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ewilson@dailyastorian.com
(971) 704-1718

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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

SHIFTING SANDS



In early July 1849, **Capt. Francis Menes**, at the helm of the French bark **L'etoile de Matin** (The Morning Star), arrived at the Columbia River Bar. He waited seven days for a bar pilot, but no one showed up. That's because the only local bar pilot had drowned in San Francisco Bay. Famed **Capt. George Flavel** wasn't licensed until 1851.

Menes crossed the bar on his own in 1847, so on July 11 he gave it another try. What he didn't realize was that the river carried vast quantities of sediment to its mouth, which formed constantly shifting sandbars on the bar, making maps useless.

The ship quickly ran aground in 16 feet of water. There she sat for nine hours, pummeled by the heavy seas around her. Lowering the lifeboats was a tragic fiasco; one man drowned, and all of the lifeboats were lost. Eventually, the keel and rudder broke off, and the ship — with the pumps broken and everyone terrified, but still aboard — drifted into Baker's Bay.

Capt. Alexander Lattie Sr., a river pilot, arrived on the scene and brought help. They spent 20 hours bailing and pumping, and by constructing an emergency box rudder, managed to take the ship safely to Portland.

The cargo, which belonged to Capt. Menes, was mostly saved, and he opened a store in Oregon City. The ship did not fare as well; the hull was sold, and later burned for its iron and copper. (tinyurl.com/letoile-1, tinyurl.com/letoile-3, tinyurl.com/letoile-4)

ODDLY OOXJAA



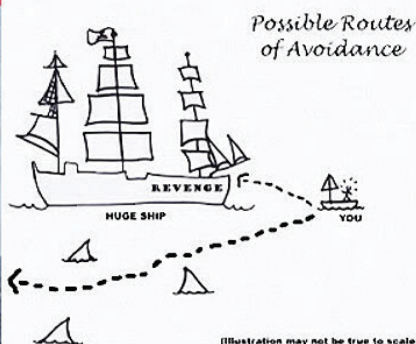
Deb Syna and **Dirk Morgan** had a too-close encounter with "Ooxjaa," a 17-year-old **Bigg's orca**, in the **Puget Sound** on June 29, the Orca Network reported on Facebook.

They were sitting in their small boat, drifting, when Ooxjaa approached from the stern, then sidled up to the starboard side, pressing himself against the boat.

Then, he dove under them several times, rocking the boat a bit, always coming back to the starboard side, pushing and slowly spinning them — all the while wetly snorting through his blowhole every few seconds. A video of the incident is here: bit.ly/ooxjaa; screenshots are shown.

Ooxjaa's playful but scary behavior lasted 10 harrowing minutes, during which the boaters wisely did not start their engine. The Orca Network says the orca's "unusual behavior" is a mystery.

HEED CAPT. TRIMMER



Fun rerun: For maritime instruction, a dandy tome is "How to Avoid Huge Ships," by **Capt. John W. Trimmer**.

Nonsensically, on Amazon.com, new copies cost \$165.99; used are \$199.69. Pictured, the book's cover and a reader's illustration of an imaginary diagram.

The book, which is actually a serious primer on how pleasure boaters can avoid being flattened by a huge ship, set off a cackle-fest of over 1,400 snarky reviews. Some examples:

"Given that there is a huge ship bearing down on me RIGHT NOW I am extremely disappointed that I cannot get inst..."

"I found 'Chapter 3: Relocate to Arizona' particularly helpful."

"I'm very much scared of ships. I live over 100 miles inland and at 6,000 feet elevation, but one can never be too careful!" (Verified purchaser) (*In One Ear*, 2/22/2013)

MEET BILL DODGE



Last week, this column mentioned that popular local artist **Bill W. Dodge** would be exhibiting new or publicly **unexhibited fine art** signed collector prints at the **Angi D Wildt Gallery**, 106 10th St., along with his iconic Astoria folk art. Better yet, Bill will be at the gallery for the **art walk on Saturday** to greet one and all.

Did you know he was first introduced to the Pacific Northwest at that very same location 30-plus years ago?

"It was at this address that I decided to open one of the first art galleries in Astoria," he told the Ear, "a decision made by the ending of a four-year romance with my California neighbor, who just happened to be Academy Award-winning film star **Joan Fontaine** — but that's another story.

"I was introduced by two local artists, **Diane Beeston** and **Shirley Dahlsten**, to the empty 10th Street space, and opened The Bill W. Dodge Gallery. Shirley decided being a gallery owner wasn't what she wanted to do — she wanted to spend her time at her easel. So, Diane Beeston and I decided to move to a smaller space on Commercial Street, where the little bakery is today.

"Then a friend of Diane's approached us and offered us an opportunity to design and open an over-the-river ice cream shop/restaurant. It appeared in a small article in *Sunset* magazine.

