leave gifts under a tree during the night while they slept," Jeff wrote. "Imagine the surprise adults had at local assisted living homes and Columbia Memorial Hospital as Santa Claus and his helpers arrived in the Glam Tram, renamed Santa's Sleigh on Christmas day."

He sent a link to a three-minute clip of just a few of the people they visited, and you can see it at <http://tinyurl.com/stnicktram>. One of the Christmas cheer recipients, ELIZABETH "BETH" ZOSCH, was a favorite. She climbed into the Clown Car front seat on her own steam, sat behind the wheel, and grinned. "I feel blessed, I really do!" she exclaimed. She is pictured, with Santa, in a screen shot from the video. Also pictured are several of the Christmas elves.

"Our rag-tag group discussed and debated all day who was having the most fun, with a few saying this was the best Christmas they have had," Jeff recalled. "But the best surprise was the whispers that many of the our group received, telling them thanks for coming, and, after all these years now they, too, believe there is a Santa Claus."



Getting to the bottom of it all

Marine biology enthusiasts will enjoy this: NPR reports that scientists probing the bottom of 1,500 mile-long MARIANA TRENCH, miles below the surface of the Pacific Ocean, have seen the deepest living fish ever recorded (<http://tinyurl.com/trenchfish>).

The fish-eye view was accomplished by dropping refrigerator-sized "landers" — loaded with equipment, cameras and baited traps to attract fish — to the bottom of the trench and waiting to see what would happen.

Along with spotting a surprising amount of sea life, they also saw what appears to be a new fish species, a translucent SNAILFISH, nicknamed "ghost fish," which is pictured in a screen shot from a video featured on the NPR website.

In case you're wondering: "The reason the fish can withstand pressure that's thousands of times that at the surface is because of a special chemical in their bodies," the story says. "Called trimethylamine oxide, it keeps the cell walls of the fish and amphipods flexible so they don't get crushed or infiltrated with saltwater."

There are plans to continue the research with a remotely operated vehicle that can travel along the bottom.



Sweet tooth sales tool

The Ear knows there are many of us on the North Coast who are gaga over GIRL SCOUT COOKIES, and can't wait for our annual fix. But what if you don't happen to find someone selling cookies? After years of putting their heads in the sand and forbidding Internet sales, the Girl Scouts are finally adding the Digital Cookie to their marketing agenda.

The Girl Scouts of Oregon and Southwest Washington will roll out their Digital Cookie sales Feb. 7, so check their website, www.girlscoutsosw.org, for updates.

Can't remember what all the flavors are, or the name of your favorite cookie? Check out <http://tinyurl.com/whatsmycookie>. At least you've got plenty of time to agonize over what to order.

In One Ear



by Elleda Wilson

ewilson@dailyastorian.com (503) 325-3211, ext. 257



History leaves memories behind

Nostalgia Nook (ran Aug. 13, 2010): The Ear is unhappy to report that yet another old cannery has collapsed. From KLOG's website (<http://klog.com>): "Authorities in Wahkiakum County are assessing the damage done when a portion of the old WARREN SALMON CANNERY COLLAPSED Friday night. Located at 120 Commercial St. in Cathlamet, the cannery was more than 140 years old, built in 1869 by the Warren Packing Company. The building was also featured in the 1999 movie, 'Snow Falling on Cedars.'"

"Locals report that about half of the roof caved in, with the upper floor coming down through the main floor. While the building was unoccupied, it was being used for storage of fishing nets and other equipment used by local fishermen. No injuries were reported, and there's no dollar estimate yet on the damage done." The cannery, in happier times, in a photo by JIM NIELAND.

Did you know the cannery was built by FRANK MANLEY WARREN (inset photo) in 1869, and that he was one of the passengers on the Titanic? According to Encyclopedia-titanica.org, Warren, who was born in 1848, was a first-class passenger on the ship, cabin number D37. He boarded at Cherbourg, France, with his wife, ANNA. They were the only first-class couple from Oregon, returning from a three-month European tour.

