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When we reached the Whistler, we discovered we were not alone, there was a Coast Guard 44 and six more all circling and listening to the horrible groan.

The motor lifeboat went first, made it across.

She then turned and faced the bar, her crew prepared for a loss, then one by one the little fleet slipped on in.

Every captain knows when crossing the bar, a place where there is no turning back You line up on the ranges, the adrenaline starts to flow, and your only thought is to hold a strait tack.

The six boats before us caught the right sets,

But like the eye of a hurricane, it wasn't meant to last,

The waves stacking up behind us, towered over our mast.

The bow dropped and the stern began to rise,

Nothing to do but grab on for the ride of our lives!

First, she tried to roll, then she tried to pitchpole,

At one point I could almost see straight down into the hole!

Her heavy wood-spoked wheel could no longer be held tight,

She spun wildly to the left and back to the right.

When we finally hit bottom, There was a tremendous roar,

The 50-year-old boat couldn't handle much more.

Water shot into the wheelhouse, seeped through every crack and I'm sure the deck was buried,

If I'd been able to look back.

Then in a defiant tribute to the long-gone boat-wrights,

who built her "Hell for Stout" in 1923, she twisted and turned,

And finally, broke free of the wave that held her.

She launched out of the foam and was pointed straight,

For home, and nothing was going to stop her.

The 44 came alongside and the coxswain said we've never seen anything like that, almost impossible to survive



Photos by Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

**ABOVE: A beachgoer walks his dog toward the water at Sunset Beach. BELOW: A child flies a small kite during the International Kite Festival in Long Beach last year.**



You men are lucky to be alive  
As we continued in, I turned back with a grin and thought to my 20-year-old self.  
Nice swing, and that's a miss Satan,  
The one you just took at me,  
But I made no deals with you and I draw  
My power from the Sea!

### July 2020. Summer in the Plasticine Ode to the Killer Hornet

BY SUE SKINNER

Lush shades of all kinds of different green.  
Plumes cups bells of

painted flowers. Berries blushing color ...  
Deer eat (some of) the strawberries, clipping them clean and straight, leaving the stem.  
Lettuce grows so fast you can barely keep up with it. And basil!  
So quiet without birdsong in the garden.  
Lawnmowers, weed eaters, leaf blowers bellow, usually morning to late in the day. Even in the rain  
An occasional collared dove coos on the telephone wire. Our scrub jay family in the rhododendron tree did not return this year. Every once in a while, you can hear a hummingbird's remarkable energy, by the feeder over in the huckleberry bush, sprung up on an ancient spruce nurse stump in our backyard  
I scan the blooming thyme and hyssop and sage eagerly, watching for flying insects, hoping for gentle pollinators.

### Thoughts on Beach and Bay

BY LEE THOMPSON

They say wait 30 minutes  
If you want a change in weather  
In Surfside, Ocean Park  
There is daytime weather  
And there is weather after dark  
You walk the beach against the breeze  
You watch it pushing beach grass  
See it bending little beach pine trees  
In the dark you smell a passing ship's gas  
A freighter diesel moving south with cargo  
Hoping the pilot knows the river's bar  
Knows where the ship must go  
To not run aground after coming this far  
Walking along the daytime beach  
Marveling at the giant cedar stump  
Getting closer it's now within reach  
Oh! It's not cedar but a huge sea lion lump  
Nighttime lanterns far out with low tide  
Shovels and clam guns and pockmarked sand  
Yellow lights winking far and wide  
Social distancing and clamming go hand in hand  
Lost along the daytime stretch of beach on a hike  
Am I north or south of Oysterville Access Road  
No landmarks or signs and this I do not

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