

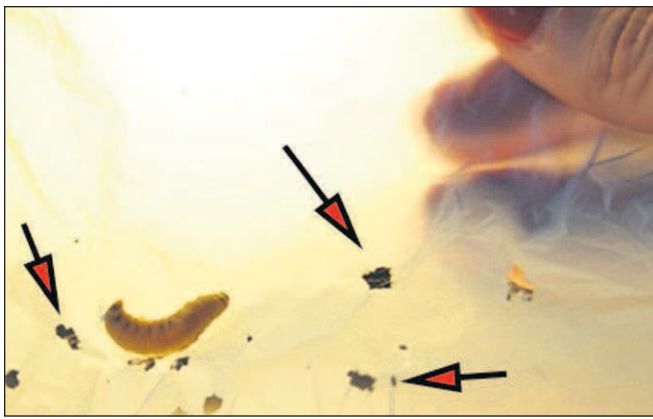
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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

'ONE WORD: PLASTICS'



At last, there's hope for the environment, which is being over-ridden by the scourge of plastic pollution: **Wax worms**. Which aren't really worms at all, they're caterpillars (*Galleria mellonella*).

According to a story on CBC News (<http://tinyurl.com/waxy eater>), the worm's saving grace was discovered by accident. A beekeeper, while cleaning a hive of the little pests (to hives, anyway), threw a bunch of wax worms into a plastic bag, which soon developed holes. It turns out these little fellows just love to eat **nonbiodegradable plastic**. And, another species of wax worm munches on biodegradable plastics. A worm is pictured, plastic munching, in a photo courtesy of Cesar Hernandez/CSIC.

Scientists think if they can figure out how these worms do it, they can find a solution to get rid of plastic waste on an industrial level. Looks like there's hope on the environmental horizon, after all.

POTTY BEGONE



The Astor Street Opry Company is moving up in the world with long awaited, longed for news, the Ear learned from **Judith Niland**: The outdoor plumbing (aka the Porta Potty lineup) is, at last, on the way out.

"**Markus Brown** ... just told me that two weeks ago, the city of Astoria approved the permit for new **indoor plumbing** at the ASOC Playhouse!" wrote Judith — who was "so dang proud and excited to share this update."

The icing on the cake (aside from Porta Potty no more): There will be three bathrooms, one of which will be ADA accessible. The work is under way, and expected be completed before the opening of the 34th season of "Shanghaied in Astoria" in July. The only question now is: When will the official toilet paper cutting take place?

WELL, I DECLARE



U.S. History fans will be interested to know that a second parchment **manuscript copy of the Declaration of Independence** has been found in a predictable spot: England. In the West Sussex Record Office, in fact, according to a story in the Boston Globe (<http://tinyurl.com/Declare2>).

Two Harvard University researchers, Emily Sneff and Danielle Allen, found the 1780s document in the archives of the little town of Chichester. They believe it was the property of the Duke of Richmond, who was supportive of the rebelling colonists. A photo of a section of the copy is shown, courtesy of the West Sussex Record Office.

Sneff and Allen postulate that the copy in England was probably commissioned by **James Wilson** of Pennsylvania, one of U.S. founding fathers. He signed the original Declaration of Independence, helped draft the Constitution, and was one of the six original justices on the Supreme Court.

The only other parchment version of the Declaration is the original, which is stored at the National Archives in Washington, D.C.

WRECKED BUTTER



Here's a catchy little snippet from **The Daily Morning Astorian, Tuesday, April 28, 1885**: "Mrs. B. Nichols, living at 20 N. Ninth St., has a **jar of butter** that was saved from the wreck of the **Great Republic** six years ago (April 19, 1879). Her husband was working on one of the tugs that went to the rescue of the passengers ... and while aboard ... took the butter and sent it to her. The butter has a gilt edge appearance, and smells sweet ..."

A little research was in order. Launched in 1866, the steamer (pictured) was the largest commercial passenger sidewheel steamer built in the U.S. to date, according to a 2012 story by Robert Wells for The Oregonian (<http://tinyurl.com/GenRepub>). The 380-foot long ship's engine was connected to two 40-foot paddlewheels, and the vessel could trundle along at 9 miles an hour for 33 days at a pop.

In 1867, the Great Republic began regularly scheduled service to Japan and China to trade, deliver mail and carry passengers. It should be noted that the ship is famous for bringing more than 10,000 Chinese laborers to the U.S. while on its Asian route.

By 1878, the use of propellers made the General Republic outdated, and it was sold to move passengers and freight from San Francisco to Portland. In fact, it was the first such voyage that was the ship's undoing.

All was well when they crossed the Columbia River bar. It was a clear, calm night. Not so much on board, however, as the captain and the pilot disagreed on the location of Sand Island — a moot point, since Sand Island found them, and they ran hard aground.

Local tugs came and picked up all of the almost 900 passengers. The crew, who stayed aboard, was finally forced to abandon the ship, which was breaking up. All went smoothly until the very last boat, which, caught in a heavy sea, overturned and killed 11 crewmen.

Portions of the ship, which was torn apart and sank, are possibly still visible at very low tide. Invisible, and to date, lost, is the Great Republic's "treasure tank," which,

PUT YOUR COAT ON



Since April is the month **John Jacob Astor IV** and about 1,500 others went down with the Titanic in 1912, it's probably no coincidence that this April a **fur coat** worn by one of the Titanic survivors, **Mabel Bennett**, hit the auction block at **Henry Alridge & Son** in England, BBC.com reports (<http://tinyurl.com/Mabel-Coat>). The coat is pictured, right, courtesy of BBC.com; at left, Mabel can be seen wearing it in a photo with other Titanic stewardesses, courtesy of Henry Alridge & Son.

