

LNG IS FOOL'S GOLD

There have been many and varied flamboyant economic schemes to make Astoria a world class port city surrounded by thriving satellite communities.

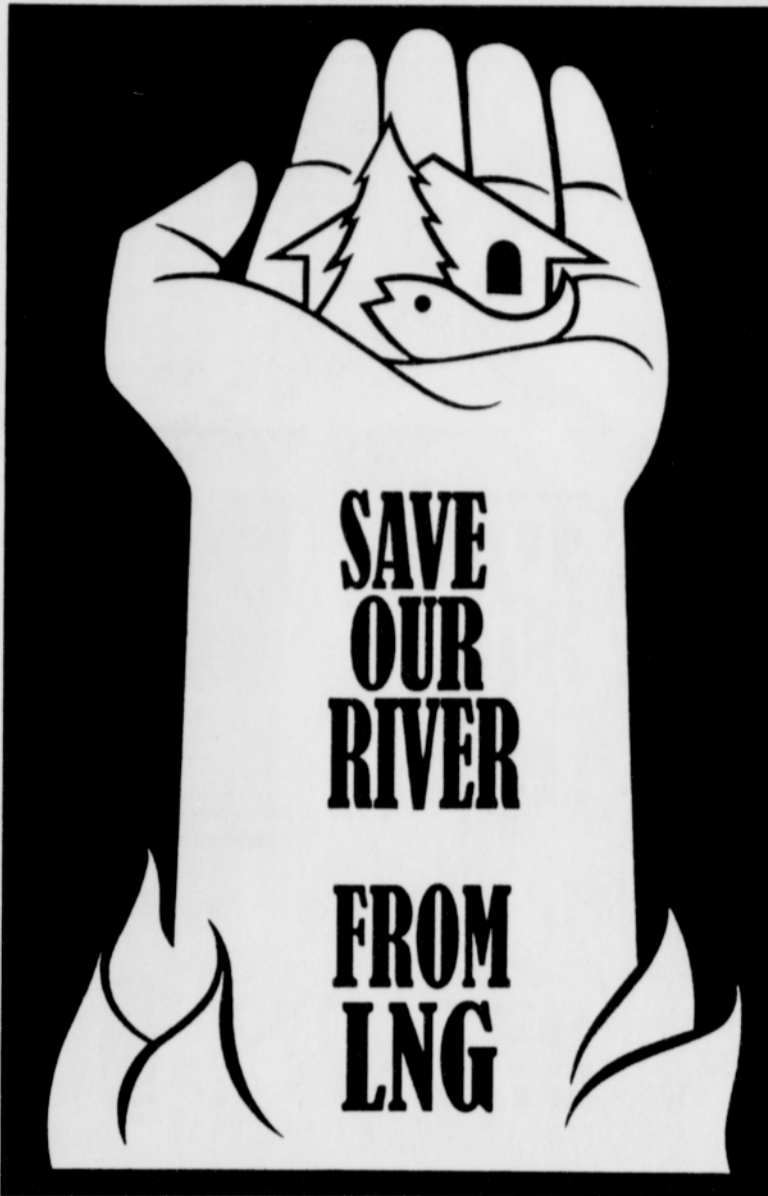
First, of course (if early hopes of fur trading are left out), was Astoria's golden era of salmon fishing and canning that made the lower Columbia River the cannery capital of the world in the late 19th century, as well as logging of the great spruce and fir forests that dominated the landscape. For a brief time Astoria had a population of nearly 30,000 (in the 1920s) and anticipated a peak of 100,000 — shamelessly touting itself as the New York City of the Pacific coast.

But a century of short-sighted greed and careless oversight of the environment that enriched Astoria decimated the salmon, clearcut the forests and ripped apart the big dreams, and the lower Columbia decayed on both sides.

More recent grandiose (and perhaps desperate) schemes such as wall to wall aluminum plants (which would make the lower Columbia, in the words of President Nixon, "the light metals capital of the world"), giant coal docks, oil module manufacturing for the Alaska fields, to name a few, were all still born. Now we have been pre-emptively invaded by LNG right here at the end of the Lewis & Clark Trail.

The notion of liquefied natural gas as an interim energy source between oil and alternative fuels is as short-sighted as every other response to the oil crisis that is crafted to keep profits in the hands of current oil and energy moguls — and would delay research and development of bio-fuels.

Whatever value put to LNG as a brief alternative energy source, the method of Calpine LNG corporation (with silent complicity of the Port of Astoria Commission) to sneak through the back door and abrogate public participation regulations, renders suspect every claim they make. Apologists say the secrecy was necessary because of competition and point to the other three LNG corporations who want a piece of the Columbia — but that is an egregious argument at its very root: the competition was probably waiting for Calpine to covertly get its lease and then rush in to gobble up the lower Columbia while the shock was still setting in.



TOM BURGESS

The lower Columbia community is divided over the prospect of LNG terminals. Alternate media seems to have an effect on people's opinions: commercial radio, for example, booms with LNG ads, and those who listen are more likely to support their point of view. Listeners to public radio station KMUN, on the other hand, are generally in opposition, not least for the reason they are spared the torrent of LNG spin, and programming is often critical of devastating the river estuary and destroying Columbia River culture for corporate profit.

There are all sorts of serious LNG issues that are not being honestly addressed by the PR spinners: problems of safety, security, pollution, ocean and river travel, fishing and commerce, the wisdom of building such a volatile terminal on an earthquake subduction zone. And there is also the matter that the federal government claims the right to overrule any local decision to exclude LNG. In June the U.S. Senate rejected a proposal allowing state governors to prevent LNG because of public health or environmental concerns.

