



FLOWERS FROM THE STORM

Q&A

with

Jan Nybakke



JOSHUA BESSEX — The Daily Astorian

Jan Nybakke in her garden. Before the 2007 storm, Nybakke’s property was forested.

EVERYTHING I DO IN THE GARDEN HAS ORIGINATED FROM MY EARLY YEARS ON THE FAMILY FARM.

Q: What are you doing in your garden this month?

A: Weeding, watering, cutting back excessive growth and watching daily changes.

Q: What has been your biggest gardening challenge this season?

A: Deer! The number of deer continue to increase. We no longer have the occasional few we enjoyed. Deer now appear in larger numbers, foraging, trampling and destroying plants.

Q: What’s the most recent gardening book you’ve read that you would recommend?

A: “Creative Propagation,” by Peter Thompson. This is not an easy read, yet reading it may encourage the gardener to be patient. Gardening failures often occur when we do not allow plants to be natural. We must learn to release control.

“Deep-Rooted Wisdom,”

by Augustus Jenkins Farmer. This should be required reading for everyone. Our disconnection from the earth grows as we are digitally drugged. This book draws the reader back to one’s sense of place and the wisdom of generations on the earth.

Q: What part of your personality is reflected in your garden?

A: I think this might be better answered by a friend.

Everything I do in the garden has originated from my early years on the family farm. I treasure those years, learning a work ethic, learning how living on the land successfully demands knowing one’s community, and a citizen’s role within a healthy community.

Q: What is your favorite plant? Why?

The persimmon tree. The wild persimmon trees on the family farm produced

only enough pulp for holiday puddings during Thanksgiving and Christmas. They are very different from the Asian persimmon common in the Northwest. The wild persimmon is only edible after the first frost. It has many seeds, and is small. Once ripe it falls to the ground and is enjoyed by cattle, therefore a challenge to gather enough for pulp.

Q: Describe the pleasure you get from working in your garden.

A: Endless pleasure — time alone, shrouded in various weathers, colors, birdsong, dragonflies, breezes, away from digital interruptions and realizing at day’s end the tired body senses renewal.

Jan Nybakke and her husband forged a sprawling garden on their property off 15th Street in Astoria after the Great Coastal Gale of 2007 knocked over many trees.



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Daisies in Jan Nybakke’s garden in Astoria.

THE SHIP REPORT

Surviving fun on the water

By JOANNE RIDEOUT

Special to The Daily Astorian

‘Boat Mom’

It’s summertime, the sun is out, the air is warm, and in the Pacific Northwest, the water beckons. It looks so beautiful and inviting with the sun glinting off the surface of the river, lake or ocean.

At this time of year I hear many people say, “We live in paradise.” I agree with them. I love being on the water.

When we’re relaxing, we want to be carefree and leave our responsibilities behind. So it’s perhaps not a surprise that when we go out on the water in boats, or swimming, or just playing, maybe the last thing anyone really wants to think about too much is safety. It seems like a downer, right? After all, how could anything go wrong in all this sunshine?

Well, just ask the U.S. Coast Guard. They have the grim stats. I see the sad press releases almost daily. Each year, they rescue more than 300 people here in the Lower Columbia region alone. Some are happy endings, many are not. Many of those people are recreational boaters who were intending to have fun.

The sad thing is, the solution to this tragic situation is not rocket science. People die needlessly on the water on a regular basis because they don’t do a few simple things.

So it’s time for me to put on my “Boat Mom” hat, like I do at least once a year on The Ship Report, climb up on my maritime soapbox briefly and say — hey!

This won’t take long; just a few simple things and you’re good to go. Do them and you stand a great chance of making it home safe no matter what. That means you get to come back tomorrow, or next weekend, and the weekend after that, and do it again. That means no one agonizing as they search for you and don’t find you. No one crying at your funeral. No one missing you on holidays. Shall I go on?

Here’s my painless summer checklist for you, some tips for surviving fun times:

• **Wear a lifejacket.** There, I said it. I’ll say it again. Wear a lifejacket. Call it what you want, call it a PFD if that sounds more sexy. Whatever you call it, don’t go out on the water in a boat, a kayak, a canoe, or any watercraft without one. I don’t, and I wouldn’t

dream of it. I like being alive. PFDs come in all shapes and sizes. If you fall into our cold Pacific Northwest water, your survival time will be exponentially longer if you have something to keep you afloat. That’s because after a few minutes your ability to swim will be impaired by the chilly water, no matter how fit you are. In some places on the Columbia where there are strong currents and undertows, people should even wear PFDs when they’re swimming. With a PFD, you might be uncomfortable floating around, but you’ll probably live long enough for someone to get help. If they know you’re in trouble. Which brings me to my next point.

• **Let someone know where you’re going.** The Coast Guard calls this filing a “float plan.” I don’t care what you call it or how you do it, just let someone know where you’re going and when you expect to be back. It can be as simple as calling or texting a friend and saying, “I’m going swimming (kayaking, canoeing, surfing, fishing) at so-and-so place, and I’ll be back by dinner time.” That way if something goes wrong and you do end up floating around

out there for awhile in your PFD, they’ll know where to send someone to look for you. It’s a lonely and potentially deadly thing to be in trouble, and realize that not a soul knows where you are.

• **Have a VHF radio or an EPIRB and know how to use them.** Both of these devices are for people who might end up in the water too far from shore to swim to safety. With an EPIRB (that’s Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon), the Coast Guard can home in on your exact location in a matter of minutes if you’re within a few miles of shore. It looks like a big walk-ie talkie. A little pricey, but what’s your life worth? VHF radios are much less expensive, and if you have a watercraft of any kind you should have one on board. The Coast Guard can also use the signal from a VHF radio to find you. Many lives have been saved by both of these devices, but they don’t work unless you have one.

And please don’t tell me you have a cellphone. While cellphones have saved some boaters’ lives, they’re an unreliable substitute for a VHF radio in this situation. That’s because cell towers are orient-



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KMUN General Manager Joanne Rideout is the voice of The Ship Report.

ed to work over land areas, not over the water. You may only have one chance to call for help before whatever craft you are on sinks out from under you. A wet cell phone won’t work at all. Use your one shot to call the Coast Guard on your VHF radio.

Save the alcohol

Well, that’s pretty much it, my very short checklist — other than the no-brainer advice to save the alcohol (and other intoxicants) for later. Boating under the influence is just as bad an idea as driving on land that way, and it’s also illegal.

As I frequently say on the radio, thanks for listening. Safety doesn’t have to be a downer. You can do these few things and then forget about them until you need them. I

hope you never do.

But if the time ever comes that you do need the PFD, the VHF radio or the float plan, you’ll be really, really glad you risked feeling perhaps a little dorky. It’s a small price to pay, a tiny price in fact, in exchange for the wonderful and inestimable privilege of getting to live another day.

Joanne Rideout is general manager of Coast Community Radio (KMUN-FM) in

Astoria. She’s also the creator and producer of The Ship Report, a radio show and podcast about All Things Maritime. You can hear The Ship Report on Coast Community Radio at 8:48 a.m. weekdays at 91.9FM, streaming at www.coastradio.org. Podcast available on The Ship Report website at www.shipreport.net.

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