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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ANYBODY THERE?



Do you wonder if there's anyone "out there"? Should we be trying to contact them? The UK Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence (SETI) folks — who provided the images shown — want to know your opinion on the subject at fromafar.world/opinion

Meanwhile, they're busy at work listening to space, trying to get some answers. "Today, the Breakthrough Listen initiative ... is conducting the first large, and systematic SETI surveys using telescopes all over the world — USA, Australia, South Africa and the UK," the website says.

"The Breakthrough Listen surveys will be many orders of magnitude more capable than the early surveys of the 1960s. ... In one day, Breakthrough Listen will survey as much parameter space as all previous SETI surveys added together. The prospects of a SETI detection have never been better!"

But is contacting anyone "out there" a moot point? The National UFO Reporting Center (NUFORC, nuforc.org) reports that there are already 197 sightings for July — only one from Oregon — and there were around 10 from Oregon (out of 444) in June. So far this year, there are 2,371 sighting reports nationwide.

One on June 13 in Scotts Mills, Oregon, was rather intriguing: "I saw a very shiny round aircraft in the sky that wasn't moving at all. It stayed in the same spot for approximately one minute, then in the blink of an eye it was on the other side of the sky. It stayed in that spot for approximately four seconds, then literally vanished."

Cue the "Twilight Zone" theme ...

A HAPPY ENDING



Don't try this at home: Several weeks ago, James Williams plopped a pile of fish heads and guts on the beach at Haida Gwaii, British Columbia, to attract some eagles and ravens. Nearby, he set up his Go-Pro camera; he was interested to see how the birds would behave, CBC.ca reports (bit.ly/GoProeagle).

After a few minutes, things got a little too interesting. First one eagle tossed a pile of fish guts at the lens, then another snatched up the camera in its talons and flew off with it.

Amazingly, in mid-July, a neighbor's guest found the camera on the beach, dinged up a bit, but the SD card was intact; about a minute's worth of "eagle cam" footage was saved. A screen shot is shown, courtesy of CBC and James Williams.

"I've been debating going to buy a lottery ticket with this good luck," he told CBC.

FOLLOW THE SIGNS



Do you know about the Historic Oregon Film Trail signs? Each one marks an iconic filming location, and the latest one went up recently at the Hammond Marina, memorializing the spot in the final scene of the 1993 movie "Free Willy," when the orca jumped to freedom. The sign is pictured, courtesy of historicoregonfilmtrail.com

There are already three signs in Astoria; on the Riverwalk, near 36th Street ("The Goonies," "Kindergarten Cop"), in Alameda Park ("Short Circuit") and by the Oregon Film Museum ("The Goonies" again).

Signs are planned in Ecola Park in Cannon Beach ("Point Break"), and in several other spots around the state. Have a suggestion for a sign location? Email makeit@oregonmade.org

A DAY LONG REMEMBERED



Nowadays, if we want to go to Youngs River Falls, we just hop in the car and drive on over. In the 1880s, getting there was a good deal more complicated, although no less desirable. A writer named "Rambler" described a trip to the falls in the Tuesday, July 25, 1882 edition of *The Daily Astorian*.

First, he boarded the "commodious and comfortable" steamer *Clara Parker* in Astoria. There were so many passengers eager to go to the falls, the captain had to tow a scow along to accommodate the surplus.

They rounded Smith Point (that little outcrop of land near the roundabout); headed south for Youngs Bay, passing an old mill and "delightful little farms"; then turned into Youngs River, "a fine sheet of water" with "old Saddle Mountain" as a backdrop.

When the steamer reached Etna Warnstaff's ranch, the excited group of excursionists disembarked — carrying lunch baskets and fishing gear, with children in tow. Many rushed to board several small boats awaiting them for a mile-long trip into the woods.

The final phase of the journey was a quarter-mile walk (which Rambler said felt more like 2.25 miles) to the falls, where there was "mist that floats away like a dream." A photo of the falls is shown, taken in the early 1870s by Joseph Buchtel, via oldoregonphotos.com

The "dining room" consisted of anywhere there was shade. "We began the onslaught, and such a demolishing of sandwiches and other luxuries had not been witnessed in those regions for many a day," the writer declared.

After the meal, there were fishing and exploring parties, and some indulged in the sulphur spring water above the falls. At 4 p.m., it was time to begin the arduous journey home, which required "considerable time, patience and ability to get the crowd all safely aboard."

"No serious accident occurred to mar the pleasure of the day," Rambler concluded, "a day that will long be remembered by those who were fortunate enough to be there."

CLARA PARKER'S LONG GOODBYE



That 1882 nostalgic trip to Youngs River Falls inspired an urge to know more about the sternwheel steamer *Clara Parker*.

