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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

SKATING AROUND



“Skate egg casings have been washing in,” said Tiffany Boothe of the Seaside Aquarium. “Some of these casings still have embryos developing inside of them. “The problem is, if you simply return the egg casing to the ocean, it will simply wash back in. However, if you come across one that is still a little wet and feels full, you can bring it to the Seaside Aquarium. “We can put it into a protected salt water tank, where they can continue to incubate. We currently have two egg casings doing just that. The incubation period for these egg casings is quite long — 11 months. Once they hatch, they can be released back into the ocean. “About a foot in length and resembling a chunk of seaweed, these egg casings are produced by the female skate, and after fertilization, are deposited on the ocean floor. A single casing can have anywhere from one to seven embryos inside.” Tiffany’s photos are shown. “Large surf and heavy storms will sometimes dislodge the egg casings from the ocean floor and push them up onto the beach. If stranded on the beach, the casings will dry up and the embryos inside will perish. “The most common skate egg casing to come across on Oregon shores are produced by big skates. Big skates (Raja binoculata) are the largest skates in the world, growing 8 feet in length and weighing up to 200 pounds.”

ORNERY OTTER



Fun rerun: Most people think otters are those ever-so cute furry critters who frolic in the water and go out of their way to be deftly amusing. Well, one otter didn’t get the memo, and acted more like “Jaws” than a cheeky clam-cracker. A story that ran on KATU.com described an incident that occurred on the Kalama River. Kierra Clark, 13, and her cousin, Matalyn Longtain, 11, were swimming when they were attacked and bitten several times on the legs by an irate river otter. Craig Bartlett of the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife said that although otter attacks are unusual, Kierra may have inadvertently gotten too close to the otter’s newborns, making it aggressive. The nips in the Northwest oddity was heard of ‘round the world, as the story even ran in the U.K. Be that as it may, the girls are fine after the ordeal. And presumably, so is the otter. (In One Ear; 8/16/2013)

IS IT A STRANGER?



From The Daily Astorian, Oct. 1, 1882, Bay Center, Washington Territory: • Sept. 29, 1882: Myself and two other oystermen, while working on the tide near Oysterville, saw, yesterday morning, about an hour before day, a very large comet, tail visible some time before the body, position a little south of where the sun rises ... Have others seen it yet, or is it a stranger? — L.H. Rhoades Note: Nope, it’s not a stranger. It’s the Great Comet of 1882, a “Super Comet” first spotted Sept. 1 from the Southern Hemisphere. Two weeks later, it was so bright it was even visible during the day. By the time the oystermen saw it, the comet had split into four parts, and was visible in the morning sky. The drawing of the comet shown is by French astronomer, artist and entomologist Étienne Léopold Trouvelot, whose real claim to infamy is that he introduced the tree-decimating gypsy moth to the U.S. (http://bit.ly/comet1882a, http://bit.ly/comet1882b)

GLENESSLIN’S DEBACLE



Today is the 107th anniversary of the shipwreck of the British three-masted square-rigger Glenesslin which, under the command of Capt. Owen Williamson, on a beautifully clear, calm and balmy day, for no apparent reason, careened (under full sail) smack into the base of Neah-Kah-Nie Mountain. No one was hurt in the debacle. The crew and captain left the ship by tossing a line for a breeches buoy to the rocks, which was secured by some locals. Several of those on shore noticed that the captain, and several members of the crew, appeared to be rather intoxicated. The captain, and his officers, stayed mum, but were noted to be smelling of alcohol. Lloyds Insurance threw up their hands about saving the ship, and A. Bremmer and John Caavinen of Astoria paid \$560 for it, then sold it for \$100 — which was probably more than it was worth. Because of the ship’s location, it was too difficult to get anything of value back to shore. When the court of inquiry met soon after the wreck, the testimony did not clear the captain (some said he was drinking, some denied it), and he was charged with negligence and lost his license for three months. The second mate was charged similarly, and lost his license for six months. The first mate was reprimanded. To this day, some believe the wreck was intentional, to collect the insurance money; a settlement would be worth more than trying to sell the ship, which was built in 1885. This was important since, at the time, steam-propelled vessels were gaining popularity and would soon replace sailing square-riggers. The insurance finally paid out \$30,000 (almost \$788,000 now), blaming inexperienced first and second officers for the loss. All in all, it was a sad end for a ship that once held the sailing record of Portland to Port Elizabeth, South Africa, in 74 days. (tinyurl.com/glenesslin, bit.ly/glenesslin)

‘A GOOD DEAL OF EFFORT’



