

Local

Perfect Storm: Local ties

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“I lowered the small ribby from the starboard side into the water. Aboard was the Chief, First, Second, and Third Bosn’s (Boatswain’s Mates, or, BMs)...A freak wave occurred as I tried to lower the boat. It was about 30 feet down, then the wave came and put the boat about 30 feet over my head,” he said.

Greenbank tried to pull in the slack, but the crane’s normal speed wasn’t fast enough to accommodate that, resulting in a 40-foot free-fall for the small boat when the wave disappeared, jerking out three of the four pad eyes, and dumping almost the whole crew overboard. They all managed to get back in the small boat, and, “...we all knew they wouldn’t come back...” due to the damage, Greenbank said.

The small boat crew, after giving three survival suits to the Satori crew, forced them to abandon ship. Captain Lawrence Brudnicki of the Tam was approved by District Command, and able to order the crew to abandon ship legally by declaring the Satori’s trip a “Manifestly Unsafe Voyage.” During this time, the Satori’s bow had crashed into the small boat, causing damage. The crew of the Satori, and the crew of the small boat were rescued by the crew of a Coast Guard Sikorsky HH-3F “Pelican” helicopter, which had been also present.

An Air National Guard (ANG) chopper, dispatched to rescue a Japanese fisherman 250 miles off the New Jersey coast, could not complete the attempt, and experienced a broken fuel line while attempting to refuel in-flight, prompting the pilot to have to ditch the aircraft in the ocean. That was a U.S. Air Force Sikorsky HH-60G Pave Hawk, call sign “Jolly 110,” from the 106th Rescue Wing, New York. The crew included Pilot Major David Ruvola, Co-pilot Captain Graham Buschor, Flight Engineer Staff Sergeant James Mioli, Pararescue Jumper (PJ) Tech Sergeant John Spillane, and PJ Tech Sergeant Rick Smith.

The Tam was tasked with reaching and rescuing the crew of the ditched ANG chopper, and Greenbank said, “...the seas were

at 50 feet, and the winds were at 80 knots. A third of the Tam crew was out of commission, and just puking into the saltwater that had built to about a foot into our birthing area, where we lived.” He said the water was coming in from numerous areas, and one of the spin windows (basically, a spinning “windshield wiper”) on the bridge was forced out, because of the strength of the incoming waves. “Also, the ladder (stairs) from the fan tail (near an overhang, at the rear of the ship) to the O-1 deck almost got ripped completely off...”

When the Tam was close to the ditch site of the chopper, Greenbank said, “All hands that were still able to function...” assembled in the mess deck (dining area), and were assigned responsibilities. “Apparently, I didn’t rank very high (he was a Seaman at the time),” he said, as he and less than half a dozen others (all Seaman, SNs, or Firemen, FNs, he said) were assigned to the bow, to search for survivors (he said it was too foggy, as he noted the small number assigned to that task).

He said, “That entailed that, dressed in mustang survival suits, along with a preserver and a flood lamp, we would hold on to the life line (a safety cable around the perimeter of the ship) with one hand, and shine the lamp with the other (they weren’t secured to the ship with any type of harness). Now imagine, 50-foot seas and 80-knot winds that have already taken out a spin window on the bridge. Now imagine what it’s like on the bow. When the bow dipped, I’d drop to my knees, hold on for dear life with my weak hand, and get churned like I was in a washing machine, for what seemed to be an eternity. Then, I’d jump back up and shine my spotlight again, trying to find the aviators... Remember, there were no life line attachments—just our free hands...It wasn’t fun being on the bow then. I recall many times that the only thing keeping me aboard the ship was my death grip to the life line, as my body was being pulled by the sea...I can tell you, I didn’t think I’d live at the time...After God knows how many bouts of that, we spotted them...”

Speaking about the arrival to the ditch site, Greenbank said, “I should

note that Coast Guard Air was there...C-130s were overhead (aircraft from the Coast Guard included the HU-25 Guardian, or “Falcon,” and the Lockheed HC-130H), and noting that they could see our keel as we rolled...Which, for this ship, meant that our mast should have sheared, or, we should have sunk.” The Tam registered at least 52-degree rolls, which meant at least a total arc of 104 degrees. “I walked with one foot on the deck, and the other on the bulkhead (wall). Then, the opposite, when we rolled the other way,” he said.

Greenbank said that three of the airmen were seen huddled together, and the Tam maneuvered close enough, so they could grab the scramble net (on the side of the ship). Buschor, who had been separated from Ruvola, Spillane, and Mioli, was pulled aboard first, leaving the three.

