

DUMB AND DUMBER



File this under “Dumb Things People Do at Sea”: Endurance runner **Reza Baluchi** was picked up and towed, again, by a U.S. Coast Guard cutter April 24, off the coast of Jupiter, Florida, when his “walk” to Bermuda in a hydro-pod bubble failed, gCaptain reports (<http://tinyurl.com/bubblebummer>). He is pictured courtesy of CBSMiami.

This was actually the second time he attempted a walk from Miami to Bermuda in the inflatable bubble. The first time, in October 2014, he got lost in the Gulf Stream — and was asking for directions to Bermuda — before calling for rescue after three days. This time, the Coast Guard ordered him specifically *not* to do it unless he had proper support and self-rescue options in place.

He ignored the order, and, no surprises here, called for their help several hours after departing. He now faces a possible seven years in jail and a \$40,000 fine.

FUN FIND



Long Beach, Washington, photographer **Janelle Hux** always seems to catch the photos of local wildlife and scenery that make people go “Wow!” — whether it is perched or soaring eagles, deer on the beach or crashing waves at Cape Disappointment — and she spends a lot of time roaming around the peninsula beaches with her camera and two dogs to get those shots.

Recently, she came across a beachcomber’s dream find: a large **glass fishing float**. “(I was) walking the dogs at Benson Beach and snapping pictures, and there it was, sparkling in the surf after just rolling in from ... ?” She is pictured holding her newfound treasure. “It was heavy, my arms hurt,” she noted, “but I wasn’t complaining.”

“Still treasures to be found on the beach, ’cause I just found this,” she added. “Sure was fun to find.”

HELP EVERY LITTLE PAW

My dad and I are walking for the second time on behalf of a nonprofit organization called **Help Every Little Paw** (www.helpeverylittlepaw.org), **Leah Hansen** of Coeur d’Alene, Idaho, wrote. “We raise money for companion animals, which means when local veterinarians call us with a companion animal in dire straits, we help financially.” She and her father, **Mike Hansen**, are pictured.



“We will be walking from Coeur d’Alene to Newport, Oregon, which is over 600 miles in 22 days,” she explained. “Our walk will end in Newport, because Rogue Ales is holding their 10th annual largest dog-friendly beer festival in the world, the Brewers Memorial Ale Festival, and they are one of our largest sponsors.” Leah is also the announcer at the event. “It’s going to be a blast,” she declared.

The duo expect to arrive in Astoria on Thursday, and they’ll be staying at the Comfort Inn. If you see them around town, why don’t you give them a warm welcome?

She’s posting the whole experience on Facebook so people can “walk along with them,” she told the Ear (<http://tinyurl.com/HELP4paws>). Their first few days on the road have also been declared “a blast,” so it’s so far, so good. As for the weather, one can only hope for the best. “Not every day is sunshine and flowers and fuzzy bunnies,” she noted.

“Help Every Little Paw is not a shelter, it’s based on helping people keep their animals,” Leah said. If you want to donate, you can do so both on the website and the Facebook page. “It fills my heart with so much joy to be able to help people who can’t afford medical care for their pets.”

In One Ear



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BIRD IN A BIPLANE



The Astoria-Warrenton Airport Advisory Committee had a pleasant surprise at their last meeting,” **Henry Balensifer** wrote. “As they convened in the airport terminal lobby, they met **Tracey Curtis-Taylor**, who was finishing up her flight planning for the next leg of her trip.”

She is pictured, inset, and with the advisory committee members who are, from left, **Brandon Kraft**, **Gary Kobes**, **Henry Balensifer**, Port Commissioner **John Raichl** and **Mark Smith**.

Tracey, who lives in the U.K., took her first flying lesson at 16, according to her website, www.birdinabiplane.com. In New Zealand, she earned her private pilot’s license, commercial license and an instructor rating, and was trained by military pilots to fly World War II airplanes with the New Zealand Warbird Association.

She is flying a 1942 **Boeing Stearman biplane** named “**Spirit of Artemis**” along the historic airmail route from Seattle to Boston. The trip honors the Boeing Co., who helped develop the routes, early pilots like Charles Lindbergh, and the role of women in aviation and engineering.

She wants the flight to “inspire young women around the world to follow their dreams, never give up and break boundaries,” her website says. This U.S. transcontinental flight is the final leg of her circumnavigation of the globe, which she began three years ago.

In an interview with Condé Nast Traveler about her current adventure (<http://tinyurl.com/traceyCT>), Tracey noted that “anywhere you go, people love aviation in America. It’s a fantastic place to fly. It’s the home of the airplane, so this is kind of a spiritual homecoming for the plane.”

And even though the biplane will require daily maintenance in its 21 legs across the country, Tracey remains enthusiastic. “This Boeing Stearman is the dream machine.”

