

# Tunnel Echoes

*Arch Cape/Falcon Cove Beach Community*

A Newsletter

Feb 2014

Welcome to Winter in Arch Cape

## Happy Dead of Winter...!?

Seems a lot more like early summer.

Picture to the right is from the fire. Quite a stir, no? For a few days Shingle Mill Lane turned into a tourist attraction. Even had the TV van from Portland streaming video for the world to see. I worked the original fire (called the Shingle fire) Thursday morning into the evening with several folks from Cannon Beach fire, as well as lots of other firefighters. It was amazing to see how quickly that a wildfire can spread, change directions. There were several times during the day when it looked like we had the fire out, only to see the wind kick up and the fire grow larger than ever. All in all a humbling experience. NOTE: it is still dry up there, despite the recent rains. Be careful with fire in our forest!

The Cannon Beach Academy continues to gain support as we move towards opening up this fall.



The Seaside School District it set to vote on our charter proposal 11 February. If they grant the proposal? Then I fully expect we will open our school this fall. If they deny our proposal? We will appeal to the State Board of Education (SBE).

Our proposal is strong, and support has been amazing. I have no doubt the SBE will grant our request and allow us to open our school. There will be a public

elementary school in Cannon Beach.

Questions, comments, critiques? Have something you want to say, or something that needs to be said? Can you write an article? Perhaps you just want to list your couch for sale (we can do that) Let us (let me) know.

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Phil



## Cannon Beach Community Warning System (COWS)

By: Charles Dice

The Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District has recently upgraded its Community Warning System (known as “COWS” for Community Warning System) to a digital system. The original Analog based system was installed starting in 1986 and has been in a never-ending state of expansion and upgrade since then.

The existing system, the District’s principal safeguard against danger of tsunami flooding, consists of 5 alarm units in Cannon Beach and Two in Arch Cape. Each alarm unit has powerful omnidirectional speakers assembled in a vertical column or stack mounted atop a 40 foot utility pole and produces intense sound from approximately 110db (Decibels) at the base of the pole to around 70db at a 1 mile radius (for reference, a loud voice is around 70-75db).

The speakers are powered by a battery array residing in the equipment “box” also mounted on the utility pole. The batteries are continuously “trickle” charged from the street light AC power lines. The COWS system is manually activated at the Cannon Beach Main Fire Station based on warning information from the National Tsunami Warning Center

in Palmer, Alaska and/or the National Weather Service Emergency Alert System and/or Fire District officers noting ground shaking associated with an earthquake.

The COWS system is activated by radio signals to each of the 7 COWS alarm units. The COWS warning to evacuate potential tsunami flood areas consists of 3 minutes of undulating siren, then a voice announcement with the voice announcement repeated 3 times.

The siren is only used during actual Emergency Events. Whenever the system is being tested (usually just once a month), it broadcasts the sound of a cow “mooing” followed by an explanatory announcement. This is a unique feature of the Cannon Beach warning system designed to minimize “panic” to the public (and our many visitors) as well as to guard against “familiarity” if the siren were used during testing. It’s important to guard against people mistaking the warning siren as being just a system test. So the sirens are only heard when warning is being broadcast to get to safe high ground as quickly as possible because tsunami flooding is imminent.

Each of the COWS alarm units cost about \$36,000 to install and there is a robust maintenance/upgrade plan in place to keep the

units operating dependably in our coastal climate.

In the event that you do hear the COWS siren, you should proceed by foot as quickly as possible along one of the mapped Evacuation Routes to high ground. Tsunami Evacuation Maps are available in the Cannon Beach Post Office or at the main Cannon Beach Fire Station in Cannon Beach. If you feel the ground shaking then immediately protect yourself (“drop, cover, and hold”) if you are indoors. Or, if you’re on the beach, immediately head for high ground inland - you may only have 5 to 10 minutes to get off the beach before the ocean flooding makes escape difficult or impossible. Then, within about another 20-25 minutes high waves twenty to thirty feet high (or higher) may arrive ashore at 30-40mph. Understanding what to do when the COWS siren sounds, having a pre-planned evacuation route, a “go bag”, and a family “Communication plan” are all great ideas for those of us who live and work in this Coastal Paradise.

