

# Contest: First event was a relatively rinky-dink affair

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The orthodox narrative pins the first sandcastle-type event in 1964, the year of the Good Friday Quake — a 9.2 megquake in early spring that originated in Alaska and sent tsunami waves crashing along Pacific Northwest shores.

However, the Library of Congress states that the event began in 1965 “as a promotional event for this small Oregon coastal town.” Furthermore, the Seaside Signal archives from summer 1965 advertise the “1st annual Sand Castle and Sculpture Contest,” which took place July 29 that year.

So what happened here?

## Origin story

In the wake of the earthquake and tsunami, which occurred on March 27, 1964, Cannon Beach became a ghost town.

The wall of water and the debris it pushed up Ecola Creek knocked out the Ecola Creek Bridge, eliminating Cannon Beach's north entrance. The incident sparked a “mass exodus:” many residents sold their property and left Cannon Beach for good, according to Elaine Trucke, executive director of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum.

That summer, a group of locals formed a sandcastle event held in August, according to documents submitted to the

state Parks and Recreation Department.

“The intention was to kind of boost the morale of the community and to show that the beach is not a scary place, that it is safe to come,” Trucke said.

That first sandcastle event — which is not terrifically well documented — was a relatively rinky-dink affair, mostly concocted as a lark for the children, many of whom came dressed in costumes, she and other sources said.

“It was mainly a community event that year,” she said.

Trucke added that, like today, the event included a parade, though it definitely did not include master sand-sculptors and high-stakes judging.

So a sandcastle event of some sort almost certainly happened in 1964. On this point, Bill Steidel, Peter Lindsey and Billie Atherton — three people who were either involved in the event or were around at the time — all agree.

## ‘Annual’ vs. ‘anniversary’

Because the first event, in 1964, was planned as a one-off, it wasn't designated “first annual” because there was nothing annual about it yet. But, on the basis of that experience, the town decided to make it an annual event the following year, complete with judging categories and cash prizes.

This means that the “first

annual” Sandcastle Contest, as publicized in the Seaside Signal, was, in fact, the second contest, that the “second annual” contest was the third contest, and so on.

“The first one was not the first one,” said Treva Haskell, who co-founded Bruce's Candy Kitchen in Cannon Beach in 1963.

So — if one starts counting from 1964, as tradition dictates — the 2014 celebration marked both the “50th annual” event and, yes, 50th anniversary of the first event. But it was actually the 51st consecutive contest, not the 50th Sandcastle Contest — unless one starts the clock in 1965, when it officially became “annual.” This year, then, marks

the “51st annual” event but the 52nd consecutive event.

## Lasting legacy

Historical hair-splitting aside, one thing appears beyond dispute: The Good Friday Quake, a formative event that could have destroyed Cannon Beach, ended up revitalizing it. By creating the Sandcastle Contest, the locals used the traumatic episode to their advantage, purposefully founding a legacy defined by opportunity rather than tragedy.

And the estimated 15,000 to 20,000 visitors that drove to Cannon Beach specifically for the Sandcastle Contest last year prove that the legacy endures.

See today's *Coast Weekend* for the full schedule of events.

# Fireworks: Washington allows virtually all types of consumer fireworks

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firework consisting of a cardboard base packed with anywhere from 25 to more than 1,000 “shots” — small gray plastic tubes filled with explosive powder.

When an SMB is detonated, each of those tubes shoots into the air with a shrill whistle, shatters apart and falls back to earth, creating a shower of litter that's hard for even the best-intentioned reveler to clean up. Unlike colorful caps and wings, the dull gray or green SMB litter blends into sand and soil. With parties across the state detonating thousands of SMBs in the week around Independence Day, it quickly becomes apparent just how much garbage is literally raining down on the Evergreen State.

After setting of a single medium-sized SMB, “You'll have 297 of these that are scattered all over,” Anderson explained, sifting her hand through the box. “You'll never ever close to getting the total number that get blown up,

because you can't see them.”

Anderson insists that she is not anti-fireworks or anti-fun. If someone manufactured plastic-free fireworks, she says might buy them herself. But she points out that, in some cases, manufacturing standards for fireworks are too outdated or vague to address the problems caused by plastic components. She wants legislators to restrict or prohibit SMBs, and she hopes to convince consumers to stop buying them.