“We were too excited; we jerked, and two of them couldn’t hold on. The one that did (Spillane) flew to the deck with his arm tangled in the net, and now, newly broken (This could have happened earlier, as Spillane had suffered a fractured right arm, left leg, four ribs, a ruptured kidney, and a bruised pancreas)...The other two Ruvola and Mioli) drifted down to the back of the ship, where we thought the screw was going to kill them. They made it past that. It took many hours, but we eventually rescued them, too. Days later, the survivalman (Smith, who had been missing the whole time) was spotted by a C-130. Hours later, we finally got to the location, but he was gone.” Smith was never recovered.

The 72-foot fishing vessel Andrea Gail and her crew played a major part in the book and the film (they were the basis for both), and all were lost at sea, as well. They were Captain Frank William “Billy” Tyne, Jr., Michael “Bugsy” Moran, Dale R. “Murph” Murphy, Alfred Pierre, Robert F. “Bobby” Shatford, and David “Sully” Sullivan.

Greenbank saw *The Perfect Storm* when it was released, noting that while the story is more widely known and recognized now, there are numerous discrepancies in typical Hollywood fashion. A notable example is that the ship intended to portray the Tam is inexplicably mod-

eled after a newer class, and the rescue scenes are inaccurate. In interviews with media, Brudnicki said that newer Coast Guard cutters, like the one in the film used to portray the Tam, would not have been able to sustain the waves and make the rescues, noting that the Tam was 700 tons heavier, and sat six feet deeper than more modern ships (the Tam had a lower center of gravity).

The Tam, also known as the “Mighty Z,” among other names, was built by Commercial Iron Works of Portland, Oregon, and began life as the USS Zuni (ATF-95) in 1943, later to be transferred to the Coast Guard, following World War II, in 1946. During her life, the Tam’s crews proudly served and saw her through the battles of World War II, and beyond

Halloween weekend also marked the expected sinking of the Tam, which was decommissioned in 1994, due to budget cuts, and the costs involved with an overhaul. She was kept afloat by a group of dedicated Coast Guard and Navy veterans, the Zuni Maritime Foundation, but repair costs became too high, and it was estimated that it would take at least \$2 million to fix the current damage. The Tam will join the Navy destroyer USS Arthur W. Radford as an artificial reef, 120 feet deep, and she will have other vessels as company, as well, on the Del-Jersey-Land Reef, managed by Delaware, New Jersey, and Maryland. Though a disheartening fate (she has an extensive history of numerous acts and awards, including during World War II at Iwo Jima), it is, according to former crew members and others, the best outcome considering the alternative—the scrap yard.

Along with others, Greenbank received medals to include the Air Force Commendation Medal, and the Coast Guard Meritorious Unit Commendation, for his rescue efforts. He is Chief Deputy Prosecutor for Bonner County, in Sandpoint, Idaho, and he lives with his wife, Kim, and their two daughters, Kari and Cadie, in Couer d’Alene. With respect to those lost at sea, and to those like Greenbank, who have answered the call, from this reporter and former Tam shipmate of his prior to *The Perfect Storm*: Semper Paratus.

Standing Rock

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Also up for debate is whether the protestors or the authorities have overstepped their bounds—or possibly a complicated combination of the two.

Said Keefauver, “It seemed like we came and went at Standing Rock during a lull in the battle—it just worked out that way. I heard about a week after I got back that the police tear-gassed the Red Warrior camp from the air and arrested many people on the highway for stopping to pray. My brother and I thought that much of the so-called violence was initiated by the authorities.”

Law enforcement would counter that the protesters in prayer had either blocked the roadway or were trespassing on private land.

Keefauver said, “Our mission was to bring food and supplies to the main camp on the Cannon River, to volunteer, and also to place our tribal flag there. We came from the south to avoid the police roadblocks. I volunteered at the medics tent briefly and my brother helped out wherever he was needed. We spoke to the tribal elders on behalf of our tribe were officially welcomed then, given permission to place our flag on the main avenue of flags.”

Keefauver was asked what he personally saw.

He explained, “We camped in the main camp near the Red Warriors camp, which was by the river. During our brief stay we partook of the rituals around the sacred fire attended the meetings and saw much brotherhood and sisterhood among the thousands of people there. Everyone helped out and all gladly shared. They were very peaceful people and the elders were especially cared for. No weapons were allowed in these camps and no police officers were required. There was no trouble in these camps. On the second day they called for volunteers to protest at the Sheriff’s Office for those that had been arrested. All the camps were getting ready to move across the river onto the reservation (or at least that was the plan at the meetings). More people were coming in all the time (bus-loads). We did not spend very much time there although we did catch a glimpse of the oil pipeline on our way out.”

