

# GRAB BAG

BOOK SHELF // GLIMPSE // WILDLIFE // POP CULTURE // WORDS // Q&A // FOOD // FUN

**NW**  
word nerd

By RYAN HUME

## Clatskanie

[klæt•skɪ•nɑɪ]

*noun*

1. a small city and timber town in Columbia County situated on U.S. Highway 30 in the Nehalem Valley. First incorporated in 1891, the current population, according to the 2010 census, is 1,737. Clatskanie is also notable for being the birthplace of writer and poet Raymond Carver

2. *Clatskanie River*: a 25-mile-long tributary of the Columbia River that drains out of the Coast Range and into a slough approximately 5 miles south of Westport

### Origin:

Both *Clatskanie* and *Klaskanine* (the name of another river; this one a tributary of the Youngs River in Clatsop County) come as variants from the native word, *Tlats-kani*, which one source claims means "swift running water." As native peoples were not in the habit of naming rivers, but rather locations and points on a river, it was early white settlers who misapplied the word to the river itself from which the city later took its name.

The name *Tlatskani* or *Tlatskanai* was also the name given to a once fierce tribe of the Athapaskan-speaking language group that descended from Southwest Washington into the upper Nehalem Valley and whose numbers dwindled into extinction by the early 20th century following a smallpox epidemic.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Independent Order of Odd Fellows Hall in Clatskanie, designed by prominent architect Ernst Kroner in 1926, fell into disrepair in the 1990s. The effort to renovate the building began in 2005. Last year, after a successful \$3.18 million capital campaign and 18 months of interior renovation work, the Clatskanie Cultural Center reopened.



PHOTO BY DAMIAN MULINIX

In this December 2014 file photo, Brian Alfonse of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife prepares to release an adult chum salmon in Stewart Creek near Clatskanie as part of an ongoing restoration project.

When it was first platted in 1852, the city was briefly known as Bryantville, after early settler E.G. Bryant, before officially being listed with the U.S. Postal Service as Clatskanie in 1871.

"Clatskanie valley lies south of the Columbia river, about sixty miles down stream from Portland, and forty above Astoria, and is the most extensive agricultural district in Columbia county. It is drained by the Clatskanie river, which is navigable for steamers between the Columbia and the city of Clatskanie, which lies on

the right bank of the river five miles above its mouth."

—"Columbia County, Oregon," *The West Shore*, March 1, 1889, P. 152

"First and most important to the health of a community is its water supply. Clatskanie owns its own water system. The water is mountain water piped from the hills on either side of town. It is cold and very pure. Those who have tasted it prefer it to the famous Bull Run water of Portland."

—Gertrude Collins, "Clatskanie, Oregon," *The Columbia Register*, Friday, Sept. 29, 1905, P. 8



PHOTO BY MATT LOVE

Bill's Tavern in Cannon Beach is a central, intimate location to enjoy a beer.

## A GLIMPSE INSIDE

By MATT LOVE

### Bill's Tavern and Brew House

Rain ripped through the streets of Cannon Beach on a June afternoon. School was out and so were plenty of haphazard umbrellas on crowded sidewalks. Local ophthalmologists were all cheering the probable spike in new business.

I stepped inside Bill's Tavern and Brew House to drink a beer and peruse two excellent finds from the Cannon Beach Library book sale. I always strike gold there.

Bill's Tavern soothes me. I like its small scale and intimate atmosphere.

I struck up a conversation with two bartenders/servers, Evie and Joel. Both started working at Bill's when it opened in 1997; they were both 21. They've obviously got a lot of history with the tavern. I bet they have some hot after-hours stories of Cannon Beach, too. Maybe I'll get to hear them one day, especially about the time members from Kiss stayed at a motel in town a decade or so ago.

Rain picked up outside and more people began entering, but the pace remained languid, and quietude still prevailed.

I asked Joel what he

thought about the recent opening of big new breweries on the north and south ends of town. Would this hurt business?

"It will be a relief," he said. "Take the pressure off us."

He hesitated for a second, then added, "We've still got the location."

That's certainly true about Bill's. The tavern and brewhouse is in the middle of all the Cannon Beach action.

Joel drifted away to handle customers. I sipped my beer, jotted a few notes on my guest check, and wondered: Can the area sustain more breweries? Growth seems endless. Is more beer coming our way? More crowds? Will there soon be any tiny sanctuaries of stillness left to drink a beer in peace?

*Matt Love is the author/editor of 14 books, including "A Nice Piece of Astoria" and "The Great Birthright." His books are available at coastal bookstores or his website, [nestuccaspitpress.com](http://nestuccaspitpress.com)*

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