

Nature wins in a landslide

We spend so much time responding to the extraordinary demands of tsunami prep that we don't consider the more traditional threats. After all, tsunamis only happen every 244 years. Seaside Fire and Rescue Chief Joey Daniels told me that while training for tsunamis and megaquakes was important, the day-to-day operations of the department focused on more common occurrences like landslides and floods.

City Council President Don Johnson urged residents this fall to not only consider tsunamis, but remember storms that come "even more frequently."

"Prepare for the big one, but be ready for the other ones coming through," Johnson said this fall.

I'm still haunted by the call I received about one year ago from Astoria's Kari Stedman, who with her aunt, Marilyn Keno, was caught in rising waters in front of Seven Dee's last year. As soon as they hit the water, the engine stalled and water began filling the vehicle. Stedman escaped by climbing out a window and onto the roof of the Ford Taurus before wading through two feet of water to free Keno. Both were treated for hypothermia and post-traumatic stress.

I never drive past that spot in the rain without thinking about it.

The flood of '96

A heavy rain can still shut down a major road like Highway 101, and it did so on Thanksgiving Day.

Oregon's Statewide Planning Goal 7 states stream and river crossings must be designed to allow for clearance above flood levels and flood-prone roads and bridges identified and mapped.

Nature doesn't always play along. While Seaside's hills are underlain by mudstone bedrock or volcanic rock, which rarely has landslides, heavy rains can trigger debris and mud flows like those witnessed in Seaside in February 1996. "The Great Flood of '96" forced the evacuation of 22,000 people in Oregon and 7,000 in Washington. Snow, freezing temperatures and then a sub-tropical jet stream flooded saturated ground.

A bridge collapse south of Highway 26 near the Nehalem River left families trapped after a 40-foot concrete center span was washed away by a massive logjam led to a bridge collapse.

It took eight hours for rescuers to hike into the hills to get around mudslides and reach trapped families. Roads were marked to signal planes. One home was lost to fire after power came on. Standing water, wet building materials and furnishings led to dire warnings from the Oregon's health department.

"People are just beginning to come out of their initial shock," the county's emergency manager Ed Hauer told the Signal two weeks after the floods.

For families who lost homes and belongings, "They don't know where to go from here," Hauer said.

Some roads remained underwater for days, while slides and deterioration closed many smaller roads.

At the storm's peak, 167 roads closed throughout the state. Northwest Oregon highways faced more than \$44 million in damages, and drew rescue support from the National Guard, Coast Guard and local responders.

Car engines, refrigerators and major appliances were carried off in the floodwaters.

"Even my false teeth floated away," Hamlet's Larry Sage told the Signal.

Making strides

Landslides are ranked as one of the most significant natural hazards in the state, causing millions of dollars in damage annually, geologist Brad Avey wrote in a 2016 report from the Oregon Department of Geology and Mineral Industries, the state agency known as DOGAMI.

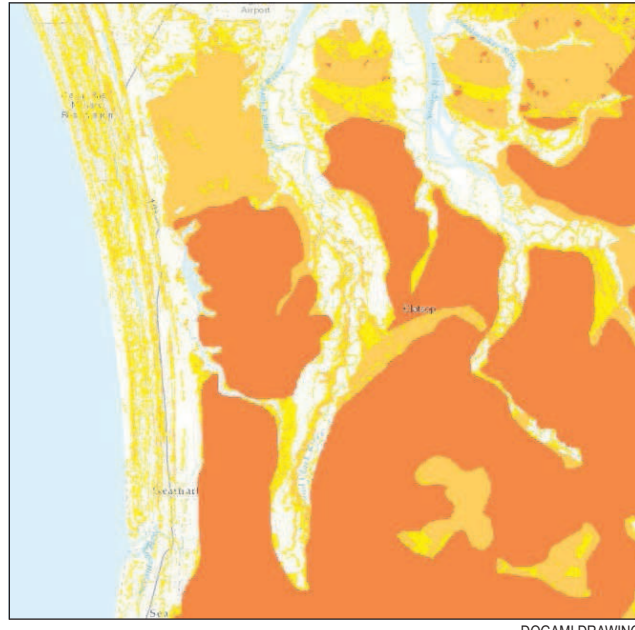
While DOGAMI has made "great strides" in mapping landslides, forecasters still can't tell us the possibility a slide will occur or its intensity.

Not all hillsides are slide prone. But if you see ground movement, evacuate immediately.

"It may start very slowly and be hard to detect," Geologic Hazards Coordinator for the Oregon Office of Emergency Management Althea Rizzo said. "Know the routes to safe ground."

Better and more accurate maps have led to identification of previously unknown slides. "It will take time to make the necessary preparations," Rizzo said. "It may be necessary to harden routes against slides."

Think about how much worse it would have been if North Coast Land Conservancy hadn't embarked on its Circle Creek floodplain restoration project in 2013. To restore the floodplain, the land conservancy and its partners



In this state map, darker area indicate "very high" existing landslide conditions.



U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici visited Circle Creek and Boneyard Ridge in late November to see the floodplain restoration project.

— including Clatsop County and the Oregon Department of Transportation — excavated sections of a berm that was built along the Necanicum River, leaving certain areas to maintain older trees.

The Signal's Lyra Fontaine reported that the berm removal allowed water from the Necanicum River to naturally flood the Circle Creek floodplain, instead of the adjacent Highway 101. After the first year of the project, analysis showed that the restoration prevented road closure at least three times that winter. Since the 2013 berm removal, "we've had significantly less flooding both in frequency and severity," the Oregon Department of Transportation reports.

When the highway was closed elsewhere during last winter's big rainstorm, it was passable by Circle Creek.

The forecast

So far, this year's flood watches and landslide threats shut down trails in the state's Coast Range, the central and south Willamette Valley, and the south Washington coast.

"People, structures and roads located below steep slopes in canyons and near the mouths of canyons may be at serious risk," DOGAMI Communication Director Ali Ryan Hansen said in advance of November's Thanksgiving storms.

Dangerous places include canyon bottoms, stream channels, bases of steep hillsides and road cuts or other areas where slopes of hills have been excavated or over-steepened. Be especially careful in places where slides or debris flows have occurred in the past.

As I write this, Ecola State Park and Indian Beach Trail are closed after heavy rains undid temporary repairs to Indian Beach Trail.

Visitors to Saddle Mountain State Natural Area are forewarned by the Oregon Recreation and Parks Department that winter weather may cause the road to become impassable. "Use caution and always let someone know where you are going," they advise.

In 2005, the same department forecast a 25-year period of La Niña, which means that the Oregon Coast is entering a period with more extreme storms and likely greater impacts from coastal erosion.

That was 11 years ago, with about 14 more to come. But who's counting?

Climate change: a roll of the dice

I had hoped when they finished the final tip off of Holladay Drive that there might have been enough macadam left over to dump a little more on 9th Ave. since that's what they had done previously. Yes, we had come away earlier with one little patch near Roosevelt Drive.

Can we do anything about climate change, which has been going on for hundreds or thousands of years from cold to hot and back again? God is in charge of the weather and has been since the beginning of time. It's the height of arrogance to think we can "control" anything so much as part of the divine design. About all we can do is seed clouds to make it rain or plant lots of trees. Why do we alternate between hard winters and mild winters? It's a roll of the dice, in my opinion.

After reading Katherine Lacaze's article in The Daily Astorian about talking tombstones at Evergreen Cemetery, I felt not only old — which is usual — but actually ancient and wish I could have taken in the program. I miss a lot these days since I don't drive anymore. I knew far to many of the underground contingent there! Quite a few of us knew Earl Hurd. He was a member of Kerwin's morning coffee club, an ex-mayor and, or course, Jim's grandpa. I knew Sam Lee, whose family lived on the same street, but don't remember any animals. My memories are for the timbre of his voice, his unique appearance and the fact that he always walked with his hands clasped behind his back.

The person called Hannah Nelby Navro I knew as Hannah Melby. She did die of tuberculosis and perhaps I got my positive TBC test from her. One of the highlights of my childhood was attending a birthday party for her daughter Julia held on a hill on Roosevelt Drive, about where Ken Karge lives. Hannah's home was across the tracks on 6th Ave., three blocks from us. The house is still there. She was a friend of my sister Blanche and they both worked at Pool's Candy Kitchen, which later evolved to Phillips, I think. Hannah was frail, pale and beautiful and had a very husky voice. That voice is the attribute I most remember.

Eva Guinn is a mystery. I went to school with an Eva Guinn so maybe she had a relative with the same name. She and her younger brother were a strange pair and sadly, I don't believe there's anyone left who might corroborate that — possibly Marette Isle or Ernestine Nordmark Neitzel.

Members of the American Legion and Auxiliary, if they pay their dues on time, are invited to an early bird dinner every year on Veteran's Day. In 2017, I will have been a member of the Auxiliary for 70 years so I went to the dinner. It was great. We had pork chops with all the trimmings. Many people are hurting, causing attendance to be smaller than usual. We do need to honor our veterans every day and let them know how much we appreciate their service. So much has been sacrificial. Thanksgiving and blessings to them all.

Laugh line

"How come you charge me so much for a haircut when I'm practically bald?" asked the barber's customer.

"I don't charge you for the haircut," answered the barber. "The increase is for the finder's fee!" (Loosely translated from Pastor John Tindell's collection.)

LETTERS

Life's positive moments

In today's perceived negative climate, it is important to be on the lookout for those positive moments. Such a moment happened for my husband and I last week when the city's street cleaner, Darlene Brown, came down 13th Avenue. She noticed in a drainage grate an envelope. She got out of the vehicle, retrieved it and delivered it to us. Inside that envelope was a \$200 donation for our ministry. We just wanted to tell her thank you and to say that the reason we love living in this small community is because of moments and people like Darlene. I often stop and thank those picking up the garbage, especially after big events, and I encourage others to do the same. We can all use a positive word and thank you for a job well done!

Shirley Yates
Seaside

See letters, Page 5A

Honoring an old friend at the Seaside Public Library

It's the holiday season and some of the best giving is done with the heart. Dec. 10 at the Liberty Theater, Gifts That Make a Difference will be hosted by the Lower Columbia Timebank. You can give to many different community non-profits, from the Wildlife center, to Coast rehab, to the Libraries Reading Outreach in Clatsop County, over 30 different charities that make a difference in our community will be represented at this one special event. You can volunteer time or give money to your favorite charities to help further what they do. I will be there in support of the Libraries Reading Outreach program. Its main goals

BETWEEN THE COVERS

ESTHER MOBERG



are a library card in the hands of every child in Clatsop County and a countywide summer reading program to help children retain what they have learned in school over the summer months. Join us from noon to 4 p.m. in the McTavish room.

In other happenings you may have seen recently in the news, the Seaside Public Library Building is getting a new name! While we will still be known as the Seaside Public

Library, the Seaside City Council passed a resolution on November 2016 in honor of Mayor Don Larson, naming the Seaside Public Library Building the Donald E. Larson Building. You will soon see the lettering naming the building over the front door of the Library and we plan to have a ceremony recognizing the new building name, details to be announced.

Don Larson was City of Seaside mayor for 14 years from 2003-16, and he just stepped down in December due to health issues. During his time as Mayor, Don was a major contributor to the new library building project and completion in 2008 that brought the Seaside Pub-

lic Library to the location where it now stands.

On a personal note, Don Larson was one of the first people I met in Seaside when I interviewed for the Library Director position and he shared in my excitement when I was hired. He will be missed as Mayor of Seaside. You may not know that the Astoria Public Library also has their building named. It was named after John Jacob Astor, and was formally named the Astor Library & Veterans Memorial building after the John Jacob Astor family and local supporters of former war veterans (including the American Legion) donated money to help with building the Astoria Library in the

1960s. Naming our building may not change what we do as a library, but there is always something fun going on at your Seaside Library! Did you catch the botanical drawing class the first weekend in December? If not, upcoming events that may interest you include Teen Tuesdays, our monthly trivia night event on Dec. 14, and an author talk on "Tough Girl," an Olympian's journey, by Carolyn Wood. Storytime's for preschoolers are always held on Wednesdays at 10 a.m. and this month will have winter and holiday themes. We will be closed on Dec. 24 and 25 so staff can enjoy family holidays.



PUBLISHER
David F. Pero

EDITOR
R.J. Marx

ADVERTISING
MANAGER
Betty Smith

CIRCULATION
MANAGER
Heather Ramsdell

PRODUCTION
MANAGER
John D. Bruijn

SYSTEMS
MANAGER
Carl Earl

ADVERTISING
SALES
Brandy Stewart

CONTRIBUTING
WRITERS
Katherine Lacaze
Claire Lovell
Eve Marx
Esther Moberg
Jon Rahl
Susan Romersa

Seaside Signal
The Seaside Signal is published every other week by EO Media Group, 1555 N. Roosevelt, Seaside, OR 97138. 503-738-5561 seasidesignal.com

Letter policy
The Seaside Signal welcomes letters to the editor. The deadline is noon Monday prior to publication. Letters must be 400 words or less and must be signed by the author and include a phone number for verification. We also request that submissions be limited to one letter per month. Send to 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside, OR 97138, drop them off at 1555 N. Roosevelt Drive or fax to 503-738-9285. Or email rmarx@seasidesignal.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS
Annually: \$40.50 in county • \$58.00 in and out of county • e-Edition: only \$30.00

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Seaside Signal, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103. Postage Paid at Seaside, OR 97138 and at additional mailing offices. Copyright 2015 © by the Seaside Signal. No portion of this newspaper may be re-produced without written permission. All rights reserved.