Sunday was the 57th anniversary of former President John F. Kennedy’s arrival in Astoria on Sept. 27, 1963. He was here to announce that a U.S. Coast Guard station would be built at Tongue Point, a former U.S. Navy base and home of a mothball fleet after World War II. When Kennedy’s helicopter landed in front of Hangar 3 at Tongue Point, he was greeted by a crowd of 5,000 to 6,000. Some lucky souls who were there even got a chance to shake his hand. He is pictured here with Harry Swanson, a candidate for Congress from Eugene, in a photo by Frank Sterrett, courtesy of the Oregon Historical Society. The Daily Astorian reported he was the second sitting president to visit Astoria, after Rutherford B. Hayes in 1880. Franklin D. Roosevelt was almost the second one, but he only sailed by in 1934 and never landed. U.S. Sen. Wayne Morse — who opposed Kennedy in the 1960 Oregon primary — introduced the president, who quipped, “I came here, as a result of, I will not say, consistent prodding, but I will say on every occasion I have seen senator Morse, this matter has come up in one way or another.” “A good deal of effort,” Kennedy noted, “a good deal of money and a good deal of dedication has gone into building this facility.” But Morse wasn’t the only champion of making Tongue Point useful again. A local committee of eight, including state Sen. Dan Thiel, Judge Guy Boyington and Astoria Mayor Harry Steinbock, also pressured the Kennedy administration for the location’s revival, and met with the president before his speech. Sadly, Kennedy didn’t live to see it happen, but in 1964, the Coast Guard Air Station Astoria opened at Tongue Point, followed in 1965 by the opening of one of the first Job Corps centers in the country. (bit.ly/JFKAstoria01, bit.ly/JFKAstoria02, bit.ly/JFKAstoria03)

NO SILVER LINING



From The Daily Astorian, Oct. 2, 1888: • Again reports from the vicinity of Saddle Mountain of silver or ledges and finds of gold ... A good coal mine uncovered in that vicinity would beat in value either a gold or silver mine. Notes: Well, the pickings for both silver and coal are pretty much nil for the North Coast area, but there was, indeed, gold. A mini gold rush in Clatsop County was started by J. M. Weed, who filed a claim on Rock Creek in eastern Clatsop County on May 25, 1885. Weed named his mine Gertrude, but there wasn’t any mention of how much gold old Gertie coughed up. If he needed consoling, Weed Creek — about 6 miles east of Elsie — was named for him. He was followed by plethora of gold miners staking claims around the same area. Consequently, the Rock Creek Mining District was formed in 1889, extending to the Nehalem River near Vernonia. In 1901, in the Gold Creek Mining District on the Nehalem River, Sebastian Glaser filed a number of gold claims there (which is now called George Creek) about 2 miles from Elsie. Did he find any gold? No one knows. (bit.ly/kerbyblog, bit.ly/kerbygold)

‘SHRILL’ IS HAPPENING



“‘Shrill’ is happening, 2020 be damned!” the Simon Max Hill Casting Facebook post exclaimed. Yes, they are looking for extras (background), stand-ins and photo doubles for season three, filming in Portland. The pay is \$13.25 an hour, and shooting begins in October. “Shrill” stars Saturday Night Live’s Aidy Bryant, and is based on Lindy West’s memoir, “Shrill: Notes from a Loud Woman.” “The show will be looking for people of all shapes, sizes, orientations, ethnicities and abilities,” the blurb says, “to create a truthful and realistic Portland setting for a woman who wants to change her life, not her body.” To apply, go to the Adam and the Backgrounds website, bit.ly/Adam_Shrill. Be sure to upload lots of photos. Parents can apply for their younger-than-18 kids at tinyurl.com/shrill3kids. “Things will be a little trickier due to COVID protocols,” the blurb advises. “One sneaky bonus of doing extra work on the show is: Free COVID test! Your nostrils will never be the same.”

GO HOME AND CAN



Amanda Gladies (pictured), a fisheries specialist with the Oregon Sea Grant and the Oregon State University Extension Service, and Kelly Streit, a registered dietician with the extension service, star in a step-by-step video explaining how to can tuna at home. Amanda lives and works in Astoria, and is active in the local fishing community. The video is part of the Eat Oregon Seafood campaign to promote local Oregon seafood. The video is at bit.ly/canningtuna; screenshots are shown. The ladies give lots of tips, a vital one being: “Can the tuna outside to avoid smells in home.” Anyone who has ever cooked fish can relate to that one. “We hope that by watching this video, you might find it inspirational,” Kelly noted, “and go home to can your own tuna someday.”