

GRAB BAG

BOOK SHELF // GLIMPSE // WILDLIFE // POP CULTURE // WORDS // Q&A // FOOD // FUN

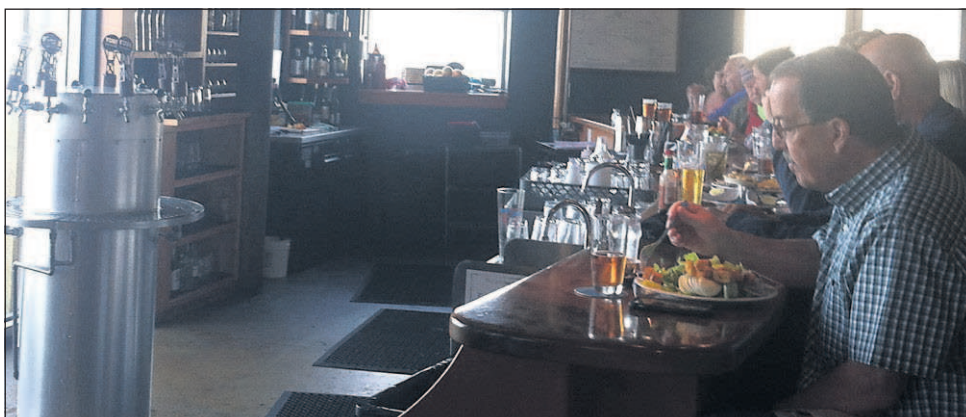


PHOTO BY MATT LOVE

Watching the river from the bar at Buoy Beer is calming.

A GLIMPSE INSIDE

By MATT LOVE

Buoy Beer Co.

Not too long ago, I sat on a stool at the back bar in the Buoy Beer Co. in Astoria, nursing a pilsner, staring at the Columbia River. In short order, I found myself completely becalmed and thankful for my eternal role in the water cycle. This always happens when I visit Buoy and watch the river.

A few minutes later, my mind drifted to a local man who regularly sends poisonous emails ripping my columns and insulting me personally. He seems utterly bilious as a human being. A rational person would simply stop reading my work. Simple — aggravation over. Move on.

But no, many people prefer to revel in anger and hate.

Sitting inside Buoy that afternoon, I decided I would write something to cheer up the man. Cheering up angry people is fun! It's wonderful imagining a smile cracking a bitter face.

Thus, I present a little lark of a tale called "Whales and Bumblebees" that I whipped out at the bar. Here it is, for you, my vitriolic critic:

At a historic summit that went unreported in the press, the whales and bumblebees decided by unanimous acclaim — we've had enough of humans. They take. They destroy everything. They've got to go.

It was quite the party at the summit. Many attendees cut a dashing, revolutionary figure. Whales drank krill from champagne flutes, and bumblebees smoked hand-rolled nectar cigarettes. Raspberry berets were worn. Speeches were fiery. The dancing got dirty.

The whales and bumblebees issued a manifesto at the summit. It was written in a big fat weird cursive script that humans couldn't read on their tiny phones. It said, in part: "We only want to bumble among pretty flowers and swim unfettered through the seven seas. We shall not go extinct. We shall bumble in the meadows and prowl the silent depths forever."

The whales knew a little something about humans. Call it inside information. They once lived on land like

humans, but they had the good sense to return to the oceans. That was their secret weapon — this ancient knowledge that humans were too dumb to grasp because they believed they stood atop everything. Bumblebees knew something about humans, too. They knew humans raised children who were so depraved that they enjoyed killing bumblebees for sport on warm summer days.

The summit didn't offer any military strategy to defeat humans. The whales and bumblebees didn't need one. They didn't have to do anything but wait. Humans were withering, clocking out. Many were very angry; it was in all the papers.

In order to survive, humans needed only to pay better attention to the whales and bumblebees. The answers were staring them in their blank faces. That was not going to happen. The whales and bumblebees merely had to hang on a little while longer, and they knew how to do that.

Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books, including "A Nice Piece of Astoria." His books are available at coastal bookstores or through his website, nestuccaspitpress.com

RECIPE

Norwegian krumkake cookies

Corleen Mathews is a second-generation Norwegian and well-known in the local Scandinavian community. Her husband, Loran, is president of the Astoria Scandinavian Heritage Association and past chair of the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival. Corleen and her friend Kathy Helmersen have a booth at the festival that sells only two things: Norwegian krumkake and Finnish prune tarts — and coffee, of course.

Krumkake are delicate Norwegian crumb cookies baked in a special flat iron and rolled when warm around a wooden form to resemble an old-fashioned ice cream cone. Modernists are tempted to fill them with ice cream or whipped cream and lingonberry jam, but traditionalists eat them plain with a cup of coffee.

Each spring, Corleen prepares 3,500 of these cookies in her home kitchen to sell at the festival and always hopes she's made enough to last the full three days.

As a vendor, Corleen adds to the authenticity of the experience by wearing a bunad — a Norwegian folk costume — that her mother made and embroidered for her 33 years ago. Corleen's daughter, Tara, and granddaughters Helen and Abbie have all represented the Sons of Norway Lodge in past years as Miss Norway at the festival, and they wear their own bunads that Corleen helped embroider.

Here, Corleen shares her recipe for krumkake and hopes that local families will continue to share ethnic traditions with future generations.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Corleen Mathews, a second generation Norwegian, prepares 3,500 krumkake cookies every year for the Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Krumkake cookies are baked in a special flat iron and rolled when warm around a wooden form to resemble an old-fashioned ice cream cone.

KRUMKAKE

Ingredients

2 cups sugar
2 cups butter
6 eggs
1 can of milk
2 teaspoons vanilla
3 cups flour

Directions:

Beat the eggs well, then add the sugar and mix. Blend in the flour, then add the rest of the ingredients. Bake in a krumkake iron and roll.

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