

Spruce trees saved in Cannon Beach, for now

A funny thing happened on the way to the tree-cutting. It didn't happen.

We first learned about the alleged tree removal about two weeks ago in an anonymous email: "Although no notification has been sent to property owners in the area, we have learned by accident that the Public Works Department of the City of Cannon Beach has determined that two large spruce trees on the corner of Fifth Street and North Larch have been designated for removal.

"Since these trees are on city property and hence belong to all Cannon Beach citizens, the city should show beyond doubt that the trees are a danger to the community because their death is imminent and that pruning will not alleviate the problem."

This email alarmed residents, and it alarmed us, too.

After all, what could be more tragic irony than a beloved spruce being torn from its roots, with the counterpoint of Cannon Beach receiving the honor of "Tree City USA"? Only a select number of American cities receive this honor, one which is earned by meeting hard-won criteria for the evaluation, care and promotion of healthy trees.

We did little to make things better in an online feature about the city's national honor by running a submitted photo of the Fifth and North Larch trees.

"Reading this article, then looking at the pictures that illustrate Cannon Beach's recent designation as a "Tree City USA" makes me feel like my name is Alice, or perhaps I have been transported back to 1984," Michael R. Capper of Cannon Beach wrote in an email. "The picture is of two old spruce trees that the city has marked for removal, based on a cursory evaluation of their health by the city's arborist. Not only do other arborists question his evaluation, there was no notification of people in the neighborhood that the trees were marked for destruction. Tree City???"

The matter was compounded by the posting of a newspaper file photo of a bower in Cannon Beach along Highway 101. (Those photos,

CANNON SHOTS

By
R.J.
MARX



Trees are always the most sensitive issue in any community. They represent roots and branches, generations and history, and the ongoing conflict between man and nature.

incidentally, no longer accompany the "Tree City" story. We are now using a nice, safe picture of spruce trees on North Spruce near Harrison, trees not slated for removal — as far as we know.)

Meanwhile, fears for the fate of the trees at Fifth and Larch grew.

"These trees, which took the better part of a century to grow, are part of the heritage of Cannon Beach and form a dignified entry to the Fifth Street access to the beach," Rex Amos wrote in an email. "They should not be treated as just another nuisance to be weeded out of the city for the convenience of the public works department.

On Friday, we called Public Works Director Dan Grassick to clear things up.

"Spruce trees on Fifth and Larch — are they coming down?" we asked.

"The application has been withdrawn," Grassick said. "There's nothing going to be done there. There's no issue. We're not going to take the trees down."

"The trees are healthy?"
"We're not going to take the trees down. That's all I'm going to say."



REX AMOS/FOR THE CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Spruce trees at Fifth Street and North Larch Street were originally slated for removal, but received a reprieve after residents and an arborist intervened.

"When you do decide to take trees down, do you notify residents?"

"Yes," Grassick said. "There's a standard city process. For trees within the right of way, property owners within 100 feet of the tree are notified. That's in the city ordinance.

"Maybe this will work out for the best?"

"Yes. There's no issue."

While Grassick's comments spared the trees, we were more confused than ever.

We turned to arborist Joe Balden to unravel this mess. Balden is a Nehalem-based consultant hired by Breakers Point property manager Bruce Francis to evaluate the trees at Fifth and Larch.

But first we had to break the news to him. He hadn't yet heard of the city's decision to spare the spruce.

Balden said he'd received a report from the city's arborist stating the trees were unhealthy and needed to be taken down.

"I said the evaluation is incomplete and there were other things that needed to be done to determine trees were structurally sound," Balden said. "That was about a week ago. I hadn't heard anything back one way or another."

Balden faulted the city's arborist and study.

He provided a copy of a letter he'd sent to the city, challenging its evaluation.

At 100 years of age, the trees are considered "to be young" for the species, Balden wrote. He recommended evaluation to determine healthy or decayed tissue and then a look to pruning to alleviate a potential hazard — deadwood or hanging branches.

"Note that these trees have been through a lot of storms, even before construction of Breakers Point buildings that now actually buffer the site," Balden concluded. "If further physical examination proves that either tree is structurally not sound, then action needs to be taken. But that evaluation needs to take place before making a decision on whether or not to remove either tree."

