

**YOUR LION EYES**



Like Katy Perry or not, you couldn't help but be dazzled by the lion she rode in on for the Super Bowl XLIX Halftime Show. She was completely upstaged by her own prop. Where, you might ask, did she find the amazing critter? Scappoose, that's where. Yes, you read that right.

According to a story on KATU, the lion, actually a giant puppet, was designed and manufactured by Michael Curry and team at his studio in Scappoose (<http://tinyurl.com/currylion>). Weighing in at about a ton, the 30-foot long, 14-foot high feline required 13 puppeteers to complete its sleek moves during the show. The photo of the lion is courtesy of NBC.

The project started as a small 3-D model, and grew from there. "The entire thing was carbon fiber, but then we covered the entire thing in gold mirror. Triangulated mirror, which was to replicate origami," the artist told KATU. "We wanted this piece to feel heavy, so you could almost feel its footsteps into the ground, and to keep it slow enough it almost felt like a time-lapse entrance."

This isn't Curry's first rodeo with Katy Perry. He's designed other puppets for her stage show, not to mention he has a resume as long as his lion's tail (<http://michaelcurrydesign.com>) — including designing several projects for the Walt Disney Company (think "The Lion King" on Broadway, for one), Las Vegas shows, Cirque du Soleil, films, TV, opera and much more.

When Curry watched his creation on TV Sunday, he was tickled when his puppeteers surprised him. "We didn't even know it could roar like that," he told KATU. "That final move, was glorious for us."

Katy must have been feeling pretty glorious, too. She got to keep the lion.

**IT TAKES A VILLAGE**



Another goodie for marine biology fans: An extremely rare 15-foot megamouth shark washed up on a beach in the province of Albay in the Philippines Jan. 28, according to Mashable.com (<http://tinyurl.com/megabeached>).

A photo of the critter by Christopher Bird is shown. The locals named it Toothless, because they thought it resembles the creature of the same name in the "How to Train Your Dragon" series.

The article notes that not much is known about the species, since its existence was only confirmed in 1976, when one got caught on a U.S. Navy vessel's anchor.

The shark normally hangs out at depths of about 1,300 to 1,600 feet, and has only encountered humans 60-plus times, 15 of which have been in the Philippines. Discovery.com has a film clip of one such meeting, "Alien Sharks: The Megamouth," at <http://tinyurl.com/megadiscover>

Toothless has been put on ice for further study. However, it was quite a feat hauling the beast onto the beach to be studied, as megamouths can weigh a ton or more (<http://tinyurl.com/megawikip>). You can watch the struggle in a Facebook video by Nonus Enolvus at <http://tinyurl.com/haulmega> — yes, it really took a village to get 'er done.

**BOOKS AND CHOCOLATE**



Are you a romance novel aficionado? 'Tis the season. Astoria author Muriel Jensen's books are featured as prizes in Harlequin Books' Heartwarming Valentine's Day Giveaway. She is pictured, left. The prize packages (four in all, plus a grand prize) feature books by other Harlequin authors, as well as Muriel, along with chocolates. The grand prize throws in roses, as well.

Want to enter? Post a reply to "What's your favorite Heartwarming moment?" in the comments section at the Harlequin Heartwarming blog (<http://tinyurl.com/hrtwarm>) before Valentine's Day.

"One of the books is my latest, 'In My Dreams,' released Jan. 1," Muriel posted on her Facebook page. "Good luck! Wonderful books and chocolate. Doesn't get any better than that." She has a point.

**In One Ear**



by Elleda Wilson

[ewilson@dailyastorian.com](mailto:ewilson@dailyastorian.com) (503) 325-3211, ext. 257

**ONCE IN A LIFETIME**



Former Astorian Stig M. Johannessen posted a link to a video, "Building the Cannery Pier Hotel," (<http://tinyurl.com/canpier>) on Facebook, and the Ear admits to being captivated. The 20-minute film, narrated by architect and hotel owner Jake Jacob, documents the hotel's rise on the pilings of the former location of the Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Company, which was formed in 1895. A still shot from the video of the original building is shown.

The opening shot of the film says: "A special thanks to longtime Astoria resident Dick Thompson, who on his own accord, walked down to the hotel for two years and filmed the hotel construction with his 8mm camera mounted on an old rifle stock. When asked why he did this, he said, 'I thought this was a once-in-a-lifetime event.'"

**BIRTHDAY BONANZA**



The Ear has always thought buying a Powerball ticket was akin to flushing \$2 down the commode, especially since nobody in Oregon ever seemed to win anything.

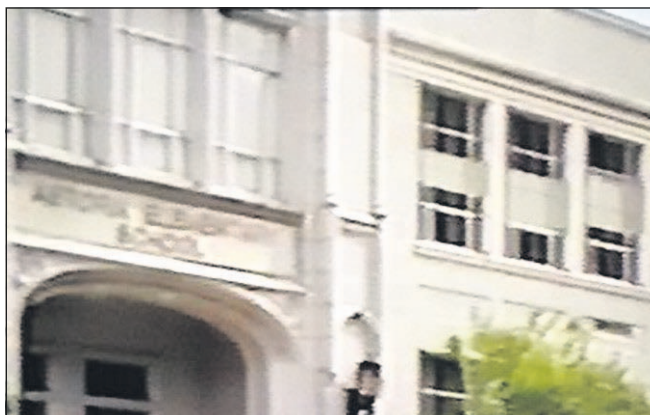
Wrong. Melissa Lundy of Tillamook, while out for her birthday dinner, checked her Powerball ticket from the Jan. 31 drawing. She was astounded to realize she'd matched four of five numbers and the Powerball, and won \$10,000. Melissa is pictured in a photo courtesy of the Oregon Lottery.

