

Bow from ship towed out to sea

By Joseph B. Frazier
The Associated Press

WALDPOR — This time, when the tug pulled the oil-laden wreck of the New Carissa out to sea, there were no high-fives, no champagne bottles, no celebratory cigars.

Salvage crews instead had pained, nervous faces Monday, guardedly optimistic the cargo ship's broken bow would weather the 248-mile trip to its watery grave and not wash ashore in Oregon for a third time.

"There is no sigh of relief until she's on the bottom," said Bill Milwee, salvage consultant to the ship's Japanese owners.

He looked tired and drained, a far cry from last week when the ship was towed out of Coos Bay and he let out a joyous "Yabba Dabba Doo!" Within hours, a violent storm ripped the wreck from its tow line and, like a nightmare that wouldn't go away, it washed ashore here last Wednesday.

Milwee said that this time around, the weather shouldn't be

a problem. Winds were expected to actually decrease and seas should run no more than 15 feet.

"There is no reason we should part a tow line in this weather," he said.

In fact, waves actually helped the 420-foot bow break free from the surf Monday at 3:16 a.m., about 45 minutes short of high tide.

It headed over the horizon in the morning sun — with a rainbow over it — and was to be sunk by a Coast Guard gunboat in thousands of feet of water, probably Wednesday or Thursday.

Coast Guard Cmdr. Dawayne Penberthy said the trick will be to shoot enough holes in the bow to sink it without rupturing the fuel tanks, which still contain up to 130,000 gallons of heavy fuel oil.

Just in case, he said, a Coast Guard skimmer boat was following behind the wreck.

The saga of the New Carissa began Feb. 4, when the 639-foot freighter with 400,000 gallons of

fuel oil on board ran aground off Coos Bay.

About half of that was burned off by explosives experts. Hours after the Feb. 10 fire, the ship split in two, spilling a total of 70,000 gallons.

Efforts to tow the bow out to sea last week failed when it broke away and washed ashore 80 miles north at this tiny town along the central Oregon coast.

Tar balls from the latest grounding have been seen as far north as southern Washington state. The ship leaked again Sunday as it was being maneuvered into position for towing.

Only 10,000 to 15,000 gallons of the spilled oil has shown up on Oregon's beaches, leaving 55,000 to 60,000 gallons unaccounted for. The cold ocean bottom temperatures will solidify the oil and it could come washing ashore for months.

Mike Szerlog of the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality said full damage assessments could take months, even years, to complete.

Artist

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The department receives government money to support low-income housing projects.

Weinman said the department was intrigued by the idea of an artist co-operative and voted to provide NEDCO with \$150,000 to purchase land for the housing as well as cover the building permits fees.

"The component of people both living and working in the co-operative intrigued us," Weinman said.

Weinman also said the department wanted to encourage housing projects in the Whiteaker community, which has struggled in the past to provide affordable housing for its inhabitants.

"We wanted to provide some stability to the neighborhood," he said.

The city of Eugene isn't the only organization that provided loans for the co-op-

erative. According to Krehbiel, the Intergovernmental Housing Board and Key Bank have also stepped forward to provide funds for the project.

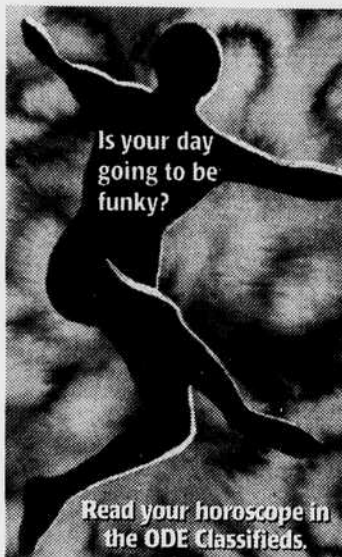
"There's been a lot of enthusiasm for the project in the community," Krehbiel said.

According to Masterjohn, her group's enthusiasm for the project led the members to take steps to become a non-profit organization so they can buy the facility and serve as overseers of the operation.

"Right now we're laying the group rules to be a non-profit," she said.

Masterjohn said she is happy to be able to contribute to the project, adding that students who fit the criteria can live there.

"It's a nice metaphor for community building," she said. "Working on the project is a unique opportunity."



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