

Absurd wonders of peninsula life highlighted by 911 summary

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PACIFIC COUNTY, Wash. — In 2014, some Pacific County callers didn't let the absence of an actual emergency stop them from asking police, firefighters or medics to help them deal with minor inconveniences, petty disputes, and silly or bizarre situations.

It is possible that some of these situations turned out to be serious, and emergency managers say that when in doubt, it's generally better to call 911. But if you know your situation is not an urgent matter, Pacific County emergency managers urge you to use the non-emergency dispatch line: 360-642-9397.

Dispatch Reports are one of the most popular features in the *Chinook Observer*, even meriting a story in *The New York Times* years ago. This annual summary of the most eye-catching items isn't meant to make light of situations that callers may have found genuinely upsetting.

That's not illegal

Some citizens asked police to deal with issues that, while perfectly legal, had offended their sensibilities. These included a "suspicious" car with fogged-up windows, a stinking manhole, a man who flushed the toilet too often, and a neighbor who raked leaves at 2:30 in the morning.

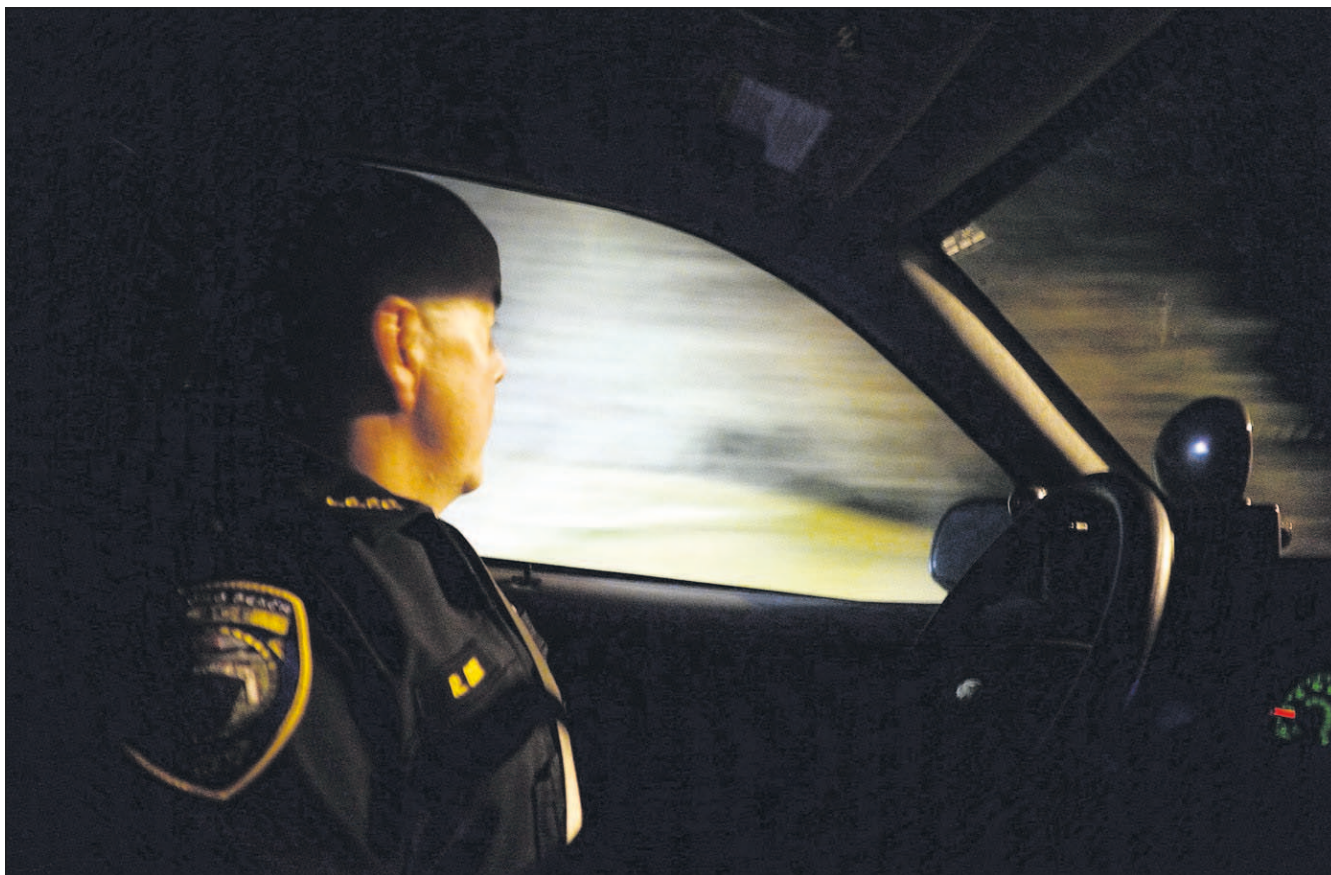
Jan. 6 — While investigating a report that an Ilwaco driver was stealing mail, a Long Beach Police officer determined that the "thief" was actually a mail carrier working for the Ilwaco Post Office.

