

New Yorker story stirs fears, provides dubious advice

I just want to thank The New Yorker magazine for letting us all know that a hugely destructive earthquake and tsunami could hit us at any time.

If it hadn't been for that story, we on the North Coast might never have realized the danger we are in.

It's not like I and other local journalists — including author Bonnie Henderson, who wrote the book, "The Next Tsunami: Living on a Restless Coast" — haven't been writing about this for many years.

Entitled "The Really Big One" with a subhead, "The earthquake that will devastate the Pacific Northwest," the story, written by Katherine Schulz in the July 20 New Yorker, is accompanied by a topographical map of the west coast of North America in red.

At the coastline, from south of the California border extending to beyond Canada, the map looks like it has been ripped apart; a wide jagged band of white — resembling a huge wave — covers all of the west coast and heads east.

The caption next to the illustration says, "The next full rupture of the Cascadia subduction zone will spell the worst natural disaster in the history of the continent."

Scary, huh? I have followed the Cascadia subduction zone earthquake and tsunami story for over eight years.

My first story in the spring of 2007 included an interview with Rob Witter, formerly of the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries (now with the U.S. Geological Service in Alaska), who had just discovered that sand originally from the beach in Cannon Beach had been thrown about a mile east of what is now U.S. Highway 101 during a past tsunami. Witter made the discovery after filtering soil and determining its properties and age in several areas between the beach and forest east of town.

State geologists created a new map for Cannon Beach, showing that land higher than 30 feet in elevation wasn't as safe as experts originally thought. The tsunami inundation zone now reached 80 feet high.

With that news, the research intensified. Oregon State University Coastal and Ocean faculty, along with staffers from DOGAMI, roamed the coast, seeking clues revealing the potential intensity and destructive path of the next Cascadia earthquake and tsunami.

They wrote reports about the sturdiness of local schools and other buildings. They created a model of the city of Cannon Beach in OSU's wave research laboratory, knocked it down with model tsunami waves and studied their effect, then recreated the

IMPRESSIONS

By
NANCY MCCARTHY



The potential Cascadia earthquake and tsunami isn't news to us.

town and started all over again.

They created a computer simulation of Seaside, showing how long it would take a tsunami to reach shore, then Necanicum Drive, then the highway and Wahanna Road and how many people would die as the waves washed over them.

A similar computer simulation was done for Cannon Beach, as well, showing how many people might make it across the Fir Street Bridge and to high ground on the north side, as well as to other elevated areas in town.

A year after the 2011 tsunami hit Japan, the principal from Kesennu Junior High School in

the Tohoku region told the story of how his school, at an elevation of 150 feet, became a shelter for six months. At least 16,000 people died in the 9.0 earthquake and resulting tsunami, considered to be the most devastating natural disaster ever to hit Japan.

Locally, residents in Seaside, Cannon Beach and Gearhart created committees and prepared for the Big One. They conducted drills, stored supplies, trained Community Emergency Response Teams and continued to perform myriad other tasks to ensure the public's safety. State geologists drew new tsunami maps for all of the Oregon coast.

And at each step, I and other reporters were there, updating our readers and listeners on the latest developments. Some people paid attention and prepared. Others ignored it. Until The New Yorker writer discovered that the west coast faced potential, overwhelming disaster.

"When the next full-margin rupture happens," Schulz wrote, "that region (the Pacific Northwest) will suffer the worst natural disaster in the history of North America." It will kill 13,000 people and injure another 27,000, she says, citing the Federal Emergency Management Agency's estimates. Shelter will be needed for 1 million people.

But we already knew that, didn't we? Well, at least the rest of the nation knows now.

My question is this: Will The New Yorker story make any difference in our urgency to prepare for an event that, geologically speaking, could happen any time? I hope so, because, to be honest, no matter how much we local journalists covered it, our stories never garnered as much attention as this one story has.

But what's going to be interesting on a whole other level is the local fallout from the July 28 New Yorker's follow-up story to Schulz's original article.

