

I ask you — Can any man really control his spouse?

A curious detour in the Mike Balzer civil rights lawsuit is Mrs. Balzer. Mike Balzer is the former Cannon Beach fire chief dismissed from his job in October for alleged poor job performance and friction with the board.

Balzer was dismissed from his role, directors said, because of poor evaluations and a lack of improvement from the chief.

A May 2015 evaluation provides these comments regarding Balzer's quality of work: "Crab

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



Feed: Thoroughness was inadequate. Too many people were left off the invitation list and feelings were hurt."

"2014-15 Budget: The budget was poorly executed and presented by the chief."

Balzer is described as having "anger and poor attitude."

Final comments from the directors urge Balzer to "develop/rebuild working relationships with all associates," "seek training and build a network of resources," and "learn to love the job."

And there was one more reason commissioners wanted Balzer out.

They didn't like his wife's postings on Facebook.

At the fire district's March 2015 meeting, there was, according to official minutes, "some discussion" about Mrs. Balzer's social media use and "rude postings about the fire district's board of directors."

According to the civil rights lawsuit Balzer filed after his firing, directors Sharon Clyde, Linda Beck-Sweeney and Garry Smith chastised Balzer for "allowing his spouse to express her criticism of board members on social media websites and in her speech."

Recall vote ahead

Good people disagree over Balzer's performance. Firefighters and former firefighters have shown support both for the former chief and for Clyde, Beck-Sweeney and Smith.

"Under Chief Balzer's direction, the district opened a new station in Arch Cape, acquired a new brush truck for fighting wildfires and replaced an aging ladder truck," Eric Reiter of Tolovana Park wrote in a letter this week. "Chief Balzer's management of the Bistro fire several years ago no doubt saved much of the downtown business district."

Reiter was referring to the 2012 blaze which took 20 firefighters, led by Balzer, to douse flames that threatened neighboring structures.

Subsequent letters from supporters have reiterated those comments.

Others question the motives of the recall petition.



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Former chief Mike Balzer has been praised for his efforts extinguishing a blaze at the Bistro restaurant in July 2012.

In a letter urging support for Clyde, Smith and Beck-Sweeney, Assistant Chief Frank Swedenborg writes: "Each member of this board, not just the ones selected in this recall, have and will continue to provide hours of their time to do the job they were elected to do, which is provide this community a safe and protected place to live."

Many others share that support.

'Can't you control your wife?'

I suppose in the old days somebody's gabbing away on the telephone would not have caused a stir.

Our last home was on a narrow lane in a small suburb. The street was really too narrow for two cars to pass, so gentlemanly drivers would pull to the side to let the other guy pass. This worked very well but sometimes people went a little too fast, especially kids who just got their driver's license. They inevitably took the turns too fast.

Such was the case one day as my wife and I were walking our Lhasa Apsos Basil and Gigi along the lane. The kid came barreling down the road. Instead of slowing down, he sped up. My wife Eve yelled, "SLOW DOWN!" The teen gave her the finger. He then pulled in to his family house on the hill.

"I'm going to talk to his parents," Eve said.

With Basil and Gigi in tow, we walked up the driveway and rang the bell.

Mr. R. answered. "Hi," Eve said. "Your son almost ran us over. You've got to tell him to slow down on this street."

"I'm sure Austin would never do anything like that," Mr. R. replied piously.

We could see Austin skulking in the kitchen behind him before slinking out of view. His mom Roseanne could be seen comforting him.

"And I resent what you're saying about my son," Mr. R. said.

"I don't care if you resent it or not," Eve replied, adding, "You're full of baloney," only in more savory language. Eve can be pretty impressive when riled. In reality she's about as dangerous as Granny Clampett, but she can sure scare off the uninitiated.

Mr. R. paled. He looked at me and sputtered: "Can't you control your wife?"

I knew Mrs. R. and Austin were in the kitchen cowering as this blow-hard sputtered excuses on behalf of his guilty son.

