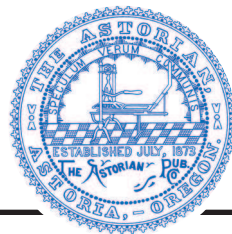


OPINION



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SOUTHERN EXPOSURE



Neal Maine

These visitors are in treacherous territory near Gearhart's Little Beach.

Personal lessons from life in Seaside

Seaside's Neal Maine stopped in the Signal office recently with some words of warning. The naturalist, wildlife photographer and former science teacher at Seaside High School slipped an 8X10 photo from a plain brown envelope.

One of a series, the photo shows visitors on a dune near Little Beach scrambling on an uneven sand shelf to keep from sliding and dropping into the icy water below.



R.J. MARX

"Somebody's going to get hurt," Maine said. My wife and I hiked the Gearhart dunes near Little Beach on New Year's Day. With Terrible Tilly in the long view, footing became

more uncertain.

Heavy rains from the days before had shifted the river's flow, undermining the dunes like a sculptor chiseling the chin of a statue.

Thanks to Maine and the region's many stewards of the land, I have learned to watch my step, to give wildlife wide berth and to keep my dog on a leash — far from the nesting western snowy plover.

I've learned to avoid high tides, rip tides and sneaker waves and to listen for the rustle of the elk herd.

I know to watch for crevasses, cracks and slippery footing, and find footholds and grips on mountains carved by nature and poked by treasure hunters.

And to be ready when the Big One hits.

Personal lessons

My wisdom is nothing as weighty as all this. But I have gleaned a few hard-earned personal lessons during four years on the coast.

- The food bank won't take your fresh-baked cookies.
- Don't even think about exceeding the speed limit in Gearhart.
- Those white "Ts" painted on the roadway in downtown Seaside designate parking spaces. Park inside them.
- When anyone asks you: "How's your day going so far?" don't overthink it.
- Be kind to your library books.
- Those gas pumps on the west side of Highway 101 near the high school aren't for you.
- Gearhart has the best doggie cleanup bags. They're available in front of the post office and at beach entrances.
- There is a "secret" tennis court in Gearhart.
- Don't drop your doggie cleanup bag in someone else's garbage can.
- Buy an American Legion poppy.
- The Red Cross installs free smoke alarms.



Troy Podoll

A Steller sea lion corpse in Seaside's Cove. Don't get too close to stranded marine animals.



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian

Signs in Seaside warn beachgoers of the potential danger posed by sharks.

- Always wear a helmet at construction sites.
- Do feed the seals — at the Seaside Aquarium.
- Ken's Market has everything you need.
- If they don't, try Trucke's.
- Wherever you shop, bring your own bag(s).
- Don't sit on the visitors' side during Gulls games.
- Give surreys plenty of room.
- Let the other guy go first.
- Don't let anybody tell you "it's an

PORTLAND TO SEASIDE IN ONE HOUR — NOT

Oregon State Police reported on Dec. 26, 5:05 p.m., the driver of an Audi A8 stopped for doing 100 mph on Highway 26 near Milepost 28 westbound from the rest area. Conditions at the time were pouring rain and heavy holiday traffic. Driver cited for reckless driving, driving with a suspended or revoked license and speeding.

hour to Portland."

- Dallas, Albany, Detroit and St. Paul are cities in ... Oregon.
- Learn how to pronounce "Yachats" (YAH-hots). It's derived from the Chinook Indian word, Yahuts, meaning "dark waters at the foot of the mountain," according to the Oregon Coast Visitors Association.
- If you don't like the weather, wait a few minutes.
- Yes, there are sharks on the North Coast.
- If an eagle eyes your beloved pet, bring your pet inside.
- And remember, it's "easy to Seaside."

R.J. Marx is editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette, and covers South County for The Daily Astorian.