

Swimming with the stars

Gearhart's elk herd will be featured on OPB

By ANDREW R. TONRY
For EO Media Group

The elk that roam through Gearhart are about to become the stars of their very own television program.

Well, at least a segment of a program. They will be featured on Oregon Public Broadcasting's show, "Oregon Field Guide" at 8:30 p.m. Feb. 5.

"One of the things that attracted me to the story was that I know these animals to be very majestic and beautiful to look at," said the program's producer, Jule Gilfillan.

In Gilfillan's initial research, she was inspired by a video on YouTube showing the elk bathing and frolicking in the Necanicum River estuary and ocean surf.

"It's beautiful footage," said Gilfillan. "I was like, 'Wow, this is really something.'"

"So I just kept researching it and realized also that there was somewhat of a controversy in that area," she added. "Some people think the elk are just fantastic, and other people think they're a nuisance. Some people are worried about safety. There were just various issues that came up, so I grabbed a photographer, and we went down last August and interviewed folks."

The elk herd that visits



Photo courtesy of Neal Maine

The sight of an elk herd in the Necanicum estuary inspired a producer from Oregon Public Broadcasting's "Oregon Field Guide" program to shoot a segment on the phenomenon in Gearhart. This photo of the elk herd, shot by Neal Maine of PacificLight Images, is on exhibit at Fairweather House and Garden, along with several more images by the local nature photographer.

Gearhart sparked enough discussion last spring to warrant a town hall meeting where residents discussed possible methods of dissuading the elk from coming to town. So far, they haven't been dissuaded.

"We were kind of rolling the dice," Gilfillan said. "I was like, gosh, I wonder if we're going to see the herd. But we need not have worried, because they were right there."

Gilfillan was taken aback, however, by the Gearhart herd's comfort in proximity to humans.

"I have crawled along the pumice plain inside Mount

St. Helens to try to get covered with elk urine so that I'm not smelling like a human in order to get close to elk," she said. "They're very skittish. They're very aware. They have great senses of smell, and they know when a human is around."

The Gearhart herd was different.

"These elk, I guess, are habituated enough to being in the midst of human activity that they really didn't scare at all," said Gilfillan. "And that was so unusual, according to my experience."

Along with a cameraman, Gilfillan followed the herd

closely for two days last August.

"They were in the dunes area, then they made their way into a neighborhood and then made themselves at home on a golf course," said Gilfillan. "We just got amazing footage."

"We met one poor woman who was chasing them out of her yard," Gilfillan added. The incident presented the issue in a nutshell.

"There are legitimate safety concerns, I just feel that way personally," said Gilfillan. "I think I wanted to honor all the opinions that I did hear, because I want to represent the community's



Photo courtesy of Neal Maine

Nature photographer Neal Maine captured another shot of elk strolling on the beach near Gearhart. The elk will be featured in a segment on Oregon Public Broadcasting's "Oregon Field Guide" Feb. 5.



Photo courtesy of Gail Como

Gail Como, Gearhart city treasurer and administrative assistant, shot this photo of the elk herd as it marched down Pacific Way in front of City Hall.

opinion authentically. So we found people with lots of different views."

"I don't think we take a stand," she added. "But we explore the issue of how the community is going to grapple with it. I have a feeling this is not an uncommon experience in communities all over, particularly in the

American West, and likely to become more so, because wildlife is more protected in some areas and that has allowed them to reproduce more, and we are also building in habitat."

After the initial airing Thursday, the episode will be repeated at 1:30 a.m. and at 6:30 p.m. Feb. 8, on OPB.

Sunset Empire Transportation District offers funds, free day

By The Daily Astorian

Sunset Empire Transportation District recently announced the opportunity for eligible parties in Clatsop County to apply for two funding programs allocated by the Oregon Department of Transportation for the 2015-17 biennium.

Eligible parties include counties, cities, transportation districts, public or private agencies, Indian tribes, individuals or any of these joined in cooperative agreements.

Only applications that provide transportation services for older adults and people with disabilities will be considered.

