

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



STEPHEN A. FORRESTER, *Editor & Publisher*  
 LAURA SELLERS, *Managing Editor*  
 BETTY SMITH, *Advertising Manager*  
 CARL EARL, *Systems Manager*  
 JOHN D. BRUIJN, *Production Manager*  
 DEBRA BLOOM, *Business Manager*  
 HEATHER RAMSDELL, *Circulation Manager*

## Royal Nebeker was a life force

*Naming the Clatsop College Art Gallery is a fitting memorial*

**M**aurie Clark changed the face of Cannon Beach in the 1970s by making it an attractive home to artists.

In a different, but just as significant way, Royal Nebeker stimulated Astoria's artistic culture. Nebeker's leadership was acknowledged in a permanent way on Tuesday when the Clatsop Community College Board of Directors named the campus art gallery after him.

Nebeker made Astoria a serious arts community in a couple ways. Early in his tenure as chairman of the college Arts Department, Nebeker began a series of lectures and workshops to which he brought eminent artists from cities such as Seattle and New York. Speaking about that some four years ago, Nebeker said these visiting artists evoked two responses. Some local artists resented the presence of the big leaguers. But many others came to the lectures and workshops eagerly, to learn.

While Nebeker built the caliber of the CCC art faculty, he also gained an international following as a painter. His growing reputa-

tion put Astoria on the map.

What followed was a burgeoning group of artists who made Astoria their home. Then in the early 1990s, a gutsy entrepreneur named Corinne Ricciardi opened Astoria's first major league commercial art gallery. It was a startling move in town that was stuck in a sort of lethargy. Today downtown is home to a number of galleries. The annual artists studio tour sponsored by Astoria Visual Arts includes a bevy of stops. And the college art gallery is home to a number of annual shows including Au Naturel, the student show and the faculty show that is now underway, including some of Nebeker's works.

It is unlikely that many other towns of 10,000 felt the presence of such a large artistic figure as Royal Nebeker. He was a life force, making an indelible impression on all who knew him. The Royal Nebeker Gallery is an excellent memorial.

## Views, protection key in dune clash

**D**rifting beach sand is irritating to far more than sensitive eyes and nether regions in Cannon Beach, where growing dunes are interfering with views and drainage.

Faced with conflicting wishes among constituents and the Planning Commission, the City Council is deferring a decision for up to two years while a sand management plan is completed.

Reflecting established public policy on many coastlines, planners advocate leaving the primary westward dune alone. If left to itself and not pierced by road cuts or graded to maintain yards and views, this primary dune acts as a natural berm between the inland and the ocean. The primary dune, ideally, can turn back storm surges and perhaps even some tsunamis.

However, seashore homeowners understandably regard the dune with annoyance. It is not a static geological feature, instead growing by inches a year as winds and waves deposit additional sand within its shelter. Before the mid-20th century, the seashore dunes were flattened out and redistributed from time to time. But the biological success of invasive European beach grass has drastically changed the ways in which sand is retained on the primary dune.

Stabilized by the grass, coastal dunes both south and north of the mouth of the Columbia have grown extensively in recent decades. Nearest the river, sands have greatly expanded the land area — most famously in Seaview, Wash., where epic political battles have been fought over whether to

permit residential development in areas that were washed by ocean waves a century ago. Historical landforms on the Clatsop Plains and Long Beach Peninsula show that large north-south dunes do predate the European beach grass era. However, it is possible the exact mechanism at play in building these dunes is unclear. They may be a consequence of our region legacy of enormous tsunami events every few centuries or some combination of factors. In essence, local coastal communities are built on material that would be a huge, flat delta if not for the fact that the energetic Pacific Ocean is constantly smashing it against the shore.

This winter's active El Niño pattern has the potential of inflicting substantial erosion on Pacific Northwest beaches. It will be worth watching to see whether this reverses some of the dune-building process in Cannon Beach. A similar strong El Niño in the 1990s took a substantial bite out of dunes north of the Columbia.

Overall, sand is a valuable asset here at the interface between land and ocean, but one that individuals and agencies often find necessary to actively manage. Cannon Beach is right to take its time in gathering community advice on the matter. City leaders and citizens will have to weigh competing interests: Flood protection, one type of wildlife habitat versus another, and homeowners' strong desire to preserve economically valuable views.

Political upset and litigation are a near certainty. But thorough public discourse will eliminate the element of surprise in whatever decisions are made.

# Oh, and they keep you dry, too!

**I**t was pouring rain and our friend Joe and his basset hound, Columbo, were stranded at our house in the storm. I offered them a ride home, but Joe politely declined.

