

The Asian Reporter

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Arakan forest turtle thought to be extinct spotted in Myanmar



RECLUSIVE REPTILES. Juvenile Arakan forest turtles are observed in the wild by a team of scientists in Myanmar. Texas researcher Steven Platt and members of the Wildlife Conservation Society discovered five Arakan forest turtles in May during a survey of wildlife in a remote forest in the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Sanctuary. The rare turtles were thought to be extinct in the wild. The discovery has boosted the chances of saving the brown-and-tan spotted reptile. (AP Photo/Wildlife Conservation Society, Steven Platt)

By Michael Casey
AP Environmental Writer

BANGKOK — The rare Arakan forest turtle, once thought to be extinct, has been rediscovered in a remote forest in Myanmar, boosting chances of saving the reptile after hunting almost destroyed its population, researchers said.

Texas researcher Steven Platt and staff from the New York-based Wildlife Conservation Society discovered five of the brown-and-tan-spotted turtles in May

during a survey of wildlife in the Rakhine Yoma Elephant Sanctuary.

The sanctuary contains thick stands of impenetrable bamboo forests, with the only trails made by the park's elephants, said Platt, of Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas.

Platt said he and his team were able to reach the area only by small boat and endured round-the-clock torrential rains and bands of leeches before finding their first Arakan turtle on May 31.

"At this moment, all of the physical

hardships of the trip were forgotten," Platt said in an e-mail interview.

Native to the Arakan hills of western Myanmar, the turtles were believed extinct for close to a century until they started turning up in Asian food markets in the mid-1990s.

The local name for the turtle is "Pyant Cheezar," which translates to "turtle that eats rhinoceros feces." Sumatran rhinos were once found in the area, but vanished half a century ago due to hunting.

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Japan studies noisier hybrids to protect blind

By Yuri Kageyama
AP Business Writer

TOKYO — An appeal of a hybrid or electric car is its super-quiet drive. But worries are growing that blind people may be endangered by their silence.

The Japanese government has set up a panel with automakers, organizations for the blind, and consumers groups to come up with a solution, which could have such vehicles emitting what sounds like engine noise or musical sounds like a cell phone

ring tone, officials said.

A legal change would be needed to equip the vehicles with such special features.

"We are still listening to different opinions and trying to figure out the best solution," said Yuta Kaga, spokesman for Toyota Motor Corp., which makes the hit gas-electric Prius hybrid and is represented on the panel.

The panel, which began meeting in July, plans to have a proposal by the end of the year, according to the Ministry of Land,

Infrastructure, Transport, and Tourism.

It was set up partly in response to worries voiced by the blind. The Japan Federation of the Blind, which submitted a request in June, is asking the government to instruct hybrid-makers to make the vehicles safer for the blind.

An informal survey of 52 blind people carried out by the group last year found more than half of the respondents said they were terrified of hybrids because they

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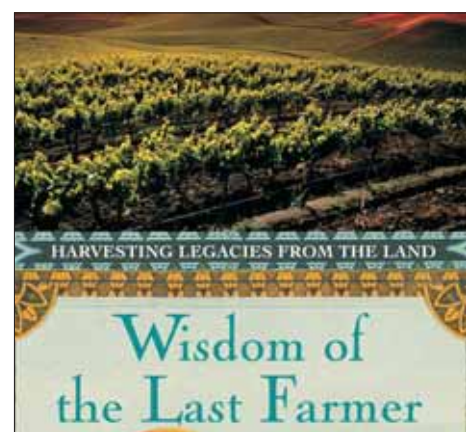
Fourth annual Agent Orange meeting held

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Discriminatory history of Portland revealed

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Cultivating memory and history on the farm

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Locally produced Papers documentary to premiere in Portland

Papers, a Portland-produced documentary about undocumented youth and the challenges they face as they turn 18 without legal status, is making its Portland premiere Saturday, September 26 at the Hollywood Theatre.

