

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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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

The basement at Astoria City Hall looks just like the one at your grandparents' house. At the end of a steep staircase there's a big, dimly lit room with cement floors and a musty smell. Pipes hang from a low ceiling, and "stuff" is stored everywhere.

The basement at City Hall is bigger and there's an old bank vault in its dank interior, but otherwise it's just the same. It's probably not where you'd want to store important historical documents.

But that's exactly where several hundred irreplaceable original construction blueprints for many of Astoria's historical buildings were kept — until this year.

Now, nearly 600 of those drawings have been professionally scanned and placed on DVDs that the public can view at the Astoria Public Library, the Clatsop County Historical Society's Heritage Museum and Astoria City Hall. People can make 8-by-10-inch paper printouts of particular plans at the library for 10 cents a page.

Richard Rowland, one of the North Coast's most innovative artists, received statewide recognition Wednesday.

Clatsop Community College's ceramics and sculpture instructor, who serves as head of the college's art Department, was honored with a Governor's Arts Award.

Gov. Ted Kulongoski presented the award at a ceremony at Willamette University.

Rowland is an innovator in wood-fired ceramics. He is known for the workshops he conducts at his wood-fired anagama-style Dragon Kiln in Youngs River, involving college students, local and regional artists, and ceramicists from around the world. The kiln has become a gathering point for artists and friends.

Hungry sea lions feasting on chinook salmon at Bonneville Dam were chased off Thursday by harmless underwater fire crackers and noisemaking guns that biologists hope will keep them away from good.

But if the scare tactics fail, the states of Oregon and Washington may have to ask for federal permission to trap or even kill the playful and intelligent marine mammals, which are protected under federal law, just like the salmon.

50 years ago — 1965

William J. Talbot, Portland U.S. Army district engineer, has announced transfer of 18.1 acres of land at Cape Disappointment in Pacific County, Wash., at the mouth of the Columbia River, from the Portland district to the U.S. Coast Guard.

He said the land, which is part of the former Fort Canby Military Reservation, will be used by the 13th Coast Guard District to expand its lifeboat station at Cape Disappointment.

The Corps of Engineers owns 940 acres of land on the cape. Both the north jetty and jetty "A" at the mouth of the Columbia River are located on the land.

A Coast Guard spokesman in Seattle said the Coast Guard plans to close the Point Adams station across the river at Hammond and consolidate the two installations. Personnel now at Point Adams — about 25 — will be transferred to the Cape Disappointment Station.

General economy of the lower Columbia area advanced in April, the Oregon Employment Service has reported, despite storms that hampered shipping and shutdown of major plants for repairs and construction.

Log shipments, construction work at Wauna and on the Astoria bridge continued to stimulate, Manager Robert Morrison of the Astoria office of the Oregon Employment Service reported.

75 years ago — 1940

If there were any large numbers of Chinooks in the lower Columbia River Sunday night, the Astoria gillnet fleet couldn't find them. One of the most disappointing season openings on record was generally reported. The high boat in deliveries up to noon had less than 200 pounds. One cannery said that its record catch was 142 pounds.

In the wake of the recent Oregon supreme court decision which held that operation of a "baseball" type of pinball machine for amusement only was not in violation of anti-gambling statutes, several pinball machines have made their debut here. There is said to be some question whether any type of pinball machine would get the blessing of the supreme court, even though it was played for sheer joy.

Unless the machines "pay," there is no apparent grounds for action by the district attorney in view of the supreme court decision.

William Boyd as "Hopalong Cassidy" stages a new roundup of action and thrills in Clarence E. Mulford's "Santa Fe Marshal," the Paramount western thriller, opening tonight at the Riviera Theatre. Also on this same program is Wallace Beery and Jackie Cooper in "The Champ."

A seven-year struggle for national recognition was successfully culminated yesterday for Astoria's Sea Scout ship Flying Cloud with the announcement from the national headquarters of the Boy Scouts of America that the local ship has been selected as one of the ships of the national Sea Scout Fleet.

This honor, goal of all Sea Scout units, is bestowed each year upon the outstanding ships of the nation. The number of ships in the National Fleet, 35, is relatively small in comparison with the number of Sea Scout units, which total 2100 in the United States.

Only four ships from the northwest were selected for the national Fleet. Besides the local ship, there were the Ranger and Columbia of Portland and the Rainbow of Hillsboro.

The Flying Cloud's bid for fame lay in the successful Sea Scout regatta staged in Astoria last June, in which Sea Scouts from all along the Columbia River participated. In addition to this event, the local ship engaged in an active part in the annual Astoria regatta.

How many marriages are done in church?

PRESIDENT FRANKLIN Roosevelt dubbed the Supreme Court of the 1930s as "nine old men."

FDR's implication was that the justices were out of touch with the nation's dire situation in the midst of the Great Depression. The court's conservative majority had thrown out a few of Roosevelt's New Deal programs.

During oral argument concerning gay rights last week, Justice Antonin Scalia raised a question that is becoming archaic in this century. Asked Scalia: If there is no ban on gay marriage, can clergy refuse to perform a marriage of a gay couple? It seems to me that clergy already has that latitude. I've witnessed it in Astoria.

The larger question Scalia's query prompts is: What percentage of marriages are done by clergy these days? Of the four weddings my wife and I have attended in the past two years, two were conducted by a rabbi, the other two were officiated by lay ministers with licenses from the Universal Life Church. During the 1960s, the Universal Life Church was a counterculture organization that licensed ordinary people to conduct weddings. My unscientific random sampling tells me it is much more mainstream these days.

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H.L. MENCKEN SAID THAT marriage, at bottom, is an economic arrangement. It is certainly a contract. No matter whether churches enter the wedding picture, the logic behind gay marriage is that two people who choose to make a long-term commitment should be allowed the protection of having their relationship made legal in the eyes of the state.