Schulz answers several questions that arose following her initial story. This is what she advises tourists:

"If you are an out-of-towner planning to spend a night in the tsunami zone: don't....Go to the coast by day, for sure. But if you're staying overnight, book a vacation rental, hotel room or campsite outside the inundation zone."

For the coastal towns that depend on overnight visitors, this New Yorker story might portend another, immediate disaster.

Nancy McCarthy recently retired as editor of the Seaside Signal and the Cannon Beach Gazette. Her column appears monthly.

5 Minutes with... Michael Soprano

Get to know Michael Soprano, the owner of Three Little Birds Bakery, which recently opened a retail store on North Holladay Drive. Soprano originally is from Asheville, N.C., but moved to Seaside in 2006 with his family. He baked and sold custom-made cakes wholesale for about three years before opening his retail store in late June.

Q: Do you remember a time where there was another retail bakery in Seaside?

A: No. We moved here in 2006 and I believe they all had already closed down since then. Talking with the locals here, I heard many stories of Harrison's Bakery that was here forever and a lot of the reminiscing about the old bakeries here. And the entire community is so excited to have another one again. It's been too long. You know I grew up in the South, so even though this is a busy town, it's still a small town and every small town needs little small-town, homey businesses, like a small bakery. When I put this place together, that's the kind of the vision I had. As you can see, there's the old-school display cases, and a lot of the history is still here. The built-ins behind the cases on the wall there are actually original to the building. They've been here forever. The old safe next to the cash register has been here for who knows how many decades, used over the years. I just wanted this to look like it's always been here and I wanted when people walked in for them to have a nostalgic feeling. Between the decor and the atmosphere and then tasting all the stuff I have in

the cases — I wanted it to take them back to their childhood. And so far I think we've been pretty successful. I get a lot of, "Oh, this reminds me of my grandmother's house," or, "Oh, this reminds me of what my aunt used to make." I get a lot of that, which is what I love.

Q: How long has this been something you wanted to do?

A: I've baked on the side, on my own, just about my entire life. When I was pretty young, my mother used to do it a lot for family and friends. And I was the youngest son, so I was always in the kitchen helping out. That's where the love of baking started. And I've always enjoyed it. I actually have a background in electronics, and this isn't really a technology driven area. So that necessity for a career out here kind of rekindled that love of baking and enough people said, "My goodness, you need to sell this. It's amazing." I finally listened to them a few years ago, and it's just grown faster than I thought imaginable.

Q: What do you think it takes for a person to take baking or cooking, and



transcend it from simply following a recipe or mixing ingredients and transform it into a true culinary art?

A: It is an art form, just like anything else. I'm not classically trained. I'm self-taught, but still there has to be that creativity behind it, and that passion behind it, just like if you were painting a piece of art to hang in a gallery. Anyone can kind of connect the dots and make it look like something else, or make it taste like something else, but I enjoy pairing unique combinations, I enjoy recreating the stuff I remember enjoying as a kid. And then as far as with the custom cakes, I really enjoy that side too. I was always an artist growing up. I love doing that kind of thing. And I've said before, this is just kind of artistry with icing. I enjoy creating those and people seeing them and enjoying them. If there was no such thing as bills, I would probably do it for free. I love watching people enjoy it that much.

Q: What are some of your favorite things to make? Or do you have specialties?

A: I enjoy it all. Some of the specialties that, since we've been open, have really stood out: my Almond Joy bars, or my version of an Almond Joy bar. Those sell out daily. I can't make enough. I probably sell about 50 of those per day. I also do a raspberry-filled cinnamon roll that sells out daily, as well. That was one I actually just tried as a variation on the standard cinnamon roll and it's become a hit and I have to do them every day now to keep up with demand.

Q: You were once involved in the electronics industry. Do you miss it at all?

A: Honestly, no. About three years ago, when I transitioned to custom cakes, was one of those mid-life epiphanies. I realized that I was good at electronics, but I didn't enjoy it. So it was time to find something I did enjoy doing. Opening up a bakery here is very hard work. I mean, I fall asleep quickly when my head hits the pillow. But at least now I fall asleep with a smile on my face.

