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Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke
 From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers



Courtesy of the Columbia Pacific Heritage Museum, Ilwaco, Wash.
 Members of the Gypsy motorcyclists gather at the Long Beach Hotel in this 1934 photo.

10 years ago this week — 2005

Lucy Fleck, Miss Portland 2005, has been a runner-up many times in her five years competing in pageants.

In 2001 and 2003, she was first runner-up in the Teen Miss Oregon USA competition, and in 2003, she was the third runner-up for Miss Oregon. So, this year, she was more than happy not to hear her name called for first runner-up. Her thought was, "No way! It's actually me this time!"

"I've been runner-up many times," she said Saturday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. Wearing her navy blue floor-length evening gown, she was crowned Miss Oregon by Miss Oregon 2004 Brook Roberts.

It was a rip-roaring, horn-tooting, down-home, clapping, cheering, good time.

The Warrenton Fourth of July parade involved loud music, candy and many calls of encouragement as the spectators crammed on the sidewalks and shoulders of the road spotted their friends. Music came from all directions, ranging from what may have been accordion music to vintage tunes from a vintage car. With a few fireworks to add percussion.

The Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots is being asked to approve rate changes today that would reduce fees for Columbia River bar pilots.

The action is designed to save Columbia River shipping operators roughly \$1 million annually.

Bar pilots, who guide about 3,500 vessels over the Columbia River Bar each year, would lose income from a proposal to reduce the number of licensed pilots and the pay pool they share.

"Some of the players in this seem to have lost sight of the potential for a catastrophe on the bar," said Robert Johnson, a bar pilot from Astoria.

50 years ago — 1965

Some of the biggest crowds in history of the Sunset Empire beach resorts flooded all tourist accommodations to their capacity during the three-day Fourth of July weekend.

Thousands were turned away from motels, cabins and camps that were full to capacity by Friday night and stayed that way until Monday night.

Despite the enormous crowds, it was generally an orderly weekend. Traffic was congested at times, but there was no serious accident and minor collisions were scarce.

No rioting occurred nor was there even any approach to it. No one drowned.

Trailer homes began rolling into the unfinished Knappa Mobile Court early last week and were installed in their permanent spaces amid top speed construction work. A dozen have arrived with more expected as fast as facilities are available.

According to President I.I. Vanderburg, of Knappa Development company, owner and builder of the mobile court, completion is being rushed because people moving into the area are so desperate for housing that they are willing to undergo the inconveniences of an unfinished court in order to have a place to stay.

State and county police agencies and the Coast Guard were credited with organizing an orderly evacuation of danger areas during Friday's two-hour tidal wave alert.

Alert was received by Clatsop County sheriff's office at 5:21 p.m. and the entire department as well as several reserve deputies were immediately put into action evacuating resort beach areas, camp grounds and rural homes near beaches.

75 years ago — 1940

The biggest crowds of the summer thronged Clatsop beach resorts yesterday for the Fourth of July, and records for several years back were reported broken at both Seaside and Cannon Beach.

Cannon Beach reported all cottages taken, with milk trucks making three trips to supply the vacation hordes. Seaside conditions were similar, and crowds there were further enhanced by a July Fourth celebration climaxing in spectacular fire works displays on the program last night at Long Beach resort.

Enough pennies to make a stack nearly 424 feet tall have been taken in by city parking meters during the month from June 3 to July 5.

Eighty-one thousand, three hundred and seventy-eight pennies have been collected, according to City Treasurer Oswald Gustafson. Seventeen thousand, six hundred and fifty-seven nickels were taken in over the same period. The total amount was \$1,690.73 for this period.

The works progress administration has approved a grant of \$5,100 for improvement of Tapiola Park at Smith's point, according to a telegram from Rufus Holman, U.S. senator from Oregon, received at the city managers office this morning.

Baseball draws us back to D.C.

OUR ANNUAL SUMMER baseball trip took us to Washington, D.C., and Baltimore. We saw three contenders for the National League pennant. In Baltimore, the Orioles played the Texas Rangers. In D.C., we saw a collision of the Nationals and the San Francisco Giants.

Baltimore's Camden Yards was the first of the new ballparks designed to resemble the best old parks. It benefits from a huge old brick building that is the backdrop of its outfield.

Washington's stadium makes no attempt at recapturing early 20th century charm. But it is a very nice stadium. Unfortunately our team, the Giants, were blown away by the Nationals in the July 4 afternoon game. The bad news began in the first inning when Giants ace Madison Bumgarner's first pitch was knocked out of the park.



UPON OUR ARRIVAL IN Washington last Wednesday, we walked up East Capitol Street to see our old neighborhood. Twice we were caught in a deluge and sought refuge under dense tree foliage. D.C. has enjoyed a spate of cloudbursts in the past 30 days.

Standing outside our two-story row house on 10th Street, a couple approached and asked if they could help us find what we were looking for. When we told them we used to live there, they said they were the current residents. The young couple had their 2-year-old in tow.

They invited us in. The home had been spiffed up considerably by an intermediate owner with enthusiasm for historic architectural details and considerable means.

Our children were 18 months and 4 years old when we left that house in 1987. Seeing its rooms — where they slept and played, where I worked and where we entertained friends — was a reminder of how full those days were.



IN JUST FOUR YEARS since our last visit, this town has changed remarkably. D.C. has always benefited from massive infusions of investment capital, because it is a very safe bet.