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IT WAS A DELIGHT TO SEE Anna King in Astoria last week. She is the only journalist who covers the Hanford Nuclear Reservation full time. She reports for Northwest Public Radio, a consortium of stations in Oregon, Washington and Idaho.

Describing Anna, I've often said you would not pick her out of a lineup as what she does for a living. She conveys an exuberance that I don't associate with the Washington- or Portland-centered

'The time has come,' the Walrus said,
'To talk of many things;
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing wax —
Of cabbages — and kings —'

Through the Looking-glass



of Cabbages and Kings



AP Photo/Dana Verkouteren

This artist rendering shows Washington attorney Douglas Hallward-Driemeier arguing that states must recognize same-sex marriages performed elsewhere, April 28, during the Supreme Court hearing on same-sex marriage. Justices, from left are, Antonin Scalia, Chief Justice John Roberts, Anthony Kennedy, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Samuel Alito Jr. and Elena Kagan.



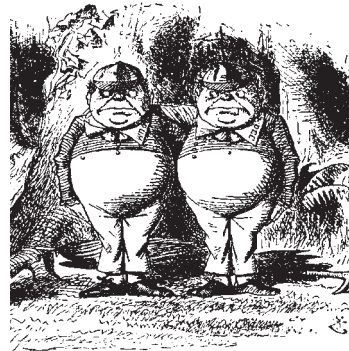
AP Photo

Henry L. Mencken, "The Sage of Baltimore" and America's most famous cynic, pictured with his wife, the former Sara Haardt, aboard the liner Europa on their return to New York following a Mediterranean cruise, April 5, 1934.

H.L. Mencken said that marriage is an economic arrangement

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BEN HUNT BROKE ground Sunday afternoon by staging a jazz concert in the McTavish Room of the Liberty Theater. The room's acoustics showed well for vocalist Nancy King and pianist Steve Christofferson. The room's Steinway upright showed great tone color in the hands of Christofferson.



Race, class and neglect in America

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

Every time you're tempted to say that America is moving forward on race — that prejudice is no longer as important as it used to be — along comes an atrocity to puncture your complacency.

Almost everyone realizes, I hope, that the Freddie Gray affair wasn't an isolated incident, that it's unique only to the extent that for once there seems to be a real possibility that justice may be done.

And the riots in Baltimore, destructive as they are, have served at least one useful purpose: drawing attention to the grotesque inequalities that poison the lives of too many Americans.

Yet I do worry that the centrality of race and racism to this particular story may convey the false impression that debilitating poverty and alienation from society are uniquely black experiences. In fact, much though by no means all of the horror one sees in Baltimore and many other places is really about class, about the devastating effects of extreme and rising inequality.

Take, for example, issues of health and mortality. Many people have pointed out that there are a number of black neighborhoods in Baltimore where life expectancy compares unfavorably with impoverished Third World nations. But what's really striking on a national basis is the way class disparities in death rates have been soaring even among whites.

Most notably, mortality among white women has increased sharply since the 1990s, with the rise surely concentrated among the poor and poor-

ly educated; life expectancy among less educated whites has been falling at rates reminiscent of the collapse of life expectancy in post-Communist Russia.

And yes, these excess deaths are the result of inequality and lack of opportunity, even in those cases where their direct cause lies in self-destructive behavior. Overuse of prescription drugs, smoking, and obesity account for a lot of early deaths, but there's a reason such behaviors are so widespread, and that reason has to do with an economy that leaves tens of millions behind.

It has been disheartening to see some commentators still writing as if poverty were simply a matter of values, as if the poor just mysteriously make bad choices and all would be well if they adopted middle-class values. Maybe, just maybe, that was a sustainable argument four decades ago, but at this point it should be obvious that middle-class values only flourish in an economy that offers middle-class jobs.

The great sociologist William Julius Wilson argued long ago that widely decried social changes among blacks, like the decline of traditional families, were actually caused by the disappearance of well-paying jobs in inner cities. His argument contained an implicit prediction: If other racial groups were to face a similar loss of job opportunity, their behavior would change in similar ways.

And so it has proved. Lagging wages — actually declining in real terms for half of working men — and work instability have been followed by sharp declines in marriage, rising births out of wedlock, and more.



Paul Krugman

As Isabel Sawhill of the Brookings Institution writes: "Blacks have faced, and will continue to face, unique challenges. But when we look for the reasons why less skilled blacks are failing to marry and join the middle class, it is largely for the same reasons that marriage and a middle-class lifestyle is eluding a growing number of whites as well."

So it is, as I said, disheartening still to see commentators suggesting that the poor are causing their own poverty, and could easily escape if only they acted like members of the upper middle class.

And it's also disheartening to see commentators still purveying another debunked myth, that we've spent vast sums fighting poverty to no avail (because of values, you see.)

In reality, federal spending on means-tested programs other than Medicaid has fluctuated between 1 and 2 percent of GDP for decades, going up in recessions and down in recoveries. That's not a lot of money — it's far less than other advanced countries spend — and not all of it goes to families below the poverty line.

Despite this, measures that correct well-known flaws in the statistics show that we have made some real progress against poverty. And we would make a lot more progress if we were even a fraction as generous toward the needy as we imagine ourselves to be.

The point is that there is no excuse for fatalism as we contemplate the evils of poverty in America. Shrugging your shoulders as you attribute it all to values is an act of malign neglect. The poor don't need lectures on morality, they need more resources — which we can afford to provide — and better economic opportunities, which we can also afford to provide through everything from training and subsidies to higher minimum wages. Baltimore, and America, don't have to be as unjust as they are.

Shrugging your shoulders as you attribute it all to values is an act of malign neglect.