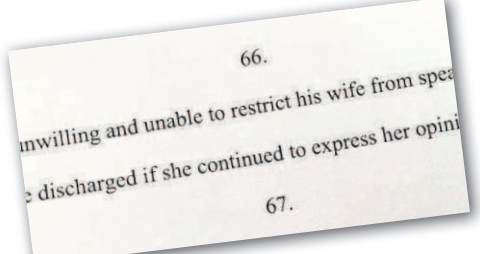
"No, I can't control my wife," I admitted. And never would try, I thought. Message delivered.

Vote for the firefighters

But back to Mrs. Balzer. Whatever she typed on Facebook that day, it must have been a doozie. She is right at the center of this lawsuit.

Balzer, in his civil rights lawsuit before Clatsop County Court, seeks a jury trial. He says his rights were violated because his firing "was motivated by personal animus," and breached the employment agreement.

Balzer's counsel writes: "By reprimanding plaintiff in his job performance report as fire chief for allowing his spouse to exercise her right to express her opinions, defendants directed plaintiff to restrain his spouse's constitutional rights to freely express her opinions, in violation of the Constitution of Oregon and the Constitution of the United States."



Claims that three fire district directors violated Mike Balzer's civil rights.

In translation, Balzer contends, the fire commissioners attempted to force him to muzzle his wife's freedom of speech.

I must say, I give Mike Balzer credit.

When it comes to wives, let them have their say. The days of ownership of wives and censoring their opinions should be long over. Women got the right to vote in 1918 and that's OK by me.

"We are all absolutely dependent on a well functioning fire district," County Commissioner Lianne Thompson said when I asked her about the situation. "If you don't have emergency, fire and EMS, you're up the creek with out a paddle. We've all got to hope they solve it. This isn't about just the people involved. Everybody's impacted by this."

Wildlife Center of the North Coast needs your funding support

We are at it again! Raising money for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast! Did you know that the center is run on donations alone? They receive no federal funding, only grants and donations from good people like all of us! This is a massive operation that requires lots of people, mostly volunteers, but there are bills to pay too! Re-habbing more than 2,000 birds every

BIRD NOTES

SUSAN BOAC



year requires a facility with a lab, hospital, outdoor pens, food, electricity and water — lots of water!

A wonderful excuse to bird all day and make much needed money for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast! That's how I got the idea to start a birdathon, the connection was easy! The center rehabs birds (and lots of other wildlife too) and I love to bird! To make it successful, I would need to get others involved in the birding part and then raise awareness for the need. It has worked pretty well for the first three years.

Last year we had 13 people out birding and raised \$4,000. Overall we have raised about \$10,000 for the center and they appreciate it so much!

Over the years this column has well documented the adventures of Team Eagles. Remember the first year, when there was a very cold east wind and the delicious sandwiches my husband made us when we stopped by the house to warm up! Then the second year when it was warmer and sunny and Mitzi took a nap in the dunes! And of course last year when the old birder van gave out with an hour left on the clock!

This year the boundaries are open to the Planet Earth and I hope this encourages more people to raise money for the center. And we have new categories to win prizes! Most bird species seen in your yard, youngest birder and participating from the furthest away (from Cannon Beach).

Don't want to get involved in the shenanigans of the pledging but want to contribute? Please go to CoastWildlife.org to donate online or mail directly to WCNC P.O. Box 1232, Astoria, OR 97103.

Join the growing group for 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 decide where the best birding is and bird until about 11. Bring binoculars and wear appropriate clothing. Everyone is welcome! Get warmed up for the birdathon on April 3 Join us!

So please mark your calendars for April 9 for 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 12 Days of Earth Day website at TwelveDaysofEarthDay.com.

Susan has spent her life enjoying the great outdoors.