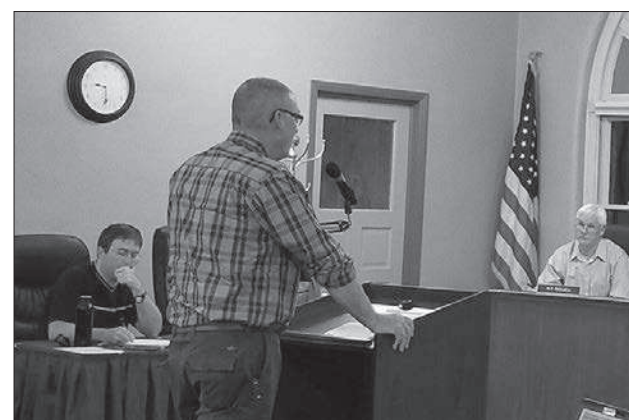
That pipeline at the center of the controversy crosses beneath the Missouri River—on private lands, technically not reservation lands. Protestors view themselves as “water protectors” against potential oil pollution of those waters. A pipeline break would prove devastating to lands considered sacred to local people.

On the flip side, the construction of the pipeline creates roughly 8,000 local jobs during construction, and connects production areas in a more direct way to an existing pipeline in Illinois.

After Keefauver returned to Baker City, protestors and law enforcement clashes escalated, and accusations flew. Off-site, Grand Central Station in New York City was temporarily closed this week due to protestors.

Online, about a million people across the U.S. “checked in” to Standing Rock to show support for the cause.

Tennis courts



Gina K. Swartz / The Baker County Press

Don McClure testifies.

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McCormick claims that she has been threatened if she goes up to the property and complained that they have had tennis traffic use their driveway to turn around and has even had drunken tennis players in her driveway.

“I’m just sick and tired of it,” she said.

A question posed by Commissioner Tim Collins as to if there was a way the electrical boxes that housed the switches to turn on the lights could be locked or breakers pulled sparked a lengthy conversation on the topic. McClure explained that some of the lights had manual switches and since there were Catering facilities on site he did not see locking electrical boxes was not an option and it was his understanding that due to Fire Marshal standards some could not be locked at all.

However, he was willing to look into lock solutions and regulations in an effort to remedy the situation. McCormick claimed that the Grangers, the former owners, showed McCormick the lighting panels and how the lights worked.

She claimed the breakers for the lights could be pulled to keep the lights from being turned on.

The Commission ultimately decided to work with McClure to find a solution for locking up lights and to look for options to “line” the light boxes in an effort to minimize the amount of light reflected when the lights were being used.

They were all in agreement that the matter would be taken up again at the next Commission meeting and they all would do some research on solutions. No formal action would be pursued at this time. During the meeting McClure insinuated that he may be exploring options to sell the property.

McCormick agreed to the Commission’s decision.

County gets weed, legislative updates, visit from Bentz

BY TODD ARRIOLA
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The Baker County Board of Commissioners met for its first, regular session of the month on Wednesday, November 2, 2016, 9 a.m., in the Commission Chambers of the Baker County Courthouse. Highlights include a County Weed Department update, with Weed Supervisor Arnie Grammon, and an Oregon Legislative update, with Representative Cliff Bentz.

Present from the Board were Chair Bill Harvey, Commissioners Mark Bennett and Tim Kerns, and Executive Assistant Heidi Martin.

Attendance also included Baker County Weedmaster Arnie Grammon, Baker County Facilities Maintenance Foreman Dan McQuisten, District 60 Representative Cliff Bentz, Mary Miller, Don Herman, John Creighton, Ed Hardt, Chuck Chase, Tork and Wanda Ballard, Bobbie Danser, and Marshall McComb.

The meeting was called to order, and the optional Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance were recited, both led by Harvey. The agenda was adopted, with no noted changes, with a motion from Bennett, and a second from Kerns.

Bennett, expressing his

thanks to the Baker County Health Department, mentioned a press release from Manager E.A. Duke, of the Oregon Health Authority, Public Health Division Adolescent and School Health Program.

The release states, “At the October 26th SBHC (School-Based Health Center) Coordinator’s Meeting the SBHC State Program Office presented awards to recognize and celebrate the committed work going on in Oregon’s certified SBHCs.

“Congratulations to Baker High School-Based Center for receiving the 2016 SBHC Partnership Award! Baker County’s

School-Based Health Center Program has gone above and beyond the traditional SBHC partnerships.

“At Baker SBHC, two separate hospitals (historically thought to be competitive) are now both working with the Baker County Health Department to ensure the SBHC has enough primary care to meet the need of the students and certification standards. Four physician assistants rotated coverage last school year to ensure that students could be seen regularly.”

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