SNIPPETS



Bad news: Well, the good news for Bisbee, Arizona, is that it won the **USA Today America’s Best Historic Small Town** competition. What’s unthinkable is that Astoria came in at No. 5, also behind Thomasville, Georgia, Abingdon, Virginia and Mackinac Island, Michigan.

No news, yet: Seaside was a contender in the top 10 **Happiest Seaside Town** entries in a **Coastal Living** competition. The votes are all in, but the result is still a mystery. Seaside was acclaimed for its tourist attractions, aquarium, volleyball tournament, Hood to Coast event and its sand dollars, among other things. Keep your fingers crossed, the May edition of the magazine will reveal the answer.

Pick the Bowpicker: In yet another USA Today 10 Best contest, Astoria’s **Bowpicker Fish & Chips** is in the running for **Best Waterfront Seafood Shack**.

The blurb says: “Bowpicker Fish & Chips ... does one thing and does it well: beer-battered Albacore tuna served on a bed of steak fries. Throw on some malt vinegar and tartar sauce, and this is seafood heaven, pure and simple.” Are you hungry yet?

Bowpicker is up against several contenders from the East Coast, such as Abbott’s Lobster in the Rough in Noank, Connecticut (more butter, please). So, Bowpicker fans, vote away at <http://tinyurl.com/pickerbow>

And, by the way, for you fans of **Rockaway Beach**: the **Old Oregon Smokehouse** is in the running, too.

TITANIC SINKS. AGAIN.



The 104th anniversary of the **sinking of the Titanic** was April 14, and now you can watch the entire tragic event in a close to 3-hour real-time animation on YouTube (<http://tinyurl.com/titan-sink>) that was created to be played simultaneously with an almost four-hour podcast (<http://tinyurl.com/titanpod>). A screenshot from the video is shown.

The animation is actually a promotion for an upcoming video game, **Titanic Honor & Glory** (<http://www.titanichg.com>), which includes a “complete and fully interactive recreation” of the interior of the ship; a large cast of characters, including the ship’s captain, passengers (including the Astors) and crew members; and a detailed replication of the Edwardian era style, way of life and manners.

The promotional video of the sinking, which is portrayed in painstaking detail, is quite harrowing to watch. For those who don’t want to sit through the almost three-hour play time, there is an extensive and detailed list of the events in the time sequence shown below the video, so you can pick and choose and fast-forward to any given spot.

Nautical history buffs no doubt recall that the great-grandson of Astoria’s namesake, **John Jacob Astor IV**, died in the Titanic disaster. His pregnant wife, **Madeline**, survived and gave birth to **John Jacob “Jakey” Astor VI** (another family member beat him to JJA No. V) four months later in New York (<http://tinyurl.com/jjastorVI>).

EYEING OSPREY



If you’ve ever longed watch the secret life of **ospreys**, rejoice — your time has come. The Cowlitz Public Utility Department, in partnership with Cascade Networks, now has a **live-feed cam** set up to observe an osprey nest in Longview, Washington, at www.cowlitzpud.org/ospreycam.php

“When a pair of osprey began trying to nest on a PUD distribution pole in 2000, the utility set up an alternate nesting pole nearby the location to prevent any safety hazards,” the press release says. “The pair has been using the alternate nest since then.” The live cam is a new addition this year.

The nest, which is about 40 feet in the air, gets bigger every year, as ospreys add new nesting material. In case you’re wondering how big, an average osprey nest weighs 265 pounds.

Ospreys mate for life, and the couple (pictured in screen shot) have been named **Electra** and **Watt-Sun**. They returned from their winter home March 25, and nest preparation began March 30. Three eggs were laid on April 18, 21 and 24. Together, the pair will incubate the eggs, which will take 36 to 42 days to hatch.

If you miss the chicks hatching, never fear, they stay in the nest 50-55 days afterwards, so you have plenty of time to take a peek.

YEAR OF THE BOAR

Just when you think you’ve heard the end of strange stories arising out of the **Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant** disaster, another one pops up. The facility, which was badly damaged during the 2011 Japanese earthquake and tsunami, has been leaking radiation ever since after several meltdowns, despite ongoing efforts to stop the contamination.

The latest problem? **Radioactive wild boars**, TechTimes.com reports (<http://tinyurl.com/hot-boar>). While the area is still unsafe for humans, the boars, who have been contaminated with caesium-137 from eating plants around Fukushima, are thriving. The population is growing by leaps and bounds, increasing from 3,000 in 2014 to 13,000 now, and they’re ravaging local farmlands to the tune of \$15 million in crop damage so far. A boar is pictured in a photo by Michael Schmidt.

Even though pork is one of the most popular foods in Japan, these “hot” boars are continuing to happily flourish, since their radioactive meat makes them unfit for human consumption.

This may be the Year of the Monkey, but in Fukushima — 2016, and likely for many years to come — it’s the Year of the Boar.



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