

Remembering the 'artsy place where liberals came'

With Betsy Ayres, who needs a survey?

The National Citizen's Research Survey, which sports a trademark symbol after its name, "begins with a customizable survey of questions relevant to your community."

The survey, commissioned by the City of Cannon Beach, measures public opinion in eight key areas of community livability. "In each domain, residents report their perceptions about the quality of their community and related services, as well as their own engagement within the community," survey authors state.

"I can understand why Oregon's gotten more and more popular," Ayres said over coffee at Sea Level in Tolovana. "It's a stunningly beautiful place. The lifestyle, the access to the ocean, the clean air, the safety, the amazing beauty..."

An essential detail about Cannon Beach, Ayres said, is that most of the residents moved here because they wanted to be here, not like most places, where people live because that's where they were born.

Ayres relocated from Portland in 1969, a time when, she said, Cannon Beach was making a transition from a quiet out-of-the-way logging town to a getaway destination.

"A lot of people in the '60s moved here because the rent was cheap and the environment was beautiful, and it sort of began its identity as an arts colony," she said. "Cannon Beach was the place where the artsy liberals came."

Between family, a long history of civic service and a glittering personality, Ayres soon "knew everybody, and everybody else knew everybody," she said.

Her grandmother's name — Lottie Anderson — is on a plaque by the checkout desk at the Cannon Beach Library.

Anderson, incidentally, survived San Francisco's Great

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



Earthquake and Fire of 1906. She moved to Cannon Beach in 1945.

'Carmel North'

A real estate agent named Richard Atherton — "a real promoter," says Ayres — first marketed Cannon Beach as "Carmel North." "That was his idea as the way to draw people," Ayres said. "It didn't seem to stick, especially when people began buying and tearing down all the wonderful beach cabins and putting up McMansions. Carmel restricts that."

In the '80s and '90s, people who came to Cannon Beach with money sought the same comforts they had in "a big house in Portland," or wherever they were coming from, Ayres said.

"Oregon's gotten more and more popular, because this is such a stunningly beautiful place, so people wanted to come here," she said. "I don't begrudge their creature comforts. Not everyone wants to live with a woodstove and be like 'Little House on the Prairie.'"

Serving as City Councilor, member of the Planning Commission, Emergency Preparedness Committee and Budget Commission, Ayres soon realized some new residents held little regard for environmental regulations or the design review process, and they came up with some "pretty crazy ideas."

A former Chamber of Commerce official wanted to put lighthouses the length of Cannon Beach.

"She thought that would bring people to Cannon Beach," Ayres laughed. "The City Council wouldn't go for it. She stormed out of the meeting: 'You're trying to ruin the businesses of Cannon Beach!'"

Ayres recalled plans to pave wetlands behind Spruce Street for more parking.

"Traffic is this long, knock-down, drag-out fight," she said. "It never changes."

In the summer, Ayres stays home, or if she does go into town, rides her bike or walks. "If I don't try to drive through town, I'm good with that," she said.

After years of service, Ayres shied away from public office after realizing it was not necessarily a good way to make friends.

"If you're in public office, there are people's wishes who are thwarted when you're on the council, and hi-how-are-you relations became really hostile," she said. "I don't have the boundaries for that. If you want to keep your friends, you have to be able to just go home, shrug it off and think, 'They're still people. I still respect their views.' Whether they respect mine, I don't know."

'True believer'

Over the years Ayres has worked for Head Start in Seaside, along with stints in land use planning, as a motel maid, librarian, and an assistant to a clinical psychologist. She has a grown daughter, Meadow, who lives in Manzanita. Today Ayres is out of city politics, watching from a different role as a member of the North Coast Land Conservancy Board of Directors, a spot she has held since 2010.

"I do a lot of outreach, fundraising, which I enjoy, because I'm a true believer," she said. "I want to make this place as wonderful as it was when I was a child."

Ayres said she thinks the city is "pretty solid," but wishes more people at City Hall had a greater personal history in Cannon Beach.

"I wish there were more institutional memory about what built this place into the fantastic place that it is, and that there



R.J. MARX PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Betsy Ayres offered her thoughts on Cannon Beach at Sea Level in Tolovana.

were more focus on the services for the people who live here," she said.

Ayres said she thinks there should be discussion of a senior center and affordable housing. She's bitter that 70 percent of the room tax goes to tourism, and is frustrated by efforts by the "real estate lobby" to stymie land preservation.

She wants people to "squawk" when the city starts cutting down trees in the right-of-way, "and not pave every road and have glaring searchlights everywhere. I don't want Cannon Beach to be like Beaverton, and it's getting more that way every day."

"I love living in a small town, I love living in a small area," Ayres said. "I like the web of connections when you stay in a community your whole life. For some reason that gives me a lot of comfort. It just has a tremendous appeal to me."

Take the survey

You don't have to be a longtime resident to fill out the poll. You can live, work or just visit the city to have your thoughts heard. Feedback will help guide the city's strategic plan, a two-year process. Surveys will be mailed to residents in late January and due back at the end of February, and the city should have an analysis back by March. Then the planning process will begin, with adoption of a strategic plan likely in June.

To access the Cannon Beach survey, go to <http://ci.cannon-beach.or.us/~Svcs/PS/survey.html>.

Every time of year is perfect for a sip of the bubbly

Maryann and I celebrated the start of 2016 by popping open a bottle of bubbly and having a rousing toast! Did you? A glass of bubbles seems to be the perfect way to say good-bye to the past year and look towards the upcoming year with a sense of hope and adventure. But, you don't have to limit sparkling wine to New Year's Eve. Having friends over for dinner? Bubbly! Sunday morning breakfast? Bubbly! Got your books back to the library before getting a fine? Bubbly!