After the ship struck an iceberg the night of April 14, 1912, "Mr. Warren helped his wife into Lifeboat 5 and then stepped back," the site says. "Frank Warren lost his life in the disaster. His body, if recovered, was never identified."

Cathlamet's newspaper, The Columbia River Sun, eulogized him on April 18, 1912: "As a loving relative and a spirited, upright and square dealing employer, his passing creates profound regret."

The possible loss of the historic cannery is also sad. Yet another landmark of the Columbia River fishing industry has fallen.



What's going on out there?

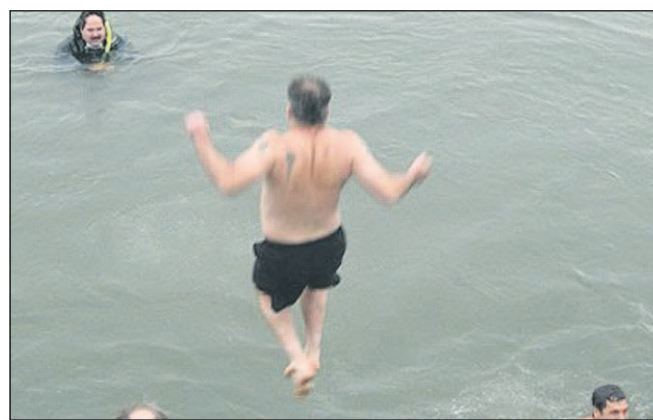
PAM CHATER spends a great deal of time cleaning debris off beaches. "I found this CANISTER (pictured, left) that says 'Hazardous material, Warning, Contact police or military,'" she told the Ear. After calling 911 to report it, both the Cannon Beach fire and police departments showed up. Turns out it's a military flare, which has been turned over to the Oregon State Police.

"My friends KAREN HOYT, SHELLY CRANE, VALERIE GIFT and I picked up many bags of trash recently," Pam said. "TRACY SUND helped us take it off the beach. Tracy works for the city of Cannon Beach, and he told me he took five truckloads of debris off the beach in one day."

Also among their recent discoveries, "I was saddened to find hundreds and hundreds of little dead CASSIN'S AUKLETS (pictured, right). It was as though they came in with tons of ocean debris," Pam recalled.

SHARNELLE FEE, executive director of the WILDLIFE CENTER OF THE NORTH COAST (<http://coastwildlife.org>), explained that the auklet die-off is being caused by starvation because several factors have disrupted their food supply. "They're a species we hardly ever, ever get in," Sharnelle said. "It's an unusual major event that's been happening in October, November and December."

"Karen and I pick up garbage every day," Pam added. "A lot of toothbrushes and slippers, obviously stuff from the Japanese tsunami, which is sad. That particular day there was so much trash, and the birds came with it. You have to wonder what's going on out there."



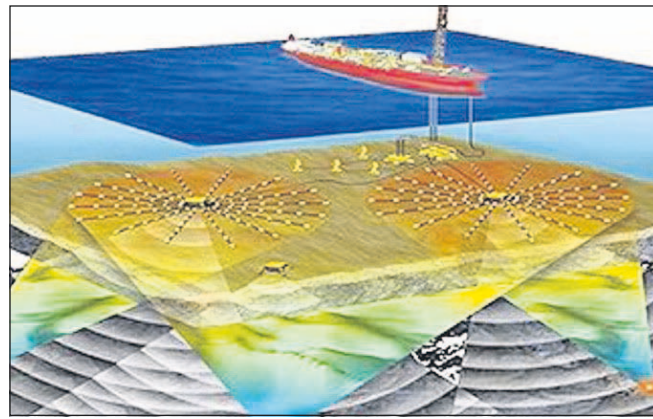
Taking the plunge

"On the morning of Dec. 24, a group of local divers took up the challenge to 'PLUNGE THE PACIFIC' to benefit JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU'S OCEAN FUTURES SOCIETY (www.oceanfutures.org), and to heighten the awareness of our changing oceans," Astorian PETER MARSH wrote. "This was the 10th and last stop — and probably the coldest — on the Brave the Elements Tour up the West Coast by a family of divers who support Cousteau and market the unique SURF-FUR dive parka and boat coat."

