

ANONYMOUS BEAUTIFUL HUMANITY

Author shares an encounter with a family

By **MATT LOVE**
Special to The Daily Astorian

Several months ago, I stood atop a sand dune on a misty morning and from a perpendicular vantage point, watched the ocean. No one but Sonny the ancient husky and I were present on the South Jetty at Fort Stevens State Park if you didn't count the bald eagle not more than 30 yards away, perched on the remains of a trestle, surveying the water, seemingly a sentinel for democracy.

He was as regal-looking a bald eagle as I had ever seen in my life. I could have cast a ballot right there for this bird to become the next president of the United States. Maybe I'll write her in.

The Pacific appeared torpid and gray. The waves seemed listless, as if they didn't want to come ashore, but they had no choice. It was their antediluvian role to roll and never stop rolling.

Nothing intrigues me more than watching the sea when it barely moves. I find the apparent stasis of the greatest force on the planet utterly transfixing, and on this misty morning, I was transfixed.

A noise broke the spell. I looked up and noticed a man and two women approaching me. I watched them as they came into view. He was in his 80s and sporting a SLR camera with a long lens around his neck. His wore a fedora with a little feather in the band and wore the hat well. The women looked around 50 and had the appearance of being develop-

mentally disabled twins. They too, had SLRs with telephotos slung like the man. They were all old-school film cameras, I could tell that.

Sonny was blocking the trail so I held her collar, and let the trio go around us. The man and I exchanged greetings and I eavesdropped while watching them pass.

The man was leading the women, his daughters I presumed, to the bald eagle to take photographs. He gave gentle, precise instructions and they responded by wordlessly preparing their cameras to shoot. They closed in on the bald eagle and the noble creature didn't move. The family crept within 10 yards and then shutters started clicking. Five seconds later, the bird lifted off toward the ocean and each member of the family clapped their hands together. They all applauded the bald eagle.

A few seconds later, the man and his daughters continued on their way down the trail and they disappeared from view. I was bit surprised to discover that I had tears in my eyes.

I would have paid \$1,000 for one of the family's eagle shots, not because of the likely beautiful image, but for the story behind it, the story I alone witnessed, that I recount here because it was the best glimpse of anonymous beautiful humanity I've observed in a long, long time, and believe me, I look all the time. We're not done yet.

Matt Love is author and editor of 14 books, including his debut novel, "The Great Birthright." They are available at coastal bookstores, through www.nestuccaspitpress.com and local libraries.

The small moments in life are often the most rewarding.

Matt Love/Submitted Photo



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