

When the Tillamook Head Lighthouse went dark

Whether you've walked the shores of Cannon Beach or Seaside, you've probably noticed that lighthouse out there. From shore the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse might seem small and unimpressive. Just another shoreline feature, but the lighthouse is far more impressive than one might imagine.

The Columbia River access was discovered in 1792, by the mid-1800s the river became an important trade route. Oregon's trapping, lumber and fishing industry were booming.

It didn't take long before the need for lighthouses became apparent. The oldest lighthouse on the northwest coastline is located at Cape Disappointment. In the mid-to-late 1800s, 10 lighthouses were constructed. On the Washington coastline nearly 30 lighthouses were constructed in the late 1800s early 1900s. A lighthouse was even constructed on the southern Oregon coast in late 1990.

The Tillamook Rock Lighthouse was lit for the first time in 1881 and was in operation until 1957. Just a few years after the lighthouse was decommissioned it was put on the auction block. It was sold to private investors in 1959 for around \$5,000. According to articles, the investors intended on turning the lighthouse into a casino, but subsequent visits to the area made it clear that that would be impossible.

The investors put the lighthouse back on the market and it caught the eye of one George Hupman. He was an executive with GE who had ties to Oregon. In previous interviews Hupman stated that he purchased the lighthouse, "on a lark." Purchased for \$11,000 in 1973, he and his wife made plans to visit the

REFLECTIONS ELAINE TRUCKE



lighthouse and start getting it back into working order. They had hoped to turn it into a vacation home. A few visits and a lot of elbow grease, the couple and friends were able to get the generator up and running. Word is that they even had a soiree on the lighthouse. Can you imagine enjoying cocktails among the sea birds?

Eventually, though, the couple realized the difficulty with maintaining their lighthouse. The Hupmans described their helicopter voyage as "harrowing." Traveling by a small 1970s helicopter the couple and friends were able to land a small flat portion of rock that is only accessible during low tides. Normally, this area would have been covered by seals and sea lions, but the helicopter noise scared them off the rock. Hupman said that the blades were within centimeters of the rock. Not an adventure that he wanted to repeat.

The Hupmans put the rock back on the market after just a few years before it was purchase by Max Shillock Jr. People in Cannon Beach and Seaside were immediately interested in the young man. It's not everyday that someone turns up with \$27,000 in cash. It wasn't just the cash that made Shillock so interesting. He drove a Mark V Continental with a personalized plate that said, "GENIUS."

Shillock assured nervous locals that he had a love for the coast and a feeling of "responsibility to the people of the state of Oregon to

preserve the best of my ability the historic landmark."

As time went on, this claim came under scrutiny. Shillock listed the property with an L.A. Realty firm for \$750,000. He stated that he would only consider selling the property if he was offered \$1 million. During his ownership Shillock made a few attempts to visit the lighthouse by boat. At one point become so sea sick that they didn't even make an attempt to go onto the rock.

An article from the Oregonian called Shillock, "Portland's most eligible bachelor." In the same article he stated that he was a "Calvinist," finding personal pleasure such as smoking or drinking a sin. And yet in the same article he admitted to a love of money.

Shillock held onto the lighthouse until another attempt by boat led to the death of James Sealy, a 26 year-old local man. The 12-foot skiff that the crew used to reach the lighthouse was overturned about 300 yards off of Seaside beach. Shillock nearly lost his own life as well.

That's when things took an unusual turn. When Shillock was sued for fraud. Joy Goolsby, a Eugene widow, claimed that he had "bilked" her of \$30,000. The 74-year-old woman filed a suit with Clatsop County asking for the recovery of the property and \$50,000 in punitive damages. Goolsby said that Shillock and his father had intentionally swindled her of money and sought enough in damages to keep



Left to right: Al Kotke, Rudy Koshier, and Lew Ford.

SUBMITTED PHOTO

George Hupman purchased the lighthouse "for a lark" in 1973.

them from swindling funds from elderly women in the future.

