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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ALL ABOARD



In case you're wondering how long it can take to resume rail service after being disrupted by a mega-disaster, you can take a lesson from Japan.

The Japan Times by The Yomiuri Shimbun reports that the final 34-mile section of the 101-mile Rias Line coastal railway is complete at last (bit.ly/iwaterail). The train connecting Miyako and Kamaishi in Iwate Prefecture — one of the hardest hit areas in the 2011 earthquake and tsunami — ran for the first time in eight years on March 23, and is pictured, courtesy of The Yomiuri Shimbun.

"I rode this line before the quake," one young train rider noted, "and I want to see how the cityscape has changed, while remembering that time." The cityscape is probably unrecognizable.

A VALIDATING MOMENT



The remote Makah Tribal Reservation town of Neah Bay is on the northwest tip of Washington, near the mouth of the Strait of Juan de Fuca (Salish Sea), right across from British Columbia.

It is two hours from the nearest city and, like many coastal Oregon and Washington towns, the land nearest the sea is flat, and would be vulnerable when the Cascadia Subduction Zone unleashes a megaquake and tsunami.

Makah tribal elder Melissa Peterson worries about the old people and children in her village. She knows they will only have 10 minutes to reach the high ground nearby after the earthquake, and took it upon herself to start a grassroots effort to build a tsunami trail to help bay residents climb to safety.

Although it is steep, care is being taken to make the trail accessible for the elderly and disabled — which means small bridges and wide stairs over steep switchbacks are needed. One holding and rest area/platform is planned at about 150 feet above sea level; emergency services will be at the top of the hill.

Work has begun. On the lower level of the trail, gravel has been laid, and two bridges and 30 stairs to the first elevation level have already been built. There have been several donations of time, money and materials, but her personal funds have run out, and more is needed to build the 250 to 300 stairs necessary to reach the top of the hill. To help, contribute at Melissa Peterson's GoFundMe page at bit.ly/MPtsutrail

The unfinished trail has already been declared an official tsunami evacuation route, which Peterson calls an "amazing validating moment."

"It's been an amazing journey," she told the Peninsula Daily News (bit.ly/MPpdn). "It provides hope."

MYSTERY EGGS

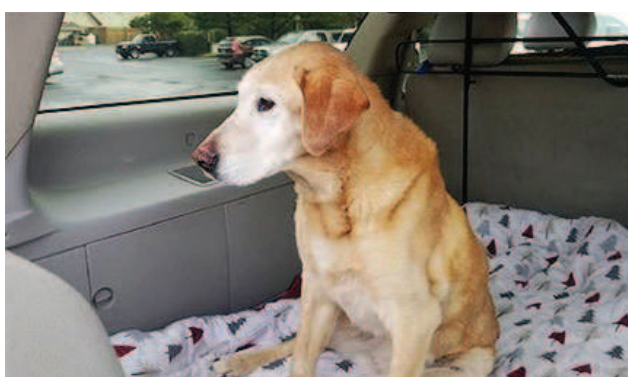


The Seaside Aquarium has been getting lots of questions about egg clusters that have been washing ashore. Wonder no more: They're squid eggs, as shown in a photo, courtesy of Seaside Aquarium.

"During the spring and summer, large schools of opalescent squid move into shallow coves and bays to mate, lay their eggs and die," an email from the aquarium says. "Each female lays about a dozen cigar-shaped egg capsules, each containing 180 to 300 eggs."

"The newly laid egg sacs attach to each other, forming massive clusters. The capsules have no taste or odor, thereby 'hiding' them from predators. It takes three to five weeks before the eggs hatch and juvenile squid emerge." Now you know.

WHERE'S PIPER?



"I didn't think I'd get to write this post, to be honest," Maria Nagy of the Tillamook Animal Shelter (@TillamookAnimalShelter) posted recently on the shelter's Facebook page. "I didn't really think we'd ever know what happened to Piper."

"Piper went missing in Neskowin back on March 13," she said. "She's an older girl, 13 years old, and doesn't get around that well. Her parents, many people in the Neskowin community searched for her nonstop. Her family doesn't live here, they kept driving back to search. Things were looking grim ... maybe she wasn't coming back."

"Then March 22, we got a call from some vacationers who had just arrived at their vacation home, and discovered a dog, stuck on the hill behind their place ... on the other side of the creek! A long way from where she started."

"The gentleman who found her coaxed her down and led her across the creek to safety and rescue. He called us to find out what to do next. He said he found a yellow dog, I joyously yelled, 'It's Piper!' and within a few minutes her parents were contacted, and all was good with the world."

Piper is back home, and seems no worse for her adventure except for being a bit tired. Of course, her "parents" are very grateful and thankful for the good people of Neskowin who looked for her, and for her rescuers, who finally found her.

In the aftermath of the ordeal, Piper's very relieved "mom" offers one bit of advice: "Never lose hope."

OLD SALT



It's time for an update on the adventures of Astoria's wayward sailor/Kon Tiki drifter, Rimas Meleshyus.

When he returned to the U.S. from Vietnam (boatless) in January after his latest around-the-world attempt, the first order of business was to have the cataracts fixed on both eyes. Sailing alone is hard enough, without badly impaired vision.

