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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## GET OUT THERE



This week, **Robert Fletcher**, a self-described “adventure cyclist” who turns 80 on Friday, passed through Astoria on his “Octogenarian Odyssey.” A retired educator who has been living in Costa Rica for the last five years, he has set forth to break the **Guinness World Record** for the longest journey on a motorized e-bike. Starting in Fairbanks, Alaska, and ending in Panama City, Panama, he expects to cover over 8,300 miles in 155 days.

It’s not his first adventure, by any means. He climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in 2014, cycled 2,600 miles in India in two months, hiked about 78 miles in Kenya and climbed Mount Fuji in Japan, among other feats, not to mention cycling from Anchorage, Alaska to Mexico City in 2015.

How does he do it? “I ride at least five days a week, anyway. I just keep in shape, and there’s nothing special,” he told Richmond-News.com. Along the way, he’ll be posting on his Facebook page, @octogenarianodyssey

Aside from breaking a record, he has another mission. “I want to draw attention to all the people that are doing incredible adventures but are not pro athletes and not Olympians,” Fletcher said. “And, I wanted to motivate people of all generations to be active, to get out there to do something, to get out of your comfort zone.”

## BEACH BEEFS



The Shell Road, Seaside, Oregon.

In *The Daily Morning Astorian*, on Aug. 18, 1890, a writer complained about the swimming accommodations at the Grimes Hotel in Seaside.

• After arriving by train, one walked down “a dusty road to the grove, then deep sand, and a walk over cobble stones must be encountered before one reaches the grand old beach.”

If one wanted to take a swim, “you find no accommodation but a rickety old shell of a bathhouse, with half a dozen rooms, the doors of which are off the hinges and no bathing suits are for hire.”

“If you are fortunate enough to have a bathing suit with you, you can (change) and come out. Then you must walk through deep sand and over rocks and stones some 10 or 15 rods (about 165 to 247 feet) to the water.”

“Returning from the surf ... you find no water to wash the sand off your feet, and no fresh water to rinse off the salt water ... and, after dressing, will have the uncomfortable, sticky feeling, which a salt water bath leaves on the body.” Horrors!

**Note:** The “dusty road” from the train depot to the sea was called Shell Road. Built by hotel owner **G.M. Grimes**, that road is now called Broadway Street.

## ‘A TOTAL INSPIRATION’

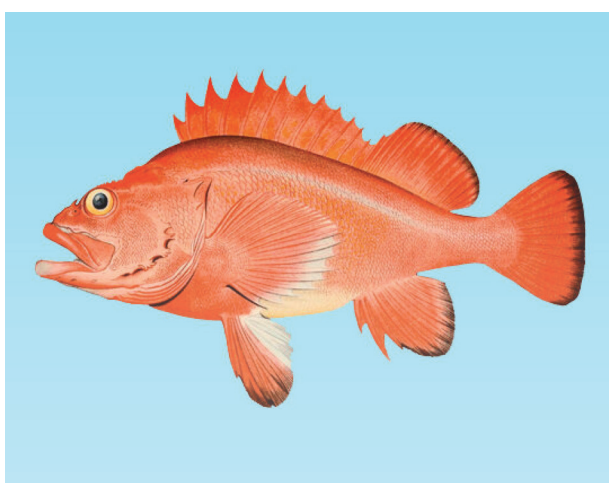


**Inspiring rerun:** **Hope Harris** was up at the **Astoria Column** when a woman asked her if it was too late to go into the column. It was not. The woman went to help someone out of her car who clearly had cerebral palsy.

“He struggled with every step, but was able to walk without assistance,” Hope observed. “I waited, watching for the door at the top of the column to open. When it did, I hooted and hollered, and beeped my car horn, and flashed my car lights.”

The pair were **Michelle Lee** and 23-year-old **Will Ramis** (pictured) of Portland. It turns out climbing the column isn’t Will’s only feat of late, he’s on his way to becoming an Eagle Scout.

Calling Will her “new hero,” Hope said, “I am so in awe of him ... What a guy! A total inspiration to me.” (*In One Ear*, 10/10/2014)



## OLD AGE

The Ocean Conservancy has come up with a list of the seven longest-living ocean animals, starting with the **roughey rockfish** (*Sebastes aleutianus*), pictured, who grow slowly, have a maximum lifespan of a bit over 200 years and live in Pacific coastal waters at depths of 500 to 1,500 feet.

