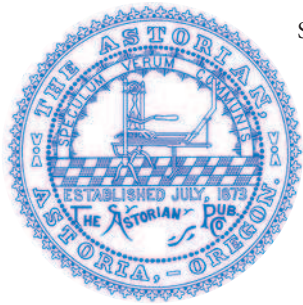


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Floodplains are key for people, salmon

FEMA flood insurance approach moves in the right direction

A look around the Columbia River estuary's edges reveals thousands of acres of land that were, are or will be floodplains. After a century in which dams, diking and a mostly stable climate allowed people to hold back floodwaters, local floodplains are back in the news.

We have gotten used to the idea of floodplains being usable for many economic purposes, from agriculture and industry to residential development. Stabilized land that might have one been underwater for weeks or months at a time in the presettlement era is now a long-established part of the private property inventory.

We seldom stop to think that federally subsidized flood insurance is a significant factor in making waterside property developable. So it was big news last week when the Federal Emergency Management Agency said it is changing how it implements the National Flood Insurance Program in Oregon to avoid further destruction of fish habitat.

Among Oregon counties with endangered salmon and steelhead species, Clatsop has among the state's greatest amount of mapped floodplains — more than 225 acres of floodplain per linear mile of stream. The county has 49.9 square miles of land classified as Special Flood Hazard Area, subject to floods, mudslides and flood-related erosion.

In tandem with FEMA, the National Marine Fisheries Service has decided "that incomplete, out of date, and/or inaccurate mapping of flood hazard prone areas prevents local government officials from understanding how

severe flood risk is and thus from implementing restrictive zoning and land use regulations and comprehensive planning."

Restrictive zoning and rules are seldom popular. As we reported last week, the cities of Warrenton and Astoria, Clatsop County, the Port of Astoria and Diking District No. 9 on the west side of Youngs River are collectively employing an engineering firm in hopes of convincing FEMA to redo and relax some of its local flood maps. This additional analysis is bound to be helpful and may help avoid some instances when FEMA's broad-brush approach may unfairly impinge on current plans.

There is, however, no doubt that most floodplains in our region once served as vital salmon habitat and could do so again. There also is no doubt that the sea level will continue to rise worldwide in coming decades, hiking the flood risk to low-lying coastal areas. In our region, the Cascadia Subduction Zone is raising the land surface, counteracting the rising ocean for now. But when the zone fractures, as it inevitably will, our coast will drop by 6.5 to 13 feet.

Floodplains are inherently risky. Like it or not, we and the federal agencies that serve us are smart to take a thorough look at what we allow to be constructed there.

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

Trump, American Preacher

When I ask Trump supporters what they love most about his rallies, they're at a loss; all of it, they say, "just, just" — the way it makes them feel. How much it makes them feel. American politics tends to produce a limited emotional range, mostly positive, peppered with indignation. But Trump scrawls across the spectrum: not just anger but rage; love and, yes, hate; fear, a political commonplace,

and also vengeance. It doesn't feel political. Politicians have long borrowed from religion the passion and the righteousness, but no other major modern figure has channeled the tension that makes Scripture endure, the desire, the wanting that gives rise to the closest analogue to Trumpism: the prosperity gospel, the American religion of winning.

— Jeff Sharlet in *The New York Times Magazine*

The Virtuous Superstar

But this isn't just about love, it's about faith. Almost everyone seems to believe in Stephen Curry, which is a very different thing from just rooting for him, or being amazed by his skills. "He could

run for mayor in any city in America," says Sacramento Kings coach George Karl, "and he'd get everybody's vote."

— Phil Taylor in *The Christian Science Monitor*

Big dig lets spirits loose, or is it a Hood-to-Ghost?

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

By R.J. MARX



SEASIDE — To the guy who slapped the Trump bumper sticker on the back of my 2004 Audi A4: Ha, ha, ha.

Who is outside of Sunset Family Fitness in Seaside at 7 a.m. with an inclination to do such a thing?

I came out of my half-hour workout to find "Trump: Make America Great Again" affixed to my rear bumper.

Maybe he got confused and thought it was his car.

If you want to talk to me more about Trump, please contact me at the *Seaside Signal* office, as we've been looking for the Trump supporter in Clatsop County. Or you may want to consider Clatsop Community Health Care.

By the way, knowing Donald as I do, he could well have a team of campaign workers placing guerrilla bumper stickers on people's cars.

Lucky coins

That was a lousy way to start the day Thursday, but things got better fast. First of all it was beautiful in Seaside, the kind of day like those spring days when I arrived here a little less than a year ago, all sun and blue sky and clean air and temps near 70.

Then I won the pot — that's the raffle winnings — at the Seaside Downtown Development Association breakfast — and heard some fun stuff about the big dig that is Holladay Drive. Everybody's getting pretty sick of the delays and inconvenience, sure, but City Manager Mark Winstanley assured us that the project is still on schedule to be completed prior to Memorial Day weekend.

This week they're working on the curbs, the last step prior to asphalt going on.

The big dig has exposed roadway hidden beneath the surface, "like it must have been in the early days," Winstanley said.

The original road was put down 90 years ago and exposed a vast infrastructure beneath the surface. "We think we know where everything is," Winstanley said. "We don't."

