

# Auto-induced personality dysphoria



**COAST CHRONICLES**  
By CATE GABLE

I'm basically driving a computer and, as a very clever friend says, "That's a hard drive!"

## My Volvo, myself

I've been a Volvo gal since I started buying my own cars. Always Volvo wagons. They can be packed with guitars and music stands, dogs, furniture, suitcases, bark mulch, lawn mowers, and — even, occasionally — friends.

For the last 14 years I've been driving a 2004 V70 wagon during which I've managed to rack up a considerable number of miles. This wagon has been a trusty companion over many a road trip north and south on west coast highways. Two years ago, March 2020, I even outfitted it with foam and slept in it on my drive back from sunny climes in Arizona in order to be home before covid shut the country down.

My Volvo and I have seen some hard times (cue the country western song): someone smashed into me in the Golden Goose parking lot in Catalina, Arizona; I myself backed into a metal post on a friend's farm; in a Grand Canyon parking lot trying to back up, I jack-knifed my Tear Drop camping trailer and busted the deck out of my rear parking light assembly. (I'm still backing-up impaired.) Some of these aesthetic repairs got fixed and some didn't.

We've had our adventures over the years. But 259,992 miles — even for a Volvo — is getting up there. My miles have added up too: my hair has gone gray, I have a bum knee, I've put on a few pounds, I have trouble opening the back hatch door (it seems to be getting heavier). Me and my Volvo — we've weathered the good times and the bad times together.

## Who moved my carburetor?

So I started to think about a new (used) car. My first inclination was to try to replace this Volvo 2004 wagon with an exact replica model with lower mileage. A friend turned me on to bringatrailer.com, an amazing auction site for cars, trucks, vans, and specialty vehicles. (On a whim, I even bid on a Japanese ambulance with cardio monitoring equipment and a gurney.) He'd found me another 2004 wagon on the site: one owner, super low mileage, a beautiful blue. But the car was in New Jersey — now what?

Buying a car online was a new experience for me. First you scroll through 57 photos of every square centimeter of the car inside and out. Then, if you like what you see, you contact the Lemon Squad (lemonsquad.com), which has reputedly competent auto inspectors scattered around nationwide. You secure one close enough to your potential vehicle to go over and drive/inspect it, and you get a report emailed to you. Then, if everything checks out, you prepare for the auction. Get ready for white knuckles. Folks who participate in the bringatrailer site know cars inside and out; the string of comments as the auction progresses is fascinating, enlightening, and often funny. If you happen to win the auction, you contract with



CATE GABLE

## Introducing a new member of the author's family.

bringatrailer (or another firm, there are many) to transport your car to you. And, believe me, on my recent drive from Tucson to Nahcotta, I saw innumerable flatbeds hauling single vehicles. They seem to be crisscrossing the nation.

Anyway, this 2004 low-mileage Volvo wagon went for upwards of \$14,000, even though it seemed to have some steering issues. I bailed out around \$12,000. But here's the thing — in this current crazy market, if you find a used car you like, be ready to jump or it will be gone. After the auction dithering, and having driven myself and my friends and a few sales people crazy with my car-search process, I decided to give the idea a rest. So me and my trusty high-mileage steed headed south to sunny climes.

Then I woke one morning in Tucson and my mental fog cleared for a moment. Why did I want to replicate my current car? I began to realize I would have the same problem that people cloning their dogs have: the clone is never the same. Then, an even more revolutionary concept formed in my mind: as an elder with modest resources, perhaps I could afford and should consider a different kind of car — maybe even an upgrade?

## Happily ever after?

Let's skip the middle of the story and head directly to the dénouement. I am now driving a Volvo XC90 T6 Inscription. (Though I have to admit I had many moments of heart-break seeing my trusty gold 2004 turbo in my rearview mirror — I really did. I felt as if I had abandoned a friend.) Everything about this Volvo is electronic, digital, and/or otherworldly. The owner's manual rivals the OED. I had to request a short orientation simply to figure out how to turn the engine on and off (which I still don't always get right). This car can almost drive itself — though since it was born in 2017, I don't feel it has the experience yet.

Thank goodness my sales person, Don, mentioned that it would correct its trajectory within lanes, because, otherwise, when the wheel started moving on its own just outside of Portland I would have been freaked out. I don't always agree with its decisions; after all, I have been driving longer!

