

PICKY PICKERS



Ever watch the documentary series “American Pickers” on the History Channel (www.history.com/shows/american-pickers)? Mike Wolfe (pictured left) and Frank Fritz (pictured right) of Antique Archaeology (www.antiquearchaeology.com) are well-traveled “pickers” who are scouring the U.S. looking for valuable, and often forgotten, antiques and memorabilia to restore.

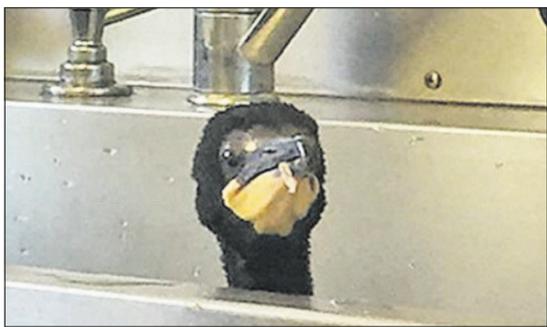
According to their press release, the duo are “on a mission to recycle America, restore forgotten relics to their former glory, and learn a thing or two about American history along the way.” The pair are pictured courtesy of History.com

So why should you care? They’re headed to Oregon to film in September, that’s why, and they’re “looking for leads and would love to explore what you may have. They are on the hunt for interesting characters with interesting and unique items. Some of the items they are looking for include: vintage bicycles, toys, unusual radios, movie memorabilia, advertising, military items, folk art, vintage musical equipment, vintage automotive items, early firefighting equipment, vintage clothing, pre-50s western gear.” You can see the full list of the kinds of items they’re seeking (and not seeking) at http://tinyurl.com/ncpickers

They are only interested in private collectors. So, with that in mind, if you have a large collection, or know someone who does, email your name, number, address and description of the collection, and photos, to: americanpickers@cinetflix.com or call 855-OLD-RUST.

Got a barnful (or attic full) of goodies? Or even a houseful (the Flavel house on 15th Street comes to mind)? Why not give them a holler? The Ear is fairly certain the North Coast is a hotbed of places for the pickers to pick up some interesting goodies.

TEMPORARY REPRIEVE



“This baby cormorant is one lucky bird!” the all volunteer-run Wildlife Center of the North Coast (www.coastwildlife.org) posted on their Facebook page, along with his photo, which is shown.

“Observed in the clutches of an eagle passing overhead, by an Astoria cab driver, the eagle dropped him and he landed in a tree. The cab driver climbed the tree to rescue this sweet, fuzzy baby. He has an injured wing, but is doing just fine. When released his greater threat will not be another eagle, but the Army Corps of Engineers.” If you will recall, the Corps is slaughtering cormorants on Sand Island in the Columbia River.

“For now,” the poster added, “he’s safe and getting strong.” Let’s hope he stays that way.

A ‘CRACKERJACK BRIDGE PLAYER’



Marion Blake, pictured, is 97 years old, and loves to play bridge. Sue Kroning, the Seaside Bridge Unit manager, calls her a “crackerjack bridge player” who is “always in the money,” usually winning or placing when she plays.

“You need 300 master points to be a Life Master,” Sue explained, “earned by competing against other players at duplicate bridge. Some of these points can only be earned at tournaments, and unfortunately, Marion has never been to enough tournaments to complete that requirement. She has, however, amassed over 1,001 master points.”

To celebrate this achievement, the local bridge unit celebrated with a cake and a toast on July 31 at the Bob Chisholm Community Center in Seaside.

Just in case you’re wondering, Marion laughingly told The Daily Astorian in 2014 that “red wine and dark chocolate” are the secrets of her longevity. The recipe is probably worth a try.

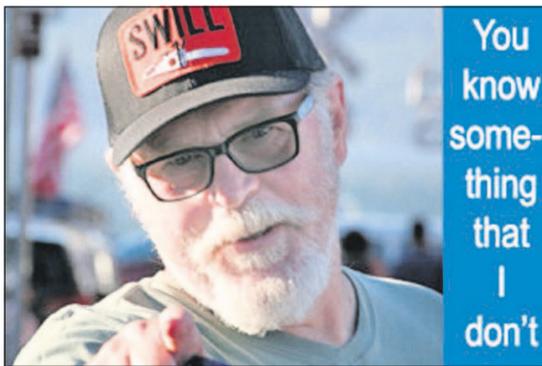
In One Ear



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TALK OF THE TOWN



The Ear bets you’ve seen Bill Honl (pictured) around Astoria with a cardboard sign nearby which says: “Everyone you will ever meet knows something you don’t — Bill Nye. You know something that I don’t — tell me something that I don’t know and let me take your picture (My daughter thinks I’m weird, but says you should talk to me anyway). Your picture and quote will go online, but with no info except date and town.”

The sign has piqued a lot of interest, and many folks have stopped to talk to him. And yes, they literally do tell him something he doesn’t know. You can see his collection of revelations at http://youknowsomethingthatidont.tumblr.com

“So, what’s it all about?” you may be wondering. Is it a social/art project? Nope. “The shortest possible answer: I’m lonely,” Bill told the Ear. “A more fleshed out response is that it’s like a people collection. Like Richard Avedon’s ‘In the American West’ series, or ‘Humans of New York’ (www.humansofnewyork.com).”