Remembering a much simpler time in Cannon Beach

The early 20th century was an uncomplicated time for Cannon Beach. It was an era for families, friends, and the simple life. Families who, at this time, traveled by stage-coach, wagon, or by foot. Long-time resident and author of "Comin' in Over the Rock," Peter Lindsey compares the journey from Seaside to Cannon Beach as "the Bataan Death March." The road, barely more than a trail, was a muddy mess for most of the year. Despite the sad state of the roads, travelers paid the toll fees and made their way to the Elk Creek and Cannon Beach areas.

In 1903 a few intrepid businessmen founded the Elk Creek and Cannon Beach Land Company and quickly platted the area from Elk Creek to Haystack Rock — just west of the present-day Coaster Theater. The developers offered plots that were 50-by-100-feet for a mere \$100 in hopes that they might encourage reticent travelers to come to the Cannon Beach area. The owner of the first home constructed in the plat would have their \$100 returned to them.

During this budding real estate market there was another area undergoing similar development, referred to as Brooklyn Camp, located originally between Van Buren and Monroe streets. In Terrence O'Donnell's book "Cannon Beach: A Place by the Sea," he suggests that Brooklyn Camp received its name because many of the families that owned cottages in the area "were from the Brooklyn neighborhood in Portland." O'Donnell goes



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Alger Family tent camp, circa 1910-1912.

REFLECTIONS

ELAINE TRUCKE



on to say that this was Cannon Beach's "first true ensemble of cottages."

The Brooklyn Camp area was in use prior to the 1900s by families in tent camps. The area was just north of Monroe Street, and as families returned year after year they eventually began to build houses, of sorts. Certainly not what we would consider a house by today's standards. Tent camps continued to be a summer get away well into the 1930s.

Cannon Beach families that can trace their roots back to this early time recall wooden homes constructed from driftwood, ship debris that washed ashore, held together with whatever

supplies they could make or that was brought from the city (meaning Portland.) The homes were not constructed with the expertise of today, but surprisingly, still survived many Oregon coast storms.

Sadly, many of these historic cottages have been lost to wood rot, or expansion. Their quizzical charm and coastal daring lost for future generations that will see homes not as cottage pieced together with love and determination, but with an eye for safety and efficiency. Don't despair! There are still precious few cottages in Cannon Beach that persist, lovingly cared for by those who just can't help to love them.

The town, too, has grown from the difficult-to-get-to place, to a quick drive from Portland or Seattle. Hotels have replaced cottages, restaurants have come and gone, but the bubble that is Cannon Beach remains.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Ecola Road, circa 1907.

<p>Publisher Steve Forrester</p> <p>Editor R.J. Marx</p> <p>Reporter Lyra Fontaine</p> <p>Advertising Manager Betty Smith</p>	<p>Production Manager John D. Bruijn</p> <p>Circulation Manager Heather Ramsdell</p> <p>Advertising Sales Laura Kaim</p>	<p>CANNON BEACH GAZETTE The Cannon Beach Gazette is published every other week by EO Media Group.</p> <p>1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, Oregon 97138</p> <p>503-738-5561 • Fax 503-738-9285</p> <p>Web: www.cannonbeachgazette.com</p> <p>Email: editor@cannonbeachgazette.com</p>	<p>LETTER POLICY The Seaside Signal welcomes letters to the editor. The deadline is noon Monday prior to publication. Letters must be 400 words or less and must be signed by the author and include a phone number for verification. We also request that submissions be limited to one letter per month. Send to 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside, OR 97138, drop them off at 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive or fax to 503-738-9285, or email rmarx@seasidesignal.com</p>	<p>SUBSCRIPTION RATES Annually: \$40.50 in county, \$58.00 in and out of county.</p> <p>Postage Paid at: Cannon Beach, OR 97110</p> <p>POSTMASTER Send address changes to Cannon Beach Gazette, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103</p> <p>Copyright 2015 © Cannon Beach Gazette. Nothing can be reprinted or copied without consent of the owners.</p>	<p>THE NATIONAL AWARD-WINNING</p> <p>CANNON BEACH GAZETTE</p>
---	---	--	---	---	--