

CONTACT US
ewilson@dailyastorian.com
(971) 704-1718

COMMUNITY

FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

DON'T BET ON IT



Well, the Ear inadvertently stumbled across some probably inadvertent alternative news and, believe it or not, it has nothing to do with politics.

Forbes.com ran an article online on June 17 with a captivating headline, “Betting On Great White Sharks Now Being Offered, But No Attack Odds.” The bets would be placed on guessing/predicting the migratory patterns of great white sharks in the North Atlantic.

The story urged the reader to click a link to “offshore sportsbook” MyBookie.ag (mybookie.ag/shark-bet) for information — but the link leads to a dead-end page. Huh?

An inquiry to MyBookie produced the reply that they aren’t actually offering shark betting at this time. No explanation of why, though, and apparently no one at MyBookie bothered to tell Forbes, including interviewee **David Strauss**, who came up with the shark betting idea in the first place.

Anyway, the good news for marine biology and shark fans alike is that the sharks — who are, naturally, sublimely indifferent to odds or offshore betting — are migrating as usual and, courtesy of OCEARCH (oearch.org/tracker/?list), and you can track their travels, even if you can’t bet on them. And, as a bonus, you can also track whales, dolphins, turtles, seals ... and even alligators.

A MERRY EXCURSION



The Daily Morning Astorian, on June 25, 1896, reported on a “Merry Yacht Excursion,” led by Astoria cannery owner **J. O. Hanthorn** in his new launch.

The impromptu gala event started in Ilwaco, Washington, where Hanthorn began “scurrying about the streets” gathering up friends for a trip to **Flavel, Oregon**. Among the notable party-goers were cannery owner **A. J. Megler** and Astoria physician **Dr. Alfred Kinney**.

Flavel was at one time a tourist hot spot on the North Coast, near Hammond, where an enormous and elegant three-story hotel was built in 1896. A photo of the completed hotel is shown. An adjoining building featured a swimming pool, bowling alley and saloon; a tennis court and a riding academy were also available for the guests’ enjoyment. The town failed and was absorbed by Warrenton in 1918 (bit.ly/1896flavel).

“There was just enough wind to make a ripple on the water,” an along-for-the-ride reporter wrote, “and the hundreds of fishing boats with sails spread, which thickly dotted the bay, was a novel sight to both stranger and home people.”

“The hotel building is rapidly assuming proportions, and the second story is well along towards completion,” the reporter noted upon arrival at Flavel. The pilings for the large dock were being driven, and the rail grade was ready, although the rails had not yet arrived.

“The house is artistic in design. ... Windows and doors are large, and a large veranda extends around the entire building. Besides the large office, reading rooms, dining rooms etc., there will be 52 bed chambers.”

“On the return trip the launch proved herself a good sailer, and steamed up the bay at a rapid rate,” the reporter concluded. “A splendid view was had of **Saddle Mountain and Onion Peak**, and **Miss Edith Conn**, in the way of a souvenir, sketched the scene on a shingle, for want of better material.

“After landing at the dock, Mr. Hanthorn’s guests tendered him a resolution of thanks for their pleasant outing, and were loud in their praises of the beautiful boat, which is a one of the handsomest on the river.”

NOT FORGOTTEN



The city of **Florence’s** November 1970 exploding whale fiasco — when the local powers that be **blew up an 8-ton decaying whale** on the beach to get rid of it — never seems to go quietly into that good night.

Any time some poor whale washes up somewhere, people envision chunks of decomposing blubber flying through the air, pelting cars and fleeing bystanders. To quote KATU anchor **Paul Linnman**, “The blast blasted blubber beyond all believable bounds.”

The anniversary of the debacle makes the news every year, and there’s even a website, theexploding-whale.com, celebrating the event, featuring the original KATU video of the explosion (a screenshot is shown, inset).

Now, a park near the beach where the 1970 whale washed up has recently been officially named **Exploding Whale Memorial Park**, according to LiveScience.com (bit.ly/whalepark). The park has a spiffy new sign, and even a mascot, Flo the Whale, created by a local resident to commemorate the upcoming 50th anniversary of the “blasted blubber” event. Both are pictured, courtesy of the city of Florence.

And the whale’s explosive legacy lives on. With benches.

