



HENRY FOUNTAIN/CROWN BOOKS

The damage on Fourth Avenue in Anchorage after the March 27, 1964, earthquake.

When Alaska rattles, Cannon Beach prepares

On March 27, 1964, a magnitude 9.2 earthquake struck Alaska — the second most powerful in recorded history, behind Chile’s 1960 magnitude 9.5 quake.

In Cannon Beach, described by author Henry Fountain in his new book “Quakeland,” as “a sleepy town in Oregon,” participants in a late-night poker game ignored one telephone call warning them of the possibility of a wave.

“A second call a short time later relayed that a wave had just hit the shoreline,” Fountain writes. “Some houses floated away and a bridge into the town was destroyed, but everyone, including the poker players, survived.”

Cannon Beach author Peter Lindsey recalls in his memoir, “Comin’ In Over the Rock” that after the wave, Elk Creek bridge washed away and pipelines swept away with the bridge. The town was without water for a week. One home drifted off its pinnings and stumbled up Elk Creek.

Elaine Trucke Murdy, executive director of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum, described the 1964 tsunami as hitting the north end of town hardest. “Tsunami debris was distributed throughout the town,” she wrote in the Gazette.

“Though Cannon Beach did not experience the fatalities or devastation of other coastal communities, it was a shocking occurrence that changed how those who live at the coast react to a tsunami.”

CANNON SHOTS

R.J. MARX



Trail of destruction

“Quakeland” paints a picture of the people and the landscape, which fell on a Good Friday at 5:36 p.m. “The day had been an ordinary one, overcast but not too dark and not too cold,” Fountain writes.

To one eyewitness, “it was as if the earth were swallowing everyone.”

A family car disappeared into the water, taking everyone with it. The high school basketball coach and teacher vanished with his two preschool-aged sons. An elementary school was a total loss and a hospital narrowly escaped destruction when land gave way.

Near Sherman Glacier, Alaska, the top 500 feet of a 4,300-foot-high mountain broke away during the quake. The ensuing landslide hurtled 25 million cubic yards of rock at 200 miles per hour.

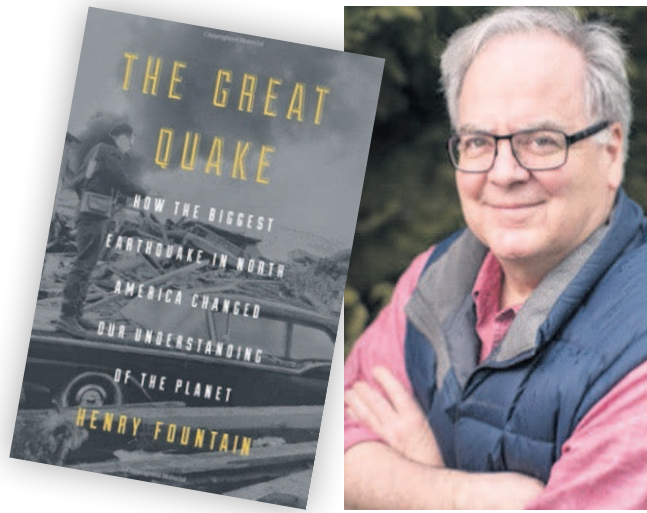
In the city of Valdez, Alaska, pipes from the city’s sewer system spouted into the air, reaching heights of 20 feet or more of water, mud and sewage. The ground rose and fell about three to four feet with every wave that passed through.

When a tidal wave is out in the deep ocean, Fountain writes, it has little or no effect on the surface. Not so as it nears land. Waves grow taller and can slow to a fraction of their initial speed. Large waves, some more than 20 feet high, left a trail of destruction southeastward along the North American coast to Oregon, California and into Mexico. Waves spread out across the Pacific, to the Hawaiian Islands five hours after the quake and Japan a few hours later. Tidal waves spawned by the ground movement along the fault traveled across the Pacific at hundreds of miles an hour, reaching the Antarctic Peninsula 10,000 miles away.

At the southern edge of the Olympic Peninsula, high water washed away a bridge in the town of Copalis Beach, Washington. ‘Boats sunk in Santa Cruz, California, and 10-foot-waves carried off fishing boats near Catalina Island.

Four children were swept away in Newport as waves hit in two surges; only one body was recovered.

In Crescent City, California, 10 miles south of the Ore-



Author Henry Fountain and his book “The Great Quake: How the Biggest Earthquake in North America Changed Our Understanding of the Planet.”

‘...IT WAS AS IF THE EARTH WERE SWALLOWING EVERYONE.’

One eyewitness to the earthquake that struck Alaska on March 27, 1964

gon border, the waves proved most lethal.

The 1964 Alaska quake killed 139 people; 13 of those as a result of waves in California and five in Oregon.

Plan ahead

Fifty-four years later, the conversation continues. The Jan. 23 Gulf of Alaska quake measured 7.9, prompting a tsunami watch stretching 3,000 miles from the Aleutian Islands to Canada’s border with Washington state.

The magnitude 7.9 earthquake was recorded in the Pacific Ocean at 12:32 a.m. on Jan. 23, about 170 miles southeast of Kodiak, home to one of the nation’s largest Coast Guard bases.

Close to home, cities throughout the South County monitored events throughout the late night and early morning. Gearhart City Administrator Chad Sweet and Police Chief Jeff Bowman received overnight alerts and arrived at Gearhart City Hall around 2 a.m.