My friend Ryan Wolslagel was the big winner: He found a pre-Civil War gold coin underneath the surface.

Hood to 'ghost'

Also looking for treasures of a different kind recently were attendees of the Oregon Ghost Conference.

Rocky Smith brought the Conference here from Oregon City for its first year at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. He and other occultists were poking around Seaside's mystical past, present and future in a fair that presented astrologers, spirit communication, haunted history and a panel of paranormal investigations. At times it felt more like Sedona than Seaside.

Smith embraced Seaside history prior to his arrival and quickly learned of the city's ghostly lore



Photos by R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Rocky Smith at the recent Oregon Ghost Conference. He says places like Seaside near great bodies of water tend to have more ghostly activity.



I'd like to know who affixed this to my rear bumper.

— enough so that he was able to lead tours through town showing visitors spots of interest.

The group trawled around the city, including two late-night tours, one from the convention center to the Ebb Tide and a second along the Promenade.

"The Grimes Hotel was one of the original hotels," he said. "There's a whole section north of Broadway, an area referred to as 'Grimes Grove,' Seventh, Eighth Street near Downing," Smith said.

Seaside ghosts?

The area remains haunted, so much so that author Dave Oester and his wife, Sharon Gill, were inspired to write a best-seller about their experiences after moving into a haunted house on 12th Avenue in Seaside.

"The spirits that haunted the Seaside cottage on 12th Avenue were friendly spirits," Oester said in a 1999 interview. "The most common prank they pulled was to take an object, be it a book or something else, and not return it for several days."

The first night in their Seaside home, they discovered their shortwave radio unplugged and playing "Waltzing Matilda" over and over.

Oester, who died in November, told the interviewer the experiences of living in a haunted house motivated him to begin collecting ghost stories from people, which he turned into his book *Twilight Visitors: Ghost Tales Vol. 1*.

More on Dave's story — and tragic end — can be found on ghostweb.com.

Other ghosts may roam our community, Smith suggested.

Is there more or less ghostly activity in Seaside than other places.

He told late-night ghost tour attendees the aquarium "has mixed stories."

"Though the owners don't think it's haunted, there are myths associated with the history of the building," Smith said.

Ghosts and spirits may linger in the region from some of the shipwrecks associated with the lighthouse, Terrible Tilly, Smith said. A shipwreck took 16 lives only a week before Tilly was completed in January 1881.

Is there more or less ghostly activity in Seaside than other places, we asked?

Smith isn't sure yet, but he thinks it is ripe for psychic exploration.

"I'm kind of new to Seaside," Smith said. "Part of Oregon City that makes it so active is its connection with its history, both Native American and pioneer history."

"Seaside definitely shares that," he added. "You have this theory that places that are connected with water — Oregon City has the falls, creeks and falls; here you have the river, the ocean — there's some geological things that can cause a place to be more active."

Wait a minute. It's becoming clear now. The Donald Trump bumper sticker.

Who would be up at 7 a.m. and do such a thing — slap a bumper a sticker on an innocent bystander's car? That is right out of the "Waltzing Matilda" playbook.

Just the type of mischief you'd expect from a disembodied spirit released from beneath the pavement during the construction on North Holladay Drive. I wish I'd found the gold coin instead!

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

Open forum

A little stale

How very fitting that both *The Daily Astorian* ("No sense") and *The Oregonian* chose to print, in the April 15 editions, a letter to the editor penned by Lars Larson, in which he lists some of the issues he finds troubling with the Pacific Northwest, and the comic strip "Non Sequitur," which accurately portrays his reason for doing so.

Now, I understand that Larson is in the entertainment business, and has to occasionally stir the crazy pot to keep his numbers up and advertisers happy, but his talking points haven't changed in years. Makes me wonder if his steady "fact-free" diet may

be a little stale, and ratings slipping.

FRANK STRICKER
Ocean Park, Wash.

Feel the Bern

If, like me, you chose not to be affiliated with any political party when you registered to vote, you will not receive a ballot for the primary election set for May 17. In Oregon, unlike many other states, this will be a closed primary. Republicans and Democrats here do not appreciate free thinkers; you have no say in selecting presidential nominees.

Here's an easy quick workaround to this prohibition. You must take action no later than Tuesday. Go online to www.oregonvotes.gov.

Click on the green "Voter Registration" box, and then the "Check or Update Your Registration" box.

Having temporarily become a Democrat, you now get to choose between Clinton and Sanders. I looked at their candidacies through my lawyer/priest lens. Former lawyer Clinton rightfully states we need to empower women. Many women both young and old agree; they just don't want to empower this woman. They lament that Republicans will decimate her.

Sanders is a secular Jew and longtime veteran of legislative battles. In Congress, with bills or amendments, he has crossed the aisle to get the job done. With Republican Sen. John

McCain, he negotiated a comprehensive bipartisan agreement for veterans' health benefits (Google "what sanders got done in washington").

Sanders is on the same page as Pope Francis with regard to catastrophic environmental change, socio-economic inequality and immigration. Even the opposition recognizes Bernie's honesty and integrity. According to consistent national polls, Sanders is the candidate more likely to defeat Trump.

Good people of Clatsop County, let's follow the example of our Sen. Jeff Merkley. Let's feel the Bern.

GEORGE MCCARTIN
Astoria