“If we don't get serious about how we reduce [plastics] we're really leaving a legacy that's for the worse for all the generations,” Anderson said. “It's kind of like patriotic pollution of our oceans. I don't get that!”

## Little pieces, big consequences

The thousands of plastic bits certainly make the beach look bad July 5, but Anderson says the ugly litter is the least of it. Over time, plastics break down into tiny pieces, called “microplastics” that

can disperse widely in water or soil. Those microplastics are then absorbed and stored in animals' bodies, where they can release harmful chemicals. Animals and humans who subsist on seafood can end up with high concentrations of toxic substances in their systems as a result.

Animals can also be injured when they get tangled up or cut by plastic garbage, or mistake it for food and eat it.

In 2007, Anderson was walking on a path near her house, when she spotted a flash of bright red in the dune grass. When she parted the grass, she found the carcass of a northern fulmar, a type of sea-bird. She was shocked to see that its digestive tract was full of chunks of plastic.

“I cried. I just stood there and cried,” Anderson recalled. “I was so stunned. And then I really got involved in trying to understand plastics in our oceans.”

It was hardly an isolated incident — a Google image search for “northern fulmar

plastic” instantly produces dozens of disturbing images of birds that died after mistaking plastic for food.

“They dive for it and consume it, and then it's too late,” Anderson explained.

## A considerable cause

Anderson has dedicated considerable time and energy to this and other local environmental causes. After she and her husband retired from the Seattle area several years ago, they decided to make their home in Ocean Park. Anderson serves on the board of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, and helped to found the “Grassroots Garbage Gang,” along with Shelley Pollack.

She still volunteers for GGG, which sponsors three well-attended annual clean-ups, including the one on July 5. But she started Environmentally Friendly Fireworks so she could do political work related to plastics in the environment without distracting from GGG's mission. The group consists of a handful of

locals who help with outreach efforts.

Citing health, safety and fire hazards, many states have already banned consumer fireworks or prohibited certain types. Idaho, Oregon and California only allow so-called “Safe and Sane” (nonaerial) fireworks, and Arizona has banned almost every type. But Washington allows virtually all types of consumer fireworks.

M-80s/M-100s, firecrackers, skyrockets, salutes, chasers and bottle rockets are specifically prohibited under state law, but many of these are readily available on reservations, where the rules are different. Cities and counties can pass laws or ordinances that place additional restrictions on fireworks, but Pacific County has not chosen to do so.

Anderson says her efforts to win over legislators yield a variety of reactions.

“I'm surprised at how many of them write back to me and say, I had no idea there's plastics in fireworks!”

Anderson said. A few say placing restrictions on SMBs on fireworks would impose on their constituents' freedom.

Others insist that it's not their problem, because the cities in their own district don't allow aerial fireworks. Anderson says this misses the point, since neither fireworks, nor the damage they cause, stay in the district where they were purchased.

“I want to tell them, ‘Do you think that this is the end of it? Do you think waterways don't travel through your jurisdiction on the way to the ocean?’ These things float wonderfully,” Anderson said.

So far, the groups' victories have been small.

“More people know,” Anderson said. She understands it will take patience and time to get people — especially lawmakers — interested in such an under-recognized issue.

“They're not going to do anything if they don't know about it. So the first big issue is making sure people realize,” Anderson said.

# Audit: Corrections increased the Port's net position by \$201,047

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• Mistakes in calculating rent escalation, expired leases not being re-upped, incorrect termination dates, rent charged without a lease and leases changed without a signed agreement resulted in less than a \$5,000 change in the Port's financials. The audit recommended third-party accounting and billing software, which staff have been instituting.

• Revenue and expenses, which should be recorded when they are recognized instead of when they are received or paid, were sometimes recognized in the wrong fiscal year. The corrections increased the Port's net

position by \$201,047.

• Omitted disclosure of compliance with a bank loan agreement specifying the maintenance of a debt service coverage ratio and issuing audits on time, which the Port did not. The mistake did not effect the Port's financials, but could have caused the loan in question to become due immediately.

“All told, it reduced the Port's net position by \$1.9 million,” Lanzarotta said of the corrections to the Port's previous financials. Almost all of that, he added, was the accounting for pollution remediation.