I can wiggle my foot under the rear

bumper and the hatch door opens (or closes) by itself. I'm told if I have an object in my blind spot. I can set the ride to different modes. I can change the light display on the dash, tell it what read-out information I want to see, change the interior or exterior lighting. The car lowers and pulls in its mirrors when I lock it. And the bright lights — OMG, I'm a lighthouse in the midst of darkness.

Frankly, I have to admit that the car is more-or-less in charge because I have no idea what all it can do or how. I've only recently discovered that I can't play CDs (tapes are out of the question) — I have been leap-frogged by technology — and there is no repair shop within a hundred miles that can diagnose what ails this baby if the problem is more complicated than an oil change.

## Who am I now?

Here's the other concept that has slowly occurred to me: in my banged up, dusty and trusty 2004 wagon, I flew under the radar as a person of any consequence. I could pull up to a gas station, restaurant, or interview rendezvous and posit, as Emily Dickinson would say, "I'm nobody, who are you?" I was in on-going stealth mode.

Now, I fear this auto blares "privilege" perhaps a little too brightly. I even have to buy premium gasoline, just when our prices are going stratospheric. Does the personal uneasiness and dysphoria I feel require that I also change my wardrobe, my worldview, my hair color? Do I need to take myself more seriously now? Will my car and I need some intensive relationship therapy? Like, first of all, who is in charge of the steering wheel? And, furthermore, I will make my own damn decisions about how close to tail-gait that obnoxious driver in front of me.

In the meantime, opening the hatch with my foot has become my favorite new (used) auto feature — though I clearly see that this wagon is not a one-trick pony. It's possible I have met my match.

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P.S.: Attention all veterans: Save the Date for the Vet Lunch. This year it's a sit-down face-to-face affair at the Senior Center Tuesday, April 12, from noon to 2 p.m. Please call 360-665-3999 by April 8 to RSVP.

## ANIMAL SHELTER REPORT



Xena

# Affectionate Xena is Pet of the Week

By CORY MCKEOWN  
For the Observer

We recently received this pretty three-year-old torbie (combination of tortoise shell and tabby patterns) because her owners were moving and could not care for her. She was surrendered along with her sister Cara. Xena was initially a little shy, but quickly warmed up and has become quite outgoing.

Xena resides in the free-range "Kitty Playroom," where she loves to greet and entertain any visitors. Xena has a very cute chirpy meow, and makes this pleasant noise when she walks as a way of getting attention. She also has a wonderful "purr motor" and loves to be petted. She seems to get along well with the other kitties in the room, and her previous owner wrote on her surrender form that she has lived with dogs, and had good interactions with them, as well.

As Pet of the Week, Xena's adoption fee has been halved to just \$25, and she is fully vetted and ready to go. Xena would be a wonderfully attentive and affectionate kitty companion, not to mention beautiful! If you are interested in any of our available shelter pets, visit our website beachpets.com and follow the instructions under "Adopt" to complete an application and submit it electronically.

We are open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday by appointment only for adoptions and surrenders. Stray drop-off, spay/neuter vouchers and pet food program are available during open hours.

View our available cats and dogs and submit an online application at our website beachpets.com. An approved adoption application is required before scheduling a meet and greet with your selected animal.

## LETTER OF THANKS

### Thanks to everyone who saved my life

I want to send out an immense thank you to the great women and men EMTs who drove and stabilized me to Ocean Beach Hospital on March 1 while I was experiencing the horrific pain of a heart attack.

I also want to thank the excellent medical staff at the hospital for their actions that continued to stabilize my condition. The ambulance crew transported me to the Astoria airport where I was life-flighted to Portland and received life saving surgery.

Immensely humbled and grateful for all of the men and women who enabled this intervention that allows me to continue to give back to our community. Blessings!

LARKIN STENTZ  
Long Beach

## Letters

Continued from Page A4

upgrades. This investment in our future reflects the need for physical facilities that enable quality education for our community in the 21st century, efficiently delivered, in a safe and healthy environment.

KELLY RUPP and  
BEV ARNOLDY  
Ocean Park

### There are great reasons to vote yes on bond

Having the opportunity to serve on the school facilities committee was an eye-opener. I was able to tour some of the facilities that you will be asked to vote on in the upcoming school bond.