Astoria is experiencing a self-styled 'renaissance', primarily a population explosion intermingled with an influx of tourism, waterfront "renewal" and restoration of old properties. Although supporters hope for so-called 'family-wage' jobs from LNG to alleviate the menial and low-paying employment currently dominant in River City and environs, others are concerned LNG terminals and traffic will wipe out what they see as vital economic and cultural gains of the past few years. Others fear for their health, even their lives.

Columbia River dwellers are threatened from two directions — federally sanctioned low-level radioactive releases from Hanford and gaseous pollution/combustion (possibly much worse) from liquefied natural gas: the river gets hot stuff on one end, LNG on the other.

As usual the pro-corporate agenda gets the most press and public fanfare. The purpose of the personal responses to LNG on these three pages is to compile opposition to counter LNG's big schtick, and these will be followed up in subsequent issues of the NCTE.

—MICHAEL McCUSKER

ANNIE OLIVER

I am opposed to siting an LNG facility anywhere on the Columbia River on so many different levels that it is hard to know where to begin. But I suppose I can start from the perspective of a Birkenstock-wearing tree hugger, a.k.a., an environmentalist. The Columbia River has had so many problems over the years that some people have begun to think that the fish glow in the dark and have sprouted arms and legs. Recently, we have been progressing toward a great improvement in our river's quality. Suddenly there is a need to build LNG facilities along our river. If LNG tankers and the facility itself will not pollute our air and river, I will eat this paper I am writing on. Oh, and how about the pipeline that will need to be built across the river somewhere and into Longview? How will that be accomplished without disturbing the river and its quality?

I can also look at my opinion of an LNG facility as a homeowner. I have a nice old Victorian house with a great view of the river and bridge and — *What are those ugly towers in my view?* I grew up in a factory town. The factories were all located along the river's edge so that no one could get to the river except in a few spots. I am sad to say that no one's property values went up when a factory was built: what do factories do for quality of life? Sure, they provide jobs. But we lived with a horrible odor that hung in the air, especially if the wind blew. And the wind always blew. People who lived near the factories got free paint jobs for their cars and free car-covers from the factories.

Now for my opinion as a middle-aged worrier. LNG is safe: right! Then why does the Department of Homeland Security need to be involved in where and when the LNG tankers come

in? Why do the tankers need exclusion zones and the facility need to be located where there is not a large population? What happens to fishermen and cruise ships when a tanker comes in? I can see cruise ships out in the ocean circling like airplanes waiting their turn to enter the river. And commercial fishermen will wait patiently ashore until "the coast is clear." Yeah, that will work. No really, LNG is safe. But things DO go wrong. Look at Chernobyl. *Oops.* I would rather not live in an area where oops could happen. Am I paranoid to consider acts of terrorism? Maybe, but who would ever have guessed that something like 9/11 could occur? So forgive me if I worry about a ship or tank filled with gas being a target for terrorists. If we have thought of it, you can be sure the bad guys have too. It is my understanding that LNG is highly flammable and could create a vapor cloud that is easily ignited. No problem — Clatsop County can just ban matches and all fire and I can relax.

LNG will provide jobs...honest. It seems to be common knowledge that building an LNG facility will provide many short-term jobs. Unfortunately many of these companies hire their own construction people. Highly specialized jobs will be available in the LNG facility. I am sure there are many locals with these very same qualifications just sitting around waiting for one of these jobs. In fact, I am thinking of applying because it will pay so well!

What will the tourists think as they gaze upon the LNG towers taller than the Astoria Column? Will they get to don fireproof clothing as their cruise ships pass by the LNG facility? Will restaurants along the river provide fireproof chairs to duck under as LNG tankers pass by? And hopefully the newspapers will

publish the dates that LNG tankers will be present. I have a nice old claw-foot tub that I can fill with water and submerge myself, just in case.

I could go on and on because there are so many negatives and few positives in an LNG facility. The thing to remember is why we live here. I live here because it is beautiful, clean and safe. What will it be like if an LNG facility is nearby?

LESLIE MILLER

What was the port authority thinking when it leased land in Warrenton that is zoned for recreation and as wetlands for heavy industrial use? Why was this done without public input? This simply defies Warrenton's land-use plan. The zoning needs to be changed before such a lease is signed if elected officials have any sense of ethics, morals, or represent our society's love and respect for public land.

It appears they think the people they represent, both liberals and conservatives, don't have the brains to participate by way of public input. *To hell with your local control over public property, we know better than you stupid citizens. Go to blazes if you wish to disagree with our clandestine, underhanded methods, the decisions are already made. We know better than the public.*

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3

HOPE L. HARRIS
 LICENSED
 MASSAGE
 THERAPIST
 503/325-2523

**COLUMBIA RIVER
 MARITIME MUSEUM**
 1792 MARINE DRIVE, ASTORIA, OREGON
 (503) 325-2323

NEW RELEASE
 BY

 Eversince
 CD ONLY
 \$9 USA
 \$11 CANADA/MEXICO
 \$13 WORLDWIDE
 POSTPAID
 SEND INQUIRY TO
 SANDSHRIMP@EARTHLINK.NET

ART+ILLUSTRATION+DESIGN
 KIM MCCARTHY
 KMCCARTHY567S@HOTMAIL.COM

**BUCK'S
 BOOK BARN**
 ★ USED BOOKS & RECORDS ★ 738-4246
 1023 BROADWAY • SEASIDE

Ship Inn
 Fish & Chips
 Imported Beer on Tap
 #1 on 2nd Street
 Astoria * 325-0033