So — nothing happened. A tree wasn't removed. Calling Jerry Seinfeld.

Wait a minute. Back to Rex Amos, the Paul Revere of Cannon Beach tree-cutting.

"Do you have any ideas about how we could use this article to raise the awareness of our fellow citizens about offing trees that are now the poster child for Tree City USA?" he wrote.

Happy to oblige.

Congratulations to Cannon Beach on its honor. Tree City USA status is shared by 3,400 communities throughout the country and represents a commitment to core standards of urban forestry management, maintaining a tree board, a community tree ordinance and a \$2 per capita commitment from residents. The designation was celebrated Wednesday, Sept. 2 at the city's community potluck and community grant awards.

And we're happy for the spruce trees at Fifth and Larch for a chance to live and thrive into the future. At least until the next evaluation — Amos shared a new letter from the city stating the city has withdrawn the tree-cutting application "pending further research."

But above all, our thoughts turn to our cultural and archetypal relationship with trees.

To cut or not to cut in an area where timber heritage goes back generations. Trees penetrate to the core of our values and beliefs. They shelter us and provide shade. They are the symbol of this state.

Trees are always the most sensitive issue in any community. They represent roots and branches, generations and history, and the ongoing conflict between man and nature.

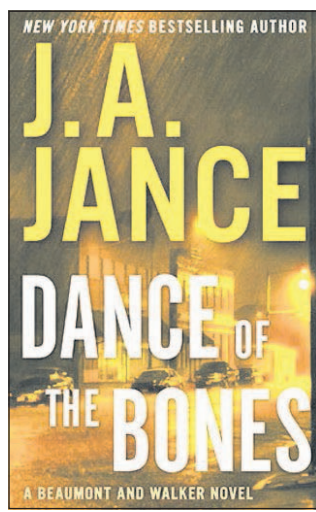
And you thought this was all about nothing.

At the Library CARLA O'REILLY

Military biography, mystery on tap for author talks

In the month of September, Cannon Beach Library is fortunate to sponsor not one, but two well-known authors, John R. Bruning and none other than J.A. Jance!

Bruning is a prolific military and aviation historian, who has previously written nineteen books. His newest book, entitled *Indestructible*, will be the focus of his talk when he visits the library on Saturday, Sept. 12 at 2 p.m. The book, to be released in 2016, is a biography of Paul "Pappy" Gunn, one of the great figures of the Pacific War. Bruning was embedded as a civilian historian with the Oregon National Guard in Iraq. His talk at the library is a part of the Northwest Author Series, organized by our own hard-working Jean Furchner.



Three days later at the Coaster Theatre, we will be sponsoring the very popular J.A. Jance, whose newest book is "Dance of the Bones," the story of two cold cases which, though far apart geographically, suddenly emerge

as related. Jance's talk will be held at the Coaster Theatre at 2 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 15. Her books will be available for sale through Cannon Beach Book Company.

Both author talks are free of charge and open to the public.

Cannon Beach Reads will be discussing a book by yet another author this month. The group will be talking about author Russell Shorto's "The Island at the Center of the World," which focuses on the central role played by the Dutch colony of New Netherland in the shaping of colonial Ameri-

"Dance of the Bones," the most recent novel by J.A. Jance.

SUBMITTED PHOTO
CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

can culture. The group will meet Sept. 16 at 7 p.m.

Fall festival

As an annual fundraiser for the library, the Fall Festival will be held in the library building on Saturday, September 26 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The event will feature handmade crafts, baked goods, a book sale for children and young adults, and lovely gift baskets! Anyone wishing to donate any of these items for the festival should call the library at 503-436-1391 for guidelines. Come join us by the fire!

Other library news

Thanks to our incomparable Office Manager Buddie Anderson, our eBook program, Library 2 Go, is up and running. By means of the



CARLA O'REILLY

program, eBooks and digital audiobooks and more can be accessed. For help initiating and using this program, drop by the library during our open hours for a little assistance! Also thanks to Buddie's efforts, our new interactive website has also been launched. The site may be accessed by going to www.cannonbeachlibrary.org

A big congratulations goes out to our Summer Reading Contest grand prize winners, Abby and Reilly Harrington. We are honored to reward these great readers!

