

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Bloodshed visits Seaside

Habitual felon with a gun begs questions

No matter where they occur, police deaths in the line of duty are horrifically tragic. In a small town like Seaside, such a crime shakes a community to its core.

Last Friday's murder of Sgt. Jason Goodding during the course of an ordinary arrest will be long remembered as one of the worst events in Seaside history.

We grieve at the thought of a wife turned into a widow by a few moments of inexplicable violence, of two daughters who will be left without their father.

We think with pride of Goodding's colleagues, who continue doing their jobs with professionalism and courtesy in the aftermath of their friend's death.



Sgt. Jason Goodding

It is astonishing that police officers manage to maintain equilibrium in the face of such horror. Few individuals and their loved ones have what it takes to endure such strain, far less do so with the cheerfulness and good grace that Sgt. Goodding is said to have shown.

We imagine the trauma faced by the other responding officer, who will live out his days with the memory of witnessing the attack on Goodding and of killing Goodding's assailant. This is the sort of vivid pain that haunts a person long afterward.

We shake our heads in confusion and wonder at the volatility of Phillip Ferry, whose life culminated in bloodshed on the main street of a pictur-

esque resort town. Could this have been avoided?

Many will ask why Ferry had not already earned a long-term bed in prison. How is it that a longtime felon possessed a concealed firearm? Where did he get it? Did anyone else violate the law by helping him obtain it?

Commonplace and predictable arguments will occur between those who want further restrictions on firearms and those who reject all such suggestions as a violation of fundamental American

rights. This is a case where existing law clearly failed. But would any law truly keep America's vast profusion of guns out of the hands of a determined criminal? It is fatiguing to witness another life lost while knowing nothing is likely to change in a nation where guns and violence are, in effect, accepted aspects of life.

Friday's memorial for Sgt. Goodding will be a paroxysm of grief but will offer his family evidence of how much he was valued and how we all regret his loss. In the months and years that follow, the best tribute to him would be substantive change in protecting police and all of society from the fear of deadly violence.

FYI: Clippings from the press of the Pacific Northwest and the nation

False charms of Bernie Sanders' single-payer plan

For starters, even if Sanders became president, the prospect for his plan being enacted would be slim. That's not a conservative wish but the view of many liberals. It's politically unrealistic, they argue, to think that nearly a fifth of the economy could be totally remade.

would be too much opposition and uncertainty.

... On examination, the single-payer proposal is a better campaign slogan than it is a realistic panacea for the nation's health-care problems. It can't escape a stubborn dilemma: How can we control spending for something that most Americans consider — as Sanders says — an open-ended "right"?

— Economist Robert Samuelson in The Washington Post

For many poor Americans, evictions are a way of life

These days, evictions are too commonplace to attract attention. There are sheriff squads whose full-time job is to carry out eviction and foreclosure orders. Some moving companies specialize in evictions, their crews working all day long, five days a week. Hundreds of data-mining companies sell landlords tenant-screening reports that

list past evictions and court filings. Meanwhile, families have watched their incomes stagnate or fall as their housing costs have soared. Today, the majority of poor renting families spend more than half their income on housing, and millions of Americans are evicted every year.

— Matthew Desmond in The New Yorker

Assessing the environmental legacy of a bad idea



Neal Maine/For EO Media Group

Changes in the estuary as a result of a stalled development in the 1960s remains evident today.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

BY R.J. MARX



By R.J. MARX The Daily Astorian

Neal Maine still remembers the battle over development in Sunset Cove in Seaside. He sees the results of it every day. A sand berm built by developers is finally breaking down. Rocks and debris dumped in the estuary almost a half-century ago continue to litter the shoreline.

"We're still living with the rock that was put there in 1976," Maine said. "We're still living with it and it's basically contaminating the estuary for the rest of time."

The 17-acre site was purchased from the city in 1965 and called for 175 homes with streets, sewers and underground wiring on a sand spit above the Necanicum estuary over Gearhart. Lots ranged from a minimum of 5,000 to 7,000 square feet.

The project had some influential proponents, including William Holmstrom of Gearhart, president of the Sunset Cove Inc. and a member of the Oregon State Senate.

Despite objections from neighbors, environmentalists and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, a Clatsop County Circuit Court judge OK'd a mining permit to move sand from the estuary and replace it with rock.

There was a different mindset back then, Maine said: "If it makes another buck, then do it."

Construction crews went to work bringing in rock and fill as Sunset Cove excavated the channel and built a rock retaining wall along a sand spit at the mouth of the Necanicum River. An island of rock and sand was created between November 1967 and January 1968.

"They got a mining permit to scrape the sand off the beach, to keep filling, filling, filling," Maine said. "People were outraged by it. It was totally bogus."

"Then they started armoring the rock," he added. "They brought in enough rock to raise a wall 25-feet deep."