Shillock's story began to quickly and publicly unravel before his eyes. More women started coming forward. It didn't take long before he settled with Goolsby out of court. As part of this settlement Goolsby was awarded the title to the Tillamook Rock lighthouse. In March of 1980 the house was put back on the market.

Just when you think that this story couldn't get even more bizarre the lighthouse was sold for \$50,000. The buyers were listed as Mimi Morrisette and Cathy Riley. In interviews conducted by the Oregon Journal in late 1980, the two hoped to conduct some restoration and turned the lighthouse into a columbarium. They called it Eternity at the Sea Columbarium. The move seemed to be a good one. The two hoped to do more work on the lighthouse than had been done since being managed by the Coast Guard.

The two sold niches in the rock in Forbes Magazine, The New York Times and across the nation. They

even registered the landmark on the national register of historic places.

Research indicates that there could have been around 20 sets of remains interred there, or even more. It's hard to say because records were spotty. At some point vandalism occurred, and according to an article in The New York Times, many families were upset about the state of the lighthouse. They felt that the location should have been maintained better. Eventually the company was sued and the story becomes a big question mark.

The lighthouse is a registered historic landmark. It's a wildlife refuge. It's private property that is still considered to be a "cemetery" according to the state. Eternity at Sea Columbarium is still a registered business name.

Many ask whether there are still remains there or what might happen to that property. The concrete walls are still in good shape decades after it's decommissioning, but even in the 1960s the roof, stairway, kitchen and rooms were in a terrible state. In the early 1960s former lighthouse keeper Oswald Allik visited the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse with a crew from The Oregonian.

Recent drone footage taken over the last three summers shows that the door, stairway, roof, and pretty much anything made of metal is nearly completely disintegrated. It's hard to say what will happen to the property. Located just over a mile off shore, the lighthouse is not in a rather difficult spot to reach — not to mention the wildlife that has taken over there. An iconic coastal image, the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse will invariably remain an important part of our coastal heritage and a bit of a mystery for those who notice her from shore.

OBITUARIES

Robert Adrian Malo

Aug. 3, 1949 — July 17, 2017

Robert Adrian Malo passed away July 17, 2017. Bob was born on Aug. 3, 1949, in Portland, Oregon, to Robert and Violet Malo. Growing up, he enjoyed working on the family farm and playing baseball.



Robert Malo

After graduating from Tigard High School in 1968, he followed his dream and moved to Hawaii to surf. Returning to Oregon, he divided his time working for the family seafood restaurant and business, doing construction and surfing. He worked to create the North Shore Surf Club, and helped open a Cannon Beach surf spot "The Needles." Bob purchased the F/V Bobby, which he operated for commercial fishing and crabbing out of Garibaldi.

He married Pam Sowa in 1981, welcoming a son, Matthew, in 1983. After the passing of his father, the family relocated to the family farm outside Sheridan in 1987. A daughter, Katelin, was born in 1988. At the farm, a small herd of cows, chickens and geese could always be found, as well as Bob and Matthew working on haying chores. Bob was a hard worker, operating the farm and being employed with Yamhill County Public Works.

Surfing remained a passion of Bob's, splitting his time between Cannon Beach and the valley. Bob permanently relocated to Cannon Beach, renovating a small beach cabin into his home and working for the city of Cannon Beach and then Tillamook County Public Works. After he retired in 2011, Bob spent his time fishing, hunting, clam

digging and surfing.

Bob is survived by his children, Matthew Malo (Becca Bostwick) and Katelin Malo; his brother, James Malo (Kathleen); his niece, Angela Royer (Glenn) and their children, Malia, Krystopher and Mathew; his nephew, James Malo (Jennifer) and their children, Summer, Emily and Casey; as well as many lifetime friends who were like family.

He is preceded in death by his parents, Robert and Violet Malo; his baby brother, Raymond Malo; and his grandparents, Roy and Bessie Malo, Raymond Robertson and Leonard and Viola Hespach.

