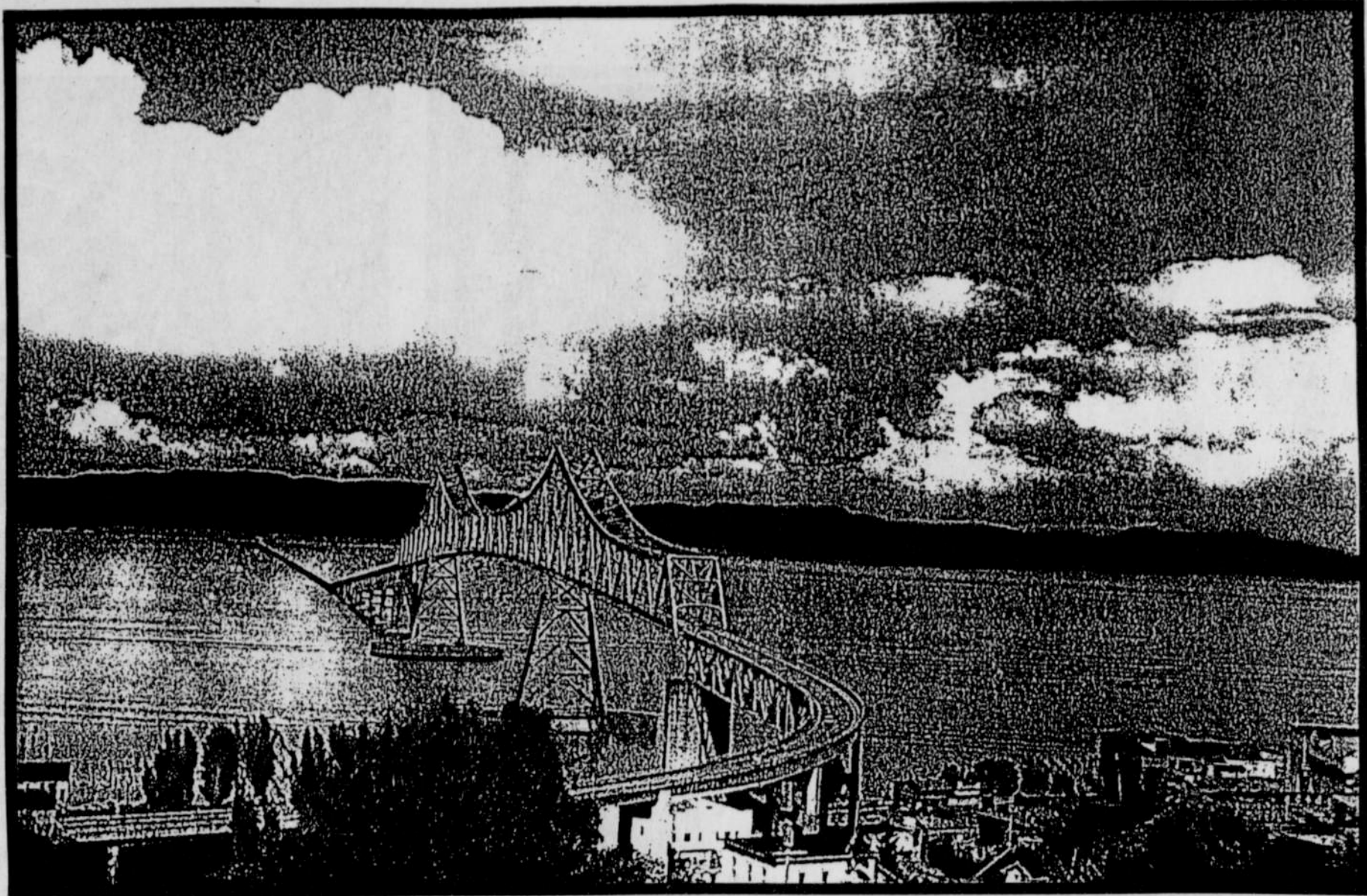


PHOTOGRAPH BY ROBERTA M. PARKS



BRIDGE TO NOWHERE

The Astoria Bridge is 30 years old on August 27, the day it was formally dedicated in 1966 by Oregon Governor Mark Hatfield and Washington Governor Dan Evans. It was built at a cost of \$24 million and one human life, a construction supervisor who was knocked off the bridge and his body never recovered. One woman remembers the early 1960s when the bridge was built as an unceasing pounding of piledrivers. When the bridge was completed it was the final link to a continuous coastal highway from Mexico to Canada, and it displaced a ferry service. It is 4.1 miles long and looms over the Oregon side of the Columbia River like a large green reptile, a height of 200 feet for ships to pass underneath. Its tail crosses the river barely above water to Point Ellice, near Meglar, Washington (though it rises to 49 feet above the seldom used north channel).

A brochure about the Astoria Bridge printed soon after it opened said that "the bridge is designed to withstand some of the toughest attacks of nature. Gusts of winds

of 150 m.p.h. from the fierce Pacific storms that occasionally batter the coast still leave the bridge with a safety factor. The concrete piers are built with an eye toward the river flood speed of 9 m.p.h. when whole trees sometimes are swept along by the raging water." (The bridge certainly endured the Great Flood of '96 in February.)

Initial hopes were that the bridge would bring prosperity to Astoria but the boom never materialized. The beachtowns to the north and south are the bridge's principle benefactors. The Astoria Bridge was early nicknamed "The bridge to nowhere" though there remain differences of opinion as to which side of the river is meant. It is not as old nor anywhere close to the beauty of the delicate and rotting art deco bridges on the southern Oregon coast, yet as Gov. Hatfield said on the bridge's opening day, "The addition of this man-made wonder (he also called the bridge a "tremendous structure") to our Northwest coast removes the last obstacle to the free flow of tourism, trade and commerce between our states." ~MPMc



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JULY 11 - AUG 24
ASTORIA EAGLES
THURS, FRI & SAT 7:30 P.M.
325-6104 FOR TICKETS



1160 COMMERCIAL ST.
325-7173

