

My COVID-19 dictionary

SEEN FROM SEASIDE
R.J. MARX



The coronavirus pandemic has changed the way we view the world, adding masks and personal protective equipment to our daily lives. Hand-washing, stay-at-home orders, the beach is closed — here is a highly selective local list of ABCs, with some definitions at the top of mind.

A is for anxiety, something we all feel at the time of COVID-19.

B is for belief: we have to believe it will end.

C is for caregivers, to whom we owe our thanks.

D is for donate, give back when you can.

E is for elevate, our spirits and our goals.

F is for furloughs, frustration and failures.

G is for goodness, gravity and being grounded.

H is for hospitality. Our city is dedicated to it in all its forms.

I is for intellect and intensity.

J is for jokes, and jolly and things just for laughs.

K is for Kate Brown.

L is for lament, for those who are gone.

M is for media, messaging, morality, memory.

N is for new or novel; the novel coronavirus

O is for old, which follows the new.

P is for perspicacity, perception and possibility.

Q is for quizzical and questioning.

R is for relief, repair, renovation, renewal.

S is for Seaside, the place where we live.

T is for time, tomorrow.

U is for U.S., us.

V is for vulnerable, viable, victorious.

W is for world.

X is for XOXO, the affection we send from far away.

Y is for you.

Z is for Zoom, by which we will all soon be meeting.



R.J. Marx
E is for Easter bunny. The bunny came bearing free masks on Sunday on the Prom near 11th Avenue.

When the whale exploded in Florence

One of the unfortunate consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, is that many of us have more of a need to find ways to remove our minds from this situation. Thus, we turn to avenues that may be less than ideal to help distract us from this challenging situation.

SKYBOX
SKYLER ARCHIBALD



I’ve found myself passing extra time by scrolling through social media, amongst other activities. I’ve seen pictures and posts of all kinds. Many were quite disgusting, pointing blame or inappropriately expressing frustration about this situation. Others were very uplifting, including those of my friends and network that shared the stories of their homeschooling, nature pictures or funny memes.

While scrolling through this week, I saw a posting that offered the rare combination of diversion and helpful information as we deal with this situation and what has become a very different life for each of us.

The post was offered by a city in England called Doncaster. Doncaster is significantly larger than Seaside, featuring a population of over 300,000. Thus, they must have some resources that smaller cities and towns may not have. The Doncaster Twitter account likened the current pandemic to one of my favorite anecdotes in the history of Oregon.

In 1970, a 45-foot sperm whale washed ashore in Florence, a little more than 150 miles from Seaside. Oregon beaches at that time were under control of ODOT who, after consultation with the U.S. Navy and other experts, made the decision to remove the whale using dynamite, the assumption being that the small pieces of remaining whale would be quickly consumed by birds and other animals.

The result of this decision produced one of the great and hilarious moments in YouTube viewing history. The explosion was, in a word, inadequate. Pieces of whale blubber and carcass were carried to areas away from the beach and birds and other animals were scared away by the large explosion.

The Doncaster Council account recounted this now comical decision to share some lessons learned in that experience that are helpful now as we sort through the uncertainty of our current situation. They shared that at the time, the officials in Florence needed to choose from three different options.

First, they could leave the whale to decompose. Second, they could try to cut the carcass into smaller pieces and then bury it. Lastly, they could blow the whale up with dynamite and hope for a quick and natural resolution. As you might guess, many of the scientific experts recommended option one or two.

The officials making the decision felt that leaving the body in place or burying it would be unpleasant and quite smelly for



Newscaster Paul Linnman reporting from Florence after officials decided to blow up a beached whale in 1970.

THE OFFICIALS MAKING THE DECISION FELT THAT LEAVING THE BODY IN PLACE OR BURYING IT WOULD BE UNPLEASANT AND QUITE SMELLY FOR THE BEACHGOERS AND COMMUNITY. A HALF-TON OF DYNAMITE WAS USED BY THE ENGINEER IN CHARGE AND THAT AMOUNT WAS MOSTLY RANDOM, AS THERE WASN'T A GREAT DEAL OF EXPERTISE AND EXPERIENCE IN THIS AREA.



This humpback whale washed onto Falcon Cove in September 2016.

the beachgoers and community. A half-ton of dynamite was used by the engineer in charge and that amount was mostly random, as there wasn’t a great deal of expertise and experience in this area.

The plan was executed poorly and the end result was nearly disastrous. It is still a humorous story to me, and one that I’m grateful didn’t happen in our era of social media and political divisiveness.

The social media account went on to relate how this story relates to the current pandemic.

First, they exhorted the public to not ignore the advice that experts give you. Second, sometimes its better to just sit at

home and do nothing than go outside and do something ridiculous. Nature has a funny way of handling things on its own. Third, when you ignore expert advice and act foolishly, the result is sometime unintended, but the potentially disastrous results could have been prevented. They closed the story with a plea to their followers to stay home and stop being selfish.

Far be it from me to overstep my expertise in this area but I, alongside the Doncaster council, and other experts ask us all to stay patient, and have faith that this situation will improve in time.

I hope you are all safe, healthy and well and I hope to see you soon.

Seaside schools committed to celebrating achievements

By **JEFF ROBERTS**
Principal, Seaside High School

Dear Seaside School Family:

This is a day that I am certain all of us hoped would not come. The original announcement of an extended closure was difficult to comprehend; the closure for the remainder of the year is nothing short of a punch to the gut that creates an unimaginable visceral feeling of pain.

As I shared in my statement a couple of weeks ago it isn’t fair, especially to the Class of 2020. This is not the way any of us imagined finishing the year ... the inability to laugh together in the hallways, pose intriguing questions in a Socratic Seminar to your peers, compete in your co- and extra-curricular activities, work on your TikTok’s between classes and simply enjoy each other’s company has been stripped from us all.

The state has provided guidelines to support all students throughout the remainder of the year. Please know that all of our schools and all of our staff will continue to work tirelessly to support you in every way we can.

Seniors: I am truly sorry and my heart absolutely breaks for you. The state issued guidelines around graduation requirements today and I am in the process of thoroughly understanding what that means for each one of you individually. I have spoken with Mr. (Travis) Cave and we will be able to provide more clarity in a short time from now. That being said, don’t panic about graduating. I am confident that we have the capacity to ensure you earn your diploma and can move forward to your next life adventure that you have planned for yourself. If never before, today I need you to trust that I mean what I say. I am in this with you and will do my very best to provide clarity in a situation that seems so uncertain. I am meeting with the senior class officers tomorrow to begin a plan to honor your accomplishment. As originally indicated, it may look a little different but I am committed to honoring and celebrating your achievement.

For eternity I will challenge you to look adversity directly in the face and make the decision to overcome. Allow how you choose to overcome define you. You all possess the ability to be resilient ... you must call on that power now.

I respect and admire all of you. Deep breath, dig heels in, and let’s tackle this together.

Love Always,
Jeff Roberts