Thanks to Al Aya, President of the Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District Board of Directors, and a leader in development of the Cannon Beach COWS system for much of the content for this article

## E-Prep Tip: FRS/GMRS Radios

By Helen Chauncey

We live in one of the most beautiful places on earth. But we know we can have bad days here. This is nothing we can't handle if the community is prepared. When the wind blew in 2007, the county relied on a well-trained cadre of ham radio operators to handle communications.

But not everyone is humming with hope to be a ham radio operator. For those of you who would rather go basic, there is a good alternative – FRS/GMRS radios.

Basically, FRS/GMRS radios are walkie-talkies. These radios – usually sold in bundled kits of 2-4 radios – are widely available at outlets such as Amazon, Costco, Radio Shack, and similar. For basic use, they do not require a license.

Channelized radios are easy to use. You simply turn the channel button to the agreed-upon channel. There are no frequencies, offsets, or tone codes to enter.

If you want a “private” group for your family or house-guests, you can set a privacy code (commonly called a PL) on the channel you want to use.

**NEVER PUT A PRIVACY CODE ON THE EMERGENCY CHANNEL.**

FRS/GMRS radios are not radios-for-dummies. This is a common misunderstanding: “I don't want to buy one of those – they are radios for wimps.” Definitely not!

These radios are widely used - by CERT, urban search-and-rescue groups, in schools, and by security guards in shopping malls and other public places. They are easy to use and, under the right circumstances, they are highly efficient. They are commonly UHF radios – that is, the frequencies assigned to them fall in the “ultra-high frequency” radio band,



which works well in a small, local area.

In an emergency, to the maximum extent possible, ham radio operators and others with access to UHF frequencies will attempt to monitor the FRS emergency channel. Ham radios can not transmit to that channel, so you won't hear the ham operators. But they will attempt to hear you.

When the going gets rough, we want to know where everyone is. We want to know where YOU are, so we can get help to you if possible. Carry a whistle; carry a radio.

### LIMITATIONS

UHF radios do very well in urban settings. Buildings just don't bring these radios to their knees. UHF radios do not do quite as well in

hilly terrains or around dense forested areas. So when your FRS radio manufacturer tells you you'll be able to transmit for 5 or 10 miles, in our area you need to take that with a grain of salt.

FRS radios are, almost without exception, sold as FRS/GMRS radios. They are two-fers. The GMRS “side” of the very same radio gives you the option to use a somewhat higher power level. The FRS “side” commonly transmits on ½ watt. The GMRS “side” can transmit on anywhere from 1.5 to 5 watts. GMRS radios also have an additional 7 channels on the very same radio that are officially designated for GMRS use.

The tricky bit here is that – according to current FCC regulations – you are supposed to apply for a “group license” to use the GMRS side of the radio. This regulation is so obviously problematic, not to mention a little loopy, that the FCC is currently considering dropping it or revising it to remove the license fee.

### GO FOR IT

While we're waiting for the FCC to see the light, don't hesitate to pick up a pack of these radios and have your family run a quick drill to be sure you know how to use them. Should you decide to upgrade to ham gear, keep the FRS/GMRS radios around. They are simple, sturdy, cheap, anyone can use them – and anyone with a radio is likely to be someone rescuers can find – if and when.

Take care out there and let's get ready.

## Safety and Emergency Preparedness are the Focus of February Community Club Meeting

By John Piatt

Bring your valentine to the Arch Cape Falcon Cove Beach Community Club potluck dinner Saturday February 15 at 6:00 pm for good food, good friends, and two great speakers.

The first speaker is Oregon State Police Sgt. Greg Plummer who will be presenting information on effective approaches for controlling speeding on Highway 101, with suggestions on funding when required.