Management at Camp 18 on restaurant on U.S. Highway 26 reported more than 40 cars of people trying to evacuate in their parking lot at 4 a.m.

In Cannon Beach, Fire Chief Matt Benedict and first responders made the decision to open a joint emergency operation center for Cannon Beach, Arch Cape and Falcon Cove, before closing after the tsunami watch was called off around 4 a.m.

In the aftermath, Tiffany Brown, emergency management director of Clatsop County, told the Gazette’s Brenna Visser she hoped to turn January’s tsunami scare into an educational moment for the county, cities and people in the community.

Brown wants to launch a public education campaign about how tsunami alerts work to address confusion. She’s also encouraging more people to register with the local alert system. The majority of the 18,000 residents registered are on landlines, with only 3,200 registered on cellphones — a factor that could hinder the county’s ability to get the word out in an actual emergency.

“This was a great scenario to put us through,” Benedict said. “With this occurring near Alaska, it gave us some time. ... I’d rather plan ahead than play catch-up.”

Dogs allowed, but what about kids?

Expedia, the travel giant, recently released a report calling Cannon Beach “one of the best places in the U.S. for a child-free getaway.” Whether or not this is something the city of Cannon Beach was actually aspiring to, it’s really good news for adults on vacation who would prefer to limit their exposure (if not avoid it altogether) to screaming, laughing, crying, frolicking, squealing children.

According to the report, Expedia said they analyzed hundreds of thousands of social media conversations to determine that conversations about child-free travel locales has increased over 100 percent in the last year.

Following their own data, they constructed a list of 15 places rated best in the U.S. for child-free getaways.

The locations were selected based on criteria including adult-only resorts, child-free restaurants, lodging, attractions and activities. Meredith Castin, a travel writer for Expedia who was involved in creating the report, said, “A place like Cannon Beach is attractive because it offers everything one could want during a child-free coastal getaway: dramatic, beautiful, uncrowded beaches, and luxurious accommodations that cater to an adult clientele.”

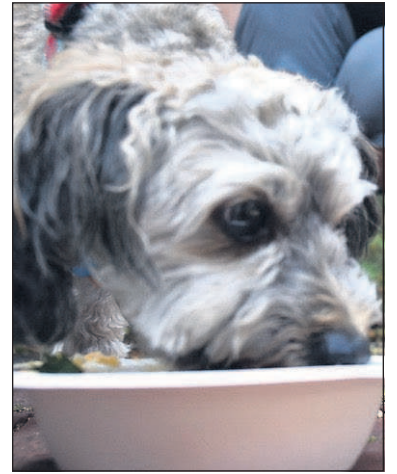
Although I am a parent of a 30-year-old person, and I like children, especially when they’re not my own, I can definitely see the appeal of taking a holiday in a relatively child-free zone. Many people feel cranky being around young kids when they’re trying to relax and enjoy themselves. Partly it’s a legal issue. For starters, the presence of children cuts into one’s enjoyment when you’re trying to enjoy your craft beer and craft smoke. And while many adults well into their middle age and older will share how much they enjoy time spent in the company of, say, their grandchildren, other children get on their nerves, tax their patience, and make them want to tell the parents of unruly kids to...well, you know what.

While of course there are children in Cannon Beach (it is, after all, more than a vacation community. Plenty of families with children do live in town), it’s true that unless you’re at Mo’s, it’s a rarity to see kids in Cannon Beach’s myriad restaurants and coffee shops. During the peak summer months, you might encounter children around Haystack Rock and on the beach, but if you’re looking for a fun travel destination to do with your kids, Seaside is a lot more copacetic.

Reading this Expedia article, got me thinking. There may not be many vacationing human children in Cannon Beach, but fur children? When it comes to dogs, Cannon Beach is arms open. For such a tiny community, there are not one, but two, dog related shops. Most hotel and short term rental accommodations allow dogs. Dogs are welcome on the patios of many restaurants and inside many shops. Dogs are on the beach and all over the sidewalks. (Unlike Gearhart, Cannon Beach has a stringent leash law, which I consider a plus.) So if your baby is a fur baby and not a human one, Cannon Beach is a delightful place to bring your little one.

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



COLIN MURPHEY/EO MEDIA GROUP

Bistro restaurant owner/chef Jack Stevenson decided to offer gourmet dog food as an option in this canine-friendly community.

LETTERS

Thank you!

This last Saturday at Coaster Theatre we had a fundraiser for the Cannon Beach Academy that was also a tribute to Bill Steidel, an artist and leading community member. This truly amazing evening was the result of the contributions of so many wonderful people.

The talents of Bob “Bobcat” Rice on guitar and gitja (you really should see this one), Cami Lira on vocals (and an occasional kazoo) and Margo Dueber on vocals (and the other kazoo) came together Saturday night, and their patience and hard work had a huge impact on the success of the evening. Bill’s songs of history, love, humor, tragedy and hope wove magic through the evening and the audience added to that tapestry by singing right along with us. The type of community event that makes Cannon Beach the special village that it is.

**Paul Dueber
Cannon Beach**

John Orr, our best choice

As a former Republican, I would like to share why I believe candidate John Orr should be our next State House Representative for District 32. Even though he is running for political office for the first time, he is certainly no “newcomer” to politics. Orr’s progressive views on finance reform, housing and the environment as well as his 25 years representing his community and helping others, have always been distinct and have never wavered. I encourage everyone to vote, but I especially encourage you to vote for those who truly care about the future of Oregon — John Orr is for Oregon.

**Phil Hall
Warrenton**

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