

Views from the Rock



High waters ran through downtown streets in 2007.

FILE PHOTO

Conversations over eggs Benedict

Let's go to Cannon Beach and pretend to be tourists, I said to my friend, Sandy. Some of my Gearhart friends enjoy an outing to Cannon Beach. It's an interesting thing, but even though Cannon Beach, Seaside, Gearhart, and Warrenton all are part of the South County, each community has a distinctive social identity ranging from dead quiet to boisterous. Some of my Gearhart pals enjoy the sights, sounds, and feel of Cannon Beach's glam beach buzz, as well as its restaurants and its galleries and shops. It always amuses me how fatigued they seem after only a few hours, happy to return to their peace and quiet and their elk.

Sandy is my pal most game for adventure. We've only known each other a few years, but I get the impression she and her late husband spent a lot of time in Cannon Beach. Whenever we drive through town, she recalls time they spent at the American Legion, or taking her mother out for breakfast at the Pig 'N Pancake. So when I blew it and the coffee shop I'd suggested we go to had a "Shut" sign on the door on a winter Wednesday, Sandy immediately suggested we go to the Wayfarer. It's 11:30 a.m., she said. We could get breakfast or lunch.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



She was a little disappointed we didn't score a window seat since I'd never been there before to appreciate the view, but the view is still pretty spectacular from most of the main daytime dining room. We were handed menus for both breakfast and lunch. While a very nice server went to get our coffees, Sandy and I considered food. I was torn between the lunch choice of a pumpkin squash risotto, or two of the breakfast items, eggs Benedict, or house-made granola with yogurt and fresh fruit. Sandy had her mind set on crab Benedict. After the server assured us the chef's Hollandaise is the most delectable on the coast, I went for the eggs. I figured between the English muffin and the ham and the poached eggs, Hollandaise sauce notwithstanding, this dish would serve as my main meal for the day. It drives our 30-year-old son crazy, but his father and I have reached that metabolic point in our lives where we require only one big meal a day.

You know, Sandy said, as we waited for our food, once upon a time John and I were having lunch here and right out the window, we saw a man taking off all his clothes. He came out of the water and just peeled off his bathing suit. He was so relaxed and natural, we figured he must be European. No American does that. He didn't think it was a nude beach? I asked. Our food arrived and Sandy pointedly ignored the beautifully poached eggs that came with her meal and went straight for the crab. I should have told them to hold the eggs, she said. This is a waste of food. Go on, I said. I want to hear more about the naked man. Well he wasn't naked for long, Sandy said. But for a minute or so while he air-dried, he was naked and so relaxed. It was a nice thing to see, she added. Someone acting so natural and confident about their body. How old was he? I asked. I don't know, Sandy said offhandedly like she hadn't really paid any attention to something like that. In his 20s or early 30s maybe. I thought I detected in her eye just the tiniest gleam. So he had a nice body, I said. Well, she said. It's not like I looked the other way. The check came. As usual, we fought a little over it before she agreed to split. On the way out to the parking lot, Sandy asked if I'd enjoyed my meal. I certainly did, I said. And what an amazing view of the beach and Haystack Rock. It's a million-dollar view. Thanks for sharing. And I absolutely loved your naked man story.

Church. Bob Neroni and Lenore Emory of EVOO cooked a meal for volunteer firefighters as they made countless emergency runs. Rose Mays and Cathy Willyard knocked on doors at Elk Creek Terrace to let residents there know about the community shelter at the church. In Tolovana Park, Bradley Linstedt joined with others to cut away trees blocking roads. Restaurants and stores with perishable food were giving it away, McCarthy recalled. The owners of the Driftwood barbecued on the Driftwood deck. Everybody checked in with their neighbors. People brought meals to the church.

Human stories

Like the valor and bravery we witnessed time and again at Hurricane Katrina, fighting wildfires, and this year's series of natural disasters, it is these human stories we remember. "I remember a neighbor of mine came over with a bottle of wine to see how I was," McCarthy said. "We sat at my kitchen table in the dark, with only our headlamps on, drinking wine and talking into the night." The "Great Coastal Gale" had several lasting effects, but the major result was the wake-up call it sent to the cities and counties on the North Coast. "It reminded us that the tsunami isn't the only emergency we should prepare for," McCarthy said. "In Cannon Beach, there was a huge push to create more preparedness committees, organize and train shelter volunteers, hire an emergency consultant, develop emergency plans and work with other cities and especially the county." In New York, in 1999, I remember similar scenes, including the dramatic rescue of a father and son from a basement filling with water while power lines remained live. The risks were as great for first responders as for those in the rapidly submerging waters. The next night, as damage and debris was surfacing, I remember one particularly poignant moment. The rain was pouring and a house had virtually been washed away. But homeowner Larry Farrell was getting into his car, holding a trombone case. He might not have known how he was going to make it, but he was scheduled to play in the pit orchestra for a Broadway musical. "I'd love to talk," he said to a reporter. "But I've got a show to do."

Human stories

lower than the top gusts of 147 at Radar Ridge, west of Naselle, Washington. What caused the most damage to trees, power poles and buildings were the sustained winds that started Sunday and didn't end until Tuesday. When a roof truss came crashing through the roof of the home of the family of Craig Shepherd — hanging perilously over 18-year-old Ian Shepherd — firefighters braved the high winds to clear debris. Peter Shepherd, 16, and Julia, 13, scrambled down the home's narrow staircase, filled with so much debris they had to jump from the stairs to the living room. They waited in a back hall under a door frame as the wind blew out windows throughout the house. To get to the scene, firefighters had to cut through and remove three trees from Elkwood Mountain Road, where



Headlines from the Gazette after the "Great Coastal Gale of 2007."