'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/Gail Burton

Baltimore Orioles' Chris Davis follows through on a two-run home run against the Texas Rangers during the first inning of a baseball game Tuesday in Baltimore.

We revisited the spot where our marriage agreement was sealed

Driving in from Dulles Airport, one quickly sees the region's booming economy. It is a highway lined with government contractors.



THE NATIONAL PORTRAIT Gallery is one of our favorite sites. In honor of B.B. King's recent death, an evocative photo of the King of the Blues is in the gallery's first hallway.

Another addition is a giant portrait of the four women who have served on the U.S. Supreme Court. Sandra Day O'Connor is the portrait's focal point. Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg sits next to her. Standing are Elena Kagan and Sonia Sotomayor.

The painting is a powerful statement.



SOME OF WASHINGTON'S most compelling attractions are hidden away. We visited one of our favorite sites — the Jefferson Library of Congress building. In its Music Division is a gem. In the center of a small room is George Gershwin's grand piano and the desk he designed for music composition. Exhibited are his first drafts, the score of *Porgy and Bess*, handwritten correspondence, photos and a small metronome that traveled with Gershwin.



OUR VISIT REMINDED ME of how much of my life and our married life happened in this city. At the Library, I showed my wife the spot in the Main Reading Room where I did my high school homework as a Senate page. The majesty of that room motivated a 16-year-old to learn.

We also revisited the escalator of the Capitol South Metro station, where our marriage agreement was sealed.

— S.A.F.

The good jobs strategy: empowerment

By JOE NOCERA

New York Times News Service

At the Aspen Ideas Festival — an annual summer gabfest in Colorado that presents all sorts of interesting ideas, from the improbable to the important — one of the big themes this year was jobs.

How will America close the skills gap? Where will the good middle-class jobs of the future come from?

I heard pleas for infrastructure spending as a job strategy, and creating jobs by unleashing our energy resources. There were speakers who believed that innovation would bring good jobs, and speakers who feared that some of those innovations — in robotics, for instance — would destroy good jobs.

And then there was Zeynep Ton.

A 40-year-old adjunct associate professor at the Sloan School of Management at MIT, Ton brought one of the most radical, and yet one of the most sensible, ideas to Aspen this year. Her big idea is that companies that provide employees a decent living, which includes not just pay but also a sense of purpose and empowerment at work, can be every bit as profitable as companies that strive to keep their labor costs low by paying the minimum wage with no benefits. Maybe even more profitable. Getting there requires companies to adopt what Ton calls "human-centered operations strategies," which she acknowledges is "neither quick nor easy." But it's worth it, she says, both for the companies and for the country. Surely, she's right.

As Ton explained to me last week in Aspen — and as she has written

in a book she published last year titled *The Good Jobs Strategy* — her thesis comes out of research she did early in her academic career on supply chain management in the retail industry, focused especially on inventory management. What she and her fellow researchers discovered is that while most companies were very good at getting products from, say, China to their stores, it was a different story once the merchandise arrived. Sometimes a product stayed in the back room instead of making it to a shelf where a customer could buy it. Or it was in the wrong place. Special in-store promotions weren't being executed a surprisingly high percentage of the time. She saw this pattern in company after company.

As she took a closer look, Ton says, she realized that the problem was that these companies viewed their employees "as a cost that they tried to minimize." Workers were not just poorly paid, but poorly trained. They often didn't know their schedule until the last moment. Morale was low and turnover was high. Customer service was largely nonexistent.

Yet when she asked executives at these companies why they put up with this pattern, she was told that the only way they could guarantee low prices was to operate with employees who were paid as little as possible, because labor was such a big part of their overhead. The problems that resulted were an unavoidable byproduct of a low-price business model.

Unconvinced that this was the only approach, Ton decided to search for retail companies — the same kind of companies that needed low prices to succeed — that did things different-



Joe Nocera

ly. Sure enough, she found some.

The two companies she talks about most frequently in this regard are a Spanish grocery chain called Mercadona and QuikTrip, a Tulsa, Oklahoma-based chain of convenience store/gas stations that competes with the likes of the 7-Eleven chain.

What first struck her about Mercadona is that the annual turnover was an almost unheard-of 4 percent. Why do employees stay? "They get decent salaries, four weeks of training that costs the company \$5,000, stable schedules ... and the opportunity to thrive in front of their customers every day," Ton said in a speech she forwarded to me. The grocery business is low margin, where every penny counts. If Mercadona couldn't keep prices low with this strategy, it would have abandoned it long ago.

QuikTrip, an \$11 billion company with 722 stores, is a prime example of what Ton means by "human-centered operations strategies." Paying employees middle-class wages allows the company to get the most out of them. Employees are cross-trained so they can do different jobs. They can solve problems by themselves. They make merchandising decisions for their own stores. The ultimate result of the higher wages QuikTrip pays is that costs everywhere else in the operation go down. At QuikTrip, Ton says, products don't remain in the back room, and in-store promotions always take place, as they're supposed to.

Ton's interest in the good jobs strategy is more than academic now; she has become a proselytizer, trying to spread the word that every company would be better served by this approach. "The assumed trade-off between low prices and good jobs is a fallacy," she says. As we worry about where middle-class jobs are going to come from, Ton's is a message that needs to be heard not just in Aspen but all across America.

'The assumed trade-off between low prices and good jobs is a fallacy.'