My boys both went to Ocean Park Elementary, Long Beach Elementary, Hilltop Middle School and Ilwaco High School. They attended from 1982 to 1997. So, it's been a few years since I've really had an opportunity to closely look at the schools.

The high school building looks really run down and in need of updating. Our committee met in the cafeteria and there are only two outlets available for anything elec-

tronics. The classrooms have the same problem. We need to update the high school if nothing else, to facilitate the technology that is available today. I want our kids to be proud of the schools they attend. That doesn't happen when the school is outdated and rundown.

The bond also includes plans to use the Kaino Gym location to build a new Alternative School. The football stadium is on the verge of collapse. We maybe have a few more years of use and then it could potentially be condemned. At that point, we will be forced to have all away games or negotiate with another school close by to use their field and stadium. The new stadium will be smaller and more inline with our size of school.

The big issue seems to be whether we should build a new elementary school on the current Ilwaco campus. There are so many good reasons to vote yes. Having one grade school located close to all the other schools will benefit students, parents, teachers, and our community. Parents will have all their children in one location making it easier for busing and or pick up. All students will be close to our hospital and if there is an emergency, policemen, sheriffs, firemen, and EMTs will be able to respond to or evacuate one location. Having

one elementary school located with all our other schools will give us opportunities for sharing teachers, staff, nurses, counselors, buses, libraries, cafeterias, gymnasiums, assemblies, and maintenance. The cost savings will be huge.

I know it will be hard to give up Ocean Park and Long Beach Elementary Schools. My kids went there too. Possibly the Ocean Park School can be used for a community building like we did with the Chinook Elementary School. It can be a win-win. Let's make our schools great so we can attract new families, new businesses, good doctors, and keep our property values up. Please join me in voting yes on April 26.

MAVIS SHUCKA  
Long Beach

### Come back with a better bond plan

As products of Ocean Park and Long Beach elementaries, Hilltop Middle School and Ilwaco High School, parents of two college and two high school students who are all products of the Ocean Beach School District system, ardent school supporters, a past two-term school board member of the OBSD Board of Directors, and property and small business own-

ers, we urge you to vote *no* on the upcoming April 26 OBSD Bond.

Obviously, this is a difficult position for us to take and I am sure many in this community are struggling with a decision on how to vote on this matter. The most important point we can convey to you as fellow community members is that a *no* vote is *not* a vote against the children of our community. In fact, we believe, taking a stand on this issue and demanding a better, more realistic and long-term plan for how OBSD plans to provide for the future success of the children in our community is one of the most caring and forward-looking actions you as a citizen can take on behalf of our children. It is important to note that in November 1999 a \$21 million bond was run by OBSD and it failed, gaining only 42% of the vote, because the community did not support the plan. Just over three years later in May 2003, OBSD came back with a \$23 million bond on the ballot and it passed by 61.72%. I have every confidence that if this current bond proposal fails, the board of directors will regroup and expeditiously put forward another proposal that is hopefully crafted to be more inclusive and widely supported by the voters of the

district.

The current IHS school building, stadium, football field, bus garage and Kaino gym all need extensive work done, which will require our community to pass a bond. We view these as the needs. The board has chosen to package these needs with the want of combining all school activities onto a central campus in Ilwaco. Please know that a yes vote will act to shutter both Ocean Park and Long Beach elementary buildings as schools. Taking into account the extensive renovations that were funded by taxpayers on these schools in 2003 and the importance of these schools to the children and adults in their respective communities we cannot support this. At this point in time we believe it is prudent for the board and this community to focus on our current needs, not wants.

Please join with us on April 26 by returning your ballot with a *no* vote on this bond, we encourage you to then contact the school district with what you do support to aid them in crafting their next proposal.

BRIAN and  
MARILYN SHELDON  
Nahcotta

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# Poetic license and the police



**COAST  
CHRONICLES**  
By CATE  
GABLE

“Poetry is the lens we use to interrogate the history we stand on and the future we stand for.”

—Amanda Gorman

## ‘I can’t breathe’

I had just exited Interstate 90 East heading to the Cle Elum Bakery when I heard that a verdict would soon be delivered in the Derek Chauvin trial. Unless you’ve been living under the bed since the shutdown, you probably know that ex-police-man Chauvin knelt on George Floyd’s neck for nine minutes and 29 seconds killing him on the streets of Minneapolis. George, or Perry as his family called him, was face down on the cement, knee on his neck and wrists handcuffed behind his back, while two other officers pinned down his legs.

