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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

SWAMP SOCCER, ANYONE?



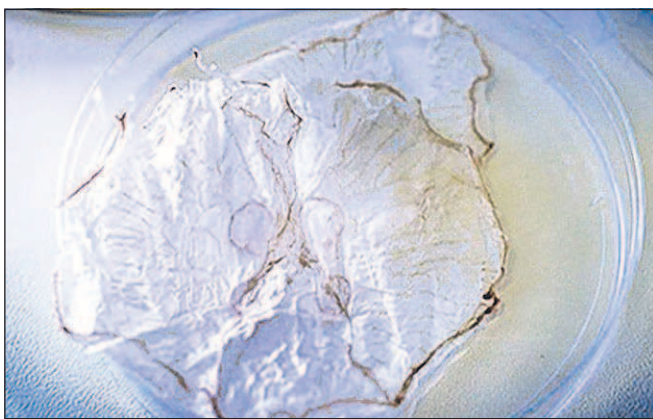
Local writer **Peter Marsh** (<http://sea-to-summit.net>) alerted the Ear to a recent New York Times article about the Finns' penchant for weird sports (<http://tinyurl.com/sportyfinns>).

"Like what?" you might ask. How about swamp soccer? Created by the town of Hyrnsalmi to make a tourist attraction out of their vast swampland, more than 2,000 people showed up for the latest bout, as the team members (many of whom were drunk, apparently) slogged around in 50 acres of goo. "You play, you lose, you win — no one cares," one player said. A swamp soccer photo is shown courtesy of @DiscoverFinland on Twitter.

And then there's the Mosquito Killing World Championships, the World Sauna Championships, the Wife Carrying World Championship (winner gets his wife's weight in beer) and the Air Guitar World Championship. And let's not forget competitive hobbyhorsing (trotting and clearing hurdles while riding wooden toy horses).

The New York Times speculates these bizarre sports reflect Finland's "wave of growing individualism." Pasi Koski, a sports sociologist, is more philosophical: "We learned to laugh at ourselves. What's so serious?"

CRISPY CRITTERS



Have you ever thought about the fact that there are too many jellyfish in the ocean? They're a downright nuisance, floating around everywhere, getting caught up in fishermen's nets and being sucked into public utility pipes.

South Korea actually declared war on the little buggers, and deployed JEROS (Jellyfish Elimination RObotic Swarm), robots that corral and puree whole blooms of jellyfish at a time into slime (<http://tinyurl.com/jellyzap>). A very nasty, messy business, indeed.

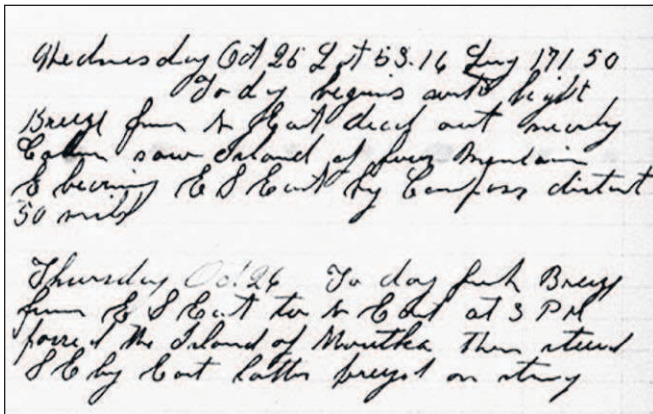
However, NewAtlas.com reports that a Denmark institution of higher learning has come up with a far tidier way to make those hordes of jellyfish useful: **jellyfish crisps** (<http://tinyurl.com/jellycrisp>).

As it turns out, jellyfish crisps have been a staple in Asia for centuries, and they're very popular. But the Asian drying process takes 30-plus days, and the end product is a bit too "gristly" for Western palates.

Enter **Mie Thorborg Pedersen** of the **University of Southern Denmark**, who steeps jellyfish in alcohol, which replaces the water in a couple of days. Left out to dry, they make thin, crispy disks (pictured, courtesy of the University of Southern Denmark) that don't have much flavor, but do have possibilities.