Feb. 12 — A possibly intoxicated Ocean Park woman told 911 dispatchers that there was a "murderer in her house." Further questioning revealed that he was only killing his liver — the woman explained that the man "drank all her beers" and wouldn't leave.

Feb. 20 — In Ocean Park, a man reported that once again, someone "was burning smut magazines," which were "floating onto his property," according to a dispatcher's report. In an effort to help with the investigation, the caller saved some of crispy calendar girls.

May 22 — An Ocean Park caller complained that "for weeks now someone has been playing the same three musical notes."

June 25 — A Long Beach caller said there is a band playing and "they aren't that good."



Observer file photo

Pacific County law officers see a little bit of everything, as revealed by an annual review of 911 dispatch reports.

Aug. 4 — A caller complained that a shirtless Seaview pedestrian was "overweight and bald, acting strange."

Sept. 9 — A Long Beach resident reported "terrorist activities," saying that music blaring from the radios of passing vehicles had the power to "vibrate him out of bed and pierce his inner being."

Animal problems

Rural residents frequently reported escaped livestock, neighbors who neglected their horses, and aggressive dogs who bit their kids — or their chickens.

Jan. 30 — In Menlo, a "vicious Chihuahua" tried to bite the tires on the caller's bicycle.

Feb. 2 — A woman reported that someone stole two pythons from her Oysterville home.

Feb. 21 — A Seaview caller requested help freeing their wayward cat from the chimney where it had been stuck, possibly for two days.

May 1 — A woman asked if police could help her deal with a bat that had flown into her Ilwaco home, but later called them off, after her cat killed the bat.

May 7 — After killing all the chickens, two dogs in Ocean Park reportedly got stuck inside the coop.

May 21 — Nachotta residents reported a dispute over a missing ferret. The ferret was later recovered.

Aug. 22 — An Ocean park

woman called 911 to ask if it was legal to shoot coyotes that were climbing onto her back porch. Nov. 27 — A sea lion reportedly showed up on the football field at Ilwaco High School.

You kids get off my lawn!

While people in the unincorporated areas the county had problems with loud, badly behaved or neglected animals, people in Long Beach and Ilwaco had the same types of complaints about kids. Dispatchers fielded regular calls about rowdy teens, the parents who yelled at them, and the ever-present menace of skateboarding youths.

March 13 — Four teenagers at the Ilwaco Library were reportedly "trashing the place."

April 26 — A Smith Creek caller reported a "barn full of drunken teenagers."

May 11 — A young girl was lying flat on her stomach on a skateboard and riding down the middle of the road. No location given.

July 25 — According to a Long Beach caller, a "herd of skateboarders" were "bothering" people.

Aug. 7 — An 11-year-old boy allegedly stole a skateboard with a "voluptuous" Indian woman on it. The report did not specify whether the Indian woman was a passenger, or a decoration.

Aug. 11 — An Ilwaco caller complained that three kids were engaged in a "marsh-

mallow fight" that was obstructing traffic.

Stupid human tricks

A handful of citizens reported bizarre situations that arose as a result of their own folly. These included a man who said that he lost his pickup after jumping out of it during a "wreck," and a woman who believed she had "accidentally pulled her mother's fingernail off."

March 12 — A Grayland man said his car had been missing for seven hours. He had "loaned it to a gal to get beer" and she hadn't returned.

March 17 — A Seaview resident accused a woman of fraud, saying that she had falsely claimed to be dead.

April 13 — A woman in a jacket with "JESUS" written across the back suffered an apparent lapse of Christian behavior — a caller reported that she had been seen casing an Ocean Park home. The same day, a man who was hauling a small building through Ocean Park got tangled in some low-hanging power lines and told dispatchers he planned to sue the power company.

April 27 — After a failed shoplifting attempt, a woman allegedly retreated to the restroom of an Ilwaco business and smeared feces on the wall.

July 26 — A caller at an unspecified location said two people were "trapped in a shed."

Various states of undress

Other callers reported citizens whose outfits — or lack thereof — seemed to signal trouble. These included calls about naked pedestrians, a mother who refused to wear anything but a blanket, and multiple reports of an agitated man in a long green cape.

Dec. 30, 2013 — a caller at a Seaview business reported a woman who was "undressing" and cursing at other customers.

Jan. 3 — a caller in Long Beach reported that a man who had been smoking meth was "running around" in his birthday suit.

Sept. 4 — According to an Ocean Park caller, a long-haired man in checkered pajama pants "pulled a gun" on a family's dog while riding a bike around their property.

Sept. 22 — A "completely nude man was walking a dog" in Menlo.