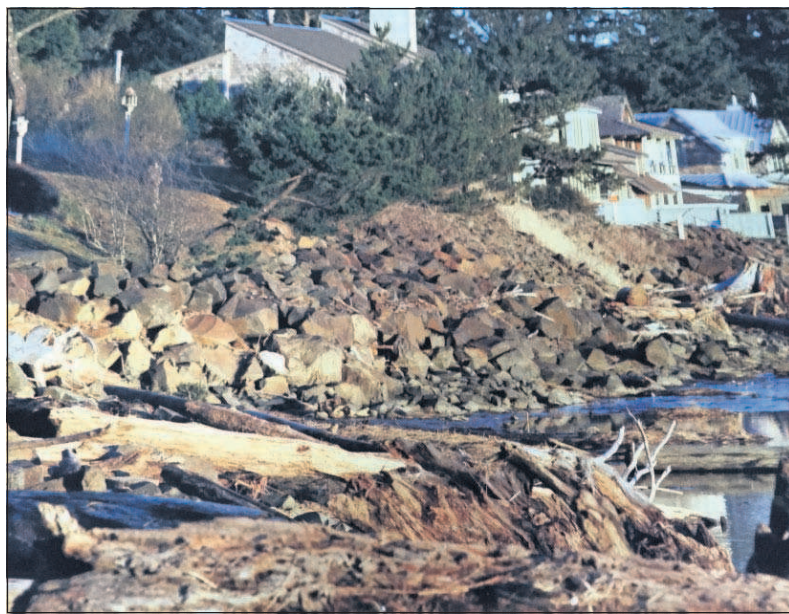
Ultimately, the developers piled up 370,000 cubic yards of sand on the 17-acre site to build it up from the beach.

When a storm washed some of that away, the builders put more riprap on the ocean side to prevent further erosion.

A group of clam diggers was able to accomplish what opponents weren't: stop the 'dozers in their tracks. Oregon Attorney General Robert Thornton charged seven heavy equipment operators and the project superintendent with "wanton waste of razor clams."

"Some old codger remembered somewhere in the fish and game laws that it was against the law to drive on clam beds," Maine said. "The fish and game wardens wrote the driver up."

Neighbors and clam diggers demanded that the fill be removed and the firm forced to pay a penalty of \$500,000.



Neal Maine/For EO Media Group

Rock fill remains on the banks of the Necanicum.



EO Media Group

The project was first proposed in the 1960s.



EO Media Group

Clam diggers played a unique environmental role in the controversy.

In 1975, a district court demanded the removal of the construction rock; however, a federal appeals judge modified the decision to "require the removal of as much of the riprap as will permit nature ... to take its course."

By 1978, nature had already taken its course. Eight property owners in north Seaside faced losing their homes after the estuary's diverted waters began eating away at their homes. The homeowners were required to add additional rock retaining walls to protect their properties.

Despite the rulings and damage to the nearby homes, the developer returned to the planning table, this time with an 80-home plan for the estuary.

The Corps of Engineers was joined by 1,000 Friends of Oregon, the Necanicum River Protective Association and members of the Seaside Planning Commission, all of whom opposed the developer's plan to build homes on an active foredune in violation of state land use guidelines. Maine, in opposing the project at the time, told Clatsop County planning commissioners in 1977 the proposal was still "basically bad."

By that time, land use rules were in effect and there was greater ecological awareness. Maine and others recognized the value of the estuaries to man and wildlife, and natural beauty of the land.

Sunset Cove Inc. brought their case to the U.S. Court of Appeals, which demanded an after-the-fact permit from the builders for unauthorized fill.

The next spring, the appeals court affirmed that the Sunset Cove area was protected as "navigable waters" and the project stalled after the U.S. Supreme Court failed to hear the developers' appeal.

Lessons learned?

As a berm created by fill from the '60s crumbles in the estuary's waters, we are watching "the last little pieces of this history," Maine said.

"I'm not interested in reliving it," Maine said this month. "I think the story is how important the decision-making process is because there are legacies that are unforeseen. You have to have a process."

Yet he mourns the ineradicable changes to the inlet, where rock will remain and channels were changed forever. "This covered over tidelands, which are the most productive in the world," Maine said.

If the developers had never started the process, Maine said, "It would have been the estuary that it has been for the past 10,000 years. It would have just done its thing every year. The fish would have come in and gone out."

"The estuary is one of only 17 on the Oregon Coast," he continued. "It's a gateway to hundreds of thousands acres of watershed."

Maine makes a connection between then and now, and issues a call to action.

"I hear the natural gas discussion in Warrenton, but I don't really hear the Warrenton people talking about a review process," he said. "You have to guarantee to the next two or three generations that these resources are going to be there. There has to be an identifiable review process, so 30 years later we don't say, 'My, God what did we do?'"

"I don't think this would happen today, but other things could," he added. "Now, Oregon has a very specific guidelines for estuaries. The land use planning process was just getting started then. But here we are getting involved with the Columbia River estuary with LNG."

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