"The mouth feel and the aesthetic appearance, in particular," Thorborg Pedersen notes, "have gastronomic potential."

UNRAVELING HISTORY



Here's the perfect challenge for maritime history buffs: Helping transcribe old ship's logs from the 19th and early 20th centuries at www.oldweather.org. Computers can't do text recognition because of the "diverse and idiosyncratic handwriting that only human beings can read and understand effectively," the website says. The sample shown proves the point.

Transcribing the logs is an important task, as aside from their value to historians, their contents are even more important to climate scientists; future climate projections can be made from the logs' weather and sea-ice data. Plus, you never know — while transcribing, you might just be the one who brings some previously unknown historical nugget to light.

LIVING LEGACY



Here's a plan for the ever after, for the ecology-minded sea lover: Turn yourself in to a little eco-system as a reef on the ocean floor, with the help of a Florida company, **Eternal Reefs** (www.eternalreefs.com).

The idea came about in the late 1980s, when two young men, **Todd Barber** and **Don Brawley**, wanted to help the deteriorating reefs around the world, and came up with the "reef ball" project, creating artificial reefs to attract the growth that occurs on the real deal. Since 1992, 70 countries have been involved, and more than 700,000 reef balls have been placed on the ocean floor.

It wasn't a big leap to incorporate human remains into the mix, and Eternal Reefs was born. They will add your ashes (you can even add a pet's, too) to an "environmentally safe concrete reef mixture," then place the mixture in a mold and cure it.

A fresh layer of concrete is added to the top so families can add hand prints, written messages, seashells and environmentally safe mementos. As a finishing touch, a bronze plaque is attached. Finally, a boat transfers the reef ball to its ocean floor location. A photo is shown, courtesy of Eternal Reefs.

The idea must be catching on, because company's website says there are more than 1,800 Eternal Reefs placed off the coasts of several southeastern states. If you want to make yourself a living legacy, literally, and help the ocean at the same time, here's your shot.

JUSTICE DELAYED



Initially, Clatsop County court was held in various residences. In 1854, according to the National Register of Historic Places Nomination Form (<http://tinyurl.com/AstorCourt>), the first Astoria courthouse was built on one of 15 lots donated by **Col. John McClure**. Ten of those lots were given to the builder; the rest were sold to pay for courthouse furniture. But by 1904, the old courthouse had become dilapidated, and didn't have enough space.

"The cornerstone of the new court house will be laid Aug. 23. The ceremonies attending the laying of the stone will be conducted by the local lodge of Masons," the **Thursday, Aug. 4, 1904, Morning Astorian** reports. "... Work on the foundation is being rushed, and a large force of men is at work."

Once the foundation was finished, and the cornerstone installed (inlaid with a metal box full of items deemed historically important) — an event marked with a parade and much pomp and circumstance — construction had ground to a halt by November. Ironically, the stoppage was because of legal complications, along with a lack of the funds needed to start on the courthouse structure itself.

Meanwhile, most of the materials needed to finish the construction were stored in the unfinished basement. An attempt to raise money to cover the costly goods failed, as all of the bids submitted were too high. So there everything sat, in the basement, exposed to the elements — including the county clerk, whose office was there.

An attempted levy to finish the courthouse failed to interest the voters in 1906, but one in 1907 succeeded, and the contractors went to work. However, the delays made the original bid of \$97,351 in 1904 (about \$2.57 million now) moot; the cost to complete the building had swelled to \$175,000 by 1907 (about \$4.35 million now).

After a long delay of bad weather, construction began again, and the Astoria Courthouse was finally completed Jan. 30, 1908. At that point, everyone probably heaved a huge sigh of relief. Especially the county clerk.

FUNNY MONEY



Oldie but a goodie from **March 23, 2012**: This week we have another history nugget belonging to lifelong Warrenton resident **Jim Culp Sr.**: a **Democratic Wild Cat Money \$5 bill** (pictured).