I was baffled by his complete willingness to get soaked.

"Do you have an umbrella, perchance?" Joe asked. Umbrella? Oregonians hate umbrellas, so I'd heard.

Joe was unabashed, so I poked around the trunk of the car and pulled out a collapsible blue umbrella, a remnant from our 3,000-mile cross-country journey last spring.

The magical *whoosh* of the umbrella as it opened ...

Mission accomplished. Dog and owner were walkin' in the rain in style.

### Turning function into form

On Manhattan streets, alas, umbrellas priced high and low are more often than not used to spear a pedestrian's way through a storm, and metal sticks and shreds of umbrellas of all price points are routinely found poking out of trash bins upside down.

At Grand Central Station, people huddle under the awning when the rain starts to fall. Miraculously, on the corners, men magically appear selling \$6 umbrellas. Those will get you from 42nd to 44th Street but then not much farther.

At Brooks Brothers on Madison Avenue, you can like the "wind-down-paneled checked automatic" umbrella, priced at a reasonable \$60. Nordstrom's can supply you with an Italian-made Alexander McQueen bone handle umbrella for slightly more, \$635, rain not included.

In China, the umbrella even became the inspiration for a political movement, inspiring democracy protesters in 2014. The umbrella not only protected protesters from the rain and sun, but served to deflect pepper spray and tear gas.

My favorite umbrella movie is "Les Parapluies de Cherbourg," marked by the lilting and memorable Michel Legrand score. The melody "I Will Wait for You" plays throughout the movie as a young Catherine Deneuve makes young men swoon, all to the pitter-patter of raindrops and the subtext of the French/Algerian war.

Chicago's Morton Salt girl, whose iconic umbrella is placed prominently along the Kennedy Expressway, is more than a century old.

Our son, who learned about rain at the University of Oregon, introduced us to Oregon's anti-umbrella tone. There are no charming Morton Salt girls here, no umbrella democracy.

## SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

By  
R.J.  
MARX



**Umbrella? Oregonians hate umbrellas, so I'd heard.**

True Oregonians don't use umbrellas, he averred, preferring to mummify themselves in rubber or latex or just flat-out get drenched. Maybe that's why his Van's sneakers were squeaking all the time.

We get it. While it's been relatively dry since our arrival in May, even in the rain we haven't had occasion to grab the umbrella. Standing on a look-out over Hug Point a couple of weeks ago in a windstorm was enough to set me straight. Gusts that can blow a car door off its hinges would churn an umbrella into bobby pins and shredded nylon with merely a breath.

### If you must use your umbrella, super-size it

Should you use an umbrella in Cannon Beach? The bigger the better, said Ann-Marie Radich of the gallery Found.

"For the most part day-to-day wind and rain, umbrellas don't do any good because they blow inside out," Radich said last Sunday on the porch of Sleepy Monk. "We went to a Seaside Seagulls football last week. We thought we were prepared with stadium blankets — water repellent on the outside, fuzzy on the inside — rain gear, big-hooded Carhart rain coats, when it started to rain like nobody's business. Somebody in front of us had a huge stadium umbrella my mom got to use.

### What's under your umbrella?

At the Stormy Weather Arts Festival last weekend, Cannon Beach once again jumped on — to mix a metaphor — the umbrella bandwagon.

Five artists presented four one-of-a-kind painted umbrellas to be auctioned off last Friday, but held in reserve until Saturday when they were used in the Stormy Weather runway show, "Dancin' in the Rain."

Designing artists were Bonny



Submitted Photo

Umbrella designed by Marianne Post and presented by Primary Elements Gallery for the Stormy Weather Arts Festival. "My inspiration for this comes from my work with a tropical landscape designer on the Big Island of Hawaii," Post said "I call it my Hibiscus umbrella and dreaming of the islands gets me cheerfully through wet and stormy days."

Gorsuch, represented by the Cannon Beach Gallery; Dragon Fire's Nancy Norman; Marianne Post, representing Primary Elements Gallery; Krista Guenther from the Coaster Theatre; and students from Seaside High School's art class.

The event helped establish scholarships to local arts' camps in Cannon Beach: the Cannon Beach Arts Association art camp for Kids, Coaster Theatre Theater Camp for kids and Sea Ranch RV Resort and Music Camp for Kids.

The show featured clothing from Dena's Shop on the Corner, La Luna Loca, Maggie & Henry's, Fruffles and Dragon Fire Gallery. Refreshments are provided by Sleepy Monk Coffee and Sea Level Bakery.

"We wanted to make sure we had a really strong connection with the arts community with this," Court Carrier of the Chamber of Commerce said.

