

Siuslaw News
P.O. Box 10
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Opinion

DISASTER PREP

BY DAVE ROBINSON
 Special to the Siuslaw News

Tsunami Safety

Every city on the Oregon coast has a tsunami warning system in place. Officials in coastal communities have taken the threat of earthquake/tsunami seriously enough to create evacuation routes and a warning system designed to minimize casualties. Those little signs point the way to higher ground and safety from an incoming tsunami.

I'm always mildly amused by the sign that says, "Leaving Tsunami Zone." How do they know? What if that sucker is two feet higher, or 10 feet higher than their signpost. Now I'm not privy to all of the scientific planning that went in to marking the zone, but I'm assuming that their data is solid and was attained through sound processes. Just to be on the safe side, if I'm on the way out, running from a tsunami, I'm not stopping at that sign.

Another thing not mentioned on the "evacuation route" signs is that if the anticipated earthquake is as severe as many think it will be, there is no way we can jump in our cars and simply drive our way to high ground. Streets will be broken, bridges impassable, building debris is likely to cover the road, power poles and power lines will block streets and trees are apt to have

fallen in inconvenient places.

More and more I'm hearing that folks are being instructed to "walk" to higher ground. I'm thinking "run" is more like it, but some of us don't run much anymore. Not for very far anyway.

Also if you're on the beach or at sea level and you feel the shaking of a quake, don't wait for the siren. That shaking is likely the only warning you will get. Computer simulations have demonstrated that on Jan. 26, 1700, when the last Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake struck our coast, it is estimated that there was a 20- to 30-minute time period before the initial tsunami wave hit. Geologic history has showed waves were 30 feet or higher

Another evacuation tactic is also being suggested: vertical evacuation. That is, finding a sturdy building at least three stories high and climbing to the top floor. If there is a higher building available, get to it.

I recently viewed a video produced by Oregon Public Broadcasting. Titled "Unprepared," the presentation examines just exactly how prepared, or rather how unprepared we are on the Oregon coast for a major earthquake.

Video footage of Japan's quake and tsunami help drive home the point of how massive the damage could be. Also, eerie similarities between the Japanese geologic structure and the Cascadia Subduction Zone off our coast drive home the point that survival for many depends on preparation and planning.

Some communities are moving forward with preparations to locate schools and other facilities out of the tsunami zone while others are bogged down with budgetary constraints and apparent failure to grasp the seriousness of the situation. This is a sobering look at not only Oregon's seismic situation, but our response to disaster preparedness especially on the coast.

The video at www.obp.org/news/series/unprepared, runs about an hour, and it is time well spent.

Dave Robinson is the postmaster in Bandon, Ore., and author of "Disaster Prep for the Rest of Us." He may be contacted at disasterprep.dave@gmail.com. Visit his website for more disaster preparedness tips, www.disasterprepdave.blogspot.com.

YESTERDAY'S NEWS

MOMENTS IN TIME

The History Channel

- On Oct. 28, 1886, the Statue of Liberty, a gift of friendship from the people of France, is dedicated in New York Harbor as the last copper rivet is fitted. The dismantled Statue of Liberty had arrived 16 months earlier in more than 200 packing cases.

- On Oct. 29, 1925, Dominick Dunne, chronicler of high-profile crimes, is born. Dunne reported on the 1995 O.J. Simpson double-homicide trial and provided TV commentary about the case. He was stunned when the former football star was acquitted.

- On Oct. 30, 1938, Orson Welles, age 23, causes a nationwide panic with his broadcast of "War of the Worlds" — a realistic radio dramatization of a Martian invasion of Earth. "War of the Worlds" was not planned as a radio hoax, and Welles had little inkling of the havoc it would cause.

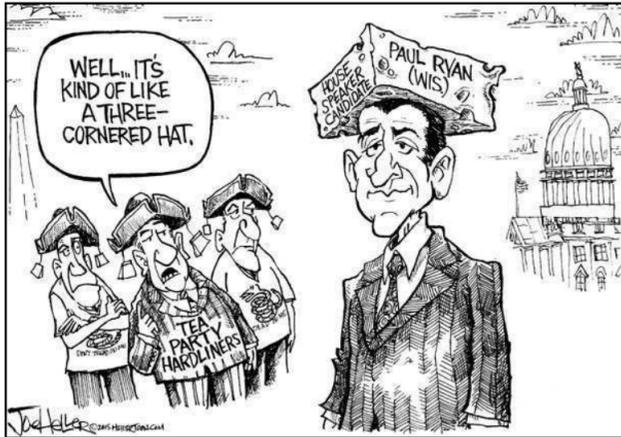
- On Nov. 1, 1941, President Franklin Roosevelt announces that the U.S. Coast Guard will be under the direction of the U.S. Navy, a transition of authority usually reserved only for wartime. Five weeks later, Japan would attack the U.S. at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii.