The storage container outside the Arch Cape Fire Station is about to be made available to serve as a cache site where residents can



store barrels with emergency supplies. Sam Steidel, from Cannon Beach, will be unpacking his barrel to give us an idea of the types of things that might be useful in case of an earthquake, tsunami, flooding, severe storm, etc. Emergency barrels are not just for people whose homes are

in the inundation zones; any home may be severely damaged by an earthquake or severe storm. For more info, contact City Manager Scott Sommers at [ssomers@co.clatsop.or.us](mailto:ssomers@co.clatsop.or.us) or (503)325-1000.

## Ham Radio Project for new Arch Cape Fire Station –

By: Charles Dice

Thanks to contributions from local community Members and from the Arch Cape Falcon Cove Beach Community Club and from the Cannon Beach Amateur Radio Society (CBARS) as well as several local Hams (Charles Dice, Scott

Sperely, Hal Dennison) a Ham Radio and Antenna have been installed at the new Arch Cape Fire Station. This Ham Radio is intended for use by our local Hams in the event of a local Emergency that may well cripple our “normal” means of communications such as telephone, internet, and even police/fire radios (all of which were, in fact, “down” during the Great Gale of 2007).

The Ham Radio has a battery “back-up” means of operation and the Fire Station has a back-up Electric Generator so we will have power even if the local power company service goes down (as it did for about a week in some areas in 2007).

## Finally the Right Direction!

By: Kate Merrell

After some serious slogging (09-12') the Arch Cape/Falcon Cove Beach market has finally turned around and property values are increasing, albeit slowly. The improvements were much like the economy at large in which you didn't feel the improvements on a day to day level but when you looked back at the numbers there were more sales, the list to sold price was tighter than years past, and the inventory levels dropped slightly. What a welcome change! Here are the sold units (only AC/FCB) for the past few years:

	2013	2012	2011
Homes	14	8	4
Lots	9	3	1

The biggest change in our market (primary a second home market) is that demand has increased. This is because the buyers have more confidence and are no longer fearful that their purchase will lose value; most buyers now believe



that “it is the time to buy”. They are right; low prices, still low interest rates, and inventory to choose from. With what has happened in our ‘feeder’ markets (mainly Portland & Seattle, both which saw double digit appreciation in 2013) I expect the pace of improvement to increase even further this year. We still have a residual inventory load from the years when we had so many more sellers than buyers. Currently we have 15 active properties on the market, which based on last year’s performance would be 1 year of inventory; 6 months of inventory is a considered a healthy, balanced market of buyers and sellers.

With appreciation in the single digits it will be many, many years before values again reach that high-water mark in fall 2008. Success is possible and very likely if you price your property to meet the market. I know I am not the only one to notice a few properties who have had posts in their yard for years; one property I noticed today has been on the market for 1266 days – when a property has been on the market that long buyers stop noticing it.

I had a great December and already January has been much stronger than usual, not only with closed sales but also with buyers wanting to see properties. Historically our selling season starts around mid-February and runs until mid-November - with the height of the season running between Memorial and Labor Day. The activity didn't stop last November and has continued. If you are thinking about selling or just wondering what your property is worth, I am always happy to chat with you and can provide a market analysis at no charge or obligation. Just call Kate @ 503.739.2324 or email: [katemerrellbroker@gmail.com](mailto:katemerrellbroker@gmail.com)

## Land Use

By: Dan Seifer

Land use and development in Arch Cape is regulated by the Clatsop County Southwest Coastal Community Plan, first adopted by the County in 1979.

Pursuant to this Plan, the County Commissioners appoint members to the Southwest Coastal Design Review / Citizens Advisory Committee, currently chaired by Tod Lundy. Members are Rich Donofrio, Virginia Birkby, Linda Lapp-Murray, Mike Manzulli, Linda Eyerman and Dan Seifer, with Jim Sparks coming on. The Committee is charged with design review recommendations of all proposed new or expanded structures and development in Arch Cape, and serves also to provide community land use input to County Community Development and the Planning Commission.

At its November meeting, the Committee reviewed an application to expand a residence at 80004 Pacific and recommended approval after concluding that all development standards would be met.