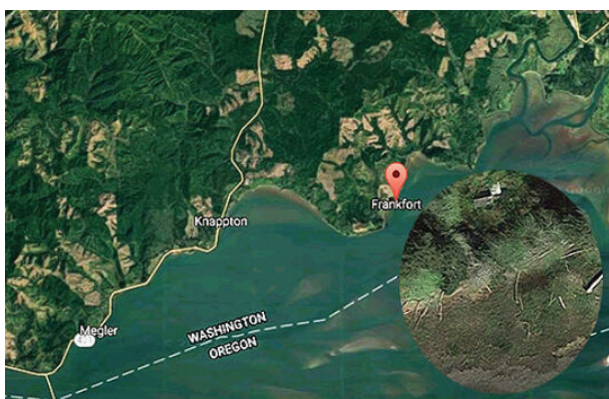
**Bowhead whales** (*Balaena mysticetus*) are 60-foot mammals who can live 200 years or more and inhabit arctic and subarctic waters. The **ocean quahog clam** (*Arctica islandica*), an Atlantic Ocean dweller, can live from 200 to 500 years. **Ming the Clam** broke the Guinness World Record as the oldest noncolonial animal in the world, living from 1499 to 2006 (the age is the number of shell ridges), or 507 years. Now the Ear feels guilty for all those quahogs consumed as a child.

The **Greenland shark** (*Somniosus microcephalus*), who roams the seas around the Arctic, Iceland and, of course, Greenland, live to be 300 to 500 years old. In 2009, scientists found a species of deep sea **black coral** (*Leiopathes glaberrima*) that was about 4,265 years old.

**Glass sponges** (*Hexactinellida*) are deep ocean animals that attach themselves to the sea floor for life. Reefs of these sponges were believed extinct until 1987, when 9,000-year-old glass sponge reefs were found in Canada. And, finally, the teeny **immortal jellyfish** (*Turritopsis dohrnii*) species, which can revert from being an adult to its younger polyp form, constantly renewing itself.

Scientists posit that the bigger long-lived animals have a slower metabolism, as do those that live in frigid waters, i.e. “species that live fast will die young, while those that have a slower metabolic rate live slower and longer.”

## GONE, MOSTLY FORGOTTEN



**From The Daily Morning Astorian, Aug. 18, 1894:**  
• **For Sale:** Ten acres improved land in Upper **Frankfort, Washington**, slashed, and partially cleared. Two-story house, stable, chicken house and yard, workshop 20 by 40, situated on the river, just the home for a fisherman. Will sell on easy terms for \$1,600 (about \$55,000 now). Inquire on premises. **David Upton**.

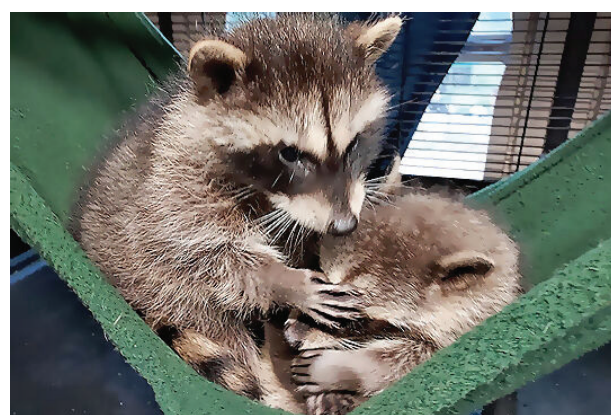
**Note:** The area that is Frankfort — which was in Pacific County, Washington, perched on the Columbia River — was first homesteaded in 1876. It was only accessible by water, and not easily, at that.

In 1890, **Frank Bourne** and **Frank Scott** platted the area; their partnership provided the name for the town. The two men had big dreams, planning a resort with 1,226 lots and streets and alleys, that looked great on paper — but was never built. The selling point was that the railroad was coming, and would go through the community ... which was still inaccessible, except by water.