Grownups behaving badly

Many people asked for aid when someone seemed out of control. During May, June and August, 911 callers reported three separate incidents involving machete-wielding men. In a separate incident, a disturbed man injured a neighbor while brandishing a sword.

In other cases though, callers appeared to be using 911 as a sort of tattling-hotline.

Feb. 3 — A caller said that shortly after getting off of the



bus in Nahcotta, an allegedly intoxicated woman "just peed" in a yard and then lied down for a rest.

April 25 — In Seaview, a man allegedly threw a drink into a car whose passengers had asked him to move from the middle of the road.

The same day, a man who was driving a mobility scooter allegedly flashed a knife at another person as he was passing by.

May 23 — Around 2 a.m., two possibly intoxicated callers threatened each other. According to the dispatcher's report, the caller said he had a squirt gun.

Sept. 22 — A concerned citizen in Long Beach told dispatchers that a woman on a motorized shopping cart had a "baby in one arm and another small child strapped to her leg."

Oct. 6 — A caller reported that people in a big red truck were "tossing couches into the ocean."

Unsolved mysteries

Finally, some callers reported suspicious incidents so bizarre that they couldn't be explained — or ignored. They described weird noises, objects that disappeared, only to reappear just as mysteriously, and visitors who tried to harm them in unusual ways — real or imagined.

June 13 — An Ocean Park resident reported a suspicious situation involving a garage door that kept "mysteriously opening."

Date missing — A woman said she had heard something on her porch three different times. Each time she went to investigate, the front porch light was out. Every time she replaced the bulb, someone took it.

Aug. 31 — A man said he had found a binder at a work site in Ocean Park that was filled with strange items including an ID card for a Russian woman and a map with "Bone yard" circled on it.

Dec. 19 — A Long Beach woman called 911 because her She believed someone had stolen her TV remote. A few minutes later, she called to let dispatchers know that she didn't need an officer or an ambulance — she found her remote.

Navy considers more sonobuoys off coast

PORTLAND (AP) — The U.S. Navy could significantly increase the number of sonobuoys it plans to deploy off the Pacific Coast.

The floating, acoustic surveillance devices are used in anti-submarine warfare. In a modified environmental assessment for Northwest training and testing, the Navy increased the number of planned sonobuoys from 20 to 720.

They would be in areas at least 12 miles offshore from Alaska, Washington, Oregon and Northern California.

The Navy acknowledges that deploying more of them is likely to harm endangered leatherneck turtles. It's accepting public comments until Feb. 2.

In addition to more buoys, the document also details additional "maritime security operations" that weren't reviewed in the earlier environmental assessment, possibly including escorts for subma-



Peter Ellis via en.wikipedia
The AN/SSQ-47B is an 'active' (pinger) or ranger (range measuring) sonar sonobuoy.

rines, search-and-seizure exercises, and anti-piracy missions.

OK for officers to walk away

Police in Oregon draft policy for dealing with mentally ill

PORTLAND (AP) — Portland police have drafted a new policy for dealing with mentally ill people that says sometimes it's OK for an officer to walk away if a confrontation could jeopardize a suspect or other people.

The policy follows a settlement last summer between the city and the U.S. Justice Department, which found that officers had a pattern of excessive force against people who have, or seem to have, mental illness, The Oregonian reported Monday.

The policy stresses the importance of officers recognizing characteristics of mental illness and requires them to avoid unnecessary violence and potential civil liability.

Portland's move comes as other big-city police departments change their policies on dealing with the mentally ill. The Milwaukee Police Department is stepping up training so that all police of-

ficers on the force would be fully trained to deal with the mentally ill by 2018, the mayor announced in December, months after a Milwaukee police officer killed a schizophrenic man at a park.

In deciding how to respond to a call involving a person suffering a mental health crisis, officers are required to assess the risk to themselves, the person who is the subject of the calls and others, the policy says.

They're also to evaluate if

police involvement is necessary given that many people with mental illness or in crisis aren't dangerous or may behave dangerously only under certain circumstances.

"Non-engagement or disengagement are tactics that can be used if the member determines that contact or continued contact with the person will result in an undue safety risk to the person, the public and/or members," the new policy reads. Officers would have to document

that decision in a report.

Among the other options is delaying taking a person into custody if police can return at a safer time.

Also under the new policy, persons flagged as having a "mental illness" in the police database will be purged 10 years after their last known law enforcement contact.

The bureau is seeking comment on the policy and other bureau directives through Jan. 31.

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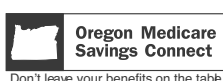
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This publication was produced by the State of Oregon with financial assistance through a grant from the Administration for Community Living and the Centers for Medicare Services. Grantees undertaking projects under government sponsorship are encouraged to express their findings. These contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the grantee should not assume endorsement by the Federal Government.

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