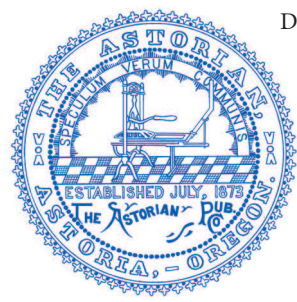


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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OUR VIEW

Start building tsunami-safe buildings now

Bad as it will be whenever the Cascadia Subduction Zone next comes unstuck, there are steps we can begin taking now to ensure most outer coast residents survive to pick up the pieces.

This is the goal of new design standards for tsunami-safe buildings that were unveiled Wednesday in Portland at the American Society of Civil Engineers' annual meeting.

Up until geological discoveries in the 1990s, the Pacific Northwest didn't have many natural disasters to fret about other than volcanic eruptions. Then we learned that European-American settlement happened to occur during one of the centuries-long lulls between massive earthquakes and the tsunamis they spawn.

Humans adapt to danger and residents of low-lying communities along the Washington and Oregon coast have reacted with a kind of optimistic fatalism — figuring it's unlikely to happen in any one person's time here, but if it does there's nothing that can be done other than bow to the whims of fate.

"In some places, like Washington's Long Beach Peninsula or Ocean Shores, even the fleetest runners could never make it to safety in time and few — if any — buildings are likely to survive the wall of water that will hit after the shaking stops," the Seattle Times reported Tuesday in a story about an ASCE subcommittee's ideas for better coastal buildings. (See www.tinyurl.com/Tsunami-Safe-Buildings.) In our area, this danger also looms from Warrenton to Cannon Beach, and even hangs over Columbia estuary cities including Astoria, Ilwaco and Chinook.

"That grim outlook inspired a group of leading engineers to create the nation's first design standards for tsunami-safe structures," the Times reported. "If incorporated into building codes as the engineers hope, the standards would require that new, critical facilities like hospitals, police stations and schools in vulnerable areas be strong enough to withstand the tsunami and tall enough that occupants won't be swept away."

"We're basically trying to save lives," one of the engineers said. "The idea that you would essentially write off whole communities is not acceptable."

The ASCE's Gary Chock points out that some Japanese buildings saved tens of thousands of lives during the 2011 tsunami, permitting residents to ride out the flood in structures made to remain standing despite powerful earth shaking, and pummeling by seawater and debris.

In the U.S., the first similar building — the gymnasium at Ocosta Elementary School near Westport, Washington — was dedicated this summer, with room on the roof for 2,000 quake survivors.

Such multi-functionality is essential, providing an asset that will be used by community members every day, hopefully for decades before it is needed to escape a tsunami. This contrasts with plans for expensive evacuation platforms in planning stages on the Long Beach Peninsula, designed with little else in mind besides briefly getting school children above harm's way.

Some building groups object the tsunami-safe standards will be too expensive, but the civil engineers' group calculates only a 1 to 3 percent increase in cost. The standards would only apply to important public buildings, not to homes or private businesses.

Estimates of when a subduction quake and tsunami will happen are imprecise. Disaster may strike this afternoon or a century from now. With a little luck, we may have several generations to build survivable buildings. Civic leaders, planners and architects now have a good starting point — thanks to the Society of Civil Engineers — for constructing multi-purpose structures that will provide decades of service before they are needed to escape the ocean's onrushing waters.

Every coastal community, every school board, every hospital district and government agency — including the U.S. Coast Guard — should adhere to tsunami-safe building codes from this point forward.

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

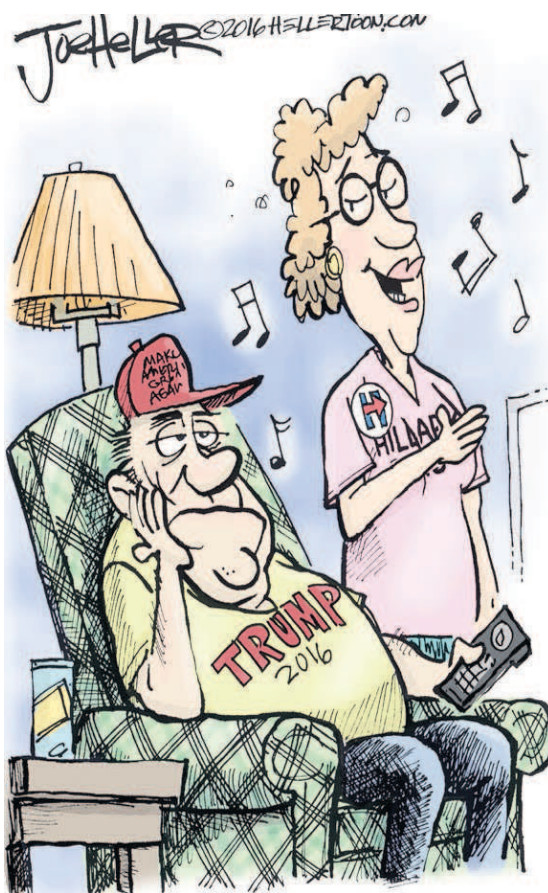
All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than

mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com; online at www.dailyastorian.com; delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103



OH, SAY DID YOU SEE,
 ON TV MONDAY NIGHT?
 YOUR SIDE SOUNDLY HAD FAILED,
 AT THE FIRST TIME DEBATING.
 THOSE FLAWED GRIPES AND WHITE LIES,
 GAVE FACT CHECKERS A FRIGHT.
 O'ER THE PUNDITS YOU WATCHED,
 YOU SO GULLIBLY BELIEVE IN.
 AND SOME TEMPERS DID FLARE,
 MY HANDS PULLED OUT SOME HAIR.
 I PROVED THAT I'M RIGHT,
 FOR THE TRUTH; YOU DON'T CARE.
 OH, SAY CAN A HARD-HEADED
 VOTER BE SWAYED,
 FROM THE LAND OF LOONEY,
 TO THE HOME OF THE SANE?