FILE PHOTO

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



My natural disaster moment was in 1999 when Hurricane Floyd rode up the Northeast coast. It came in on a Wednesday afternoon — our newspaper's deadline was Thursday — and dumped 19 inches of rain on our small town. As the rain was bucketing down, our office, on a hill, overlooked a stone-and-masonry lot. The street — turned into a fast-flowing basin — was already too deep for a concrete truck to get through. The police scanner — we still had power then — scratched out stories of stranded motorists, downed wires and closed roads. I ended up spending the night in the office, sleeping on the floor, using a cardboard box as a pillow. And yes, the paper did make its deadline.

Nancy McCarthy's moment came 10 years ago. McCarthy, my predecessor as editor at the Gazette and now a city councilor, had moved to Cannon Beach fulltime earlier that year. December 2007 was her first winter. "I told myself if I could survive the first winter in Cannon Beach, I'd continue to live here. So, the 'Great Coastal Gale' became my test," she told me this week. "The 'Great Coastal Gale' was a euphemism for the hurricane we actually had," McCarthy recalled. The wind reached 120 mph in some areas of the North Coast. "We didn't have power for about six days," McCarthy said. "I remember hearing that 72 transformers had collapsed all up and down the coast."

Thousands of trees fell along the highway. The wind and rainstorm blew into town for three days, from Dec. 2 to Dec. 4.

McCarthy recalled that there was no means of communication with the outside world for several days, until a ham radio operator from Seaside could get to Cannon Beach. "City officials thought they could use their satellite radio, but that didn't work, and the cell towers were down, and, of course, the landlines weren't available," she said. "The city couldn't even communicate with county officials for a few days. That lack of ability to communicate came as quite a surprise to city officials."

'Worst storm'
"It's the worst storm we have on recent record that has hit our service area on the North Coast in terms of duration and distance," Mark Sampson of Pacific Power said in the Gazette at the time. More than 470 crews from all over Oregon and from as far away as Walla Walla, Washington, and Utah, worked to restore power from Tillamook to Astoria. Winds in Cannon Beach "only" reached 80 mph, significantly

the Shepherds lived. Nearby trees snapped constantly while crews sawed through huge logs. "I felt like a sitting duck," firefighter Matt Gardner said at the time. After the winds settled and clearing of debris, McCarthy wrote on the editorial page: "Through the darkness, all of the stars shine here in Cannon Beach." She recounted example after example of human kindness. Mariner Market stayed open and served coffee to drop-ins, while local restaurants provided free coffee and meals, she wrote at the time. The restaurants operated by Martin Hospitality — Wayfarer, Lumberyard, Stephanie Inn and Surfsand Resorts — brought meals to the Community

particulars. If a policy was breached, we discussed it like adults, and I do not remember any such public displays of disagreements or chastising one another. I am baffled as to why, if the county does not intend any disciplinary action, there was a public chiding of Commissioner Thompson at a board meeting. Upon reading the ar-

icle, it appeared to this reader that she was being criticized for just doing her job. It is incumbent upon commissioners to keep up with the demands of the job of making policy, something I have known Commissioner Thompson to have done since she came on to the county board. She has been religious in attending conferences and

summits that are of great importance to Clatsop County. Her attendance this past summer at Pacific Northwest Economic Region did not go unnoticed. And, this group is not a "mutual admiration society not relevant to county business." I have represented Oregon on PNWER for

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'I TOLD MYSELF IF I COULD SURVIVE THE FIRST WINTER IN CANNON BEACH, I'D CONTINUE TO LIVE HERE.'

NANCY MCCARTHY | former editor of Cannon Beach Gazette

Unprofessional treatment

In all my 30-plus years of public service, never have I seen such unprofessional and inappropriate use of power in a locally elected board as that of the Clatsop County Commission for the past few years. I say this from a position of personal knowledge, having served as a Clatsop County commissioner in the late 1980s. I served with two

other commissioners under the general law form of governance. When I was on the board of commissioners, if we didn't agree on something we were at least respectful of each other's right to an opinion or stand on an issue. We did not play out our disagreements in the local newspaper by calling out each other's

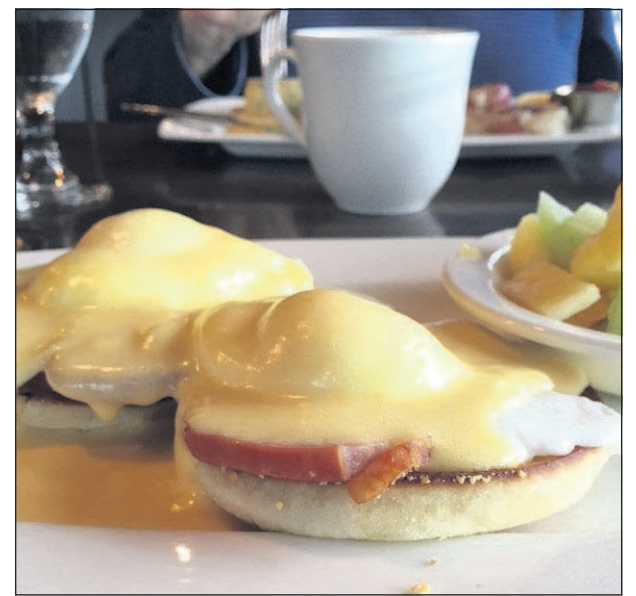
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EVE MARX/FOR CANNON BEACH GAZETTE

Brunch at the Wayfarer offered terrific views, great food and a place to meet a good friend.

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