Our lovely hand-stitched quilt remains on display at the library. Tickets are \$1 each or 6 for \$5. The winning ticket will be drawn at our annual Holiday Tea Saturday, Dec. 5. One need not be present to win, and if the lucky ticket is held by a non-local, we'll ship the quilt!

Looking ahead to next month, on Oct. 7 our membership meeting and brunch will feature speaker Nancy McCarthy, longtime former editor of our local newspapers.

Happy autumn!

Uncorked Ramblings STEVEN SINKLER

For something different, consider some hard ciders

Fall is right around the corner. The days are a bit chillier and are getting shorter. Leaves are changing colors and beginning to drop from the trees. Harvest is making its way here too as the grapes have become perfectly ripened. In vineyards across Oregon and Washington, workers are busy bringing in the 2015 fruit. It's one of my favorite times of the year.

Fall is also the time when we see more interest in hard apple cider. Orchards are busy with activity as tons of Washington apples are being pressed and fermented into hard cider. Hard ciders have become very popular in the past couple of years. They are gluten free and have lower alcohol levels, typically around five to six percent. Interestingly, it's the younger crowd that seems to be the most interested in their 20s and 30s are much

more likely to purchase a hard cider than a customer in the 50-plus age group.

While I've been carrying hard cider for the past few years, a few months ago I was forced to find new hard ciders for The Wine Shack. The cider house I had been carrying was no longer working with a local distributor and wouldn't be available to us much longer. The search for new ciders was on. My requirements were simple: I wanted to carry three or four ciders from a single, local cider house, and I wanted ciders that taste like ciders, no hoppy beverages that taste more like beer than cider. With these two, seemingly simple requirements to work with, I let my distributors know of my search. Within a couple of days, distributors responded by bringing me A lot of cider to taste. It's a tough job, but someone has to do it.



STEVEN SINKLER

I settled on Atlas ciders, made in Bend. Recently, Bend has become known as a mecca for craft breweries. But, instead of following the crowd and making beer, Atlas owners Bob and Samantha McCoy created a world class cider house. I really like that Atlas sources all of its fruit from the Pacific Northwest and their ciders are 100 percent natural, with no artificial colors or sweeteners. The Wine Shack now carries all four Atlas ciders: hard apple, apricot, pome-

granate-cherry and blackberry. Customers seem very pleased with the lineup, which delivers the diversity of flavors I was looking for.

The hard apple cider is Atlas's flagship, with crisp and tart apple flavors, this cider is off-dry, meaning it has just a hint of sweetness. I really enjoy this cider as you can actually taste the fruit, so if you like apples, you'll like this choice. Atlas's hard apple cider pairs nicely with salads, sandwiches and barbecue.

Atlas apricot cider is the driest drink they make. As an enthusiastic apricot lover, this hard cider offers tart flavor of apricot that may possibly be the most refreshing drink in my store (don't tell Puffin rosé about this, please). I enjoy drinking this on the deck by itself or with a sandwich or a burger.

Atlas blackberry cider is a stunner! An amazing blend of blackberry and elderberry, this hard cider is crisp, off-dry and even has some light tannins. I was immediately impressed with the beautiful purple color of the cider, but the taste is true to the sweet-tart combination that makes blackberry one of my favorite fruits. This may sound crazy to some, but Atlas blackberry cider has what it takes to be a dinner beverage, instead of a glass of wine or beer.

blend of fruits that go together surprisingly well. Prior to tasting this cider, I was expecting this cider to be too tart to be enjoyed by itself. I was wrong. The cherries deliver enough sweetness to offset the tart pomegranate flavors. This is another delicious and refreshing adult beverage with low alcohol content. However, the biggest surprise was yet to come.

Recently, I was out for dinner at a Portland brewery for dinner and drinks with a group of friends. While most of the group was busy enjoying their craft brews with appetizers and dinner, I went with an Atlas blackberry cider. The cider was up to the task.

I'm in the process of scheduling an Atlas cider tasting for an October or November Saturday afternoon. This will be a great opportunity for you to come in, try something completely different and sample these delicious Oregon hard ciders.

Please don't drink and drive. Although the hard ciders have much lower alcohol levels than wine, they still can lead to impaired driving and decision making. If you've been drinking, please use a designated driver. We want to see you again at The Wine Shack soon. Cheers!