The note was issued in fictional Bungtown, N.J., on Oct. 21, 1892, and features a portrait of **Grover Cleveland** and an illustration of a wildcat. A satirical bit of currency, aka funny money, the bill was issued during the presidential campaign of 1892, when Cleveland (Democrat) ran against **Benjamin Harrison** (Republican). Cleveland won, becoming the only president to serve two nonconsecutive terms (www.legacyamericana.com).

As an aside: In a bit of presidential irony, Cleveland is also pictured on the very real \$1,000 Federal Reserve note, first printed in 1928.

The funny money bill says, "Democratic National Platform 1892. Sec. 8 — We recommend that the prohibitory 10 per cent tax on State Bank issues be repealed. Which I accept. — Grover Cleveland," and "receivable in payment for five cent drinks at twenty cents each."

The best part, though is how to redeem it. "The Cleveland Bank Promises, whenever it D___ pleases, to pay to bearer Five Dollars in Money, Coon Skins or Cord Wood at the option of the bank." Naturally, the bank is as phony as Bungtown.

"So who is **Harry F. Culp**, and why is his name on the bill?" the Ear asked. He was Jim Culp's father, who inherited the bill from his father, "who was close friends with the **Jesse James** gang and all them," Jim said.

There was a centennial celebration in Warrenton years ago, and the family heirloom was put on display. Jim's mother put Harry's name on the note because she didn't want it to get lost in the shuffle. The funny money was eventually passed down to Jim's sister, and finally, to Jim. How's that for provenance?

WHERE ARE YOU, RIMAS?

Astoria's wayward sailor, Russian immigrant **Rimas Meleshyus**, left Hilo, Hawaii, in late May in a second donated sailboat, on yet another attempt at an **around-the-world sail**.



Since he still doesn't know much about sailing, and his sails are often torn or missing, it's really more of an around-the-world drift. His friends, fans and critics keep track of him via his daily Garmin satellite feed posts on Facebook.

In mid-July, it looked like he would land in American Samoa, but he couldn't contact the Coast Guard, or anyone else, by radio to tow him into harbor (he doesn't know how to dock), so he drifted on by and kept heading west. You can read about his adventures on this journey in Jon Prime's blog at <http://tinyurl.com/mimsyrimas>.

On July 21, a Facebook post said "Good morning. One of the biggest adventure in America history. No money no life raft no main sail no nothing, but one of the happiest sailor." His last post, July 30, from near Fiji, mentioned his tiller was damaged, and it was "just current pushing boat, very not clear where end up."

Now his Garmin tracker is off, and he is out of contact, floating around the South Pacific with little food, no fishing gear, no engine and no sails. Will the Coast Guard rescue him (again)? The saga continues.

POT LUCK



A little bird sent the Ear this item: The "Lodging" section of the **Kush Tourism** website ("for cannabis consumers that like to travel") features the **Rose Creek Retreat** in Rosburg, Washington (<http://tinyurl.com/kushrose>).

The self-described "boutique campground, wildlife sanctuary and agro-forestry project" has only three campsites, each one "your own private nature park." Pictured, the retreat's Rose Creek Hut and rose garden.

Kush Tourism stresses the retreat's proximity to Astoria for "restaurants, breweries and cannabis shops." Yet, interestingly enough, it only lists five marijuana-friendly lodging spots in Oregon — none of which are in Astoria.

COMMUNITY NOTES

SATURDAY
Angora Hiking Club — 9 a.m., Sixth Street parking lot. Cape Disappointment hike with Steve Wood. For information, call Kathleen Hudson at 503-861-2802.

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

Detachment 1228 Marine Corps League — noon, El Compadre, 119 Main Ave., Warrenton. For information, contact Lou Neubecker at 503-717-0153.

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>

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.

Seekers Group — 6 to 7:30 p.m., Pioneer Presbyterian Church, 33324 Patriot Way, Warrenton.

Group discusses issues facing religious faith in the modern secular world. All are welcome. For information, call 503-861-2421.

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, embroidery 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.

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