

Views from the Rock

Move on, nothing to fear here

CANNON SHOTS
R.J. MARX



If you Google “smart meter dangers,” you may soon fear for your mitochondrial functions like insomnia, tinnitus, fatigue, nausea, dizziness, irritability, listlessness, heart palpitations, and changes in cognitive behavior.

In the monograph “Smart Meters: Countdown to a National Crisis of Illness and Death,” John P. Thomas suggests millions will experience chronic disability and fatal illness from exposure.

Our cell proteins will become “permanently altered” and we may suffer for decades “with chronic fatigue, unexplained anxiety, and attention deficits until a life-threatening illness makes its ugly appearance.”

Unlikely? Every power company and most scientists would say the levels of radiation are lower than the cellphones pressed against our thighs.

In a Feb. 12 City Council work session, Pacific Power’s Alisa Dunlap came to Cannon Beach to introduce councilors to smart meters at a work session.

Residents questioned the safety of smart meters, and lamented the lack of public information available.

Resident Bob Thom said smart meters are not “entirely safe.” He was concerned about the lack of information presented by the city and Pacific Power, and the lack of press coverage given to the topic. He asked that the changeover be delayed to educate the public.

Former Seaside High School science teacher Ed Johnson called smart meters a “big money venture.”

“There’s been so little background information put out to the general public that’s not being provided by the corporations that are responsible for the technology,” Johnson said after the Cannon Beach work session. “They didn’t even vote on it, it was just coming. I wasn’t very happy.”

The 5G network may adversely affect humans and wildlife, he said. “You won’t be able to go any place on this planet without being impacted.”

In a similar presentation at Seaside City Hall, Frank Erickson, a retired radiologist with an impressive list of medical credentials, told city councilors he had “seesawed” whether to opt in or opt out for smart meter installation at his own home. “I’m still rethinking,” Erickson said.

Meet and greet

No wonder that the first package received at the Pacific Power meet and greet March 5 at Seaside Brewing Co. was a handout from the Utilities Telecom Coun-



R.J. Marx/Cannon Beach Gazette

Pacific Power customers in Clatsop County will be able to opt out of smart meters, but it will come with a price.



R.J. Marx/Cannon Beach Gazette

Pacific Power General Manager Scott Morris and energy analyst Jason Turner at the Pacific Power presentation in Seaside.

cil, “No Health Threat from Smart Meters.”

The same binder included the fact sheet, “Electromagnetic Fields and Public Health: Mobile Phones”; the monograph “Radiofrequency Safety and Utility Smart Meters,” Sept. 25, 2013; and “Aclara’s response highlighting inaccuracies in ‘Evaluation of

the Aclara I-210+C AMI Meter,” by William Bathgate.

Heavy titles, designed to counteract the mountain of conspiracy theories, junk science and speculation regarding higher frequency radio waves.

Cory Estlund, manager of Pacific Pow-

er’s field support based in Portland, is the guy whose job is to shake people like us out of paranoia.

Smart meters are a more efficient way of gathering home energy usage details. “Instead of having a meter reader come out once a month, data is reported on a real-time basis. This is the first time we’ve been able to give you insight into what you’re actually using.”

Smart meters have been in existence for almost 20 years, Estlund said. They’re all manufactured by Aclara Technologies, which bought out the meter business from General Electric.

Today, there are more than 70 million smart meters throughout the country. Estlund has had a smart meter in his own Portland home since he moved in 15 years ago.

Future shock?

After watching Robert Redford and Jane Fonda in “The China Syndrome” almost 50 years ago, I learned never take anything with radioactive material for granted. The movie was released to nuclear industry denials — and the timing couldn’t have been worse, followed 12 days after its opening by a meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear plant near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.

Official denials and industry cover-ups, in not just the nuclear industry but in many aspects of our lives, followed through the decades: Love Canal; the Hanford site; the Flint, Michigan, water crisis; and the Boeing 737 MAX 8.

In the 1990s and early 2000s, I remember covering many meetings on the topic of cell towers. Towers were ugly, for one thing, sprouting up on mountains, hills and then farms and backyards. And maybe unhealthy — but one of the provisions of the 1996 Telecommunications Act was to ban challenges to cell tower sitings based on potential health impacts.

Now smart meters join the great cavalcade of American fears: fluoride, cathode-ray tubes, microwave ovens, pacemakers to our ubiquitous cellphones, all of which have the capacity to poison, radiate, fry or otherwise contaminate us in one way or another.