The money from lots sold was used to build a store and a hotel, and get a newspaper, the **Frankfort Chronicle**, started up. Things looked promising for a while, and more lots were sold, but potential investment came to a halt when the Panic of 1893 raised havoc with the economy — probably the reason why Upton wanted to sell.

The railroad never appeared, but the town did have some success with logging until 1900, when it started to fade. The post office closed in 1918. By 1947, there were only 11 residents — by 1960, there were only two. A logging company bought the town in 1953 and now it’s a ghost town.

## LITTLE BANDITS



“All the **raccoons** in our care have moved on to the next level of care,” Peninsula Wild Care in Ocean Park, Washington, posted Aug. 6 on their Facebook page. “We do not have the outdoor enclosures that raccoons need for proper conditioning for release ... yet!

“In the past few weeks, they have gone from sweet little babies to rambunctious, crazy, ornery raccoons. This is the first group of raccoons we have been able to raise, as we recently obtained our permit for them.

“We started off feeding them formula five times a day, for the first couple weeks, then the number of feedings slowly go down. At about five weeks, you start offering a juvenile diet, while still supplementing with formula. Their diet consists of kibble, fresh veggies, fresh fruit, yogurt, eggs, fish and fresh trout, if they are lucky like ours were (thanks Emily!). Then they receive medications for deworming weekly, and were vaccinated, including boosters.”

Want to help them with their good work helping local wildlife? You can offer to volunteer or donate at [peninsulawildcare.org](http://peninsulawildcare.org)

“We enjoyed caring for these little bandits,” the post concluded. “... Hopefully, next year we will be able to provide the necessary outdoor enclosure to see them to release.”

## RENEWED FAITH



“Now that I have my wits about me,” **Wenda Norce** wrote, “I would like to thank the people who helped me when my **bike tire got stuck** in a trolley track, and I **went down hard**, breaking, fracturing and chipping my **wrist**.”

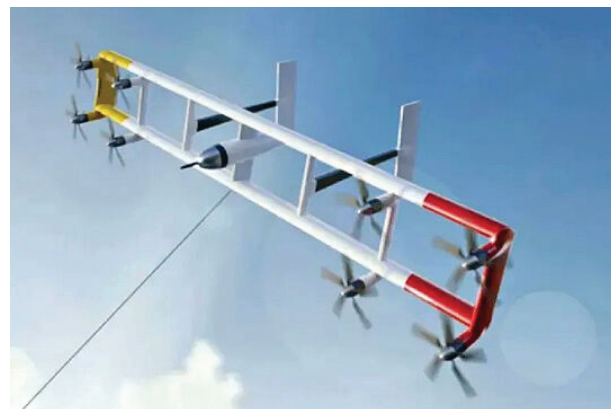
“I am doing OK, with a plate and nine screws. My point is those strangers who witnessed the wreck called 911 and got me help. One sat on the pavement and let me rest my head on his leg until the emergency medical technicians got there. They talked to me, keeping me awake. I never saw their faces, just their feet.

“Their care and concern for me renewed my faith in humanity. I am not seeking sympathy; I just want to say thank you to those two couples that stayed with me until help arrived. I don’t know if they were locals or not. I did thank them numerous times in person, but wanted to share their good deed with others.

“And, thanks to the great people with the ambulance, they were very attentive, and to the Astoria Fire Department, for making sure my bike was safely taken care of. I think I saw the Astoria Police Department. It was sort of a blur. Thank you all for being there for me.

“However long it takes,” Wenda added, “I will ride again. By next spring for sure.”

## KITING ALONG



Well, there’s a new form of energy production on the horizon: **aluminum wind kites**, made by Kitecraft. The power absorbed while aloft is transmitted to a ground station through its tether. The energy can then be stored there in batteries, or fed into the grid.

“Our systems need 10 times less building materials compared to conventional wind turbines of the same power rating,” the website says. “... Thanks to their compactness and their increased operational height our flying kites are barely visible (and) we can cut the carbon footprint of wind energy by 90%.” When there’s no wind, the kite rests on the ground station it’s tethered to.

What’s the downside? There doesn’t seem to be one. The only problem is that the kites don’t produce enough energy yet, *InterestingEngineering.com* says, but “this does not mean that they won’t.”