

# Community Voices

## NATURAL PERSPECTIVE — STARS OF THE TIDEPOOL



By EMILY J. UHRIG, PH.D.  
Special to Siuslaw News

for tidepooling, provided you keep an eye on the waves, and the colorful sea creatures certainly brighten the winter landscape. Among the brightest are the ochre sea stars, ranging in brilliant colors from red to orange and even purple.

Widely known as “starfish,” most biologists prefer the name “sea star,” as these animals are not fish. Sea stars are invertebrates, and their closest relatives include urchins and sea cucumbers.

In comparison to vertebrates like us, sea stars seem almost alien.

They lack a true brain and their eyes are on the tips of their arms.

The sea star’s mouth is located on its underside, and its anus is on top — so when you notice a pretty sea star clinging to a rock, you’re actually admiring its rear-end.

Looking in tidepools, it’s easy to imagine sea stars leading fairly unexciting lives.

But appearances are deceiving.

Most sea stars are carnivorous predators that stalk the intertidal zone, the area between low and high tide marks, in pursuit of

prey. They move using hundreds of tiny “tube feet” that also help the sea star feed, breathe and sense chemicals in the environment.

The ochre sea star, one of the most common in Oregon, is a voracious predator that largely preys on mussels. Grasping a mussel, the sea star pries apart the shell with its tube feet.

Then things get weird: the sea star pushes its stomach out of its mouth and into the mussel shell where it secretes digestive juices to break down the mussel — making it easy for

the sea star to absorb.

As macabre as their eating habits seem, they’re essential to the ecosystem. Left unchecked by sea stars, mussels can become over-abundant and drive away other species, turning the once diverse ecosystem into one dominated by mussels.

This scenario nearly became reality in 2013-2014 when sea star populations were decimated by a wasting syndrome, a mysterious illness in which the animal’s body disintegrates over a matter of days.

Around 90 percent of

Oregon’s ochre sea stars were affected.

Despite researchers’ efforts, the cause is still not fully understood. However, Oregon populations are now rebounding.

So, consider taking a trip to the tidepools and let the sea stars brighten a winter’s day. But remember they’re not just ornamental: when you’re not looking, these top predators roam the intertidal zone keeping the ecosystem in balance.

## Us TOO FLORENCE — CLOSE ENCOUNTER WITH COVID-19 (PART 2)



By CHRISTOPHER SCHWARTZ  
Special to Siuslaw News

golfing foursome, started feeling ill (headache, high temp, lack of energy and appetite) just a day following our Nov. 29 golfing outing.

A test showed he was positive for COVID-19. Fortunately, his wife, along with we other members of the foursome and our spouses, all tested negative.

Jim really kept his friends up-to-date with his symptoms and how he was coping with them as he dealt with the disease.

In his case, he didn’t quarantine to see if he had COVID-19. He knew he had it, so his quarantine was to see if he could recover from it at home or would need hospitalization.

I want to share his experiences (I have his permission) because we who are not personally affected seldom read or

hear about the trauma and mind games holding the patient hostage.

So, with no further ado, here’s Jim to relate his experience — in his own words...

**Health Update:** Today I tested positive for coronavirus. We can’t figure out how. We do so little, and distance, and mask.

So boring. Holly tested negative today. Woo hoo! That means she went off to Bandon Inn.

**Testing:** I gotta say the testing process was smooth and quick. If you have symptoms, call your provider and they fax it to the hospital. Nice girl in a hazmat suit swabbed my good nostril — no big deal.

My plan was to text all my friends in a group text, but either too stupid or loopy right now to fit all the messages

on the list. So, Facebook it is.

My plan is to write a short update each day and let you know how I am doing, how we are doing, I know it’s personal, but the virus is not.

If you write a comment or a question, I might not get to it. I am loopy and pooped.

**Covid Blues Day 4:**

I’m bummed because a measure as to whether you are turning the corner is whether you can go the whole day without Fever Reducing medicines like acetaminophen or ibuprofen.

