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# COMMUNITY



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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## A RARE SIGHT



**F**or marine biology fans: A very rare fish washed up on a California beach on May 7.

“Last Friday morning, an incredible deep sea fish washed up on shore in Crystal Cove State Park’s Marine Protected Area,” the Laguna Beach park posted on its Facebook page.

“There are more than 200 species of **angler fish** worldwide, and this particular fish is most likely the **Pacific Football Fish**. Only females possess a long stalk on the head with bioluminescent tips, used as a lure to entice prey in the darkness of waters as deep as 3,000 feet.”

Photos of the fish are shown, courtesy of Crystal Cove State Park.

“Their teeth, like pointed shards of glass, are transparent, and their large mouth is capable of sucking up and swallowing prey the size of their own body. While females can reach lengths of 24 inches, males only grow to be about an inch long ...

“Males latch onto the female with their teeth and become ‘sexual parasites,’ eventually coalescing with the female until nothing is left of their form but their testes for reproduction.

“To see an actual angler fish intact is very rare,” the post added, “and it is unknown how or why the fish ended up on the shore.”

## WHAT A RELIEF



**F**un rerun: **Denny Tibbetts**, of Berkeley, California, visited the **Astoria Column** recently, and wanted to know the story behind the **bronze relief map** donated by the **Angora Hiking Club** in 1966. Part of the map is pictured, courtesy of **Astoria Daily Photo** (tinyurl.com/columnmap).

**Bob Westerberg**, chief guide of the hiking club, explained: The club was founded July 4, 1920, “on the summit of Saddle Mountain, long before easy trails and highway access. A logging railroad took them out to the base of the mountain, and hikers pretty much scrambled directly up the south slope.

“In the 1930s, the club had built a cabin on the north face of Tillamook Head on a parcel of land acquired, and later sold to, Oregon State Parks for the coast hiking trail ...”

Part of the money from the sale made the brass relief map at the Column possible.

“The map was the dream of **Ruben Jensen**, an Astoria High School photo and mechanical drawing instructor,” Bob added. “... Jensen designed the map with all the inscriptions, including the ‘new’ Astoria Bridge.”

And now you know the story, too. (*In One Ear*, 4/22/2016)

## WATCH YOUR STEP



**M**arine oddity: In March, a furious **octopus** leapt out of the water, lashing out with its tentacles, trying to smack **Lance Karlson** while he was walking in shallow water on a beach in western Australia, the *Independent* reported.

A screenshot from Karlson’s video shows the critter in mid-attack. This was shortly after the octopus tried to beat up a gull in a similar fashion.

Not one to leave well enough alone, Karlson went swimming and found the fuming critter perched on a shell bed. This time, the octopus gave Karlson a proper thrashing, whacking him hard on the neck and arms.

Aside from some stinging, Karlson was fine. So was the octopus.

## TILLER TALE



**I**n April 2017, this column ran a story about the tiny **unincorporated town of Tiller**, in southwest Oregon, most of which was for sale for \$3.85 million (bit.ly/YTTiller).

Tiller is surrounded by the Umpqua National Forest, and sits right on the South Umpqua River and Elk Creek. A photo of the town is shown, courtesy of LandLeader Properties.

A little history: Tiller was founded in the mid-1800s by farmer **Aaron Tiller**, a pioneer from Missouri. Once environmental logging regulations kicked in some time ago, logging came to a halt, and the Tiller timber mill closed.

There went the town’s main source of income and most of its citizens. A longtime resident, **Richard Caswell Sr.**, bought up the majority of the downtown properties (28 tax lots) for a family vacation area. When he died in 2014, his heirs put the town on the market. Surprisingly, inquiries came in from all over the world.

The property included six houses, a shuttered general store and gas station, land (257 acres), water rights and infrastructure, including sidewalks, fire hydrants and a working power station. Not to mention, there was also access to berries, acorns, fruit trees and merchantable timber.

In September 2018, it was announced that the anonymous new owners hoped “to create a tree-laden river resort open to the public,” according to a story in *The Oregonian*, with forest maintenance, local hiring, selling local products and “biofuel public transportation.”

In March 2019, *The News Review* in Roseburg revealed that the owners are **Timothy Pham** and **Global Shopping Malls**, who bought four deeds for \$4.85 million. Future planning mentioned a summer program to bring urban children to Tiller to learn about the environment.

So, what has happened since then? Good question, since the town seems to only be mentioned online in old news and real estate listings on Zillow.com

Looking for an answer, the Ear visited the Tiller Oregon Facebook page and sent a message inquiring what changes had been taking place under the new owners. The answer was, as one English professor put it, “terse but pithy.”

“No changes at all,” was the reply. “Pipe dream. Zero. Not surprising at all, really.”

And there you have it.



## LOCAL BREVITIES

**A** few nuggets from the **Saturday, May 20, 1882** edition of *The Daily Astorian*:

• “Shall a hotel furnish **quill toothpicks**?” is the latest question.

**Note:** For centuries, many considered wooden toothpicks not up to the task of removing trapped food for two very good reasons: One, they get soggy and wear out, and two, they splinter.

Early civilizations made toothpicks out of metals, such as bronze and silver. The ancient Romans came up with a clever and much more inexpensive idea: Pulling bird feathers, and sharpening the quill.