The Port's audit had been due at the end of December, but the agency was unsure about the

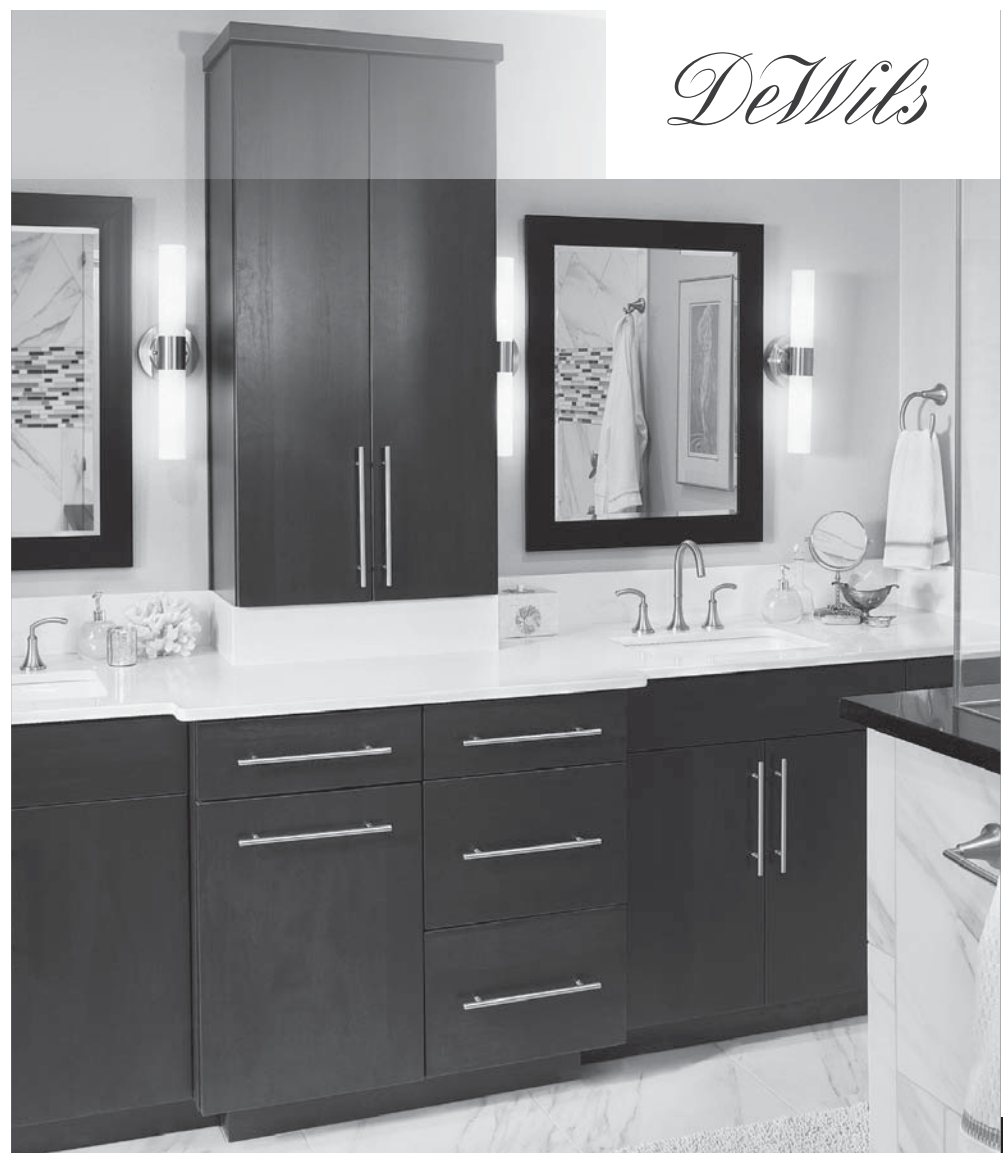
accuracy of its financials. The Port had fired Finance Manager Colleen Browne in November, hired Jim Grey to replace her, and added staff accountant Will Isom.

The Port contracted Barbara Blue of Bussert Law & Associates in August to help staff scour through the financials back to June 30, 2013. In January, the Port hired financial accounting firm CFO Selections to help prepare for the 2013-14 audit. At the same meeting, it hired Moss Adams to perform the audit.

Lanzarotta said he is confident the Port has accurate financial statements moving forward, and that the Port will be on time with its next audit.

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