With that done, and all healed up, he recently went sailing at Penn Cove, Washington. "So wonderful to be back on the water," he exclaimed, "and to be able to see with my fixed eyes!" Many of his devoted fans hope he picked up a few sailing lessons in the process.

A true "old salt," Rimas, who is in his late 60s, is not one bit deterred from making his around-the-world dream come true. "I look forward to finding a boat in the future, and sailing again," he posted on his Facebook page recently. "My eyes are now open to the world. Thank you for prayers and supporting me." Stay tuned.

A LEGACY OF LARD



The wreck of the 343-foot Russian cargo ship Vaslov (aka Vazlov) Verovsky on April 3, 1941, occurred when the steering mechanism jammed while outbound on the Columbia River bar. She ran hard aground on Peacock Spit, not far from Cape Disappointment.

No lives were lost, and the 37-man crew was rescued. Capt. Tokareff insisted on staying aboard, but wisely skeddaddled after 24 hours. The ship quickly broke up and disgorged its legacy, thousands of cases of lard that washed ashore.

"One local, Harry Smith, remembers working around the clock with a group of friends to transport and store around two thousand cases of lard," FluxStories.com says, "which they later sold to an Astoria bakery for \$4 a case."

"To this day, a number of Long Beach Peninsula locals have memories of eating pies and pastries made with shortening from the doomed Vazlov Verovsky." (bit.ly/vaslov1, bit.ly/vaslov2)

to order from menu, includes coffee. Cost is \$5 for seniors 62 and older, \$7.50 for those younger than 62. Breakfasts are open to the public. Proceeds after expenses help support local and other charities.

1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to astoriafiberarts.org

SUNDAY Seniors Breakfast — 9 a.m. to noon, Astoria Moose Lodge, 420 17th St. Cooked

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.

Grace and Encouragement for Moms — 10 to 11:30 a.m., Crossroads Com-

NO REGRETS



The news from Astoria's favorite expatriate, Chef Daymon Garrett Edwards, is that he and his partner, Luke, closed their successful Tartine Bakery and Cafe and Rusty's Smokehouse in Itaewon, South Korea, last fall.

There were several reasons for the move, "but most of all," the chef explained, "I turned 70 years old and I had been cooking/baking for 22 years. ... Luke and I wanted and needed a change. I have no regrets. We soared higher than I ever thought possible."

He's not totally retiring, though. Just going in a different direction. "I have fallen back on modeling/acting," he wrote. He used to model, part time, in San Francisco in the 1990s.

However, this time around, he has an idea to pitch. "While I was playing Santa Claus in 2018, I realized that I looked a bit like Col. Sanders (of Kentucky Fried Chicken) ... and thought I could pull off a look-a-like."

"Of course," he recalled, "I grew up seeing Col. Sanders and KFC, and at the time, I never even considered that I would grow up and age to look like him."

So, he's submitting his promotional idea and new photos to KFC Korea, Japan and China.

"The advantage I have," he mentioned, "is that I live here, and am available at short notice, same with Japan and China."

Once again, he is reinventing himself, "and will continue on my merry road as a true 20th/21st Century boulevardier."

"I celebrate the past," he added, "and close my eyes and jump forward to open them and gaze upon a new frontier, and Luke will be by my side, as well as my friends and supporters."

THE PERFECT PLACE



As you may know, Capt. John Couch was the first ship's master to sail past the (Columbia River) Bar and up to the Willamette River; then up the Willamette almost to Oregon City, site of the main Hudson's Bay Co. trading post," Graham Lewis wrote.

"The man owned a good chunk of what is now northern downtown Portland."

"In the early 1840s, on his first trip, Couch guided his first ship, the brig Maryland, from Newburyport, Massachusetts, around the Horn and up to the mouth of the Columbia in hopes of establishing trade with the Hudson's Bay Co. A member of Couch's crew made a color drawing of the Maryland in 1841 before they left Massachusetts, and it has been in my family for many years. Now in my 70s, I've been looking for a new home for the drawing where it will be valued and, at least part time, displayed."

Since they only made it to the mouth of the Columbia on this maiden voyage, "that's why it's appropriate that this drawing remain, in perpetuity, in Astoria. The Columbia River Maritime Museum is the perfect place for it."

The drawing, with a drawing of Capt. Couch (inset left), is shown, courtesy of Graham Lewis (inset right).

By the way, if you're wondering how Graham Lewis is connected to Capt. Couch, he's the captain's great-great-grandson, and the family has expanded quite a bit since the 1840s.

"Turnout at the Couch Family Reunion in 2013 astounded me," he wrote, "and all the 250 or so others who showed up."

A few of those family members came to Astoria on Saturday to help deliver the drawing to the museum, where it is now safely ensconced.

"Your town has a rich and colorful history," he added. "We are happy to be a part of it."

COMMUNITY NOTES

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

Columbia Northwestern Model Railroading Club — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Cardew at 503-325-0757.

Spinning Circle — 1 to 3 p.m., Astoria Fiber Arts Stu-

dio, 1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to astoriafiberarts.org

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See Notes, Page B4