This idea made its way to Europe, and then to this country via colonization. Those already here had their own take on the toothpick dilemma: Native Americans carved toothpicks out of deer bone, and Eskimos found walrus whiskers were handy for the task. (bit.ly/quillpick)

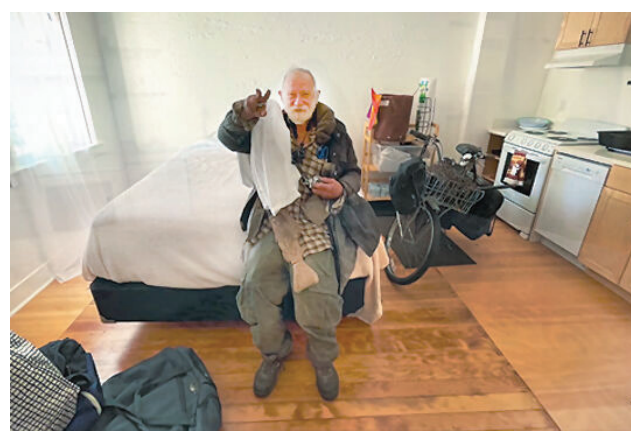
• One hundred feet of a Seattle wharf fell a few days ago. The piles having been completely eaten through by the **teredo**.

**Note:** The teredo navalis, or shipworm, isn’t really a worm at all. Instead, it is a repulsive and voraciously hungry tunneling clam who devours wood.

Perhaps the pilings in Astoria were safe from these critters, though, because they require water that is very high in salinity to survive, and the water here is only brackish (seawater mixed with freshwater).

Besides, Astoria’s pilings’ primary enemy was fire. Both major blazes in the city, in 1883 and 1922, destroyed the waterfront pilings on which many of the city’s businesses were built. (bit.ly/teredos)

## NO PLACE LIKE HOME



**S**o many people have worried about **John Wedell**, aka **Helmet John**, living on the street here in Astoria, especially during the long, wet, bone-chilly winters.

Fortunately, he has a legion of friends who supply him with warm winter clothes and gear, not to mention his favorite treats, and keep an eye on him year ‘round.

“It’s been over a decade since John Wedell had a roof over his head and had a bed to sleep in,” good friend **Jeff Daly** posted on the Friends of John Wedell Facebook page on May 14. “Today ‘Helmet John’ has a home.”

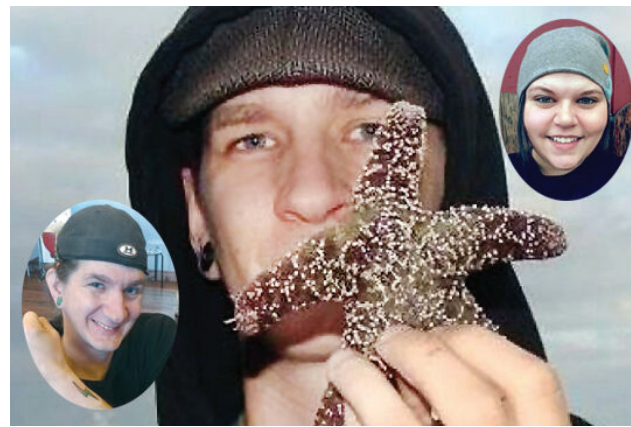
His new and cozy abode is in the **Merwyn Apartments** on Duane Street, next to City Hall.

Jeff’s heart-warming announcement is accompanied by a video he took of John getting settled in, thanks to friends who helped him move into his new studio apartment, replete with a dishwasher (which made him smile). A screenshot is shown.

Thanks also goes to **T&C Home Furnishings** in Astoria, for donating a bed, the **Cannery Pier Hotel** and **Hotel Elliott** for sheets and towels, and **Shauna** at Innovative Housing Inc.

Jeff summed up the long-awaited happy day in four words: “It’s all about community.”

## COMMUNITY STRONG



**‘Travis Oja** was transferred late last night via Life Flight (to Portland),” **Kendra Cavett** wrote on May 16. “He suffered from a spontaneous bleed in his brain caused by a clot. He had emergency surgery to drain the buildup of cerebrospinal fluid, and also to remove the clot in his brain.”

“... The days ahead will be critical in determining the outlook for the future. His girlfriend, **Paula McCargish**, along with their families, will be commuting and staying in the Portland area during this time.”

Which is why Kendra has set up a GoFundMe account at bit.ly/HelpTOja

“The goal amount,” she explained, “is for commuting, hotel expenses, loss of wages, help with personal expenses and to provide a cushion for the days ahead, that may include some rehabilitation.

“Neither Travis or Paula, would ever ask for help. Instead, these two are the front force of helping, supporting and organizing many community events to help others ...”

“This is our time,” Kendra added, “to show them they have an army behind them. And we are community strong!”

## UNSINKABLE. REALLY.



**F**or six years now, construction of a Chinese tourist destination **theme park**, an exact **full-scale replica** of the ill-fated ship **Titanic**, has been underway in **Sichuan Province**, according to the South China Morning Post.

The landlocked site in China will also feature a **Southampton port** replica and tour buses that play “My Heart Will Go On” endlessly. The progress on the ship is shown in a photo courtesy of Agence France-Presse.

The Titanic project’s main backer, **Su Shaojun**, was wildly inspired by the 1997 movie to the tune of, so far, \$153.5 million. Tourists will have to pony up about \$310 to spend a single night on the ship, which includes “five-star cruise service” and, thanks to the ship’s steamer, will have that “at sea” feeling ... minus the Dramamine and iceberg.

When will the project be completed? There was no mention of an opening date, and from the photo, it looks like it won’t be anytime soon.

“I hope this ship will be here in 100 or 200 years,” Su declared.