"Its demise came when the entire Sixth Street wharf and an adjoining restaurant burned totally. That disaster ended both of our gallery ownership desires."

Not owning a gallery didn't keep Bill from his art. After the fire, he continued painting in his Alderbrook cottage. He moved to Portland for a while for a (thankfully) short-lived retirement, then back to Warrenton.

And now, he's happily un-retired, back home at his old Astoria gallery, and looking forward to Saturday.

MIDNIGHT MISHAPS



On **July 8, 1885**, **The Daily Astorian** reported a **midnight blaze**. The mishaps that followed could easily have turned the fire into a repeat of conflagration that swept the city's waterfront in 1883.

At 11:30 p.m. July 7, a flame was spotted shooting up from the roof of **H. Brown's saloon**, across the wharf from the **Point Adams cannery** in **Upper Astoria**. The fire bell rang out.

No. 2's hose cart, while dashing toward the fire, broke down going up a hill. Then, the first fire engine, also racing, took a corner at a tilt, badly injuring a fireman riding along.

No. 2's engine rushed out next, right behind the second hose cart, which suddenly jumped off the road and flew into a gulch near Point Adams Co. A cart occupant was tossed out onto an enormous stump, then the cart crashed into the stump, and tipped over.

Thought to be dead when he was carried to the bank, when the man gained consciousness, he only complained of pain in his shoulder. In the same incident, two others were injured, including the mayor.

No. 2's engine made it to the fire, but ... the pumps wouldn't work. By then, the saloon was an inferno, and flames had engulfed the surrounding buildings.

At least 1,000 local men helped the fire department untangle the cart hose and pull it out of the gulch, prevent the fire from spreading and fight the fire, which was declared out at 2:30 a.m.

In the aftermath, only four small buildings were lost. The unfortunate saloon owner, who was intoxicated when the fire broke out, was carried out suffering from horrific burns, and was not expected to survive.

"It is necessary for everyone to be doubly careful about fire," the newspaper cautioned. "A five minutes' start would make a terrible blaze in any part of the city."

Good advice, even now.

ROCKY RESCUE



A **Guadalupe fur seal**, which is an endangered species, was spotted entangled in some netting, and first reported to the **Seaside Aquarium** on July 1. Someone who meant well tried to free it, but the seal fled into the ocean.

The seal was reported again on July 3. When the aquarium staff arrived at Arch Cape, it had crawled onto an offshore rock, so they had to wait for the tide to change.

"Once the rock became accessible," **Tiffany Boothe** of the aquarium explained, "they were able to safely get to the animal, capture it and place it in an animal carrier for transport ... to a licensed rehabilitation facility for a full veterinary health assessment, disentanglement and stabilization."

Her photo of the seal is shown.

"... It is best to let trained responders deal with marine mammal emergency situations," Tiffany advised. "If you see a marine mammal trapped in netting, the best thing you can do for the animal is give it plenty of space, keep dogs away and call the West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network at 866-767-6114."

As for this little guy, "if all goes as planned" she added, "the animal will be released back into the ocean once it is healthy."

KIND AND EMPATHETIC



For "**The Goonies**" fans, that remaining ray of hope for a **Goonies 2** sequel was crushed with the death of 91-year-old director **Richard Donner** on Monday. The movie would not be made without him. He is pictured on the set of "**The Goonies**," courtesy of Warner Bros.

Donner was a man of "astounding generosity," as **Jeff Cohen** (inset, **Chunk** in "**The Goonies**") explained to *Variety*.

Most of the movie's fans know that Cohen became a prominent entertainment lawyer in Beverly Hills. What many don't know is that his legal career was made possible by Donner and his wife offering to pay for his education.

"I was absolutely flabbergasted," Cohen recalled. "I was shocked. I had to sit down, because, for me, paying for college was going to be a problem.

"That changed my life ... They thought I could do something. They thought I could make something of myself. That is Dick Donner — being kind, being empathetic, and not because he wanted anything in return.

"... The world is a darker place without him in it, but his amazing films and his good works as a human being will live on."

RIP Richard Donner.

SAIL ON



Michelin Research & Development and two Swiss inventors have collaborated to come up with the **Wing Sail Mobility project**, an "automated, telescopic, inflatable wing sail system" for merchant ships and pleasure craft.

Using sails will help ships reduce fuel consumption, lowering carbon dioxide emissions and improving fuel efficiency by up to 20% — depending on the type of vessel, its route and, of course, the weather conditions.

The sail system can be used on most ships but is deemed "especially suitable" for car and bulk carriers, and oil and gas tankers. The system can be installed as original equipment on new vessels or retrofitted on older ones. Since the mast is retractable, ships using this sail system can also easily enter harbors or go under bridges.

The first sail system will be fitted on a merchant ship in 2022. Once the trial phase is complete, Michelin expects to go into production.