- On Oct. 31, 1957, the Japanese car company Toyota establishes its U.S. headquarters in California to begin selling its inexpensive Toyopet Crown sedans. A sensation in Japan, it flopped in the U.S. The car was too small for many American drivers, guzzled gas and oil, and shook at freeway speeds.

- On Oct. 26, 1984, in Loma Linda, California, Dr. Leonard Bailey performs the first baboon-to-human heart transplant, replacing 14-day-old Baby Fae's defective heart. Baby Fae survived for 20 days, longer than any previous human recipient of an animal heart.

- On Oct. 27, 1994, the U.S. Justice Department announces that the U.S. prison population has topped 1 million for the first time. The 1,012,851 men and women were in state and federal prisons, and did not include those incarcerated in local jails.

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LETTERS

Right to remain honest

First I want to say it has been my honor to protect and serve the Florence community for the better part of 17 years. In 17 years, I have never been in any trouble of any consequence, and my personnel file is full of praise and thanks from the people I have helped.

In early September, during the Labor Day weekend, I committed my first and only policy violation by going into a secure area that had been left unlocked. Out of curiosity, I entered the area. But, when it occurred to me that even as a supervisor I was not supposed to be in the area, I overreacted.

The outcome of the investigation proved I did not break in nor was anything missing.

I immediately realized that what I did was out of policy and looked for cameras. When I did not see cameras, I sent an email to another employee asking about them. I became embarrassed about my actions, and the following morning I went to my supervisor's house to tell him in person. I told him everything in complete honest detail.

After he told his supervisor, an internal investigation was started by the city. Although the investigation revealed I had done nothing illegal, the city felt, because of the steps I took, I was a dishonest person. The city felt that I only revealed what I had done because of the response to my email. This is where I disagree with the city and maintain that despite my overreaction, I knew the only choice I had was to come forth.

I asked the city to look at my past 17 years of service of honesty and integrity. The city

returned with a decision to terminate me for being dishonest.

I knew as a police officer we are held to a higher standard. From the beginning, I have maintained that I deserve some sort of punishment. The irony of the situation is that if I had not been completely honest in revealing what I had done, the city would not have anything to say I was dishonest about.

Shawn Morgan
 Florence

American flag program

There are 10 holidays a year when American flags magically appear lining the streets of Florence. They are put out on both sides of Highway 101, Bay Street and several of our side streets including Kingwood. Over 400 flags are put out each holiday by a core of more than 20 volunteers from our local Kiwanis Club.

The flag program is managed by the Florence Kiwanis Club and funded by local residents and businesses. An individual flag sponsorship costs \$30 for the year, which is tax deductible as a donation to the Florence Kiwanis Foundation.

The proceeds of the flag program are used to finance local youth projects, including college scholarships for outstanding high school graduates, and grants to other youth-oriented projects in our community. Last year we raised and distributed over \$12,000 in scholarships and grants.

The next time you see the flags flying, think about the hundreds of kids they have helped

over the years. You might want to be a sponsor, or possibly a volunteer to help with the program; we are always looking for more support. To get more information about our flag program or our club, contact us at flags@florencekiwanis.org.

Dick Shores
 Florence

Thank you, Margaret

In November 2001, the Siuslaw Public Library District was very lucky to welcome a brand-new staff member. Her name was Margaret Avery. If you have visited the Library any time since 2001, then you know Margaret. She has greeted you with a smile, checked out your items and helped you find what you need.

Of course, even the best things come to an end, and Margaret will be retiring from the Siuslaw Public Library on Friday, Oct. 30. While she has already promised to be back as a volunteer, I know she will be greatly missed by the many patrons who have come to appreciate her warm presence and kind manner.

So, if you have a few moments in the next week, please take a moment to stop in and wish Margaret good luck on the next phase of her life. We will also have a community card available for your signatures and comments as a way to wish Margaret the very best, and let her know how much she has meant to us all.

Thanks, as always, for your support of the library.

Meg Spencer, Director
 Siuslaw Public Library District

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR POLICY

The Siuslaw News welcomes letters to the editor concerning issues affecting the Florence area and Lane County.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters should be limited to about 300 words and must include the writer's full name, address and phone number for verification.

Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Libelous and anonymous letters as well as poetry will not be published.

All submissions become the property of Siuslaw News and will not be returned.

Write to:
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