The film follows a group of undocumented youth from around the country sharing their stories with the American public. It also includes interviews with representative Mike Honda (D-California); Karen Narasaki of the Asian American Justice Center; Kent Wong of the Center for Labor Research and Education at the University of California, Los Angeles; Marshall Wong from the Los Angeles County Commission on Human

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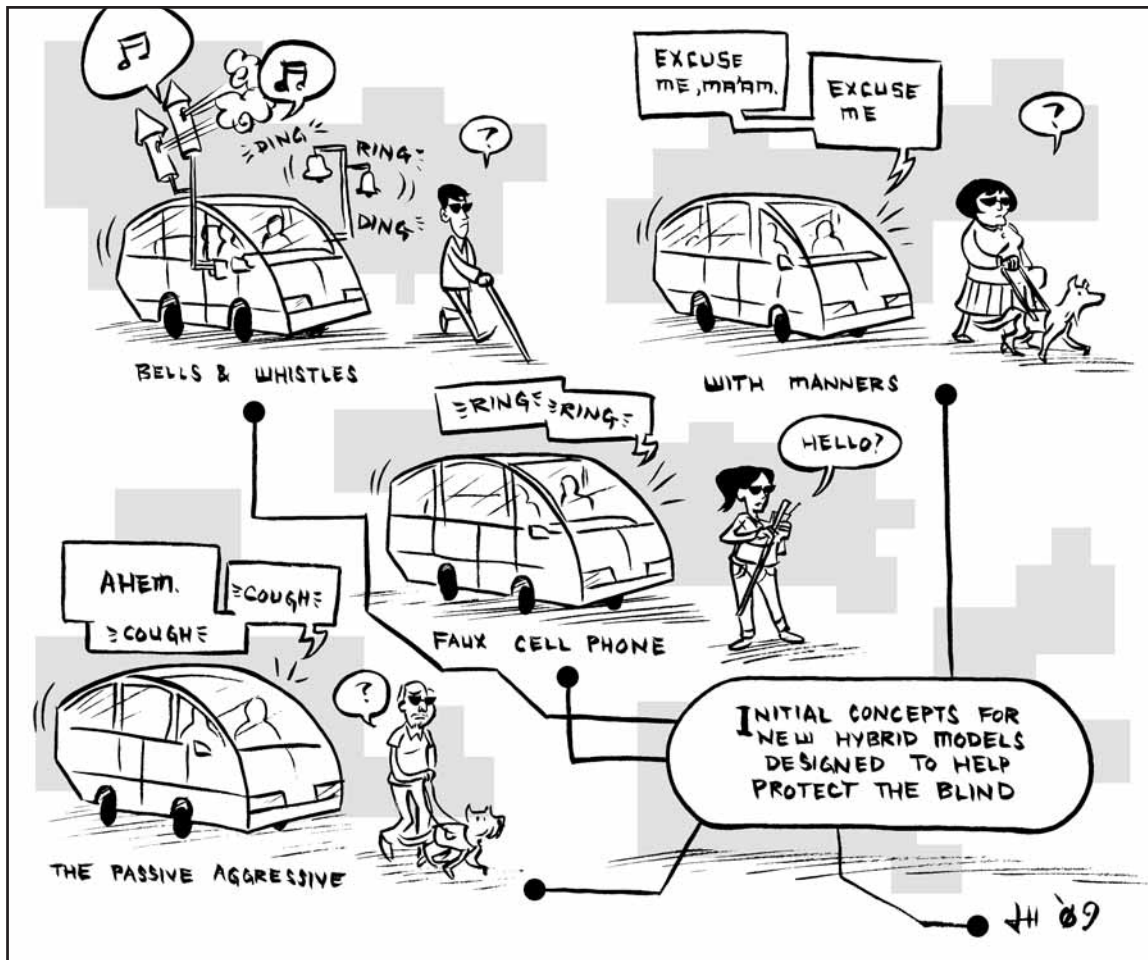
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MY TURN

■ Marie Lo



It's been a bumpy ride

When I first arrived in Portland, I was pleasantly surprised by the city's progressive ideals. I knew very little about Portland, but I liked its commitment to sustainable practices, careful urban planning, and its public transportation system. I was inspired by the miles and miles of bike-friendly streets and the city's DIY spirit.

One thing that has been difficult — maybe because of the city's progressive investments — has been to open productive dialogues about discrimination. Perhaps bringing it up threatens to undermine the progressive image Portland has of itself. I'm not entirely sure. But when I heard about a tour of its hidden discrimination past, I jumped at the chance to see the underbelly of liberal Portland.

The tour of Portland's hidden discrimination history, dubbed "Fasten Your Seat Belts — It's Been a Bumpy Ride," debuted in 2008 and is run by the Fair Housing Council of Oregon. For my particular trip on September 2, the council partnered with the Lawyers' Campaign for Equal Justice to combine housing discrimination history with legal history.

Diane Hess, the education director of the Fair Housing Council, was our guide, illuminating the various stops and sites along the way. Lawyers Diane Schwartz Sykes and Cashauna Hill provided insights on past and current discrimination cases. Presenters Ed Washington, the community liaison for Diversity Initiatives at Portland State University (PSU), and Valerie Otani, a Portland-based public artist, offered first-hand accounts of discrimination.

Against the backdrop of what was once the city of Vanport, now dry yellow fields bisected by empty roads, Washington told of the 1948 flood and his family's escape. He brought to life the community that had existed there, rendering the loss and dispossession even more devastating. Otani, creator of the traditional Japanese gates at the Portland Expo Center, described the World War II experiences of Japanese-American families who were corralled there. While she spoke, metal plates strung across the gates shimmered and chimed in the wind. Each plate represents an internee housed at the center.

As we drove through the various neighborhoods, which included my own of Boise Elliot, what struck me was how these sites of discrimination were not invisible or in out-of-the-way locations. They were hidden in plain sight, and through the darkened windows of the tour bus I became a tourist in my own city.

PGE Park, formerly Civic Stadium, was the site of huge Ku Klux Klan rallies in the 1920s. From 1879 to 1910, south of Burnside and west of 14th Avenue, were more than 21 acres of communally owned terraced vegetable gardens tended by Chinese immigrants. They were initially forced there by anti-Chinese laws that allowed them to settle only in certain areas. From 1919 to 1952, the Portland Realty Board Code of Ethics prevented its members from selling property in white neighborhoods to African Americans and Asians, restricting them to inner north and northeast Portland. Up north, just off Lombard, is the Del Monte plant where in 2004 workers were illegally fired for complaining of safety and work violations. These are just some of the "highlights" of the tour.

The most powerful moment was when our bus stopped at the corner of S.E. Pine Street and S.E. 31st Avenue. It is the ubiquity and mundane quality of this neighborhood street that sends chills down my spine: a tree-lined street and a boxy three-story brick apartment complex at the corner. On the ground floor is a row of garage doors. Just outside these doors is the spot where on November 12, 1988 Mulugeta Seraw, a 28-year-old Ethiopian student at PSU, was bludgeoned to death by white supremacists. Today, there is a nondescript car parked in the driveway. There is no hint that a young life was brutally ended, no memorial to mark his family's and a community's loss.

Calling it a tour of Portland's discrimination history suggests all these events took place a long time ago, and that we have progressed and moved on. It may be tempting to point to our current president as a sign of the end of discrimination. But, it might be precisely these kinds of victories against injustice, discrimination, and inequality that have mobilized a resurgent militia movement and a steady increase in hate groups. According to 2008 figures from the Southern Poverty Law Center, hate groups have increased by 54 percent since 2000. The center also says the growing number of immigrants, the faltering economy, and Obama's election have fuelled the increase in membership.

What started out as a tour of Portland's hidden discrimination history became, in some ways, an act of commemoration at sacred sites — sites shaped by dispossession and pain as well as endurance and resilience. Commemoration connects us to the past and acknowledges how our current freedoms are a legacy of early struggles. This hidden history is everywhere around us, and there is still work to be done.

See related story on page 16

Bus tour journeys through Portland's discriminatory history

By Julie Stegeman
The Asian Reporter

It's sometimes hard to imagine, while navigating through crowded city streets, the struggles of past Portlanders for civil rights. "Fasten Your Seat Belts — It's Been a Bumpy Ride," a bus tour exploring historic sites of discrimination in Portland, brings the past to life with its narrative on pertinent historical laws and events and speakers who were affected by them, all made more tangible by being on location.

The tour — offered by the Fair Housing Council of Oregon and the Lawyers' Campaign for Equal Justice — condenses the discrimination history of Portland and Oregon into a three-hour bus ride. Led by tour guide Diane Hess, education director of the Fair Housing Council, the bus ride covered events in Oregon history from the mid-1800s — when a series of exclusion laws was passed in Oregon to keep African Americans out of its borders — to the present.

Historic events were offered in geographical, not chronological, order, skipping from year to year as the bus came to relevant sites.

One of the stops was the Portland Metropolitan Exposition Center, formerly known as the Pacific International Exposition Center, the site of a temporary holding facility for Japanese Americans — forced to leave their homes due to Executive Order 9066 during World War II — until long-term internment camps were constructed.

Portland artist Valerie Otani, standing in front of one of the *torii* gates she designed to commemorate the Japanese Americans who were held there, spoke about how this point in history affected Japanese Americans. Not only was there physical restriction during the internment, there was also loss of income and businesses, the freezing in 1942 of their assets which were inaccessible until 1955 — well after the end of the war — and the eroding of relationships, within the community as well as within families.



BUMPY RIDE. "Fasten Your Seat Belts — It's Been a Bumpy Ride," a bus tour exploring historic sites of discrimination in Portland, brings the past to life with its narrative on pertinent historical laws and events. Pictured is Portland artist Valerie Otani, a speaker on the tour, standing in front of one of the torii gates she designed to memorialize the site of a temporary holding facility for Japanese Americans forced to leave their homes due to Executive Order 9066 during World War II. (AR Photos/Julie Stegeman)

Tour participants learned about the 1886 and 1887 attacks on Chinese by mobs in Portland, Oregon City, Albina, Mount Tabor, and Guilds Lake; the 1882 Federal Chinese Exclusion Act that prevented Chinese immigration; the 1919 Portland Realty Board Code of Ethics, which until 1952 banned its members from selling property in white neighborhoods to people of color, fearing they would depress property values; and many other acts of discrimination.

The bus also drove to PGE Park, formerly known as Civic Stadium, a rally site for the KKK during its peak time in Oregon, the 1920s, and to the area surrounding the Multnomah Athletic Club, which used to house the Portland Chinese Garden Community's terraced gardens until the Chinese were gradually pushed out because "they were in the way of progress." An innocent-looking corner on the bus route was the site of a well-known hate crime in 1988, the

murder of Ethiopian immigrant Mulugeta Seraw by three racist skinheads.

Not all of the tour sites had negative histories. The bus stopped at the former location of the city of Vanport, where Ed Washington, a one-time resident, gave a talk about his experiences growing up there. He described how the city was constructed in 1942 as public housing for Henry Kaiser's shipyard employees and that, although the housing itself was segregated, the schools were integrated and the city was the first in Oregon to hire African-American teachers. Disaster struck Vanport in 1948, when a cataclysmic flood wiped out the entire city, leaving residents homeless. The city was never rebuilt.

A modern-day example of housing integration was seen at New Columbia in north Portland, a mixed-income community that includes public housing, rentals, senior housing, and privately owned homes.



Interspersed among the stories of historical events, attorneys from the Campaign for Legal Justice offered insight on current-day discrimination, much of it related to unfair housing practices and exploitation of immigrant workers, who are sometimes unaware of their rights or threatened with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement when attempting to exercise those rights.

The tour also touched upon the worrisome increase in hate crimes since 2000 — in part due to the recession, the election of President Obama, and the immigration debate — citing several recent examples in Oregon.

If, as philosopher and poet George Santayana says, "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it," then "Fasten Your Seat Belts — It's Been a Bumpy Ride" is an excellent vehicle for achieving a brighter future for Portland.

To learn more, or to schedule a tour, visit <www.fhco.org/tours.htm>.

Seasonal flu vaccine available for adults

Continued from page 11

People are encouraged to call their healthcare provider for more information.

A seasonal vaccine will not protect individuals against H1N1. However, a new vaccine against H1N1 flu is in production and will become available this fall. Federal guidelines call for it to be offered to those at highest risk for complications from H1N1 before it is offered to the general public.

Health officials encourage everyone to obtain the

vaccination for seasonal flu, especially people most at risk of complications. Those most at risk include children age six months to 19 years, adults age 50 and older, individuals with certain chronic medical conditions, and nursing home and long-term care facility residents. People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from seasonal flu — including healthcare workers, household contacts of high-risk individuals, and household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children younger than six months — are also encouraged to obtain

the vaccination.

Vaccination with the live, nasal-spray flu vaccine (FluMist) is an option for healthy people between age two to 49, except for pregnant women. Healthcare workers younger than 50 who are in good health and are not providing care to anyone who has a severely weakened immune system should consider receiving FluMist.

Seasonal flu shots are available through healthcare providers and pharmacies. For more information, or to locate flu clinics, visit <www.flucliniclocator.org>.

Locally produced Papers documentary to premiere in Portland

Continued from page one

Relations; and others.

The September 26 premiere takes place at 7:00pm at the Hollywood Theatre, located at 4122 N.E. Sandy Boulevard.

The film will also screen several times next month in Portland:

October 5: Hollywood Theatre.

October 8: Center for Intercultural Organizing, 700 N. Killingsworth

Street.

October 15: Portland Latin American Film Festival, Regal Broadway Metroplex, S.W. Broadway at S.W. Main Street.

For more information, or to reserve tickets for the September 26 premiere, call (503) 281-4215 or visit <www.hollywoodtheatre.org>. To learn more about the film and future screenings, visit <www.papersthemovie.com>.

Wondering what's going on this week?

Check out The AR's Community and A.C.E. Calendar sections, on pages 10 and 12.

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