

Earl's Diary - Saturday - July 12, 2014

Dear Loyal Readers;

The Peanut and I are on another excursion to the state to our north - Oregon. My main purpose for this trip is once again to visit Bullards Beach State Park in Bandon, Oregon. This is to be the site of the 12th Oregon Gathering. (You may remember I lovingly call these the "cult gatherings" because we molded fiberglass trailer owners are VERY enthusiastic about our "eggs".

This year I am starting my Diary Pages differently. Last year I related my travels from home to Bandon and back. I figured there was no reason to repeat that narrative. Instead I am arriving in Bandon several days early in order to take a few day trips to the north of Bandon.

I left home on Thursday, July 10, spent the night at Ancient Redwoods RV Park (I've stayed there every year on my trip north.) On Friday, July 11, I arrived in Port Orford, Oregon and have parked at the home of friends Ben and Nita. They have always been the most gracious hosts over the years and this year is no exception.



The Peanut had its own parking space.

Their home is in a very lush forest setting. They even have a herd of deer that delights in munching on everything in the yard. Of course, the weather is overcast!



Their backyard is surrounded (completely) by a six foot fence to keep the pesky animals at bay.

Nasturtiums grow practically like weeds.

Coastal Oregon with its moist (lots of times foggy) climate is prime growing grounds for fuschias. You can tell I like to take closeups of flowers?





Deer must find dahlia foliage distasteful. As we were eating dinner, looking out the window, a deer came tiptoeing past all these delectable dahlias. Nary a nibble did she take. Now, strawberry and nasturtium foliage is ANOTHER matter!

On Saturday, July 12, they gave me a tour of several sites of interest in the Port Orford area. Here's your history lesson for today.

The Port Orford Lifesaving Station

Frequent shipwrecks on the south Oregon coast in the late 1800s and early 1900s prompted the U.S. Coast Guard to select Port Orford Head as the site of a lifesaving station. Besides the observation tower and boathouse, the compound included an Officer-in-Charge residence and a two-story building housing an office and quarters for the crew. Today, the Crew Quarters building is a museum.



Unique among Coast Guard facilities, the Port Orford Lifeboat Station boathouse was located in Nellies Cove almost 300 feet below the crew quarters and operations building - connected by over 530 steps. The boathouse was constructed between 1932-1934.



The boathouse could house two 36-foot motor lifeboats out of the water. When needed, the boats were placed into the water with a rail-mounted carriage and launched out of the cove into the often-raging surf. Once out in the ocean, the boat crew was at the mercy of the elements, often having to ride out the storms at sea after rescuing sailors in distress.

The boathouse was destroyed by fire in the 1970s. The pilings, portions of the boat carriage rails and the breakwater are all that remain.



I found a few photos of what it looked like. A restored craft is located on the park grounds.



During World War II, lookouts in the Port Orford Lifeboat Station tower did more than watch for emergency signals from foundering ships. Guardsmen stayed alert around the clock watching for enemy aircraft, ships and submarines.



An attack did come, but perhaps not in the way the Coast Guard had expected. In early September 1942, the Japanese submarine I-29 surfaced just off the coast from Port Orford. The sub's mission was unique: it would launch a seaplane which would then drop incendiary bombs on Oregon's coastal forest. The Japanese military hoped the bombing runs would cause massive wild fires which would destroy an important natural resource and demoralize the American public. While the attacks by the I-29 certainly caused alarm, Oregon's rainy weather rendered the incendiary bombs useless.





Our next stop was the pier at the Port of Port Orford

The Port of Port Orford harbor has been in use since the 1850s, and was primarily used for shipping lumber. The first Port District was formed in 1911 and dock construction began in 1919. A breakwater was built in 1971 in an attempt to protect the dock from winter storms. Shoaling became a problem shortly after and dredging became

necessary. Although no longer a deep harbor, Port Orford is still home to many commercial fisherman and is used as a harbor of refuge by many during severe storms.



The historic observation tower was removed when the station was decommissioned in 1970. Today this is all that remains of the tower.



I couldn't resist the urge to take a closeup of this fish



A very photogenic pelican posing for pictures AND then a nap

The port is also unique, one of only two "dolly docks" in the U.S. (the other one is in Los Angeles) - and only six in the world - where gigantic hoists lift the vessels in and out of the water each day. The harbor area is too shallow for safe mooring, and when not on the ocean, the boats are parked in rows on the dock, cradled in custom-made trailers that are easily pulled around by pickup trucks.



We were there just in time to see this all happen.



Unloading the day's catch



What a sight-seeing afternoon we had. It was both educational and exciting to see and hear about the local area.

Tomorrow I must leave and head up the road 26 miles to Bandon. Perhaps I will find something else to write about. I hope you will come along with me then.

Again, thanks for traveling with me on this adventure. Until next time - bye for now - - Earl