The two transportation program funds — the Special Transportation Fund and the 5310 Program Grant — are separate programs requiring separate applications.

For more information, visit the SETD website at www.ridethebus.org or contact Diane Moody at 503-861-5363 or DianeM@ridethebus.org.

Application packs may be picked up at the Astoria Transit Center, 900 Marine Drive, open daily from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. and will be mailed upon request.

Applications are due by 5 p.m. Feb. 6.

In addition, Sunset Empire Transportation Services will host its annual "Ridership Appreciation Day" Thursday to show appreciation to bus riders and the community for their support.

The Ridership Appreciation Day coincides with the

Project Homeless Connect event at the Seaside Convention Center from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m..

For more information about Ridership Appreciation Day or Project Homeless Connect, contact Elisabeth Pietila at 503-861-7433 or go to www.ridethebus.org

The public is also invited to attend an open house at the Astoria Transit Center from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. Refreshments, prizes and transit information will be available.

Prepare for Goonies in June

Eager to relive one of the most beloved coming-of-age stories of the 1980s, fans will flock to historic Astoria and surrounding area to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the cult classic film "The Goonies," June 4 to 7.

During the four-day event, Goonies fans can tour iconic film locations, bowl at "Chunk's Bowling Alley," attend costumed quote-a-long film screenings, sip Truffle Shuffle Stout from local Fort George Brewery and adventure on a scavenger hunt supported by Geocaching.com

Using Lego blocks, the Virtua-LUG builders group recreated iconic scenes from "The Goonies," which will be on display. In the spirit of One Eyed Willie's trea-

sure-filled ship in the film, the tall ships Lady Washington and Hawaiian Chieftain will be offering tours and sails in Astoria during the celebration. Official memorabilia, including T-shirts, hats, glassware, collectibles and more, will be available at the event, primarily in Astoria and Cannon Beach.

The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce will sell weekend passes as well as individual tickets for specific events. Tickets are anticipated to go on sale March 1. The detailed event schedule and prices will be announced early this year.

The chamber offers several sponsorship options, including placement on the event website and social media, signs at the events

and ways to get products into people's hands. Sponsorships enable the chamber to keep costs for attendees down. Sponsorship funds also boost its ability to bring in cast members and other special guests, which will further increase excitement around the event.

Businesses can participate in celebration activities like '80s Night Out, or simply by offering a themed ex-

perience to visitors during the celebration (or all year long).

Individuals who would like to assist during the celebration as a volunteer will be able to sign up online this spring when details on those roles and shifts are available.

Contact Marketing Manager Regina Willkie at 503-836-5147 or regina@oldoregon.com for more information.



Daily Astorian file

Goonies fans Steve Simmang, right, of Hemet, California, dressed as Brand, and Kelly Doule, left, of Brooklyn, New York, dressed as Chunk, pose for a photo taken by Doule's wife, Kasia, following the Truffle Shuffle gathering at John Warren Field during the 2013 Goonies Day.

Liberty Theater Presents
Portland Chamber Orchestra's
It's Better with a Baritone
BROADWAY'S BEST BOYS

February 14 at 7:30 pm
Celebrate Valentine's Day with the Portland Chamber Orchestra and Acclaimed baritones Rocky Blumhagen & Ron Spivak's with a romantic edition of their Broadway review

Third Thursday Comedy Series
Great Family Shows 7:00 pm
March 19 - Irish Comedian George Casey
April 16 - Ventriloquist Lynn Trefzger

Anthony Kearns
Ireland's Foremost Tenor
One of PBS's supergroup
"The Irish Tenors"
May 16 at 7:00 pm

Liberty Theater 1203 Commercial
Box Office 503.325.5922 X55 or ticketswest.com

WANTED
Alder and Maple Saw Logs & Standing Timber
Northwest Hardwoods • Longview, WA
Contact: Steve Axtell • 360-430-0885 or John Anderson • 360-269-2500

How I wish I had gone to
Columbia Travel...

Call us to schedule your next vacation!

433 13th St., Astoria
503-325-1531 **COLUMBIA TRAVEL**