

Beachcombers' Alert
6306 - 21st Ave. N.E.
Seattle, WA 98115

Beachcombers' Alert!™

Non-Profit Quarterly Newsletter
Subscriptions: 1 year - \$20.00 US
Canada & Overseas - \$25.00 US
Issued ~ January, April, July, October

“May the tides be good to you.”

— Paul J. Ebbesmeyer



John's Beachcombing Museum (Photos 26-28). Watch for the fish float tower driving along Route 101 located at 143 Andersonville Road, Forks, WA 98331 (27). John's Museum contains one of North America's finest flotsam collections. Museum hours: 10am - 5pm, June-August; other times by appointment (360-640-0320). **Photos 26, 28) John Anderson** points to ship's pulley (26) with close-up (28) found at nearby Norwegian Memorial Beach most likely from the Norwegian Bark Prince Arthur wrecked about the turn of the century. Neither side of the pulley shows any markings. It's on display along with other Norwegian Bark artifacts at John's Museum. (John Anderson photos).

Sea Beans in Texas. Beachcombing Matagorda Island on August 10, 2015, in six hours **Mike Burnett** made a remarkable haul of hundreds of sea beans: 1 Calatola; 3 oxyrhyncus; 2 flat black Mucunas; 8 Mary's beans; 11 brown nickars; 2 grey nickars; 1 egg fruit; 134 sea hearts; 74 hamburgers; 4 calabash; 2 "Brainfruit" (aka Donovan's brains); 10 prickly palms; 11 sea purses; 3 blister pods; 7 starnut palms; 2 navel spurges; 1 antidote vine; 8 mermaid's purses; and a few yet to be identified. Mike also found a message in a bottle containing three notes, three pieces of sea glass and 3 grey nickars! For sea bean ID, visit www.seabean.com.

Flotsam Scuttlebutt. My cousin **Bob Kieding** writes the *Scuttlebutt* column for *The Santa Barbara News-Press*. A while ago, Bob reported a couple of fascinating flotsam: "A pair of brass knuckles nailed to a wooden board washed ashore north of Chicago at Highland Park on Lake Michigan during the mid-1940's. Perhaps a Chicago gangland member attempting to hide evidence?"

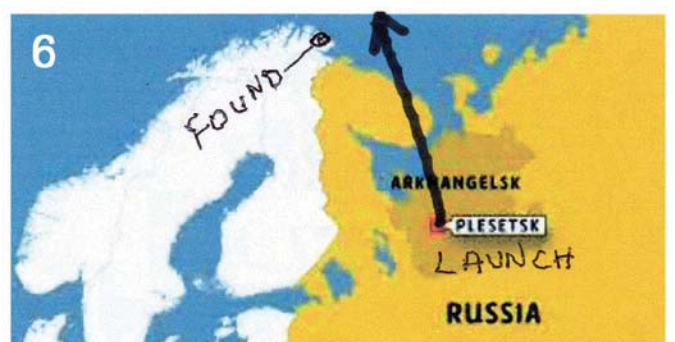
"In the 1960's off Santa Barbara, an aerospace missile about eight-feet long, and likely a misfiring from the Pacific Missile Range launching area about forty-five miles down the coast from Santa Barbara. I found it while I was sailing about 25 miles off-shore on my way from Catalina Island to Santa Barbara. I lugged the strange object home, then called the US Navy. I had barely put the phone down when a truck raced up to our house, two men jumped out, grabbed the missile, and quickly drove away with barely a word spoken."

Beachcombers' Alert!™

OCTOBER – DECEMBER 2015
78 ISSUES SINCE 1996

Jet Wing Flap

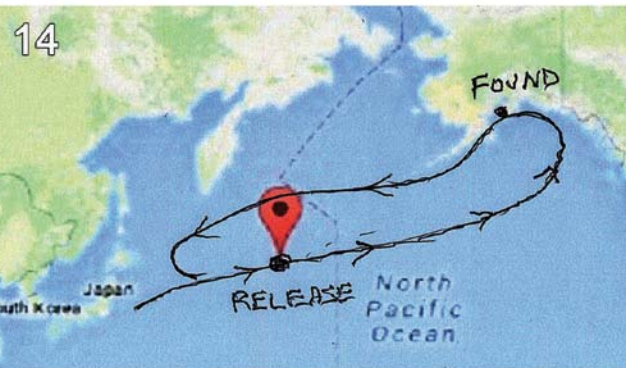
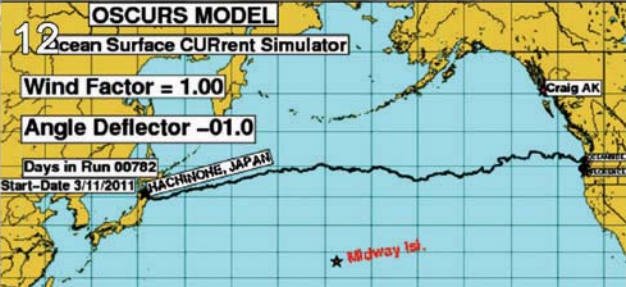
Rocket Nose Cone



Stories for Photos 1-3 on page 3: Photo 1) Flaperon found on Reunion Island off Madagascar (red dot); **2)** Flaperon on Boeing jet; and **3)** General drift of flaperon from search area to Reunion Island. Possible locations of long-range debris occur along the drift lines in the general pattern of currents surrounding garbage patches in the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans.

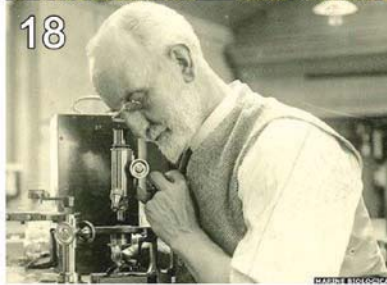
Stories for Photos 4-6 on pages 3-4: Photo 4) Soyuz nose cone fairing found afloat off northern Norway; **5)** Two nose fairings released during Soyuz launch; and **6)** Locations of launch (Plesetsk Cosmodrome) and recovered fairing. Photos: Russian Defense Ministry; European Space Agency; Arian Space.

Beachcombers' Alert, quarterly nonprofit newsletter, circulation circa 300. **All rights reserved.** Unless noted otherwise, attribute authorship to Dr. Curtis C. Ebbesmeyer. Photo editing and collages by Dave Ingraham. Managing editor, Jim White. We take no advertising or institutional funding. Without your donations, the Alert will cease publication. For a 1-year subscription, send your annual donation to Beachcombers' Alert, 6306 21st Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98115 USA. Make checks to B&OIA (Beachcombers and Oceanographers International Association): \$20 in the USA; \$25 US dollars overseas. Printed by Blue Sky Printing, Poulsbo, Washington.



Transpacific Flotsam. (Stories for Photos 7-14 on pages 4-5): **Photo 7)** Shrine crowns (kasagi) at Oceanside (7, top, **Gordon Rood** photo) and Florence (7, bottom, photo from oregonbeachcomber.com); **8)** One of Japan's 80,000 Shinto Shrines; **9)** Fish Attraction Device (FAD) lost off Yoron Island, Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan, and found during May 2015 near La Push, WA (Kacey Karp photo); **10-11)** Russ Lewis holds a sign near the yellow tote both from the Japanese tsunami (**Cheri Lewis** photos); **12)** OSCURS computer simulation of two shrine drifts by Jim Ingraham (Driftbusters Inc.) in which one kasagi stranded at Oceanside and the second continued drifting south to Florence; **13-14)** Drift of a yellow MIB (Message In a Bottle; red teardrop) launched at mid-North Pacific and recovered during a debris cleanup in Kenai National Park, suggesting two drift routes: directly to Kenai and laying for years on the shore; and / or a loop or two around Aleut Gyre (**Monica Decker** photo).

Atlantic Ocean



Pacific Ocean



Atlantic & Pacific Flotsam. (Stories for Photos 15-25 on Pages 5-6): **Photos 15-16)** Yellow submarines and assorted rings beached at Cornwall, England (Tracey Williams photos); **17)** Refugee raft stranded on June 28, 2015, on Sargent Beach, south of Bay City in Matagorda County, Texas (photo, **Stephen Bell**, shell.driftwood@gmail.com); **18-20)** Century-old Message In a Bottle (MIB) released by **Dr. George Parker Bidder** and recovered by **Marianne and Horst Winkler** 108 years later (photos: 18, 19, Marine Biological Association of the United Kingdom; photo 20, The Telegraph); **21-22)** Lauren Mackie samples decomposing whale blubber found near Craig, Alaska (Kathy Peavey photos); **23)** Beeswax from a Manilla Galleon found in the 1950's by **Tap Ames'** father near Neah Bay, Washington (Tap Ames photo); **24)** Echo sounder discovered by **Jim Purdy** on Kodiak Island, Alaska; **25)** ARGOS satellite buoy possibly dating from the late-1970's found at Dall Island, Southeast Alaska (Tory O'Connell photo).

Photo 23) Beeswax. "Curt, we met years ago on an Ocean Shores beach walk," emailed **Tap Ames**. "I told you about some old wax my Dad found in the 1950's while beachcombing Shi Shi Beach. It came to light selling Dad's house. It's the size of a volleyball, fissured and seems to be beeswax. We tested; it floats."

From my experience with shipwrecks, Tap's report resembles beeswax from a Manila Galleon. I'd guess it floated from one of several galleons wrecked along the coast of North America during 1565-1815. In those years, beeswax served utilitarian purposes including church candles and axel lubricant.

Photo 24) Echo Sounder. "The Navy's been conducting military exercises in the Gulf of Alaska over the years," emailed **Michael Armstrong** with a mystery he'd received.

"I found [April 28, 2008] what appears to be a large echo sounding device on a remote beach, Kodiak Island, Alaska. It is shaped somewhat like an enclosed boat. Dimensions: 3 feet wide x 6 feet long x 2 feet high. Weight: 300+ pounds. No outside ID. Interior serial number, 13030-e13525-1, REV.H. It is in good shape. Any ideas?" **Jim Purdy**, Kodiak Land Surveying.

Photo 25) Old Argos Drifter. "Jim Lange found an old yellow Argos buoy high on the beach at Dall Island; we have it at the Sitka Sound Science Center" emailed **Tory O'Connell** (July 8, 2015). The message stenciled on the buoy reads: "Free Drifting Scientific Buoy, Property of Atmospheric Environment Service, Do not recover."

Tory made inquiries. "We found out that this buoy is probably more than a decade old," replied **Robert Daigle** from Metrologic Service of Canada. Wikipedia provides a hint of the buoy's age: "Argos is a satellite-based system which collects, processes and disseminates environmental data from fixed and mobile platforms. Argos geographically locates the source of the data anywhere on Earth. Argos was established in 1978." I'd guess scientists deployed this Argos drifter soon after satellite tracking became available, making it possibly thirty-plus years old.

Beach Life

by **David McCroskey**

Recently I read **Rachel Carson's** wonderfully written book 'The Edge of the Sea.' Carson (1904-1967) may best be known for her book 'Silent Spring' which many credit with advancing the environmental movement in America and abroad.

Her main passion, however, was for the sea. Carson wrote a sea trilogy which explores the whole of ocean life from the shores to the depths. *The Edge of the Sea* thus deals with sandy beaches, tide pools, rocky shores, even the story of a grain of sand. She shows the seemingly simple plant and animal life of the seashores is a complex and beautiful place deserving of our compassion, understanding and, finally, protection.

Many people, organizations and Government agencies are working to support a healthy Pacific coast that provides not only habitat for fish, birds and wildlife, but

also recreational and economic opportunities for countless individuals and communities.

Here in Washington State, where I live, driving on our large, broad sandy beaches is mostly allowed. On a nice summer weekend it can often turn into a busy thoroughfare however.

Washington State is by no means the only State that allows driving on its coastal beaches. With perhaps some exceptions, individual states are responsible for their own coastal policies; there are often competing interests. Vehicle access is considered by some to be an important part of regional culture and economics.

Personally I don't like it. So I just choose not to go to those beaches in the summer. There are plenty of other great beaches. But as Carson shows us most all coastal beaches are incredibly unique, and as such deserve protection. Coastal areas should be left in, as much as is possible, a wild state. Ocean beaches are the tip of a mysterious world. That sense of mystery is lost when these beaches are turned into highways.

The coastal communities that rely on visitors fear fewer people would come to the coast if they couldn't drive on it. But they may actually find that more people would come. This could make for a more sustainable year round economy, more aligned with the values of the Pacific Northwest.

Not unlike our National Parks it's often a balance between accessibility and preserving the natural beauty. So of course there needs to be accommodations, especially for the disabled. That certainly can and should be done.

As Rachel Carson shows us, even a large, broad, mostly flat beach that appears to have no life on it actually is teeming with life. Most of that life can be buried or waiting until nightfall to search for food. Vehicles certainly impact this mostly unseen life.

Beachcombers and families who walk along the surf must compete with vehicles as well. Trash that accumulates after a busy weekend is often left behind or blown into the fragile dunes.

It's safe to say more limits need to be imposed on the number and the places where vehicles can go.

Carson's books poetically show what treasures these beaches are; we should make sure they stay that way.



Mystery grey knight on a brown horse. Beachcombers have reported these sea heroes stranded in Texas and Florida. Four purchased in Seattle in 2015 carried no markings to ID the manufacturer. Each horse (upper inside) carried one of the following embossed numbers: 2, 4, 7, 8. Please email reports to Curt. **Kieran Powell photo.**

Wing Flap from Missing Jet

Story for Page 1, Photos 1-3

On March 8, 2014, Malaysian Flight MH370 from Kuala Lumpur to Beijing vanished with 239 passengers. Nearly 17 months later, on July 29, 2015, the first wreckage turned up, a remarkable 4,000 miles from the crash site. On La Reunion, a French flyspeck island 400 miles east of Madagascar, beachcombers found a wing flap. Aircraft experts identified the flotsam as a flaperon from the aft section of the Boeing 777 jet's main wing.

The flaperon provides clues as to the drift of other floating wreckage. No doubt, on striking the water, the jet shattered into many pieces some of which floated as indicated by the flaperon. Unfortunately, how fast the winds and currents push flotsam in the sea remains unknown for nearly all drifters.

Useful perspective can be derived from the flaperon's drift speed equaling the difference between the start and ending locations divided by the intervening elapsed time. Beachcombers found the flaperon approximately 4,380 nautical miles — twice the distance between Los Angeles to New York City — down-current of the area where vessels searched the sea floor. The time elapsed between the jet's crash and flaperon recovery equals 508 days (March 8, 2014 to July 29, 2015; 1.39 years; 16.7 months). Therefore, the flap could have drifted as the proverbial crow might fly at 8.6 nautical miles per day along a well-known trans-Indian Ocean flotsam pathway.

The speed for a specific piece of flotsam depends on how it rides in or under the water. Flotsam riding low in the water with little rising above the water line may drift five miles per day (low windage speed), whereas winds may blow flotsam riding high on the water 25 miles per day (high windage speed).

Investigators in France have not released details concerning their flotation tests. How a drifter floats can vary with time while the drifter travels. Some flotsam floating underwater includes spilled oil, drift logs and glass fishing floats. It may be that immediately after the crash the flaperon floated horizontally on the surface, then gradually filled with water like some fishing floats punctured by micro-holes. As they grow, barnacles add to the flap's weight. After a time, perhaps the flaperon floated vertically in or under the water with little direct exposure to the wind.

The flaperon begs the question as to the locations of other debris. Islands are well known flotsam attractors; islands other than Reunion may harbor debris.

Amongst thousands of shards spewed by the plane's impact, some may have drifted much faster than the flaperon. A drift simulation from the day of the crash through the date of the flaperon recovery by **Sarah Burns** of Australia's *Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organization* (CSIRO) illustrates this point. According to Sarah's sophisticated computer simulation, the main mass of the debris drifted into the major ocean gyre circling between Western Australia and Africa's east coast. Higher windage objects scattered about the Indian Ocean as far as South Africa. Assuming some flotsam drifted 25 miles per day, suggests a travel distance of 12,700 miles — half way round Earth at its Equator — a

distance placing some debris approaching Florida at the time the slow-drifting Flaperon stranded at Reunion. Other debris may be trapped in the garbage patches within the Indian and South Atlantic Oceans.

Soyuz Nose Cone

Page 1, Photos 4-6

by **Terje Nordberg, Oslo, Norway**

In June 2015, Norwegian fishermen discovered an unidentified floating object off Batsfjord (70.9 degrees North Latitude; 29.1 degrees East Longitude), a village in Finnmark County near Norway's northernmost shores not far from the Russian border. After towing the boat — like object, the fishermen delivered it to Batsfjord police.

"I think it could be an ST fairing from a Soyuz rocket," Twittered **Stephen Clark**. *"You can see two round caps next to each other on the top of the fairing. One of them seems to be attached to the other fairing and in its place there is a hole. You can see the other cap next to the hole and numbers on square plates welded to the wreckage. With some imagination you can see them on the fairing as well. Two days ago a Soyuz launched a satellite into polar orbit. The rocket lifted off from Plesetsk and I guess towards north, so the fairing could have ended up near Norway."*

Plesetsk, a military base about 800 kilometers north of Moscow, is used preferentially for placing military satellites into high-inclination polar orbits. Falling debris lands to the north on largely uninhabited Arctic and polar terrain. The flight's name (Kosmos 2506) suggests a classified payload.

Originally developed as an InterContinental Ballistic Missile (ICBM) site, Plesetsk served for numerous satellite launches using the R-7 and other rockets. For much of its history Plesetsk functioned as a secondary location, with most orbital launches taking place from Baikonur. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, Baikonur wound up in foreign territory which charged usage fees causing Plesetsk to become considerably more active since the 2000's.

Not long before fishermen found the fairing, a new Russian military global surveillance platform began orbiting Earth after launching from the Plesetsk Cosmodrome. According to the Russian Defense Ministry, the payload soared into space atop a Soyuz rocket which lifted off at 1644 GMT. The three-stage rocket flew in the Soyuz-2.1b configuration, an upgraded version of the Soyuz with a new third stage engine and digital avionics. Russian military authorities said the launcher successfully deployed its payload into orbit, completing the second Soyuz flight from Plesetsk in 17 days.

Tracking by the U.S. military indicated the payload circled Earth in an elliptical orbit with a high point of 675 kilometers and a low point of 183 kilometers. This is the third Persona imaging satellite, following the launch of the first craft in 2008 and a second mission in 2013. The first Persona satellite failed shortly after launch due to an electronics failure. The second Persona spacecraft apparently remains operational.

Persona satellites downlink reconnaissance imagery to Earth via radio. The spacecraft launched Monday reportedly

carried a laser communications system to transmit images at faster rates. Persona-series satellites are designed for longer life in space. Tuesday's launch was delayed from early June in the wake of the April 28 launch mishap that doomed a Russian Progress supply ship heading for the International Space Station.

Sources: Stephen Clark, [Twitter@StephenClark1](https://twitter.com/StephenClark1); Terje Nordberg, NorthAtlanticSurfaceDrifters@gmail.com

Shinto Shrines

Page 2, Photos 7-8

Most Japanese practice Shinto religious rituals. Japan's 80,000 Shinto shrines reflect the popularity of the largely nature-based religion. The great tsunami damaged or destroyed 4,585 shrines. Inevitably, flotsam from the devastation drifted into the North Pacific Ocean.

Weeks after the second anniversary of the 2011 tsunami, the crowns from two shrines stranded in Oregon, the first on March 22, 2013, at Oceanside, the second a month later and 120 miles to the south at Florence. The first bore no markings indicating provenance whereas the second carried traceable Kanji characters.

In beachcomber photos, **Sadafumi Uchiyami**, curator of Portland's Japanese Garden immediately recognized the 14-foot long iconic red crossbeams ("kasagi" in Japanese) as those of Shinto Shrine gates. From which of many Shrines did they originate? Sadafumi became obsessed with tracing the Kanji characters.

Sadafumi's obsession subsequently narrowed his search. The tsunami struck the Tohoku region, home to 300 shrines (Akita, Aomori, Fukushima, Iwate, Miyagi and Yamagata prefectures in the northern-most portion of Honshu, Japan's largest island). An inscription indicated the Florence shrine had been dedicated in 1988 by **Toshimi Takahashi**. Undaunted by the name's frequent occurrence, Sadafumi's search deepened when he noticed that Takahashi's name mentioned his birth in the Year of the Snake. Considering the dedication date, he calculated Takahashi was 84 years old in 2013.

Despite this specificity, hundreds of phone calls proved necessary to locate Takahashi living in Hachinohe, Aomori Prefecture. When he felt the earthquake preceding the Tsunami, he'd run to high ground. As Toshimi turned to watch the unfolding devastation, he witnessed the tsunami wash away his beloved shinto shrine gate.

With transport provided by Pacific Lumber and Shipping Co. of Longview, Washington, and Yamato Transport of Japan, the kasagi will be rededicated in a ceremony.

Sources: Story leads: **Bob Cline** for the article from the *Oregonian*; **Richard Read:** *Homecoming for more than tsunami debris. The Oregonian, July 27, 2015*; **Ellen and Pete Steen;** *The Association of Shinto Shrines.*

More Transpacific Flotsam

Page 2, Photos 9-14

Photo 9) Mystery FAD (Fish Attraction Device)

During May 23-24, 2015, **Kacey Karp** discovered a 15-foot FAD near Teahwhit Head on Second Beach at La Push, Washington (47 degrees, 52.69 minutes North Latitude; 124 degrees, 36.50 minutes West Longitude).

In July the Alert reported the FAD; in this Alert, the mystery has been partially solved.

"According to the Government of Japan, it was a support buoy attached to a floating fish reef in the waters off Yoron Island, Kagoshima Prefecture, located between Kyushu and the Okinawa island chain," emailed **Chuck Matthews**, Washington Department of Ecology. "The local fisheries association says the buoy was last seen between 5 and 6 years ago (before the Tohoku tsunami), and the cause of its disappearance is unknown. Typhoons are common in the seas where it was placed and storm surges may have helped dislodge it."

Previously, two FAD's of this design stranded along Washington: a red buoy from Ginoza, Okinawa; and a yellow buoy of unknown origin. The Ginoza Buoy drifted 5,000 nautical miles between August 9, 2006, and April 9, 2007 (elapsed time of 245 days, 8.1 months) at the remarkably high speed of 20 miles per day. If the present yellow FAD drifted at that speed during five years, it could have covered 36,000 miles equivalent three orbits around the North Pacific (Turtle) Gyre.

Story lead courtesy **John Deely**.

Photos 10-11) Tsunami Sign and Tote. "A few months ago [June 15, 2015], a large plastic sign from a construction company and a yellow plastic tote from a tofu factory washed from the city of Otsuchi, Japan, to Leadbetter Spit, WA," emailed **Russ Lewis**. "They were later identified by **Hanako (Hana) Kojima** of the Japanese Environmental Action Network (JEAN), as lost from Otsuchi, Japan, during the 2011 tsunami. It took over four years for them to wash ashore onto our beach. They were sent to Japan where they reside in a local Otsuchi museum."

Participants at the museum reunion ceremony offered the following comments: 1) From the current business owner of Matsumura Construction (plastic sign; **Mr. Tenman**): "1) Thank you very much. We lost six employees and our retired president. Our auditor and company president are still missing to this day. Having the sign come back to us feels like one of our missing people came back. It's been four years since the Tsunami and it's hard to remember that people are still trying to recover even for the Japanese living in Japan. This news was very positive and very important for them."; and 2) From the Tofu factory owner (yellow tote): "I am very happy to get my tote back from before Tsunami. I would have never thought it travelled so far and would ever come back."

Photo 12) Shinto Shrine Drift. The computer program OSCURS (Ocean Surface CURrent Simulator) explains why the two kasagi stranded near the same time and place along Oregon. **Jim Ingraham**, OSCURS' inventor, input the relevant data for the two kasagi finding the same simulation produced identical drift tracks for both kasagi with the difference that one beached at Oceanside leaving the second to continue southward to Florence. OSCURS suggests both drifted close to one another at six miles per day during their 4,500-mile transpacific transit.

Photos 13-14) Message in a Yellow Bottle.

On Christmas Eve, a German sailor in the mid-North Pacific threw a message rolled up in a bottle he'd painted yellow to attract beachcombers. Nearly nine years later, during debris clean up in Kenai Fjords National Park, the bottle stood out from other plastic trash. Inside, **Monica Decker** noticed a scroll.

The paper tore a bit as she extracted the missive. Fortunately, it remained readable: *"I wish you a good day. This is a sailor in the middle of the ocean. We are at 42.7 degrees North Latitude by 170 degrees East Longitude in the Pacific on Christmas Night (December 24, 2006)."* The sailor noted his address in Germany, seeking contact with anyone who found his note. By happy coincidence, Monica spoke German, penned him a note in his native tongue, and sent it via postal mail.

The North Pacific Current likely handed the bottle off to the Alaska Coastal Current. This drift leg equates to a speed of half a mile per day, too slow if the bottle remained afloat for the nine years between release and recovery. It could have lain for years on the shore or floated the entire time. At the usual flotsam speed of 7 miles per day, nine years equates to 23,000 miles, distance enough to orbit the Earth at the Equator or twice to Japan and back around Aleut Gyre.

Flotsam Notes

Page 7, Photos 15-25

Photo 15) Yellow Submarines. *"I found these three little baking powder submarines (free inside Kellogg's cereal packets) washed up on the same beach within a few days of each other,"* emailed **Tracey Williams**. *"The submarines were issued in 1957, 1963 and again in the 80s. I've found two different versions so presumably at least one of these dates back to the 60s. These don't float but were in a huge deposit of ocean trash dumped on my local beach earlier this year. We also found quite a few Lego bricks thought to be from the Tokio Express, amongst the debris. Interesting that these little submarines were all found together?"* (Watch for an update in the January 2016 Alert.)

Photo 16) Sea Rings. *"On the beach a few days ago [circa July 4, 2015] virtually nothing had washed up except small pieces of driftwood and 'circles' — loads of them,"* writes **Tracey Williams** from Cornwall, England. *"Curt, I know you often say that 'like birds of a feather, flotsam sticks together'. All these 'circles' — different sizes, weights and materials (some plastic, some rubber) — washed up together on the same bit of Cornwall beach on the same day. I've seen this before. How does that happen, scientifically?"*

Photo 17) Refugee Raft. On June 28, 2015, artist **Maureen "Mo" Huddleston** and **Steve Petty** found a ramshackle raft on Sargent Beach, south of Bay City, Matagorda County, Texas. Others might have seen the raft three days earlier. *"From what I have been able to determine I believe the raft came from Isla de la Juventud, (formerly the Isle of Pines), an island off the south coast of Cuba that is only one of the two areas in Cuba that has a certain type of pine tree that I believe the wood decking on the boat was made out of."*

Mo thinks a handful of Cuban refugees sailed the 9 x 20-foot raft constructed with a wood and Styrofoam bow.

Pieces from the raft numbered at least 150, including: a glove; boots; fishing lures; rice sack; spoon; container of bio-larvicide (manufactured in Havana) used to keep mosquito larvae from growing in water; scrap of a label from a potted meat tin; and a pencil bearing teeth marks.

The raft once included a small motor with three propellers, mast, rudder, a light fixture attached to a white plastic awning constructed with rebar, all of which led Mo to conjecture the refugees used both wind and engine power. Further, that Tropical Storm Bill which hit the Texas Coast in June could have engulfed the raft and its passengers. How long it had been drifting in the Gulf of Mexico before reaching Texas remains a mystery.

Photos 18-20) Century Old MIB. In 1906, British scientist **Dr. George Parker Bidder** dispatched 1,020 Messages in a Bottle (MIBs) to study currents along the seafloor off Great Britain. Each contained a postcard with instructions in English, German and Dutch to return the note to the *Marine Biological Association* in Plymouth, England, in exchange for a shilling. Reports of the MIBs confirmed Dr. Bidder's theory of deep sea currents.

Beachcombers didn't report all of Bidder's bottles. In April 2015, 108 years later, retired postal worker **Marianne Winkler**, found another as she and her husband **Horst** strolled down a beach on the German North Sea island of Amrum. Inside, a visible note read *"Break the Bottle."* She followed the instructions and found the intact postcard, instructing her to fill out information about finding the bottle and mail it back to the *Marine Biological Association*.

Marianne received her one shilling reward.

Photos 21-22) Whale Blubber. *"It's a blob of collagen [aka, blubber] from a decomposing whale,"* emailed **Kathy Peavey** (July 13, 2015). *"It's just outside of Craig. It looks like the one found in Tasmania in the 90's."*

*"The blob measures 24 feet x 13 feet x 3 feet. It proved tough to cut; some bloody, pinkish water oozed from the holes **Lauren Mackie** had cut. No flies or birds have been seen on the blob. It appears to be melting and dripping."*

"In 1998, a 20-foot, 4-ton carcass-like object drifted ashore on Tasmania's Four Mile Beach," read Australian reports. *"Extremely decomposed and with a white fibrous hair-like covering, it also sported several sturdy but elongate projections resembling tentacles. However, it lacked any recognizable head, sensory organs or internal skeleton."* DNA analyses confirmed it to be a decomposing lump of whale blubber.

Wikipedia elaborates: *"Lipid-rich, collagen fiber-laced blubber comprises the hypodermis and covers the whole body, except for parts of the appendages, strongly attached to the musculature and skeleton by highly organized, fan-shaped networks of tendons and ligaments. It can comprise up to 50% of the body mass of some marine mammals during some points in their lives, and can range from two inches thick in dolphins and smaller whales, to more than 12 inches thick in some bigger whales, such as right and bowhead whales."*

Thanks to the Sitka Sound Science Center and retired Klawock School teacher **Kay Schrammeck** for identifying the blob. **Sources:** **Shuker, K.P.N.** 1999. *Mysteries of Planet Earth: An Encyclopedia of the Inexplicable.* Carlton, London; Jump up. **Eberhart, George M.** (2002). *Mysterious Creatures: A Guide to Cryptozoology.* ABC-CLIO. pp. 208–209. ISBN 1-57607-283-5.