

AND THEN THERE WERE NONE



Naval history buffs: Ever wonder what happened to the **Mothball Fleet** (aka the National Defense Reserve Fleet), the Navy ships that were left to rust at various anchorages after the end of World War II? More than 200 of them were moored in Astoria.

The photo shown, taken over **Tongue Point** in 1958, is courtesy of the website <http://navy.memorieshop.com>, which says that when the Navy began consolidating the West Coast Reserve Fleets in the 1960s and 1970s, the warships held at Tongue Point were towed to Suisun Bay, Calif., or Bremerton, Wash. The Astoria Reserve Fleet facility closed in 1963.

According to a story in the Daily Mail (<http://tinyurl.com/astoriamoth>), the original reserve fleet of 2,277 (in 1950) is now down to 122 ships. And, of the original eight anchorages for the "rust buckets," only three remain: Suisun Bay, Beaumont, Texas, and James River, Va., where they are quietly rusting away and polluting the water.

But some have lived to serve again. In 2005, four NDRF ships participated in relief operations after hurricanes Katrina and Rita, six went to Haiti to help after the earthquake in 2010, and two were used to assist after Hurricane Sandy in 2012.

Sadly, there's not much help or hope for the lonely 122 vessels that remain: plans are already in motion to dismantle several of them, and the rest are probably not far behind.

BRIDGE OVER MUDDLED WATERS

Speaking of retired ships being put to use, KPLU reports that Washington state Rep. **Jesse Young** wants to put a one-of-a-kind toll "military tribute bridge" — made of decommissioned Vietnam-era Navy aircraft carriers — across the Sinclair Inlet to connect Bremerton and Port Orchard, Wash. (<http://tinyurl.com/brem-bridge>).

In the illustration shown, courtesy of Kevin Mooney of Northwest News Network and KPLU, three aircraft carriers span the inlet. Young says he'd really prefer to use two ships, so there could be on ramps at each end and a span across the gap in the middle.



There's only one small hitch: The Navy is less than enthused, and even a tad huffy. "Navy policy requires reuse as a museum or disposal at a ship breaking yard," a representative said.

Ever hopeful about his project, Young declared, "I know that people from around the world would come to drive across the deck of an aircraft carrier bridge ..." And he might be right.

GUNNING FOR CLAMS



Grant McOmie, pictured foreground, of KGW's "Grant's Getaways" decided to explore razor clamming here at the coast in a recent episode of the show, and tackled the mysteries of the clam gun (<http://tinyurl.com/grantclam>). The photo shown is a screen shot from the video.

He soon learned that all clam guns are not the same once he met devoted clam digger **Paul Watt**, pictured with McOmie, known as the **King of the Clam Guns**. Educated as a structural engineer, and a welder by trade, Watt is revered for his innovative stainless steel clam guns (pictured inset), which he makes in his Bay City welding shop, **Watt Welding**.

"The stainless is very thin and yet it's strong enough to stand up to the pushing and pulling through thick sand," he told McOmie. "Plus, it's really a slick metal so it goes into the sand easier." He's even added a new feature, a release valve, to ease the sore back problem that so often accompanies clam digging.

"You're in the water digging and the tiny valve breaks the vacuum that is created when you push the gun down," Watt explained. "So when you pull it up, the valve opens and releases the sand vacuum, so it's easier to pull." And yes, there's a child's model, too.

Wondering where you can get one locally? Check out Englund Marine & Industrial Supply. Be sure to ask for (drumroll, please) The Claminator.

In One Ear



by Elleda Wilson

ewilson@dailyastorian.com (503) 325-3211, ext. 257

ROASTING JAKE



Did you know there was a roast for **Robert (aka "Bob" or "Jake") Jacobs** on Saturday at the Astoria Event Center? "I decided to do the roast and toast because he is such a character, but more importantly, because over the years Bob's vision for Astoria has helped improve the waterfront, brought in the trolley, saved the Liberty Theater, and made the Astoria Armory useful again, to name a few positive changes for the city," his brother, **Greg Jacobs**, wrote.

Soon Greg had a guest roster of 95, many of whom showed up wearing "Who the hell is Jake?" T-shirts. "And, to top things off," Greg noted, "we all managed to keep the roast and toast a complete surprise to Bob, who had no idea until he walked through the doors."

Several contributed to the handcrafted, personalized baseball-bat rocking chair made by **Don Supple** (<http://supplerockers.com>), presented to Jake at the beginning of the roast. And, of course there were the usual jibes, but there were also testimonials, and Jake even received an award from the city of Astoria.

Helping with the festivities were **Cyndi Mudge** of the Event Center, and **Port of Call**, which provided the hors d'oeuvres. Want to see some of the goings-on? Go to <http://tinyurl.com/jakeroast>. A screen shot from the video is shown. Yes, Jake really is wearing a bowling pin headdress.

"The evening was full of laughs because Bob's friends had a good time honoring and ribbing him," Greg added, "and Bob turned the tables and somehow roasted half the people in attendance."