Then, you want to string a bunch of those days together and you’re on your way to recovery. I did fine with the no fever part during the day, but as night rolled around, it went up to 100, so I took some ibu-

profen and it did the charm.

My wife says I should be comfortable, who am I to argue?

So many generous friends have reached out to me with love and support. At this point, there’s not much you can do. Know that your friendship makes everything worthwhile, fighting to get healthy and find joy in life.

**Covlog Day 5:**

People are so generous in Bandon. All your upbeat comments, offers to help in real ways, and kindnesses make me cry. I used to watch way too much news, thinking “Those poor people with Covid” like we were so careful I’d never get it.

Now it’s the Yule Logs or light-hearted comedies.

My wise friend John Campbell, and Dan-

iel DeSurra, a relentless pursuer of truth and deep-er knowledge about the virus, always remind me of the most basic thing: “Go outside and breathe, breathe, breathe, Jim.”

I really don’t want to jinx myself or give the “announcers curse,” but my breathing has been smooth so far.

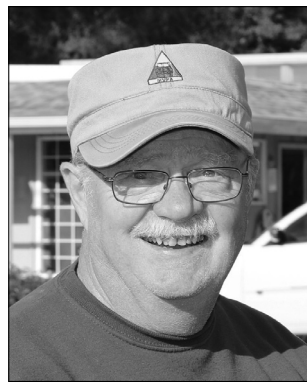
People are so worried about it going into their lungs, and for good reason.

I do get these medium gauge headaches, still wake up in pool of sweat, some chills and an inability to think straight (more than usual).

Signing off for now. Someday you’ll get to stop hear-ing from me (because I’m better, yeah).

Next, Day 6...

## MILITARY CHRONICLES — PURSUING THE MISSION



By CAL APPLEBEE  
Special to Siuslaw News

peared in the pages of the *Siuslaw News* roughly 100 times. In those editions, we covered an amazing range of topics and time periods in military heritage, and I was delighted when the museum board requested we re-launch the column.

Over the next year, we will mix it up with stories which will alternate between elements of military heritage such as battles, events, and tools of war, with something that’s even more important — interviews with the veterans of our community who have “been there, done that.”

That being said, with the impact the COVID pandemic has made on our community — including nonprofits and

the ability to serve their stated missions — I thought we would start with a primer on why the museum was created, and the full mission statement says it all:

“To educate the members of the coastal communities concerning the role our military members, both past and present, have played in defending the freedoms we all enjoy; and to provide an avenue for veterans to display and share their personal artifacts, memorabilia, memoirs and as an oral and visual history of their honorable military service.”

Because of the generous support from the community for the effort, the museum was able to open in 2015.

Since that time, however, except for the limited annual fundraising events, financial support from the community has waned.

We recognize there are multiple worthy nonprofits and organizations in our community that need ongoing financial support — including several veterans service organizations (VSO’s). Many of the members of those organizations were instrumental in the creation of the museum — both through initial financial support, as well as actual hands-on efforts to build it.

While the various VSO’s certainly have their own specific and critical mission, the Oregon Coast Military

Museum is that one that serves to honor their service, and we hope you will continue to support our mission.

That support can be with an annual membership, purchasing a brick for the Remembrance Wall extension, a memorial in a family members name, or through your estate planning. Those options and more are available on the website, oregoncoastmilitarmuseum.com

During the pandemic shut-down, museum staff and volunteers have taken advantage of the quiet time to continue work on the never-ending archival process of the thousands of artifacts which have been donated over the years. They have worked

on enhancing existing displays by re-focusing the emphasis on Oregon’s military heritage, as well as those veterans from our local community.

The tour through the museum now takes a different path through Civil War, WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam and Gulf Wars, all with significant enhancements to enrich the visitor’s experience.

And now, at least for the current moment on the COVID clock, the museum is pleased to announce that it is open again from noon until 4 p.m., Friday through Sunday.

We hope you will stop in and check it out.

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