She was built and launched in 1881, in Astoria, for businessman, politician and former Clatsop County sheriff (1856 to 1859) Hiram Bliss Parker, who named the vessel after his youngest daughter.

The 107-foot *Clara Parker* offered freight, towing and passenger services on the lower Columbia and Willamette rivers in the 1880s. Parker's obituary claims he "established the first independent steamer service between Astoria and Portland."

In 1890, the *Clara Parker* was condemned for a weak hull, and pulled out of service. She was rebuilt (to 142 feet), and renamed *Astorian*. Back in service in 1891, she reportedly became known as one of the faster boats on the river, which was crucial, profitwise, due to rate wars the steamboat companies persistently waged with each other.

In 1892, *Astorian* would have sunk, if not for the ingenuity of her master, Capt. Eben Parker. She hit a snag, then a rock, and a hole was torn in the hull. Parker ran into the hold, stuffed the hole with blankets, used timbers to hold them in place, then steamed on into Astoria.

During yet another rate war, in 1894, Hiram Parker was paid by his competition to take *Astorian* out of service. She was removed from service again in 1896, for the same reason. Ironically, her owners probably made as much money not running her, as they would have resuming the route.

In 1903, *Astorian* was bought by the White Collar steamboat line, and was back to work for a short while. Jacob Kamm, a competitor, bought her that same year and took her out of service. Again.

By 1908, *Astorian* had been sitting at a dock in Portland for five years. Her boilers were removed in April 1908, but left on the bow. She sprang a leak, and with the extra weight on the bow, sank to the bottom the next morning — a sad and ignominious end for one of Astoria's most popular steamboats. (bit.ly/StmrClaraP, bit.ly/HBParker)

BEYOND WORDS



Rhett Mattson was an absolute ray of sunshine, and he continues to shine even after he has moved on from this life," Hannah Gonterman wrote. Thirteen-month-old Rhett was the son of Anne Mattson, who lives in Ilwaco, Washington.

"On July 16, Rhett fell into a pond at his grandparents' house," Hannah explained. "After he was stabilized at the local hospital in Astoria, he was life-flighted to Oregon Health and Science University Doernbecher Children's Hospital, where he received the best possible extraordinary care."

"Rhett fought for every second of his life, but unfortunately he was unable to overcome the trauma he had suffered. He passed away peacefully in his mother's arms four days later. He is resting in peace, watching over his momma now."

"We have started a GoFundMe account, the Rhett Mattson Memorial Fund, to help aid her in the costly medical expenses and in the funeral." You can help at bit.ly/RhettM. If you feel uncomfortable donating on a website, you can contact Hannah directly at lilsmiles114@gmail.com

"Any and all donations are greatly appreciated," Hannah added. "We love you beyond words, Rhett!"

SOLD ... OR NOT



Well, the auction results are in for Lot 0736, "A Century at Sea," at Guernsey's in New York, which included the Peter Iredale ship's bell and Titanic first class passenger (and survivor) Ella White's battery-powered lighted cane. Both items are pictured, courtesy of Guernsey's.

It's quite disappointing to note that the bell (bit.ly/IredaleBell) didn't attract any bidders. The minimum bid was \$5,000, and it was expected to fetch from \$15,000 to \$25,000. On a happy note, this means the 10-inch bell is possibly still available for some avid Iredale shipwreck fan, should it pop up in a future auction.

The lighted walking stick (bit.ly/ellastick), which Ella White waved to use as a beacon for the other lifeboats and the rescue ship *Carpathia*, also under-performed at the auction. The suggested opening bid was \$100,000, and the cane was expected to sell for \$300,000 to \$500,000. Sadly, there was only one bid, and it sold for \$50,000 (plus quite substantial auction fees). Mrs. White would no doubt be quite vexed at the outcome.

VAMPIRE GIRL



Finnish Astorian Maila Nurmi (1922-2008), an Astoria High School graduate, went to Hollywood to find fame as the ghoulish character she created, *Vampira*.

Aside from her wasp waist (rumored to be 17 inches), her gig hosting horror movies on TV, and her lawsuit against younger horror movie hostess Elvira for copyright infringement (bit.ly/VampElv), *Vampira* is probably best known for her nonspeaking role as "Vampire Girl" in what is often referred to as "the worst film ever made," director Ed Wood's "Plan 9 from Outer Space."

Speaking of which, *Vampira*'s Facebook page noted that Monday marked the 60th anniversary of the release of the movie (July 22, 1959). You can grit your teeth and watch it at bit.ly/Plan9ugh. Or, if you just want to watch her scenes: bit.ly/Plan9Vamp. As truly abysmal as the film is, *Vampira* still shines.