We are delighted to see umbrellas finally getting their due. Their struggles against the elements in Cannon Beach are as iconic as the Rock.

Cannon Beach Photo has a website with 546 umbrella photos. Pelican Bay Brewing Co. brews an "Umbrella IPA." Umbrellas, like kites, are magical museum creations — form and function majestically married to art and nature.

Just got word that my friend Joe just returned the little blue \$6 umbrella. Use it in the rain? Fuggetaboutit. It's a collector's item!

R.J. Marx is *The Daily Astorian's* South County reporter and editor of the *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette*.

## The Republicans' fickle pageant

By FRANK BRUNI  
*New York Times News Service*

**A** college psychology professor of mine liked to say that life was all about adjusting to loss.

He was clearly prepping me for Tuesday night's debate.

George Pataki: exiled. Lindsey Graham: gone.

Their spots in the minor leagues were taken by Mike Huckabee, who once upon a time won the Iowa caucuses, and Chris Christie, who long ago represented the Republicans' great hope for taking the White House back from the Democrats. Demoted and diminished, Huckabee and Christie stood in the lesser lineup as testaments to the cruelties of politics, which is another way of saying that they stood next to Bobby Jindal and Rick Santorum.

The major-leagues event shrank, with eight candidates where there had been 11 back in the glory days of Scott Walker. Do you remember Walker? And do you remember that he was briefly considered something of a front-runner, at least for a few weeks earlier this year?

So was Jeb Bush — more than briefly — and LAST year, Rand Paul appeared on the cover of *Time* and was ranked No. 1 on Politico's annual list of visionaries transforming American politics. For Tuesday night's debate, he remained in the major leagues, but at a far end of the stage, like a hard-luck mountaineer holding tight to a crumbling cliff, about to fall into the abyss, by which I mean the Christie-Huckabee-Jindal-Santorum crowd.

A classic old TV program was called "Queen for a Day." The Republican primaries could be called "Front-Runner for a Day." The turnover in leaders

and the turns of fortune have been that plentiful.

And that confusing.

I'm adjusting to the loss of coherence in the political process. For all our analyses of Ben Carson's lure as an outsider and his appeal to evangelical Christians, it still makes little sense that he's done quite this well for quite this long, given his proclivity toward fantasy, both historical and personal, and his tenuous relationship with anything that might be considered an actual platform or a governing philosophy.

It doesn't make a whole lot more sense that the Donald Trump phenomenon steams on and on.

He got a fresh burst of attention, as if he needed it, from a gig last weekend on "Saturday Night Live" that said everything about the erased line between politics and entertainment and about the way in which a public figure's currency today is measured in the eyeballs he or she can draw, not the ideas he or she promotes. It's a function of visibility, not integrity. Of clicks, not character.

I'm confident that most of the comedians, writers and producers of "Saturday Night Live," along with most of the executives at NBC, aren't Trump voters. Over drinks with friends, they probably bemoan his political ascendance, gaping at the country's nutty trajectory.

But they readily gave him the microphone, and he reliably gave them their best ratings in years.

Success will almost always override ideology.

The Republican debates, more raptly watched than most people would have predicted at the outset, have af-



Frank Bruni

firmed the candidates as jesters — as performers in a profitable spectacle — and the candidates in turn have begun to behave like actors negotiating perks in their contracts and quibbling over the sizes of their trailers on set.

After they didn't like the way that CNBC handled the Republican debate two weeks ago, they moved to assert control over when and how the camera would frame the lecterns and what sorts of visual images would be shown before and between snippets of the actual debate.

Trump loves to set the terms regarding his appearances, a mercurial diva who will entertain certain questions and questioners but not others.

I thought I'd made peace long ago with the magnitude of vanity and arrogance in politics, but then Trump, Ted Cruz, Carly Fiorina and the 2016 presidential campaign came along.

Even Carson, who was supposed to be the humble one, has been unmasked as something of an egomaniac, his biography aggrandized, his home decorated as a shrine to himself. Among the losses I grieve is the belief — or maybe it was just a wish — that a significant fraction of the candidates who talked of "public service" really meant it, and saw politics as an act of generosity, not of self-validation.

Tuesday night's debate was the fourth meeting of the Republicans, but it felt more like the 40th, and that's because these debates have not for the most part been debates. More so than usual, they've been oratorical beauty pageants. They've been invitations to preen.

Pity the poor orator. Pity the person who preens reluctantly, with obvious discomfort. Pity Bush, who isn't finding the reception he banked on and isn't looking at the outcome he dreamed of.

Talk about adjusting to loss.

**The Republican primaries could be called 'Front-Runner for a Day.'**