Without the video made by quick-thinking 17-year-old Darnella Frazier, the police’s initial report would have stood unchallenged. Titled “Man Dies After Medical Incident During Police Interaction,” it concludes simply “Officers were able to get the suspect into handcuffs and noted he appeared to be suffering medical distress. He was transported to Hennepin County Medical Center by ambulance where he died a short time later. No officers were injured in the incident.” (The full 188-word report: [tinyurl.com/4mpxtwsw](http://tinyurl.com/4mpxtwsw).)

## Understatement

There are several literary devices at play here. Let’s start with understatement. “To note” is an action that means to glance at and, in the most incidental way, notice something. It’s hardly the verb witnesses on the scene used as they watched George Floyd die. They testified that they pleaded for his life. They screamed, “You’re killing him!” They shouted, “He is not resisting, let him go!” and other perfectly appropriate and reasonable rejoinders. There was nothing incidental about George’s death throes, despite what the “officers noted.”

That he “appeared to be suffering medical distress” seems the height of understatement. In fact during the trial, pulmonologist Dr. Martin Tobin pinpointed the exact moment when George stopped breathing. As stated in a Slate article by Elliot Hannon, “Dr. Martin Tobin provided a powerful rebuttal and excruciating testimony Thursday outlining just how Floyd died — down to the very second his life was lost. Tobin, a Chicago-area pulmonologist with 40 years specializing in the science and mechanics of breathing, broke down the video of the arrest, explaining to the jury in plain terms what was happening to Floyd’s body over the course of the nine-and-a-half minutes that he testified left Floyd dead on the street.”

Understatement is often used in literature as a humorous device such that the reader understands the obvious gap between what is real and what is being minimized. Here the understatement is treacherous. (PS: Floyd died under Chauvin’s knee — not “a short time later” in the hospital.)

I also love the creativity of “medical incident during police interaction” rather than “murder caused by police misuse of power,” or “death caused by police violence.” We might even admire, in some perverse way, the exceptional job this report writer did obliterating what actually happened. The power of words — for good or evil — is evident here.

## Satire, sarcasm, irony

The most astounding sentence in this report is probably “No officers were injured in the incident.” Well, thank goodness—we were all holding our collective breath waiting to hear that bit of good news! My last sentence is sarcasm, folks. I mean the opposite of what I wrote, as no one was waiting to hear whether the police were OK. Instead we wanted to hear how and why George Floyd died, his life evidently worth less than the \$20 bill he tried to pass off at Cup Foods.

Is this shocking police report satire, sarcasm, or irony — or all three? Good friend and literary luminary Paul Nelson, founder of Seattle Poetics Lab ([splab.org](http://splab.org)), offers some thoughts. “We’ve had the militarization of the police perhaps since the



STEVE KOVACH

“The power of words hasn’t gone away,” says Kevin Young. Check out one of the Peninsula poetry boxes to see why.



STEVE KOVACH

Look for a poetry box in a neighborhood near you.

**POETRY IS  
TRANSFORMATIVE  
— IT MAY BE ONE  
OF OUR MOST  
POWERFUL TOOLS,  
AND YOU ONLY NEED  
‘POETIC LICENSE’  
TO PACK IT.**

Reagan era when military surplus equipment and training began for our local police; and the assumption that the police are good people killing bad people.” This report simply reiterates that the “good people” were unharmed.

It’s certain this report writer did not intend to be satiric or sarcastic and surely had no idea how ironic these words would be after the truth came out.

## Poetic justice

It’s sad that we cheered for guilty verdicts against Derek Chauvin; but so many of us feel that justice was served. What’s unconscionable is that we were surprised by these verdicts when the guilt should have been obvious. What’s tragic is that this trial’s conclusion does not bring George Floyd back to his family and his community. It’s unsatisfactory for everyone involved. What will Chauvin learn in prison; will he be changed for the better? Will this case change police practices or future judicial procedures or is it simply an aberration? Will it help us as a nation deal with — and finally heal — intransigent racism?

In Elizabeth Bruenig’s article “Chauvin Was Convicted, but Suffering Remains,” (*New York Times*, 4/25/21), she writes “Pain lasts, grief lasts, anger lasts. The life you had before loss is never returned to you. There’s a hole in the world.” She continues, “I want to live in a world

where it is possible to forgive and to be forgiven. I think it emerges not from a place of moral victory, but from the realization of human brokenness.”