One of the documents presented at the Seaside Brewing information session included a white paper analysis of radio frequency associated with “advanced metering devices.”

While I didn’t understand a word of it, I do like the word “advanced” better than “smart” to describe these contraptions.

“Smart” gives it a human quality that you don’t necessarily want in an electronic device, especially when it is monitoring your electric orange-juice squeezer.

It’s a little too close to another famously intrusive device, the HAL 9000 computer in Stanley Kubrick’s “2001: A Space Odyssey.”

“Good morning, Dave ... How are you this morning?”

What’s a man to wear in Cannon Beach?

VIEW FROM THE PORCH
EVE MARX



Years ago, my husband and I were at an event. It was one of those end-of-week things where you steal away for a half hour from whatever you were doing to run in, kiss people on both cheeks, make small talk, congratulate. If you get a chance to swig down a quick drink and eat enough hors d’oeuvres to confuse your stomach into believing you’ve had dinner, so much the better. Or that was the plan.

Not long after our arrival, a man approached my husband to critique his outfit, or, more accurately, the lack of it. It appeared what my husband was missing at this event was a sports coat. The fact he had just come from his office where he never wore a sports coat did not compute. In fact, it didn’t matter. The critic was annoyed by what seemed to him to be a slight, or a sign of disrespect at the informality of my husband’s outfit.

Not long after, we were at another event. This time he wore a sports coat. He also wore a pressed white shirt, a tie, real trousers and leather shoes. A woman who had helped to organize the event approached. She took a good look at what my husband was wearing and told him he needed a new outfit. Her recommendation was for him to lose the white shirt and tie and his boxy, light colored coat and replace it with a good quality black tee shirt and a more fitted black jacket. I looked around the room and that is exactly what all the other men in the room were



Stylish stuff for men and women at Ter Har’s in Cannon Beach.

wearing. Should I mention this was an art event?

You may have noticed the dress code in Cannon Beach is beach casual. This holds true for dining at any restaurant or attending any social or business function. Ever since we’ve moved to the Left Edge, my husband has given up on fancy clothes. There isn’t a single restaurant in Cannon Beach where a man is required to wear a sports jacket, let alone a tie. Shorts, even board shorts, are acceptable everywhere. If you’re wearing a shirt with a collar, you’re already overdressed.

Truth be told, I’m not sure how I feel about this.

I kind of miss men dressing up. I haven’t talked to too many guys about this, but my impression is men are super happy with the dress code in Cannon Beach. I think a lot of guys if given their druthers would never wear long pants again.

Or a sports jacket. And feel safe knowing a shirt from Tommy Bahama is really dressing up. Pretty much the only thing a man can’t wear out to dinner in Cannon Beach is a wet suit.

Which is not to say that men’s fashion here is dead. All a guy really needs to rock a look is a great pair of Birkenstocks and a killer pair of sunglasses.

‘PRETTY MUCH THE ONLY THING A MAN CAN’T WEAR OUT TO DINNER IN CANNON BEACH IS A WET SUIT.’

PUBLIC MEETINGS

Tuesday, April 9
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, April 11
Cannon Beach Academy, board meeting, 5:30 p.m., 3781 S. Hemlock, Cannon Beach.

Monday, April 15
Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 188 E. Sunset Blvd.

Tuesday, April 16
Cannon Beach Public Works Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Seaside School District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin, Seaside.

Thursday, April 18
Parks and Community Services Committee, 9 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Cannon Beach Design Review Board Meeting, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, April 25
Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Friday, April 26
Emergency Preparedness Committee, 9 a.m., 163 E. Gower St.

Tuesday, May 7
Cannon Beach City Council, 7 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Thursday, May 9
Cannon Beach Academy, board meeting, 5:30 p.m., 3781 S. Hemlock, Cannon Beach.

Monday, May 13
Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, 6 p.m., 188 E. Sunset Blvd.

Tuesday, May 14
Cannon Beach City Council, 5:30 p.m., work session, City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

Publisher Kari Borgen
Editor R.J. Marx
Circulation Manager Jeremy Feldman
Production Manager John D. Bruijn
Advertising Sales Holly Larkins
Contributing writers Joseph Bert, Eve Marx, Dave Fisher, Rita Goldfarb, Rain Jordan, Nancy McCarthy, Cara Mico

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