What kind of sparkling wine to choose?

Sparkling wine is made in many countries, from a variety of grapes and comes with many different names. Depending on where in the world you are, you might call this drink Champagne (France's Champagne region),

UNCORKED RAMBLINGS

STEVE SINKLER



Cremant (France-anywhere other than Champagne region), Sparkling Wine (U.S.), Cava (Spain), Prosecco (Italy), Spumante (Italy) and Sekt (Germany/Austria).

Sparkling wine can be made by injecting a gas into still wine. But, more often sparkling wine is made using the traditional method, by fermenting wine a second time, which creates the beautiful bubbles.

Chardonnay and pinot noir are the two most popular grapes used in making sparkling wine and are the two classic grapes used in Champagne. For this reason, it's easy to see that Oregon has what

it takes to be a powerhouse in the sparkling wine market.

Argyle, located in Dundee, is Oregon's best known sparkling wine producer. They make a number of different sparklers, but my favorite is Argyle Brut rosé, a beautiful salmon-colored wine made mostly from pinot noir. This hard-to-find bubbly delivers creamy flavors of strawberry that make it a perfect choice to be enjoyed by itself or with food.

Kramer Vineyards, from Gaston, makes sparkling wine from a number of different grapes, including pinot gris, chardonnay and pinot noir; but my favorite is their Muller-Thurgau Celebrate. Using Muller-Thurgau as a base grape for sparkling wine is unconventional, but it works. The bubbles are delivered in a brut style, packed with flavors of apricot, ap-

ple and pear. This sparkler is great with food and is very popular with customers who aren't looking for the creamy style of a classic sparkling wine.

Capitello Brut, made in Eugene, is another hard-to-find selection. Ray Walsh is one of my favorite winemakers in Oregon (he also makes our Puffin pinot gris) and I love it when he makes this bubbly. Made in a classic style, Capitello Brut is a creamy, delicious blend of pinot noir and chardonnay that stands up nicely against its counterparts from Champagne.

Another favorite is Sokol Blosser Sparkling Evolution. Sokol Blosser, located in Dundee, throws all of the conventional rules out the window with this sparkler. Where other wineries package their sparkling wines with high-end foils, labels and heavy bottles to create the

image of sophistication and class, Sokol Blosser goes the other way. No foil covers the cork cage, no heavy bottle, no elegant label. Instead of focusing on fancy, Sokol Blosser's Sparkling Evolution delivers fun. Made from a blend of about every white grape grown in Oregon, this sparkler delivers citrus, apricot and peach flavors in a crisp brut style. Delicious by itself, this sparkler is a perfect companion to sushi, salads or spicy foods.

Oregon is really delivering on the sparkling wines, so be adventurous and try different bottles as occasions arise throughout the year.

Cheers!

Just remember not to drink and drive. If you think you've had too much bubbly, give your keys to the designated driver or call a sober pal.

Even 'common' bird species face risks to their natural habitat

Sure, it's exciting to see rare birds, as I noted in my "State of The Bird Count" address last month. But I would hate to think what my backyard would be like without our "common" birds — like the red-winged blackbird pictured here.

This time of year, we see big flocks of blackbirds, as red-wings join forces with others like cowbirds, starlings and Brewer's. It may seem like their numbers are good but experts say that up to 54 percent of populations within common bird species have disappeared in the last 50 years.

A few of the things we can do to help our bird populations are protect habitat, support forests, protect wetlands, fight global warming and combat invasive species

BIRD NOTES

SUSAN BOAC



which I think includes keeping domestic cats inside. Sorry, bird feeders do not make the list. It feels like we are moving in the right direction here on the North Coast. Starting in my own backyard where I have planted willow, twinberry and other native plants. I also like to wait until spring to tidy up my gardens. The leaf litter and decaying plants make excellent places for birds to find bugs.

We also have champions for the environment in the North Coast Land Conservancy, local

watershed councils and many other passionate groups. I feel good about our chances of keeping our common birds around for all to enjoy.

Extra extra!

I am just home from work this rainy evening and after three stops in previous days, I finally saw the female pine grosbeak hanging out at the Netul Landing in Fort Clatsop Historic Park. Not common, but worth a mention!

Six of us braved the cold in January to make a loop around the lagoons in Cannon Beach. Join the group for more birding adventures in the Cannon Beach area. We meet the first Sunday of the month at the Lagoon Trail parking lot on Second Street at 9 a.m. As a group, we de-



SUBMITTED PHOTO/CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Red-winged blackbird.

side where the best birding is and bird until about 11. Bring binoculars and wear appropriate clothing. Everyone is welcome! Upcoming dates are Feb. 7 and March 6 — it is bound to be warmer!

Also, please mark your calendars for April 9 the fourth annual

North Oregon Coast Birdathon, an event inspired by Cannon Beach's 12 Days of Earth Day, April 11-22. Together we will raise much needed funds for the rehabbing birds and wildlife at the Wildlife Center of the North Coast. Information on the Birdathon can be found on the Wildlife Center's website at Coast-Wildlife.org.

Susan has spent her life enjoying the great outdoors from the lakes and woods of Northern Minnesota, Mount Adams in Washington and now the Oregon beach environs. After spending many pleasurable hours driving her avid birder parents around, she has taken up birding as a passion, to the mixed emotions of her husband Scott. The Boacs reside on the Neawanna Creek in Seaside where their backyard is a birder's paradise.

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