GUEST COLUMN

Wildlife center remembers its founder, celebrates fledgling year

By LINDSEY NICOLAS
 For The Daily Astorian

This month marks one year since the passing of Wildlife Center of the North Coast's founder, Sharnelle Fee. Fee, who has been described as a "light in our community," had an incredible passion for helping animals, conservation and education. She was a champion for wildlife in need.

Fee founded the wildlife center in 1997 and moved from Portland to the coast, where she set up shop to specialize in seabird rehabilitation.

"I have never met anyone as absolutely dedicated and mission-focused as Sharnelle," said Vicki Bucklin, a longtime volunteer at the center. "She cared for nothing other than what was best for the birds and didn't mind if she offended anyone who didn't agree with her (views)."

Fee worked side-by-side with the volunteers, never asking them to do anything she hadn't done herself at least a million times," Bucklin remembered. "She earned the admiration and respect of those she worked with, and inspired so many people in our community and beyond."

"She was fun — and funny!," said current Director Joshua Saranpaa, with a laugh. "Sharnelle had such a sense of humor. She was also a tireless worker. She'd run circles around everyone every single day, but she loved her volunteers," he adds with a smile, "despite the fact she liked birds more than people."

A year of change

Saranpaa, a licensed wildlife rehabilitator, was Fee's longtime assistant director and protégé, and has been at the helm since Fee's passing. With support from the Board of Directors and an outstanding volunteer team, Saranpaa has accomplished much to be proud of after his first year without Fee.

"The transition has gone really smooth overall, considering all of the changes we've undergone this year," Saranpaa said. "It is sometimes difficult to go from a founder-directed organization with just one person calling the shots to one run by a group of dedicated individuals. We all have different ideas of what to focus on and the priorities that we'd each like to see accomplished, but we've got a great group and have been working well together. I feel lucky to have such a great team!"

What started in Fee's small mobile home trailer nearly 20 years ago has grown into a fully functional wildlife hospital including 19 outdoor enclosures and a variety of prerelease pools. The wildlife center relies mostly on volunteer support and public donations to take care of over 2,000 patients annually. A wide variety of birds and mammals come through their doors every year, each in need of some kind of care. Whether injured, sick, starving or orphaned, the center is working on building the facility to take care of their every need.

The wildlife center continues Fee's mission of honoring the dignity of their patients, respecting their wildness, and returning them to their natural home as quickly as they can.

"We're working to improve our current rehabilitation techniques by being more science-based and data-driven in the decisions we make, and want to expand our ability to rehab more patients by fixing currently unusable spaces and have plans for new, state of the art enclosures,"



Submitted Photo
 Sharnelle Fee, founder of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, who passed away one year ago this month, is remembered for her immense contribution to saving wildlife and advocating for conservation along our North Coast.



The Daily Astorian/Brown Photo
 In addition to the caring for Caspian terns, bottom left, brown pelicans, upper left, and cormorants in 2014, right, the Wildlife Center of the North Coast provided aid to 30 American white pelicans.



Submitted Photo
 Josh Saranpaa of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast holds a spotted owl early last year.

Saranpaa said. "We'll also need to get some new equipment and add medications in order to be more self-sufficient in-house, but it's all a work in progress."

From safe, secure kennels inside for those patients needing critical care to long flight aviaries and therapy pools outside, Saranpaa and his team have a plan to become a state of the art wildlife hospital, recovery center and wildlife-conservation education center.

"Our goal is to be open to the public with an education center onsite in five years' time," he says. "Education was very important to

Sharnelle and we would love to honor her legacy by expanding our education programs and developing a stronger community-nature partnership. A bold plan, but very exciting, too."

Immediate Need

This fall is considered the wildlife center's "busy season" as starving seabirds all along the coast wash up on shore as warmer ocean temperatures deplete their food source. The center is looking for volunteers to help with patient care at the center and those to join the animal transport network they have set up along the coastline from Newport to Long Beach, Washington. Anyone interested in lending a helping hand can email volunteer@coastwildlife.org for more information on how to sign up.

Don't have the time, but still want to help? The center has an item "wish list" posted on their website, www.CoastWildlife.org, and accepts monetary donations there as well. For those interested in staying involved and up to date with the wildlife center, join their new membership program by visiting the website. Donations can also be mailed to Wildlife Center of the North Coast, P.O. Box 1232, Astoria, OR 97103.

Lindsey Nicolas is the development and communications coordinator for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast.