

‘SIDEWAYS’ IN SEASIDE

May is Oregon Wine Month! Why not? Brian Doyle, the great chronicler of Oregon and parts beyond who died in 2016, wrote a whole book to Oregon wine, aptly titled “The Grail: A year ambling and shambling through an Oregon vineyard in pursuit of the best pinot noir wine in the whole world.”

Doyle is the Oregon author I most wish I had met, the former Portland Magazine editor, novelist and bon vivant. I’ve written about his lyrical writing before, best known here for his masterful novel “Mink River” which is in a class by itself in describing the inner life of a small Oregon coastal town.

I like to think we might have shared a glass together: we have so many dovetailing interests: Robert Louis Stevenson (he wrote a whole book about this author, whose “Treasure Island” was one of my favorite books too.

He was a street basketball aficionado and a dog-lover who passionately believed animals could talk — in his books at least, if not in “real life.” With Doyle’s fulsome imagination, the lines were sometimes blurred.

Doyle employs plentiful adjectives, eschewing all rules and laws of grammar, “direct and straightforward and honest and blunt and powerful and quiet,” as Doyle himself described the boxer Sugar Ray Leonard. His book “Chicago” paints a loving memory of the city in 1978, a year I too inhabited it, and recall the sights, sounds and breath of the Windy City.

In “The Grail,” Doyle pays homage to the hills of the Willamette Valley, where is found the “best pinot noir wine in the world ... with the Cascade Mountains glittering snowily to the east and the Coast Range mountains rolling greenly to the west, with a hundred tons of purple-black grapes the size of fingernails roaring by like a murky dusty river.”

California pinot? Bahh, humbug. “Critics of some Oregon pinots have accused them of tasting like silage,” Doyle writes.

When the suffragette movement swept the nation in the late 19th century, many women saw abstinence from alcohol as a cornerstone of the right-to-vote movement; these included the many thousands of members of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union and National American Women Suffrage Organization, whose passion for breaking the bottle was only exceeded by their passion for the polls.

But Oregon’s Abigail Scott Duniway, a leader in helping Oregon women win the right to vote, took a slightly different tack, Jennifer Chambers writes in a new book, “Abigail Scott Duniway and Susan B. Anthony in Oregon.”

Duniway was described in her day as “5-foot-6, stocky ... a forceful, logical platform orator, with a touch of sarcasm and a dash of humor that make her arguments effective. As an impromptu speaker she has few equals.”

Despite her idol Susan B. Anthony’s

SEEN FROM SEASIDE

R.J. MARX



If it hadn’t been for Abigail Scott Duniway, Oregon’s pinot noirs may never have seen the light of day. Oregon Historical Society

CAN PINOT NOIR BRIDGE THE URBAN/ RURAL DIVIDE?

rigid temperance stance, Duniway earned the disapproval of members of the temperance movement by first recognizing the potential for alcohol abuse. “Too many cases of cruelty, crime and poverty have been traced to the saloon, to expect this conflict to cease until the saloon shall have reformed herself.”

At the same time she recognized the economic importance of “the production, transportation and sale of wheat, barley, hops, rye, apples, peaches, berries, grapes and cherries, from which intoxicants are made.” She offered consideration for the families dependent on these commodities, their sale and production. “Let the blame go to the drunkard, where it belongs, she said. “Let the drunkard’s wife have legal power to protect her home from the debauchery, just as the husband has the power, when so inclined, to protect it now.”

The blowback from the speech, Chambers writes, “was immense.”

Oregon stayed a wet state, at least until 1919 in Oregon and the nation with the passage of the 18th Amendment.

Wine production shut down but resumed in 1933, with Prohibition’s repeal.

According to the Oregon Wine Board, two Salem men John Wood and Ron Honeyman, founded Oregon’s first estate winery, Honeywood, in 1933.

Twenty-eight years later, Richard Sommer launched the state’s “modern era of winemaking,” planting riesling, gewürztraminer, chardonnay, semillon, sauvignon blanc, cabernet sauvignon, pinot noir and zinfandel at his Hillcrest Vineyard in the Umpqua Valley.

David Lett is credited for the first rooted pinot cuttings near Corvallis, in 1965.

These first plantings in the Willamette Valley were followed by a parade of names: Charles and Shirley Coury, David



R.J. Marx

Naked Winery offers samples of six or more. They describe their Willamette Valley Pinot Noir as “demanding attention, with aromas of tart cherry and balanced oak on the nose and flavors of red currant and early season raspberry on the palate.”

SEASIDE WINE WALK

Participating stores present tastings, wine sales, music, appetizers and prize drawing.

Pick up a glass, wristband and passport booklet at any of the following locations:

Carousel Mall (two locations) 1 – 6:30 p.m.

Maggie’s on the Prom 2 – 5 p.m.

Holiday Inn & Express 2 – 5 p.m.

Cash or credit at all locations.

A commemorative wine glass and ID bracelet are required for wine tasting. Must be 21 or over to participate.

and Ginny Adelsheim, Dick and Nancy Ponzi, Dick Erath, Jim and Loi Maresch, Susan Sokol and Bill Blosser, Philippe and Bonnie Girardet and the Wisnovsky Family. I don’t know any of them, but I’ve seen their names on labels.

According to the 2017 Oregon Vineyard and Winery Census report, wines are grown now through the state, including parts of the Columbia Gorge, Walla Walla Valley and Snake River Valley. Pinot noir holds an unchallenged dominance: with almost 18,000 of the state’s 27,000 acres — about two-third of all Oregon wine is pinot noir, and another 3700 acres produce pinot gris.

Here is how Doyle describes the flavors of pinot noir, with help from his guide, winemaker Jesse Lange of Lange Vineyards: “cherry, plum, raspberry, strawberry, chocolate, smoke, truffles, almonds, cedar, roses, licorice and mint.”

Doyle adds to this: “elegant, velvety, earthy, musty, pungent, fragrant, brilliant, glistening, shimmering, sparkling, aromatic, mysterious, discreet, harmonious,

Sharing a cup of coffee with Jeremiah in Seaside

VIEW FROM THE PORCH

EVE MARX



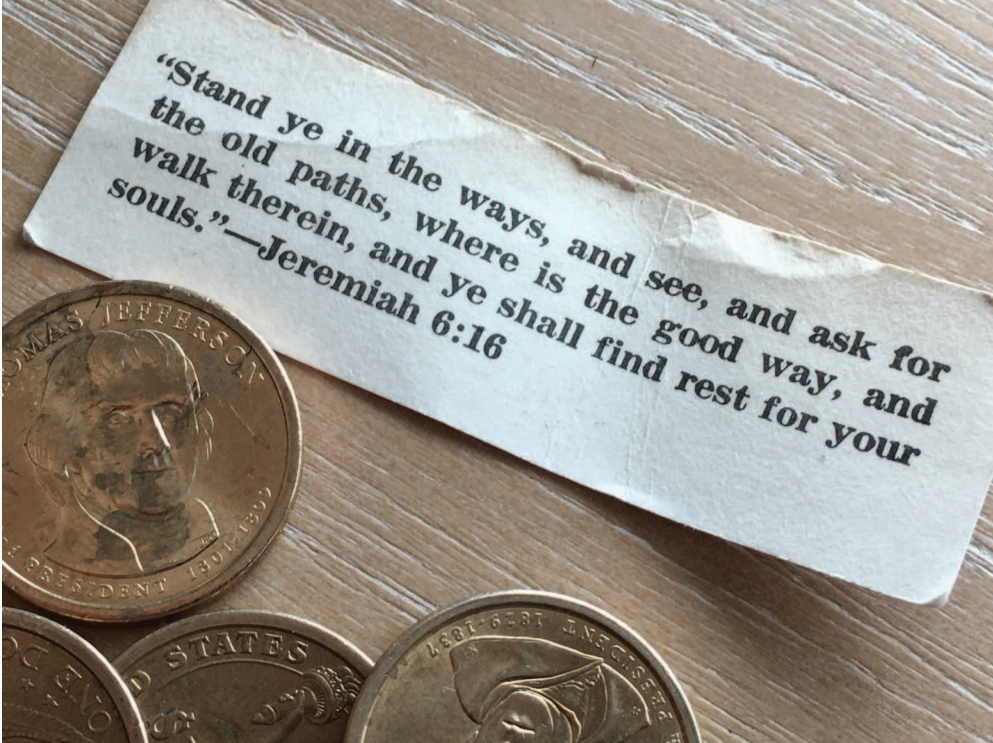
A couple of weeks ago my husband was walking down the street with one of our dogs when a car slowed down beside him. The car stopped and the window opened so the driver could speak to him.

For a moment my husband thought it was someone in need of directions. But that wasn’t it.

The driver rolled down his window. He stuck his hand outside the car and offered it. In his hand was a scrap of paper with some writing printed on it. Without his glasses, the print was too tiny for my husband to read. In addition to the paper, the man passed him five gold-colored coins. He said, “Here, use this for a cup of coffee.”

When he got home, my husband laid the scrap of paper and the coins on the table. The coins, we saw, were those \$1 coins they give you as change at the car wash. They look fake as heck, but they are legal tender. I put on my glasses and looked at the scrap of paper, which was about the size of those fortunes that come baked in fortune cookies.

Did you see what this says? I asked.



This message and coins was delivered on a Seaside street.

It was a passage from the Bible, specifically Jeremiah 6:16.

“Stand ye in the ways, and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.”

Forty years ago when I was in my twen-

ties and living in New York City, there was no end of people spreading the word of God. Bible messengers, I called them. Some stood on street corners and relayed their message via bullhorn. Quite a few of them hung out around Port Authority, the major bus terminal, where they competed

with pimps and hustlers to snag the attention of young people coming to the big city from everywhere in the country.

Because I often walked to my editorial job on the Upper East Side from my apartment in lower Manhattan, I daily passed through great throngs of people, a surprising number of them handing out messages, often on flyers. It was the Reverend Sun Myung Moon years, and also a big time for Hare Krishna.

Sometimes it was unnerving how many caring and concerned people were handing messages to me.

Looking back, I understand it was probably my youth and my appearance that made me look like someone who could use spiritual guidance. Like many New Yorkers, my wardrobe was mostly black clothing. I also had a carefully cultivated attitude of bleak indifference, which served me well at the time in both my professional and personal engagements. Nobody ever gave me money, however. If they had, I would have spent it on coffee, which at the time was 50 cents.

I flipped over the tiny scrap of paper that man gave my husband and read some handwritten words. In addition to the Jeremiah 6:36, there was a message from John 3:16.

“Do you know that God loves you?”

Not a bad thing to know. And I still might use the money for coffee, which if you like a grande latte or a double shot cappuccino, could easily run you five bucks.