“People are interesting,” he added. “Who needs monsters or angels when there are people running around loose? Also, I’m lonely.” Not for long, the Ear suspects.

PAIN RELIEF FOR THE WALLET

The Ear found out something interesting the other day while picking up some prescriptions for someone just out of the hospital who does not have prescription insurance — but that was after almost keeling over when a price of almost \$600 was quoted for two antibiotics and some pain relief pills.

The pharmacist recommended the Ear whip out the old smartphone and go to www.freedrugcard.com. Done. The website instantly produced an online card, and the pharmacist entered the accompanying numbers from the phone into the computer for the billing, and lo and behold, the bill came to about 42 percent of the original quote.

No, this isn’t some weird scam, and it really works. Go for it.



CATCH A WAVE



Everyone talks about wave energy, but someone’s finally doing something about it, Gizmag.com reports (http://tinyurl.com/azuratest). The Azura wave energy system, pictured, courtesy of Northwest Energy Innovations, who created it, has been deployed in a Wave Energy Test Site near Kaneohe Bay on the north shore of Oahu, Hawaii.

Weighing in at 45 tons, the Azura is expected to provide power to the municipal grid for a 12-month assessment period. If it works out, commercialization is the goal. This particular device is unique in that its “360-degree rotating float mechanism is able to extract power from both vertical and horizontal wave motions,” the article says. “By contrast, some other systems can only utilize up-and-down or back-and-forth movements.”

“The pilot project is being conducted with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, the U.S. Navy, and the University of Hawaii. The university will be in charge of data collection and analysis, while the other two groups will use that data in their “ongoing efforts to validate wave energy technology and advance the marine renewable energy industry.” Sounds promising.

SOLE SURVIVOR



Nostalgia Nook, first ran Aug. 3, 2012: After reading the story about the early August 1943 B-17 crash on Cape Lookout, and sole survivor bombardier Wilbur Perez (pictured inset), Geri Humpal of Seaside gave the Ear a call. It was reported that Mr. Perez, who was badly injured, was taken to Fort Stevens, the nearest military hospital (pictured). His surgeon was Dr. Donald H. Kast, pictured inset, Geri’s father.

It was no surprise that Mr. Perez needed surgery after being blown out of his bombardier bubble by the crash, then dangling from a tree by a shoelace, and finally winding up strapping himself onto a propeller wedged into the face of Cape Lookout. Plus, it took a long time to rescue him. Initial reports of the crash were ignored, and, Geri told the Ear, there were no trails or roads up to the crash site on the cape. The rescue team had to wait for the tide to change to get rescue equipment up there.

Geri also added a new tidbit to the story. When Mr. Perez finally made it to the hospital, he wanted to put off necessary surgery until he could deliver his Norden bombsight (pictured, inset) personally into the hands of someone from his base at Pendleton. How he got it out of the wreckage, and held onto it, is a mystery.

At the time, the Norden bombsight was a new and top secret piece of equipment used to drop bombs accurately. The bombardier input airspeed and altitude, and the bombsight calculated the bomb’s trajectory, which was so accurate it could hit within a 100-foot circle from higher than 20,000 feet.

Mr. Wikipedia has more than you would ever want to know at http://tinyurl.com/nordenaim

Dr. Kast finally convinced the bombardier to give up the bombsight by stowing it in the hospital safe until someone could come and retrieve it. The surgery was successful, and Mr. Perez went on to live a long life, dying at 90 in 2009.

As Paul Harvey would have said, “And now you know the rest of the story.”

STEAMIN’ ALONG



Not many of us can remember when steam boats were Astorian Norm Davis, meet coordinator, wrote, “But members of the Northwest Steam Society (www.northweststeam-society.org) have rejuvenated or built boats that go back to that time. The group’s first meeting was in 2011 in Cathlamet, Wash, and they have been meeting up and down the Interstate 5 corridor ever since.”

They return to the Elochman Marina in Cathlamet, starting today, for more “reminiscing on the Columbia,” including Norm’s boat, Miss Chif, which is pictured. Tentatively, a steamboat parade will start around 11 a.m. Saturday at the marina, proceed up Bernie Slough to the Highway 409 bridge, then head back to the marina. Most of the steamboats, which range from 15 to 40 feet long, will be leaving by Sunday afternoon.

“At the last meet they brought 16 steam boats and an old fashioned steam donkey, which got a lot of old timers reminiscing,” Norm recalled. “While it won’t be with them this year, there are 22 registered to attend. The oldest boat in the fleet is Uno. She started out with a mast and oars on Lopez Island, Wash., in 1894. Through the years she lost the mast and picked up a steam engine and boiler ... Another boat returning is the Vital Spark — strange name for a boat that has no spark plug.

“Those who were there at the 2011 steam meet may well remember the Cheng Tze, a tall stern wheel paddle boat ... The largest boat is a 1937 steel hulled tugboat that is being refurbished in St Helens. She is the only boat that will be steaming to the meet. All the rest will be coming on trailers.”

Aside from the Saturday steamboat parade, “the rest of the time will be spent just steaming, a favorite thing for the steamers,” Norm added. “All with an interest in steam are invited to come to the docks, chat with boat owners, take pictures and, space available when boats leave the dock, catch a ride.”



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