The coat's provenance was proven with a note written by Mabel's great-niece: "This coat was worn by my Great Aunt Mabel who was a Stewardess. On her rescue from the Titanic she was in her nightdress and this coat was the first garment she snatched for warmth. My aunt gave me the coat in the early 60s, because of her advancing years she found the weight of the coat too much for her."

Mabel died at 96 in 1974, and the coat remained in the family until 1999, when it was sold. On display in the U.S. since then, the coat fetched about \$193,000 at auction — almost double its original valuation.

RHINO RIDER



Longview, Washington, sure got an eyeful the other day when cyclist **Matt Meyer** (pictured inset), a safari guide from South Africa, rolled through on his bicycle towing a life-sized **300 pound rhinoceros replica**. He was tickled he made the front page of The Daily News Wednesday, as shown in a photo from his Instagram feed, @rhinoride2017.

No, he's not coming to Astoria. He left from Blaine, Washington, on a fundraising mission, **The Long Ride to Free Them**, to raise funds and create global awareness about the **rhino poaching crisis** in Southern Africa, and he headed straight for Portland. From there, he's off to Eugene, then over to the coast, and down to his final stop, San Diego.

Why the West Coast route? He says it's the home of "some of the most intense illicit wildlife trade in the U.S."

Want to donate and help the rhinos? Check out his website, where you can also track his progress, at <https://rhinoride.org>

TOWN FOR SALE



The New York Daily News, and several other publications, ran a story recently about the almost-dead tiny (population around 200) southwest Oregon unincorporated **town of Tiller** being for **sale for \$3.5 million** — not including the elementary school, which is being sold separately for \$350,000 (<http://tinyurl.com/Tiller3-5>), or the church, which is not for sale.

Of course, one has to wonder how a town could wind up on the market, and the explanation is fairly simple. Tiller, which was founded in the mid-1800s by farmer Aaron Tiller, a pioneer from Missouri, is surrounded by the Umpqua National Forest. Once environmental logging regulations kicked in some time ago, logging came to a halt and the Tiller timber mill closed. There went the town's main source of income, and most of its citizens. A longtime resident bought up the majority of the downtown properties (28 tax lots), but he died, so his estate is selling the whole kit and kaboodle.

Included in the sale are "six houses, a shuttered general store and gas station, land (250 acres), water rights and infrastructure that includes sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station," according to the New York Daily News. The realtor's site says this also includes a 13-acre subdivision, 13 commercial zoned lots and four industrial zoned lots, not to mention access to berries, acorns, fruit trees and merchantable timber.

And, the town is right on the South Umpqua River and Elk Creek, so almost 5,000 feet of waterfront footage is included in the deal. The sold-separately elementary school is about 16,600 square feet on 6.58 acres. The little town is pictured, courtesy of the broker, LandLeader.com (<http://tinyurl.com/TillerSale>).

It looks like there's a buyer, the listing says, and "sellers have allowed buyers a reasonable due diligence period." But it ain't over till it's over, and "backup offers are encouraged for serious, qualified buyers." Time to rattle the penny jar?

SAVE A FOREST



Ever wished you could help **protect a forest** and its inhabitants from logging? **Jim Unwin** of Long Beach, Washington, asks. "Now's your chance!" Jim, and a group of like-minded souls, are trying to buy — and save for posterity — a 4.4 acre forested lot next door to Jim's house and studio (pictured) before the owner logs it and puts it on the open market.

The group has until Monday, May 1 to come up with the money. They've already raised most of what's needed, but are about \$700 short. Once they own the land, they intend to donate it to a land trust, so it can remain untouched, and be enjoyed by everyone.

And, it's not just the forest they want to protect, either. "We have identified 22 different species of animals that live in or travel through the parcel," Jim noted. Want to help them save this little piece of heaven? You can donate at <http://tinyurl.com/buyaforest>

"My children and I gather chanterelles here, witness ravens and eagles challenge one another, laugh at the antics of Douglas squirrels and delight in the deep peace of a trail less traveled," **Lee Hogan Knott** wrote. "Help preserve this small sanctuary on the peninsula for generations to come. Celebrate Earth Day, every day."

COMMUNITY NOTES

SATURDAY
Angora Hiking Club — 9 a.m., Fort Clatsop main parking lot. Fort Clatsop South Slough Trail hike. No fee for parking. For information, call Jan Coughlin at 503-791-3521.

Sit & Stitch — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Home-spin Quilts & Yarn, 108 10th St. Bring knitting, crochet or other needlework projects to this community stitching time. All skill levels welcome.

Columbia Northwestern Model Railroad Club — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group

runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Carter at 503-325-0757.

Spinning Circle — 1 to 3 p.m., Astoria Fiber Arts Academy, 1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to <http://astoriafiberarts.com>

Sweet Songs of Spring Concert — 2 p.m., Chinook Community Gym, 810 U.S. Highway 101, Chinook, Washington. Performance by the Bayside Singers, directed by Barbara Poulshock, accompanied by Barbara Pate. Free event, donations accepted.

SUNDAY
Line Dancing — 5:30 to 8 p.m., Seaside American Legion, 1315 Broadway. For information, call 503-738-5111. No cost; suggested \$5 tip to the instructor.

MONDAY
Chair Exercises for Seniors — 9 to 9:45 a.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. For information, call 503-325-3231.

Scandinavian Workshop — 10 a.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. Needlework, hardanger, knitting, crocheting, embroi-

derly and quilting. All are welcome. For information, call 503-325-1364 or 503-325-7960.

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60. For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. Cost is \$6. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$5 for seniors and \$7 for those younger than 60. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3502 Monday or Thursday.

Astoria Rotary Club — noon, second floor of the Astoria Elks Lodge, 453 11th St. Guests always welcome. For information, go to www.AstoriaRotary.org