So to the four kinds of justice — distributive (determining who gets what), procedural (determining how fairly people are treated), retributive (based on punishment for wrongdoing) and restorative (attempting to restore relationships to “rightness”) — I am going to posit a fifth by creating a new definition for “poetic justice.”

Let’s imagine poetic justice involves forgiveness, understanding, empathy, even beauty. Let’s imagine that poetry can restore us to ourselves and to our own humanity. Let’s imagine we can use the power of words to heal, as Amanda Gorman believes, “Somehow we’ve weathered and witnessed a nation that isn’t broken, but simply unfinished.” Kevin Young, the new director of the Museum of African American History and Culture, agrees, “A good pot of collard greens won’t cure everything, but it will cure a lot. Poetry does some of the same things. The power of words hasn’t gone away.”

## April is poetry month

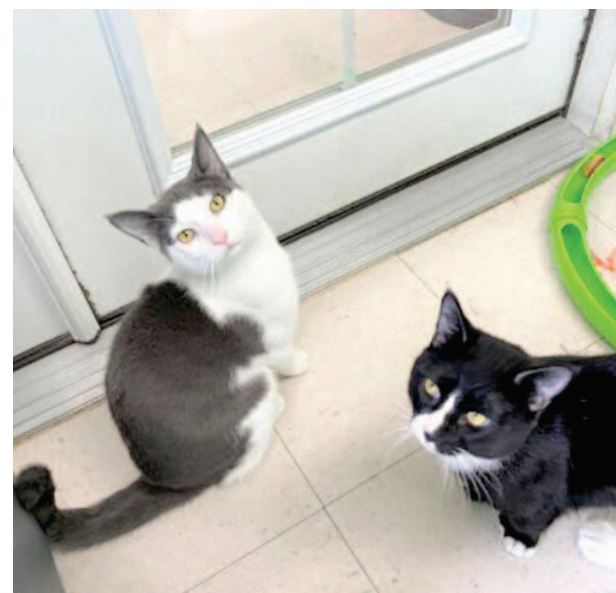
It’s not too late to add a little poetry to your life this month. Poet Anthony “Tony” Pfannestiel started a great project before the pandemic hit: the installation of poetry boxes up and down the Peninsula. He and others have both created these beautiful receptacles for words and refilled them monthly.

You may not have noticed these around town, but now you have no excuse. Steve Kovach is the poetry tender for At The Helm Hotel, 408 Pacific Avenue S, Ilwaco; the Wiegardt Studio Gallery, 2607 Bay Avenue, Ocean; and the Timberland Ocean Park Library, 1308 256th Place, Ocean Park. Shelley Weaver tends the poetry box at Bay Avenue Gallery, 1406 Bay Avenue, Ocean Park. Janice Thompson keeps up Abbracci’s (now defunct coffee house), 408 Pacific Avenue across from Marsh’s Free Museum in Long Beach.

Tony refreshes the one in front of his house at 32402 J Place in Surfside; another at BOLD Coffee, Art and Framing, 711 Pacific Avenue North, Long Beach; Adelaide’s Coffee House, 1401 Bay Avenue, Ocean Park; and 38208 Stackpole Road north of Oysterville. Port of Peninsula in Natchotta will soon install another poetry box as well as the RE/MAX real estate office in Ocean Park.

If you’d like to make a poetry box, fill one monthly, or help out in any way, give Tony a call at 503-720-6786 or email him at [tonypfan@aol.com](mailto:tonypfan@aol.com). Poetry is transformative — it may be one of our most powerful tools, and you only need “poetic license” to pack it.

## ANIMAL SHELTER REPORT



Loki and Frodo

## Unique brothers Loki and Frodo are Pets of the Week

By CORY MCKEOWN  
For the Observer

These brothers are special not only because they are very sweet, but because they also are polydactyl — meaning they have extra toes! Cute little baseball mitts! They were brought to us in February by their young owner who was moving out of state and couldn’t take them with her. The boys (or “cattens” as we call adolescent kitties) are about 11 months old. Loki is white and gray, and brother Frodo is black and white.