Q: What sort of things do you like to do in your free time?

A: Right now I don't have much. I do have a family with kids. I love spending time with them — doing barbecues, things like that. I enjoy woodworking. As a matter of fact, the cases here, I built myself. So I enjoy that kind of thing.

Probably the biggest thing is just doing things outdoors with my family. This is a great place to live to be able to do that kind of stuff.

Q: So you have kids?

A: I do. I have three girls. They're the "three little birds." The bakery is named partly after them and partly after the Bob Marley song.

Q: Have any of your daughters shown an affinity for baking?

A: All of the kids love helping out, especially the taste-testing part.

Q: What are some of your favorite outdoor, recreational things to do?

A: We do a lot of small road trips. There are too many to mention times that we've just said, "Hey, we've never been down that road. Let's see where it goes." We do that a lot with the family. The kids seem to love it. We find a lot of neat, interesting, out-of-the-way places that way. Just pack a picnic and pile in the van and just drive.

Q: What is your favorite part of Seaside?

A: Growing up in the South, I really love the Southern hospitality. And here it's a lot the same, just without the accents. I love the fact that this community is really involved with bettering itself and everyone here is friendly. It's really helped me transition to move from the East Coast and not be so homesick. I mean, this is my home now. I really love it here.

— Katherine Lacaze

Gearhart to host CERT workshop

The City of Gearhart Community Emergency Response Team will host an informational workshop, Wednesday, Aug. 15, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the fire station. The city will

highlight countywide alert systems, personal and family safety and preparedness including demonstrations and displays. Countywide tsunami maps will be available.

Encore Dance Studio to host open house

Encore Dance Studio will hold an open house and customer appreciation barbecue to kick off the studio's 20th anniversary celebration. Festivities take place at 3631 Highway 101 North in Gearhart, Tuesday, Aug. 25, 4 to 6 p.m.

Instructors will be available to answer questions, give studio tours and help students choose classes for the fall. Dancewear will also be available for purchase. Online registration is open now at www.getyouddancing.com.

This fall encore is offering more than 70 classes per week in two locations.

Classes are available for all ages from 2 1/2 to adult. School bus drop-off and transportation is available from Seaside Heights. For more details, visit www.getyouddancing.com or call 503-717-1637.

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PUBLIC MEETINGS

Monday, Aug. 10
Seaside City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Seaside City Hall, 989 Broadway, Seaside, Council Chambers.

Thursday, August 13
Gearhart Planning Commission, 7 p.m., Gearhart City Hall, 698 Pacific Way.

Wednesday, Aug. 19
Seaside Tourist Advisory Committee, 3 p.m., City Hall, 999 Broadway.

Sunset Empire Park & Recreation District Board Meeting, 5:15 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Ave. A.

Monday, Aug. 24
Seaside City Council Meeting, 7 p.m., Seaside City Hall, 989 Broadway, Seaside, Council Chambers.

Tuesday, Sept. 1
Seaside Planning Commission, 7 p.m., Seaside City Hall, 989 Broadway, Seaside, Council Chambers.

DEATH

July 17, 2015
HALFORD, Nathaniel 'Nathan' Bradley, 30, of Seaside, died in Seaside. Hughes-Ransom Mortuary in Seaside is in charge of the arrangements.

Officials celebrate Food Bank debut

The South County Community Food Bank celebrated its successful community driven campaign during an ice-cream social and ribbon-cutting ceremony July 25 at the food pantry's new facility on North Roosevelt Drive.

The site opened in January after volunteers moved equipment and food from the pantry's temporary location, at the former Coastal Research & Maintenance building, to the new location, north of the Seaside School District's bus barn.

For more information, visit www.southcountyfood.com.



PHOTO SUBMITTED/KATHLEEN PETERSON
South County Community Food Bank board member Neal Wallace, right, and Seaside Mayor Don Larson prepare for the ribbon-cutting ceremony.

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