At its December meeting, the Committee reviewed an application for wetlands setback variances for a new residence on East Beach (across from the old fire station) and unanimously recommended that they not be approved, finding that the proposal failed to present the “minimum adjustment necessary for the reasonable use of the land”. The matter is now pending before the County Planning Commission at its 10:00 a.m., February 11 meeting in Astoria.

The Committee held no meeting in January, but the County

Commissioners held a work session on Arch Cape land use issues on Jan. 15. An agenda item was the possibility of establishing an urban renewal district to obtain funding for street and storm water improvements without raising property taxes. Also discussed was whether to review the 10-year old short term rental ordinance. Staff was directed to continue to study both.

The Committee’s next meeting is scheduled for February 19 at 6:00 p.m. at the new Arch Cape fire station. The public is, as always, welcome and invited.

## Leadership Change at Water and Sanitary / Water Board Positions Open

By Virginia Birkby

Phil Chick has recently taken on the duties of acting manager for the Water and Sanitary Districts. He has served as operator for the water and wastewater systems at Arch Cape since 2006, and in recent years has played a supporting role in the treatment plant upgrade projects. He is currently pursuing his level III certification in wastewater treatment.

Prior to coming to Arch Cape, Phil worked for Oregon State Parks, where he served as Operations/ Maintenance Ranger and Volunteer Coordinator for the 10,000 acre Nehalem Bay Management Unit. He also worked as a spawning salmon stream surveyor for the Oregon Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, where he gained a multitude of experience with the coastal streams and rivers of the Nehalem River Basin. Phil lives in Nehalem with his wife, Julie, and boys Blake and Noah. As the acting manager, he is overseeing a six-month Intergovernmental Agreement with the City of Cannon Beach for staff and operation support.

Tevis Dooley III and Dale Mosby have announced that they will leave their water and sanitary board positions. Both have served as Board Presidents and spent many years working for our community and utility districts. Their last meetings will be in March. In April new Board Directors will be appointed to fill their unexpired terms.

If you are interested in being on one or both of the boards, watch for application forms along with your March water and sanitary bills. They will also be available on line at ArchCape.com and at the District Office.

## Letter of Appreciation: Thomas Merrell

By Steve Hill

As of January 15, 2014, Thomas Merrell will be resigning as Manager of the Arch Cape Water and Sanitary Districts. Thomas has given 20 years of service to these districts and the community of Arch Cape.

Thomas has lived on the north coast since 1978, graduating from Seaside High School, attending Renton Technical College and then returning to the area taking a job with the city of Cannon Beach in the public works department. In 1993, he and his family made their home in Arch Cape and Thomas began his career with

the Arch Cape Water and Sanitary Districts.

In the early 1990's, both districts were facing a complete rebuild. The Water District built a new membrane treatment water facility, built a 520,000 gallon water holding tank, added a second water source, upgraded the water distribution piping, and has had ongoing pipe and equipment repairs. In 2013 the non-profit, Oregon Association of Water Utilities, recognized Arch Cape water as the 'Best Tasting Surface Drinking Water in the State of Oregon'.

The Sanitary District built its new waste water treatment plant to meet the latest agency regulatory requirements and the demands of an expanding community. The District purchased 120 acres for both

the spray irrigation site and the bio-solids site, therefore creating a solution for bio-solids disposal. It also upgraded the waste water collection system, and rebuilt three major lift stations.

Thomas worked on all these projects with the help of the engineering firm, Curran-McLeod, districts operator Phil Chick, and various board members over the years, including Bill Owens and Dick Pearson. He has been constantly ahead of the curve with his own knowledge of each project and using forward thinking for the benefit of the community. On many of these projects, Thomas assumed the responsibility as contractor and/or project manager resulting in financial savings for the districts.

## Letter of Appreciation (cont)

During these years Thomas has kept both districts in compliance with DEQ and other state and federal agencies, written and received numerous grants to help fund many upgrades and repairs, continued his education for higher certification levels, maintained the business office, and

attended numerous meetings and seminars gaining knowledge benefiting both the districts and the community.

The Boards, on behalf of the community, want to thank Thomas Merrell for his 20 years of service in providing Arch Cape with the best services of the most basic needs for its citizens.