"We scanned the ticket when I was out for dinner, and it said go to Salem, then I checked on my phone and couldn't believe it!" she exclaimed. "I'm having a great birthday!" Just so you know, she bought the ticket at the Tillamook Safeway.

"It made my flowers look like chump change," her husband, Bobby, noted. "But I'm not complaining." Especially since the couple is now planning a vacation in Mexico.

There was another unidentified Oregon winner of \$10,000 in that very same Powerball drawing. The Ear is reconsidering buying a ticket.

**WHAT'S IN A NAME?**



Astoria Elementary School was featured as the establishing scene for a skit on the Jan. 31 Saturday Night Live on NBC, Jeffrey Nelson told the Ear. "The comedy bit was about Career Day at a school, and starred guest host J.K. Simmons, the Oscar-nominated actor for the film 'Whiplash.'"

Pictured, Jeff's screen shot of the school. Sure enough, it says "Astoria Elementary School" over the door when you look at it closely.

But wait! The real elementary school here on Franklin Avenue actually says "John Jacob Astor" over the door. Yet, the windows, doorway, doors, decorative inverted Ys, etc., in the photo from the SNL skit look identical to those at our local school.

So why did SNL change the school's name?

**GROUNDHOG DAY DUST-UP**



Punxsutawney Phil might be the reigning rodent weather forecaster on Groundhog Day in Punxsutawney, Pa., but what does an East Coast groundhog know about West Coast weather, the Ear wants to know, feeling somewhat petulant.

So Phil predicts six more weeks of winter? Hmph. How can the little varmint even see his shadow with all that snow around, anyway? The Ear prefers to heed the prognostication of the West Coast's newest weather muse, housed at the Oregon Zoo, hedgehog Whiskers J., who, according to KGW, predicts an early spring (<http://tinyurl.com/punxwhisk>). Whiskers is pictured with zoo curator Michael Illig in a photo by Michael Durham courtesy of the Oregon Zoo and KGW.

"Hedgehogs are the real weather experts of the animal world," Illig proclaimed to KGW. "Punxsutawney Phil and his ilk are relative newcomers to the game. When European immigrants to the U.S. realized their new home didn't have hedgehogs, they turned to the groundhog out of necessity. But Whiskers J. is bringing the (Groundhog Day) holiday back to its origins."

**HE TOOK UP HIS COW-HORN ...**



Another gem, courtesy of the George Flavel Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/captain.george.flavel](http://www.facebook.com/captain.george.flavel)): "Jan. 27, 1882 — This morning the inhabitants of the quiet little town of Oysterville (Wash.) were awakened by the hideous howling of a whistling buoy, which has been washed from its proper place of residence, supposed to be from near the mouth of the Columbia River, and seated its noble self in the ocean, opposite here, and about two miles off shore."

Pictured, inset, a whistling buoy, courtesy of the Jan. 3, 1885, edition of Scientific American (<http://tinyurl.com/whisbuoy>), which noted: "There are now 34 of these whistling buoys on the coast of the U.S., which have cost, with their appurtenances, about \$1,200 each (\$29,268.29 in 2014). It is a curious fact that, in proportion as they are useful to the mariner, they are obnoxious to the house dweller within earshot of them ... They can at times be heard 15 miles, and emit an inexpressibly mournful and saddening sound."

Back to the consternation of the 1882 Oysterville locals: "To say that they were wonder-struck is only a mild way of expressing it. None could solve the mystery. Each seemed to have a different opinion of its origin or whereabouts. One man, for instance, arose jumped into his clothes, and rushed around the corner to see if it were some one in distress. After following the noise from house to house he returned home none the wiser for his search. Some thought it was Indians lamenting their dead. Another took up his good old cow-horn and started off 'over the hills and far away,' stopping at intervals to blow and holler, thinking to find some one in great distress ..."

**ET TU, TUNA?**



Another dorsal-finned critter is roaming the ocean, but this one is Aman-made: The GhostSwimmer roboshark, pictured in a U.S. Navy photo, a shark-shaped underwater robot that is the Navy's latest toy to gather data and videos on tides, currents and weather, according to a story on Gizmag.com (<http://tinyurl.com/roboshark>). Both its body shape and swinging tail mimic its namesake.

Developed by Boston Engineering as part of the Navy's Silent NEMO project, to create "nature-inspired unmanned underwater vehicles," roboshark is about 5 feet long, weighs almost 100 pounds, and works both in 10 inches of water and as deep as at 300 feet. No surprise, it can also be used for covert military operations such as surveillance and reconnaissance, or for more mundane tasks, like hull inspection.

The device can be either remotely controlled via a 500-foot tether connected to a computer, or can scoot about autonomously using onboard sensors and a battery.

In development alongside the roboshark, but not yet in service, the BIOSwimmer — this one looks like a tuna.



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