Their previous owner describes them as “friendly, playful, affectionate, and always purring” and we have found them to be all this and more. They have become staff favorites because they love attention and are very playful, and are good with other cats. Their owner also said that they “played with our dogs.”

We are hoping that these brothers can go to a home together, as they have never been apart and are very bonded to one another. They love to sleep together in the sun on the windowsill of the room they are in, often with their arms around each other. Frodo and Loki would be a wonderful pair of kitties for a home with several children, each wanting their “own kitty.”

Frodo and Loki are fully vetted, including neuter, vaccinations and chipping. As Pets of the Week, their adoption fees have been reduced to just \$50 each, or \$75 for both. It would be so nice for them to go to a loving home together! If you are interested in adopting these great kitties or any other shelter pet, please go to our website [beachpets.com](http://beachpets.com) and follow the instructions under “Adopt” to electronically complete and send your application. Staff will review your application and make arrangements for you to come to the shelter to visit the pet, if your application is approved.

We are open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday by appointment only for adoptions and surrenders. Stray drop-off, spay/neuter vouchers and pet food program are available during open hours.

View our available cats and dogs and submit an online application at our website [beachpets.com](http://beachpets.com). An approved adoption application is required before scheduling a meet and greet with your selected animal.

## LETTERS POLICY

The *Chinook Observer* welcomes letters from readers. They are among our most popular content and provide a way for community members to communicate thoughts and concerns that might not otherwise come to widespread attention. Here are some guidelines to bear in mind:

- We are an intensely local publication. Letters dealing with local issues and people have our highest priority, followed by those concerning state and regional issues.

- Readers’ letters debating intractable national issues and controversial politicians will be published on a space-available basis.

- All letters should be limited to around 350 words, unless the editor agrees to an exception. Exceptions will seldom be granted for letters regarding national politics. Writers should normally limit themselves to no more than one letter per month.

- The editor can and will modify letters for space, clarity, good manners and to avoid potential legal issues.

- Letters received by Monday morning will usually be printed in that week’s edition. However, there is no guarantee any letter will be printed, and delays in publication are sometimes necessary due to space constraints and other factors.

- All letters must be signed with the author’s true name and hometown. We do not publish anonymous letters.

- Thank-you letters are welcome and are published without charge, but must be kept brief.

- Letters may be submitted via [www.chinookobserver.com](http://www.chinookobserver.com); emailed to [editor@chinookobserver.com](mailto:editor@chinookobserver.com); mailed to P.O. Box 427, Long Beach, WA 98631; or dropped by our office at 205 Bolstad Ave. E, Suite 2, Long Beach. Please include a phone number where you can be reached in case we have questions; it will not be published.

# I think that I shall never see



**COAST  
CHRONICLES**  
By CATE  
GABLE

*A poem lovely as a tree.  
A tree whose hungry mouth is  
prest  
Against the earth's sweet flow-  
ing breast;  
A tree that looks at God all day,  
And lifts her leafy arms to pray;  
A tree that may in Summer wear  
A nest of robins in her hair;  
Upon whose bosom snow has  
lain;  
Who intimately lives with rain.  
Poems are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree.  
—Joyce Kilmer*

Kilmer, a New Jersey poet killed in World War I, was known for celebrating the natural world, and I couldn't agree with him more about trees. But trees are more than just beautiful: they clean the air, aerate the soil, provide environmental bounty for both humans and other creatures, they sequester carbon, communicate with each other via their roots, and even pass needed elements to trees in their root-network who may be suffering.

We use them for warmth and for constructing vessels, fences, furniture, floors, and structures of all kinds. Sustainable harvest is more important than ever. Certainly trees should be at the very top of the list of things we humans are most thankful for and protective of. And yet... over the course of my nearly two decades on the Peninsula, I've witnessed so many trees, acres of trees, needlessly cut down.

Unfortunately, this is often the standard for new arrivals: they love our magical green, our exquisite landscapes and forests. They buy a lot or a home, then often and quickly, trees are cut down to make way for more human development. I've found it difficult to convey the sadness of this in a photo because, what do you see? Where once there was a tree full of abundance and life, you find... a stump flat against the ground.

## A grand old Sitka

Several weeks ago the *Chinook Observer* received a call about an old Sitka Spruce being threatened in the Surfside Home Owners Association (SHOA). No one knows its age, but I've heard estimates from between 125 to 300 years old. Eleven years ago this same tree was threatened with removal and it was saved; the property owners got an official variance letter from the SHOA board of directors. Now it's déjà vu all over again.