A LUXURY



American Shad (*Alosa sapidissima*)

From The Daily Astorian, June 25, 1879:

• Yesterday we were shown by Mr. **Geo. W. Hume** and Capt. Jas. Williams a **young shad** ... which is the first shad that has ever been reported caught in the Columbia River. ... Where it came from is a mystery.

We have never heard of any shad being put in any other than the Sacramento River, and if it came from there it has strayed a long way from its hatching station. As a luxury, this is even better than the salmon. We hope to hear of many more of them in the Columbia.

Note: Hume was an Astoria cannery owner. Shad were introduced into the Sacramento River in 1871; they were first seen in the Columbia River in 1876. And, the men’s wish came true in abundance. In 2019, 7.5 million 18-inch shad crossed Bonneville Dam. (bit.ly/colshad1, bit.ly/colshad2)

WILD NO MORE



Some may recall that **Astoria**, a film star in her own right, was also featured in the movie “**Into the Wild**,” filmed from April to November 2006.

The movie, directed by **Sean Penn**, starred **Emile Hirsch** as misguided wanderer **Chris McCandless**, who in 1992 spent his last 114 days alone, and starving to death, in a bus near Denali National Park and Preserve in Alaska.

The dilapidated 1940s vintage Fairbanks city bus wound up in the wild when it was put there to be used as a shelter for a road construction project. It was abandoned when the project ended in 1961, according to the Anchorage Daily News (bit.ly/wildbus).

Since McCandless’ death, and the notoriety brought to his sad fate by the 1996 book “**Into the Wild**” by **John Krakauer**, and then again by the film, the bus has become an attractive nuisance, despite its remote location.

There have been 15 bus-related search and rescue missions between 2009 and 2017, and two deaths, according to the the Washington Post (wapo.st/2V7Ooya). One woman was swept away crossing a nearby river trying to get to it in 2019; another drowned in the same river in 2010.

The decision was reluctantly made to remove the bus, and store it someplace safe. The exact location has not been revealed yet. The **Alaska National Guard** did the bus transport honors, and two of their photos are shown.

Krakauer visited the bus in 1993, while researching his book. At the time, McCandless’ possessions were still there, but since then, the bus has been repeatedly vandalized.

“It really gobsmeaked me,” Krakauer told The Washington Post when he heard the bus had been removed. “This place has been desecrated, and now it’s been obliterated. But it’s really tragic people keep dying doing stupid stuff.”

“I wish the bus could have remained how it was,” he added. “But I wrote the book that ruined it.”

AN AUDACIOUS IDEA



While in the midst of being quarantined — and bored out of my mind — I had an audacious idea,” 13-year-old **Ava Chandler** wrote. “What if I could ride from one end of Oregon (Astoria), to the other (Brookings), on an electric skateboard, while raising money for families that have been affected by COVID-19?”

Then she got to work. She found some sponsors, and “**Ava’s Audacious Oregon Coast Skateboard Ride**” was a go. She’s already south of Bandon, accompanied by her support team (her parents). You can follow her at [instagram.com/coasting4covid](https://www.instagram.com/coasting4covid)

“This is really important to me,” she explained, “because when my dad lost his job a few years back, I knew what it was like not knowing if food was going to be on the table ...” (You can donate at [coastingforcovid.com](https://www.coastingforcovid.com))

“My goal is to raise \$25,000 for the **Oregon Food Bank**,” she added, “in addition to hopefully inspiring other kids to maybe do something crazy to raise awareness, and money, for kids just like us, who are struggling right now.”

STRINGS ATTACHED



Kurt Cobain, whose hometown was Aberdeen, Washington, found fame with the grunge rock band **Nirvana**. Now his **1959 Martin guitar**, which he played in Nirvana’s 1993 “MTV Unplugged” performance, is probably just as famous.

NewAtlas.com (bit.ly/KCguitar) reports the guitar sold for **\$6 million**, a world record price for a guitar, at a recent Hollywood auction (photos courtesy of Julien’s/NewAtlas.com). The closest is \$3.9 million for a guitar owned by **Pink Floyd** member **Dave Gilmour**.

Cobain’s guitar buyer, **Peter Freedman**, recalled that he “immediately knew it was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure it, and use it as a vehicle to spotlight the struggles that those in the performing arts are facing, and have always faced.”