Bob's passing leaves a void that will never be filled. His infectious smile, willingness to help anyone and his constant "good job" words of encouragement will forever be missed. He never met anyone he didn't like, and was often seen driving around waving at people he knew, and those he didn't.

A celebration of life potluck barbecue was held on Saturday, Aug. 5, 2017, at Les Shirley Park in Cannon Beach.

Pot proposal inconsistent with Cannon Beach comprehensive plan

Regarding consideration of the cannabis dispensary license application for 140 South Hemlock St., Cannon Beach.

The city issued a land use compatibility statement regarding this property as requested by the Oregon Liquor Control Commission in November 2016 for a cannabis dispensary. However, at that time, the property did not meet Cannon Beach code requirements, i.e., it was a mixed-use building with three apartments upstairs (mixed use not allowed). The site plan submitted with that LUCS request, however, did not include anything indicating the existence of those apartments.

The City Planner, Mark Barnes, said at the Tuesday, Aug. 1, City Council meeting that at the time of the original LUCS, he was not made aware of the three residences in the building. That should have made it an invalid application, and it probably should have been rejected at the time of its original filing. The LUCS is used to "determine whether a land use proposal is consistent with local government's comprehensive plan and land use regulations."

In fact, this application is not consistent with the Cannon Beach comprehensive plan. According to the plan's vision statement, "Cannon Beach will continue to be a small town where the characteristics of a village are fostered and promoted. Both the physical and social dimensions associated with a village will be integral to Cannon Beach's evolution during the next two decades."

GUEST COLUMN DAVID FREI

Among the elements of the town's physical form which the plan will foster are:

Small-scale family-owned businesses.

Comment: This is hardly a "small-scale family-owned business." There are in fact six Five Zero Trees cannabis dispensaries in operation or "opening soon" in Oregon, according to their website.

General development policies. Commercial uses which detract from the unique character of downtown, or are detrimental to the small town atmosphere of Cannon Beach shall be prohibited.

Comment: The dispensary-eligible area downtown where this store would be located (between First Street and Washington Street), has 37 residences, eight businesses and one church. Our "unique character of downtown" becomes less unique with the addition of a cannabis dispensary (there are five in Seaside, six in Astoria, more than 400 in Oregon).

Downtown policies. The city will encourage the provision of permanent housing in downtown by providing zoning incentives for mixed-use structures which incorporate housing.

'Because of code requirements regarding mixed use, this business would take away a mixed-use building (with three apartments) and make it into a commercial building, eliminating apartments in affordable-housing-challenged Cannon Beach.'

Comment: Because of code requirements regarding mixed use, this business would take away a mixed-use building (with three apartments) and make it into a commercial building, eliminating apartments in affordable-housing-challenged Cannon Beach.

All things considered, denial of this application will specifically preserve the residential designation of the building and continue to

provide much-needed housing. And generally speaking, denial will preserve the spirit and composition of this residential neighborhood.

All of this is in keeping with the comprehensive plan, which states: "All city ordinances, policies and actions must be consistent with the comprehensive plan. Where there is a conflict between the plan and ordinances or other city policies, the plan shall prevail."

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A 1996 article in the Cannon Beach Gazette mistakenly referred to Cheri Lerma as a bodybuilder. Cheri was not a bodybuilder. She was a world champion powerlifter.

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If she looks like a strong woman, Cannon Beach's Cheri Lerma has good reason for appearing that way in this photo taken during a Sunday workout. In excess of 200 pounds were on the bar for Lerma's practice leading to the world championships in South Africa which she will be leaving for on Halloween with Greg Sumner, Gordon Olson and Corey Sidlo. All four will represent the Seaside Fitness Center at the Nov. 7 and 8 world championships. Sumner, who trains Lerma, is spotting her, while Olson provides encouragement at the right. See feature on Page A15.
Photo by Lisa Heuschkel.

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