"Anybody can help get a trolley, or the Liberty Theater, or the Armory, or build the Cannery Pier Hotel," Jake quipped, "but the real stuff was helping on the Glam Tram, the backwards Clown Car, the Double Decker Bus, The Big Lebowski Festival and starting and ending the Tuna Tournament. The latter group of projects were really difficult, working with demented and fun people." And a good time was had by all.

WHALE MUGGING

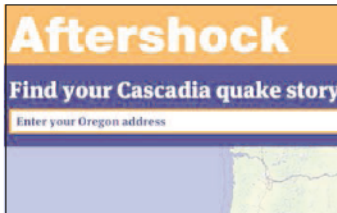


Ever been mugged by a whale? It happened recently to a group of whale watchers off San Juan Island **KING5** reports (<http://tinyurl.com/mugwhale>). "Whale mugging" actually means the captain can't move the boat until the whale leaves — kind of like being held hostage — and on Saturday, a humpback whale and her calf cavorted around the delighted whale watchers, spouting, literally eyeing them, and entertaining everyone for about an hour. A photo by Capt. Spencer Domico of Maya's Legacy Whale Watching is shown.

"It's pretty incredible," said naturalist Heather MacIntyre, who was aboard the boat. "Once in a lifetime, this will never happen again."

WHOLE LOT OF SHAKING GOING ON

Want to scare yourself silly, and it's not even Halloween? Go to <http://opb.org/aftershock>, type in your address, and "find your Cascadia quake story," for a "custom report on your seismic risks and how to prepare" for a 9.0 Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake, courtesy of Oregon Public Broadcasting.



Go ahead, type in your own address. You might not be as prepared as you think you are.

HAVE YOU SEEN ONE?



Several local residents have told the Ear they've seen a UFO. So, here's the event you've been waiting for: The 16th annual **UFO Festival** at the Hotel Oregon in McMinnville. The festival started Thursday and runs through Sunday (<http://ufofest.com>).

The event began as a way to honor the internationally known **1950 Trent sighting**, when two McMinnville locals witnessed and photographed a UFO. One of the Trent photos is shown, courtesy of www.ufocasebook.com

Just in case you're wondering, according to a map at Good magazine, even though the Pacific Northwest is a true hotbed of UFO sightings overall, Clatsop County has only 2.5 per 10,000 people (<http://tinyurl.com/clatsopufo>). Which doesn't say anything about unreported sightings, does it?

HOME IS WHERE THE CAT IS



"We have several feral/semi-feral cats that need safe, caring homes," **Rita Smith** of **River Song Foundation** wrote. "We recently helped save and/or spay/neuter over 50 homeless and feral cats in Seaside between three different neighborhoods. Some of the cats have caretakers and were able to be fixed and returned to their colonies."

"Sadly, many of them cannot be returned and are not adoptable through normal venues, so we are looking for people who would like to give them a home. Please contact us if you would like more information on how to acclimate and care for a feral or traumatized cat. It is very rewarding."

The Ear agrees. Yes, it takes time and patience, but it's a truly heartwarming endeavor. A case in point, the awesome and adored **Miss Garbo** ("I want to be alone" was her initial attitude). Pictured, **Sniggles**, **Lylah**, and **Camille**. Want to adopt or donate, or both? Contact River Song at 503-861-2003 or river-songfoundation@yahoo.com

"Please note that we believe that every one of these lives are important," Rita emphasized. "... So that is why we go to such great lengths to help these socially and physically challenged animals."

IF THE SHOE FITS, FIX IT



It happened to be at our local shoe repair shop (**Astoria Shoe Fix**) on a day when a cruise ship was in," **Jan Roberts** wrote. "As I entered the shop, a lady was taking a photo of the owner, **Scott Sage** (pictured). When she left, I commented that he would be famous! He said that oftentimes, tourists will take photos of him and his machinery, etc. They found everything in his store fascinating."

People come from all over, Scott told the Ear, as many towns don't have shoe repair shops any more. Plus, he repairs bags, belts, luggage, handbags, etc. He learned the trade from his uncle, **Russell**, who learned it from his uncle.

Scott took over Russell's shop in Roseville, Calif., when Russell decided to move to Astoria and open a shop. By 2007, it was getting too busy for Scott in Roseville. "I wanted to come to a small town for a slower pace of life," Scott said, so he bought the Astoria shop from Russell, who was ready to retire, in 2007. Scott had both friends and family here, "so it worked out well."

"Aren't we fortunate in having such a business in our town?" Jan asked. "It is apparent that this type of artistry is going out of style."

The first time the word "Twinsies" has ever been used in the financial industry.



TLC Credit Union is now a division of Fibre Federal Credit Union. You'll see the same friendly faces at our Astoria branch, as well as our other four locations. Service will continue uninterrupted, and you'll continue to receive the exceptional service you've come to expect. Because together we're better!

www.tlcfcu.org www.fibreku.com
503.325.2538 800.205.7872

NCUA Federally insured by NCUA

Because together we're better.

TLC
A DIVISION OF Fibre Federal
CREDIT UNION

Fibre
Federal
YOUR COMMUNITY CREDIT UNION