"The swim took place at 9 a.m. in the rain at Pier 39," Peter explained, "and ASTORIA SCUBA owner and dive instructor FLOYD HOLCOM was first in the river, wearing a full body suit, to act as safety officer." Floyd is pictured, upper left, in Peter's photo.

Peter recalled the youngest participant was age 8, and the oldest was over 70. The Surf-fur crew reported that the water was 44 degrees on their Facebook page, www.facebook.com/Surffur. Brrrrr.

"There was a post-swim party in the Scuba shop," Peter added, "with snacks and discounts on the Surf-fur line of clothing. For the raffle, Floyd donated great prizes of dive equipment from the shop, including a GoPro camera."



Can you hear me now?

Many rightfully worry about the effects of the loud underwater sounds used in sonar imaging and seismic surveys on mammals with sensitive hearing, such as whales, dolphins and orcas. Well, now there's hope. University of Bath, England, scientists have developed a more cetacean-friendly sonar system called ACOUSTIC ZOOM, according to Gizmag.com (<http://tinyurl.com/soniczoom>).

"Instead of reflecting sound energy back from the depths of the Earth, Acoustic Zoom measures how the energy is scattered as a beam of sound scans through an area before being picked up by a 16-spoke array set on the ocean floor," the article says. "The signal is then digitally processed, and from this, a much higher resolution image is built up." An image of the concept is shown, courtesy of the University of Bath.

"Acoustic Zoom is also gentler on the environment because it releases smaller amounts of energy over a longer time and at higher frequencies," said co-developer JACQUES GUIGNÉ, "so although marine life can still hear the sound waves, they are much less intrusive."

"We hope this new technology will help avoid unnecessary exploratory drilling by the oil industry and also reduce the impact of underwater surveys on the environment." Score one for the dolphins.

Reminders of Washaway Beach

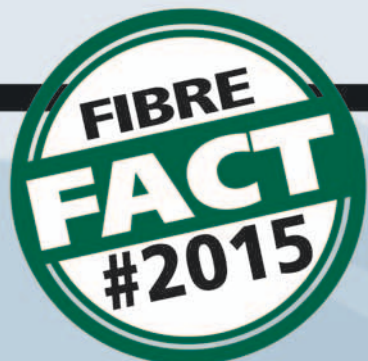
"I've seen a couple of stories now on WASHAWAY BEACH, Wash., in your column and thought you might be interested in the work of SENJA ANTILLA, an artist we represent who grew up in that area," TERI SUND of IMOGEN GALLERY (<http://imogengallery.com>) told the Ear. Senja is pictured, with one of her creations.



"She, for several years now, has been collecting the ocean tumbled wood from houses lost to erosion, and then creates beautiful mosaic compositions with her finds," Teri explained. "Senja takes it a step further by photographing homes that she knows are prone to winter storms before they are lost to the sea."

"Each piece she creates comes with its own catalog showing the dwellings intact, that are incorporated into each finished piece. It's a great story of living history, as she can identify where each piece of wood came from, in many cases knowing the owners of the original home."

"My art is a tribute to the loss of homes that occurs each winter at Washaway Beach, and a reminder of the strength of Mother Nature and the impermanence of all things," Senja observed on her Etsy.com website. "I transform the result of this devastation into beauty that can be appreciated."



Slimming down is easy.

Trim your bills down to one attractive payment!



January's a perfect time to cut down on excess debt for a healthy financial outlook. If the holidays left you feeling bloated with bills, we have just what the doctor ordered: A low-cost debt consolidation loan. Put your debt on a diet with one easy payment. Rates are 4.99% – 7.99% APR* with terms of 12 – 60 months. Call or visit us, or apply online.



www.fibreco.com

800.205.7872 • 360.423.8750

*Annual Percentage Rate available through 1/31/15. Subject to credit approval. Existing FFCU loans are not eligible for refinancing with this special offer.

Banking made easy

Fibre Federal
YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION