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Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2005

Hey you guys!

More than 400 Goonies fans from as far away as England and Australia are descending on Astoria this weekend to celebrate the 20th anniversary of "The Goonies," the much-loved movie that features locations in Astoria and Cannon Beach.

The "Goonies Never Say Die" event, organized by the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, will be a weekend packed with tours of these locations, screenings of the movie and a documentary, and chances to meet and get autographs from cast members including Sean Astin, who played Mikey, and Jeff Cohen, who played Chunk.

"I loved Astoria, Astoria was awesome," said Cohen, who said he remembers feeding the birds from the porch of the Astoria Red Lion Inn. "It has a real special place in my heart."

"In war we serve; In peace we trade."

For Jim Durham and other American merchant Marine veterans, this was more than a motto, it was a way of life during World War II.

With members of the U.S. Coast Guard, the veterans gathered to honor the memory of those they served with at Uniontown's Maritime Memorial Park on Memorial Day.

On a recent foggy evening near the mouth of the Columbia River, fisherman Jim Wells was joined by just four other boats, a far cry from the crowds seen during the heyday of commercial salmon fishing.

A drastic decline from the promising spring chinook returns of the past five years has commercial, tribal and sport fishermen alike criticizing recovery efforts for endangered and threatened salmon. Some blame poor ocean conditions for the low returns, while others point to farmers' irrigation for reducing river flows.

SEASIDE — The \$32 million from Seaside's rejected U.S. Highway 101 project has been assigned to projects in Astoria and Tillamook, as well as areas around Salem, Eugene and Newberg.



Photo shows Pier 166, built at Tongue Point, being barged into place in preparation for Span 166.

50 years ago — 1965

Span 166 of the Astoria bridge, which has been under construction at Tongue Point for more than a week, is expected to be ready for floating into position Monday, Web Ballinger of the Highway Department engineering staff said Friday.

The steel span will connect Piers 166 and 167, which are north of the main ship channel, between it and the Desdemona Sands viaduct.

No more steel will be placed, after this span, on the main ship channel crossing until Piers 168 and 169 are completed.

The ferry M.R. Chessman was aground an hour and a half just north of the Columbia River ship channel Tuesday morning.

The ferry grounded at 9:15 a.m., just before the 10 a.m. low tide, and pulled itself free at 10:45 as the tide began to flood. The boat apparently was undamaged.

Four boys visited once too often a cache of stolen loot hidden in tunnels under the downtown streets Wednesday night. Patient police, who had been keeping watch over the cache, caught them.

The four, aged 14 to 17, were all in detention in city jail's juvenile quarters Thursday and police were preparing to round up nine or 10 more boys reported to be implicated in a series of burglaries of downtown store basements occurring over the past two months.

Police recovered a substantial part of an estimated \$1,000 of merchandise and tools stolen by the tunnel prowlers.

75 years ago — 1940

The senate today passed the bill providing an additional \$2,000,000 authorization for Tongue Point Naval Air Station, according to word from Senator Ruiifus Holman, sending the bill to conference with the house, which already has approved it. Speedy adjustment of differences is anticipated.

Even though about 110 motorists received tickets for violations of the parking meter and traffic ordinance Monday, the new meters were received more cordially by the public than was expected.

HAMMOND — Residents of this peaceful village today got a taste of what war sounds like. Windows shook, dishes danced on the shelves, and the roar of gunfire made the earth tremble, just as in Flanders, only no one was being killed.

Fort Stevens' 12 inch mortars were blazing away at targets towed at sea as the fort's garrison conducted firing practice. Guns of Fort Canby will be fired later this week.

Our water-guzzling food factory

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Service

Let's start with a quiz. Which consumes the most water?

- A) a 10-minute shower.
 B) a handful of 10 almonds.
 C) a quarter-pound hamburger patty.

D) a washing machine load.
 The answer? By far, it's the hamburger patty. The shower might use 25 gallons. The almonds take up almost a gallon each, or close to 10 gallons for the handful. The washing machine uses about 35 gallons per load. And that beef patty, around 450 gallons.

The drought in California hit home when I was backpacking with my daughter there recently on the Pacific Crest Trail, and the first eight creeks or springs we reached were all dry.

The crisis in California is a harbinger of water scarcity in much of the world. And while we associate extravagant water use with swimming pools and verdant lawns, the biggest consumer, by far, is agriculture. In California, 80 percent of water used by humans goes to farming and ranching.

That's where that hamburger patty comes in.

I grew up on a sheep and cherry farm near Yamhill. I worked for a year for the Future Farmers of America, and I still spend time every year on our family farm. But while I prize America's rural heritage, let's be blunt: It's time for a fundamental rethinking of America's food factory.

A mandarin orange consumes 14 gallons of water. A head of lettuce, 12 gallons. A bunch of grapes, 24 gallons. One single walnut, 2 gallons.

Animal products use even more water, mostly because of the need to raise grain or hay to feed the animals. Plant material converts quite inefficiently into animal protein.

So a single egg takes 53 gallons of water to produce. A pound of chicken, 468 gallons. A gallon of milk, 880 gallons. And a pound of beef, 1,800 gallons of water. (Of course, these figures are all approximate, and estimates differ. These are based on data from the Pacific Institute and National Geographic.)

You can also calculate your own



Max Whittaker/The New York Times

Fritz Durst walks over an irrigation canal that hasn't seen water since 2013 on his farm in Zamora, Calif., April 4. While we associate extravagant water use with swimming pools and verdant lawns, the biggest consumer, by far, is agriculture. In California, 80 percent of water used by humans goes to farming and ranching.

water footprint at *National Geographic's* website.

Our industrial food system produces food almost miraculously cheaply. In 1930, whole dressed chicken retailed for \$6.48 per pound in today's currency, according to the National Chicken Council; in real terms, the price has fallen by more than three-quarters. And, boy, is the system good at producing cheap high-fructose corn syrup!

Yet industrial agriculture imposes other unsustainable costs:

- It overuses antibiotics, resulting in dangers to the public from antibiotic-resistant diseases. About 4/5 of antibiotics sold in the United States are for livestock and poultry - even as 23,000 people die annually in America from antibiotic resistant infections, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

- Farming overuses chemicals such as pesticides, some of them endocrine-disruptors that have been linked to possible cancer, obesity and reproductive disorders.

- Factory farming is often based on treating animals, particularly poultry, with ruthless cruelty.

To this indictment, we can add irrational subsidies and water engineering projects that have led to irrigation in areas where it doesn't make sense. Today, California, despite the drought, is effectively exporting water (in the form of milk, beef, walnuts and produce).

Most of agriculture's irrationalities aren't the fault of farmers but arise from lax regulation and mistaken pricing, and that's true of water as well. Traditionally in the

West, water was mostly allocated on a first-come basis, so if you acquired water rights more than a century ago you can mostly still access water for uses (two gallons per walnut!) that no longer make sense in an age of scarcity.

As for the foolishness of agricultural subsidies, until recently, the federal government paid me, a New York journalist, \$588 a year not to grow crops in Oregon. I rest my case.

Let's be clear that it's unfair to blame farmers for the present problems. We're the ones eating those water-intensive ham-

burgers, and we're the ones whose political system created these irrationalities.

Like most Americans, I eat meat, but it's worth thinking hard about the inefficiency in that hamburger patty - and the small lake that has dried up to make it possible.

Maybe our industrial agriculture system is beginning to change, for we're seeing some signs of a food revolution in America, with greater emphasis on organic food and animal rights. Just a week ago, Wal-Mart called on suppliers to stop keeping calves in veal crates and hogs in gestation crates.

Something good could come from the California drought if it could push this revolution a bit further, by forcing a reallocation of water to the most efficient uses. But remember that the central challenge can't be solved by a good rain because the larger problem is an irrational industrial food system.

A single egg takes 53 gallons of water to produce.

Is Motown getting its groove back?

By JOE NOCERA
New York Times News Service

DETROIT — Tom Kartsotis, the wealthy co-founder of Fossil, has no connection to the Motor City. He lives in Dallas, where he now oversees a handful of ventures he's invested in. In early 2011, he decided to build a small watch factory that would sell high-quality watches that were priced, as he puts it, "at the entry point of luxury."

He also wanted to make these watches in America. "So many big companies have sourcing infrastructures whose knee-jerk reaction is to head to China," he said. He couldn't compete with China at the low end of the market — nobody can. But he felt that the kind of watches he had in mind — priced between \$450 and \$600 at the low end, with a distinctive but classic design — could be made competitively in the United States. So he decided to put his new factory here in Detroit, a city once renowned for its manufacturing prowess that, in recent times, has needed all the help it can get.

That original idea turned into a company called Shinola. It has eight retail outlets and employs around 375 people, most of them in Detroit. Although those stylized watches are its biggest sellers — the company expects to sell between 150,000 and 180,000 this year — it also designs and makes bicycles, leather goods and other well-crafted, high-end products. Not only are those products built in Detroit, but Shinola also tries to buy the parts it needs from other American companies. Its leather, for instance, comes from the Horween Leather Co., a Chicago tannery more than a century old. Its bicycle frames are shipped from a company

run by a fourth-generation Schwinn.

Although it was a philanthropic impulse that moved Kartsotis to set up shop in Detroit, it has turned out to be a very good business decision. The space Shinola needed to build its factory was cheap. There was also plenty of talent — engineers, for sure, but also former auto assembly-line workers, people eager to work who Shinola could train to be watchmakers. When I visited the watch factory recently, I saw rows of employees bent over their desks, focusing intently as they placed tiny, intricate parts inside the unassembled watches.

Indeed, to spend any time in Detroit these days is to be amazed at the extent to which it is humming with entrepreneurial activity. Dan Gilbert, the founder and chairman of Quicken Loans — which he relocated to Detroit — has bought more than 70 buildings and is converting some of them into office space for small businesses. There are other buildings with common workspaces

and tools like 3-D printers than can be shared. The city's government and, especially, its foundations are focused on helping people who want to start a new business. I spoke with a woman named Julie James, who, with her four sisters, manufactures a brand of juices they call Drought. It employs 32 people. Another company, The Floyd Leg, makes handsome, colorful legs for furniture; its workforce is seven people. New companies like these are starting every day.

Kartsotis told me that "creating a few hundred jobs isn't going to



Joe Nocera

move the needle." He's right about that, of course. But, collectively, all these small companies do seem to be helping to bring Detroit back. Young people are moving in to the downtown and midtown areas. The unemployment rate is dropping. Once-abandoned buildings are being reoccupied. There are retail stores and restaurants that didn't exist even a few years ago.

Something very good is happening here, and it's largely the result of private-sector activity. Kartsotis isn't the only entrepreneur whose desire to come to the aid of a once-great city has turned out to be a smart business move.

If it seems clear that companies like Shinola are the way forward for Detroit, it is not so clear whether they are also the way forward for American manufacturing more generally. "I'm proud of what this company stands for," Jacques Panis, Shinola's president, told me. When I asked him just what that is, he replied: "High-quality manufacturing jobs for America."

Shinola's products are well-designed and made. They are selling briskly. But they are not cheap, and they'll never be mass produced. I've written before about how even big manufacturers like Caterpillar and General Electric employ far fewer workers than they used to thanks to automation. Shinola offers a different twist on that idea. It's not automation that is restricting the number of workers but rather the niche appeal of its products. I'm not sure its example is particularly replicable.

As for Shinola, Kartsotis is readying its next product: Shinola-style headphones that can compete with high-end models like those from Beats. He told me that he has just completed a round of financing and hopes to take the company public one day.

Which will be good for him — and Detroit.

All these small companies do seem to be helping to bring Detroit back.