## Sweatshirts & Mugs Still Available

By: Nadia Gardner

Have friends and family that love the beach? Need gifts for birthdays, 'thank you's, etc.? The Community Club has sweatshirts, mugs and the Arch Cape Chronicles available for sale.

The sweatshirts are zip-up hoodies in gray with a large logo (Castle Rock) on the back and a small one on the front right. Sizes are Men's S, M, Lg or XLg. They are \$40 and are available for purchase from Jack's



Store, Arch Cape Inn and Ocean Point Inn, or by contacting the Community Club.

The mugs are bistro-style, 15 oz and cost \$9 each.

They are available in navy or forest green with a logo (Castle Rock) on them.

The Arch Cape Chronicles book contains the history and stories of the area, including great historical photos. They are \$16.

All of these items are offered for sale at our quarterly potlucks. Alternatively, you can contact us at [acfcbcc@gmail.com](mailto:acfcbcc@gmail.com) or call Linda at 503-436-0893

## Nature Nights Educate & Inspire in Dark Winter Months

By: Nadia Gardner

There's not too much to do out here in the dark, wet wintertime evenings. But as an alternative to TV and bars, local nonprofits have developed several wonderful speaker series on nature. All are invited and events are free.

Haystack Rock Awareness Program holds events on the 2nd Wednesdays of the month at 7 p.m. at the Cannon Beach library. Wednesday, February 12 is Ed Wagner, Seattle Science Writer speaking on "Animal Incognita: Animals, Marine Mammals, & the Wilderness Act." The full schedule can be found on the community bulletin board or at: [www.friendsofhaystackrock.org](http://www.friendsofhaystackrock.org)

North Coast Land Conservancy and Necanicum Watershed Council co-organize events on the 3rd Wednesdays of each month at 6 p.m. at the Seaside Library. This



year's series focuses on "The Voice of the Artist in the Landscape". John Newman from Cannon Beach restaurants, Newman's at 988 and Fishes will speak on Wednesday, February 19 on "Sustainable Seafood." The full schedule can be found on the community bulletin board or at: [www.nclctrust.org](http://www.nclctrust.org)

Lower Nehalem Watershed Council holds events the 2nd

Thursdays at Pine Grove Community House in Manzanita at 7 p.m. On Thursday, February 13 Teresa Hutsinger from the Oregon Environmental Council will talk on "Love Your River: The Clean & Plentiful Water Program."

The full schedule can be found on the community bulletin board or at: [www.facebook.com/lnwc1](http://www.facebook.com/lnwc1)



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## Bulletin Board

### Spring Meeting

Did the recent fires get you thinking about emergency preparedness? Come to the ACFCBCC potluck Saturday February 15 at 6:00 pm, where Oregon State Police Sgt. Greg Plummer will be presenting information on effective approaches for controlling speeding on Highway 101. Sam Steidel,

from Cannon Beach, will be unpacking his barrel to give us an idea of the types of things that might be useful in case of an earthquake, tsunami, flooding, severe storm, etc.

know and we will list it right here....

### Animals In Distress

If you come across injured wildlife on the road, at home, or on the beach remember to call the Wildlife Center of the North Coast at (503) 338-0331.

### FOR SALE

Got something for sale? Want to give it away? Have something you need done? Or a job you can do?? Let us

## Arch Cape - Falcon Cove Beach Community Club

The Community Club meets four times yearly on the third Saturday of May, September, November and February. Membership in the club is \$16 for a household and includes membership in the Club as well as a subscription to this newsletter.

Not a member? Please Join or renew today. You can mail to ACFCB Community Club, Attn: Treasurer 79729 Hwy 101, Arch Cape, OR 97102



## Board Members

**Nadia Gardner — President**  
**John Piatt — Vice President**  
**Charles Dice — Treasurer**  
**Marney Beemer — Secretary**  
**Dañia Kittell — Member**  
**Linda Lapp-Murray — Member**  
**Steve Hill — Member**

## Questions/Concerns/Comments

Contact me:

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