Surfside has a homeowners covenant that trees cannot be higher than a roofline. But "roofline" is a moveable number depending on where your roof is located. The folks with homes in the "heights" — that is up on the ridge on J Street — have no tree height restrictions; and, as one homeowner admitted to me, some feel that these J Street people are somehow elite, can lord it over the homeowners on the "flats." (As we know, a view makes a property more valuable.) So the roof-height tree-cutting policy has in effect created a class hierarchy that, as I've recently discovered, is a red-hot issue.

This concern has been made hotter still after a "proactive enforcement ruling" on tree cutting was "rammed through" (as one owner put it) this past summer when many homeowners were absent. Any changes to covenant issues can only be taken up as part of a special session, which must be publicly announced in order to allow time for owners' comments. The board did not do this, no doubt understanding that tree cutting would be unpopular.

Generally, tree cutting does not get triggered until or unless there is a specific complaint from a Surfside homeowner. (Note: the complainant does not even need to have an adjoining property.) So, over time, many trees have been left to grow over roof height. Some property owners in "the flats" voluntarily cut their trees without prompting; so they'll see, if you drive around Surfside, some significantly tortured trees. Many have been topped, their branches growing parallel to the ground as if they were large green mushrooms; some are cut and struggling like skinny rooted toothpicks; others are simply



CATE GABLE

**A group of Surfside residents are trying to save a large old Sitka from being cut down because of a controversial tree height covenant: (in alphabetical order) Sharon and Mike Carnes, Ronda Christoph, Dave and Julie Drimmel, Betsey Nelson, Dan Pollard, JoAnne McMurphy, Phil and April Williams, and Jan Worrell.**



CATE GABLE

**Here is one possible outcome of the Surfside tree-height covenant dispute.**

cut down entirely to eliminate the whole problem. But because there are so many trees now growing higher than the stated maximum, this mandatory enforcement, if carried out, will likely cost homeowners tens of thousands of dollars.

## Perch tree

The large Sitka is remarkable for Surfside. It stands hundreds of feet above the other decapitated trees, most of which are scrubby ordinary beach pines. Driving up to 35306 I Place to take a look, I noticed the grand old tree from blocks away and also saw a pair of bald eagles soaring above it, lofting on the drafts along the Surfside cliffs. (This is eagle-nesting time.)

A dozen or so of the concerned neighbors gathered at the foot of the tree. One person said, "There are other people who would be here if they could be. Some live out of town" Many folks — some who've watched this tree 30 years or more — had stories about it. One person with adjacent property said, "Often there are red-winged blackbirds filling the tree. Then they fly off all at once. It's beautiful." Another said, "The pair of eagles you saw have a nest just up on the ridge. Often they perch in this tree."

So, the fight is on to save this grand Sitka — again. It's clearly the right thing to do. Just during the 15 minutes we gathered at its foot, many different bird species flew into and through its welcoming branches. Aside from its obvious ecological value, there's a Washington State Fish and Wildlife policy against the removal of "eagle perch trees" ([apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=220-610-100](https://apps.leg.wa.gov/wac/default.aspx?cite=220-610-100)). According to WAC 220-610-100, "a perch tree means a tree that is consistently used by eagles. It is often close to a nest or feeding site and is used for resting, hunting, consumption of prey, mating display and as a sentry post to defend the nest. The purpose of these rules is to protect the habitat and thereby maintain the population of the bald eagle."

It was suggested that the SHOA

board must now wait to establish whether this is an official "perch tree" and, therefore, cannot be taken down. Because of the rich resources of our ocean and other waterways, we are graced with an abundance of bald eagles, and, therefore, our trees — especially those on ridges like the Surfside high ground — provide eagle habitat. Trees can also be communal roost sites (where eagles might spend the night) or are important for establishing "flight corridors." Even other adjacent trees "on hills, ridges or cliffs" can be designated as providing wind protection for these eagle-frequented areas. This is a ruling to keep in mind when our large trees are threatened.

## A poke in the eye with a stick

In sum, it's clear that the tree dispute is a longstanding *cause célèbre* in Surfside in which probably no one involved will emerge unscathed (perhaps including this writer).

Granted, it's difficult to manage a group of homeowners who may all have differing ideas on aspects of home ownership and aesthetics. (One need only look at the appalling changes in the National Historic District of Oysterville to see what can happen when disagreements and lack of code enforcement take root.) Serving on a homeowners board and attempting to mitigate such disputes is generally a volunteer position with no benefits, an enormous time commitment, and no compensation. There is little upside, except perhaps keeping one's investment intact, and considerable downside.

So I sympathize with the homeowners in Surfside. It appears that the issue of "view privileges" and "tree cutting" — perhaps even the entire tree height covenant — should be revisited. I wish them well and hope it can happen congenially. But my heart is, without question, behind allowing this big Sitka to keep lifting her arms to the sky. Losing her would be tragic.

## ANIMAL SHELTER REPORT



JOYCE LANG

Rusty

## Cuddler Rusty is Pet of the Week

By CORY MCKEOWN  
For the Observer

Rusty is a very sweet and affectionate, lanky, tabby boy. He came to us after his owners had moved and abandoned him and the neighbors became concerned for his welfare and brought him to us.

At his first vet evaluation, they found that his blood sugar was higher than normal, and they ordered that he be put on insulin and a special diabetic diet. When he first got to the shelter, he was quite stressed, and stress can also cause an elevation in a cat's blood sugar. With a lot of TLC and good food, Rusty relaxed, and his blood sugar normalized. His last blood sugar reading was 170, which is good, and he was able to come off insulin.

Rusty is an older boy, about 10 years old. The person who surrendered him to us described him as "talkative, affectionate, always near you, and likes to be petted." We have found all these qualities to be true, and Rusty has become a staff favorite. He very much wants a home of his own, and spends a lot of his time sitting by the glass door leading to the lobby, asking for someone to come in and give him some love and attention. He loves to be brushed and to get chin scratches. Rusty would be a wonderful companion for someone wanting a mature, easy-going and affectionate kitty. He has lived with a dog in the past, and might be a good companion for a cat-friendly dog.

As Pet of the Week, Rusty's adoption fee has been halved to just \$12.50! If you are interested in this cuddle bug or any of the other pets at the shelter, visit our website [beachpets.com](http://beachpets.com) and follow the instructions in the "Adopt" section.

## Beach Pets Treasure Hunt online auction

We are having an online auction fundraiser April 25 to May 1, and would be very grateful to receive donations of auction items from our supporters. We would love to receive original art items, collectibles, vintage items (no large furniture, please) dog and cat supplies, and gift certificates for local businesses and attractions. All items in new or gently used condition, please. Donations can be brought to the shelter, 330 2nd St, NE in Long Beach during open hours, Tuesday-Saturday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Donations can also be taken to BOLD Coffee, Art and Framing 711 Pacific Ave N, Long Beach, on Tuesday or Thursday between 9 a.m. and 5 p.m.

This is an important fundraiser for us, and we are hoping to receive some nice donations to encourage bidding. Thank you supporters!

*We are open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday by appointment only for adoptions and surrenders. Stray drop-off, spay/neuter vouchers and pet food program are available during open hours.*

*View our available cats and dogs and submit an online application at our website [beachpets.com](http://beachpets.com). An approved adoption application is required before scheduling a meet and greet with your selected animal.*

## Letters

*Continued from Page A4*

risking life and limb to repair and maintain our roads and power systems so emergency vehicles can transport along with providing needed power for life-saving equipment.

The next time you might complain about

our dedicated professionals serving our communities, stop and remember the risk they put themselves in to help us be safe. Take a moment when the opportunity presents itself to say thank you to those who serve. Thank you!

**BLAIR BRADY**  
Rosburg

*See Letters, Page A4*

## LETTERS OF THANKS

### Evans family appreciates community support

The Family of the late Tom Evans wants to thank our community friends so very much for the cards, flowers, visits and other remembrances after his passing. All were such a comfort to us at this sad time.

**FAMILY OF TOM EVANS**

### A thank you for Rhett's Ranch Easter celebration

Rhett's Ranch did a marvelous Easter celebration for the kids at no charge but a donation. The petting zoo was so cute even my 2- and 3-year-old grandchildren loved it. The food was reasonably priced and perfect for the kids. The egg hunt was lots of fun and the atmosphere was welcoming and friendly. Thank you.

**CHARLOTTE PALIANI**  
Ocean Park