

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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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

Mitch Mitchum was fired as Astoria Public Works Director Friday.

City Manager Dan Bartlett made the announcement today, saying he had "completed a disciplinary decision."

Bartlett had been investigating how a pump station on West Irving Avenue came to be sited incorrectly — because of a measurement error — and did not conform to the city's own setback requirement. It was one of several projects for which the city public works department had been under fire in the past several months.

The city manager said he has been advised by the city's labor attorneys, Kathy Peck and Diane Tubanoff of the Lake Oswego firm, Williams, Zografos and Peck, "not to comment further on this matter as it may be a decision that can be appealed."

Anna Albertson used to stand in a bucket filled with hot water to soothe her chilled feet during winter shifts at the canneries that once dotted the Columbia River.

But on a hot Saturday afternoon at the 2005 Astoria Regatta, Albertson and more than 250 former cannery workers found respite from the sun as they strolled into Pier 39 to take part in the first ever CRPA/Bumblebee Cannery Workers Reunion.

"It's not as cold without the freezers," said Alberston's daughter, Mary, a second-generation cannery worker, who was last inside Pier 39 15 years ago as a CRPA worker.

Pier 39 owner, Floyd Holcom, helped organize the event, which included live music, drinks and a salmon bake.

There's no two ways about it. Seaside really digs beach volleyball. Under the sun, in the fog, doesn't matter.

If it's summer and on the beach, they will come. Just add about 70 courts, 600 teams and big parade-size balloons, and you've got yourself a big beach volleyball bash. One of the biggest around, anywhere.

Thousands of spectators and participants alike packed the sands in front of the Turnaround for the annual Seaside event this weekend.

### 50 years ago — 1965

City Manager Dale Curry said Tuesday Astoria may look more poverty stricken on paper than it actually is.

Curry's statement was in response to a report, based on 1960 census figures, that Astoria has the highest poverty index of any city with 10,000 or more population. The report was prepared for the governor's coordinating committee for the Economic Opportunity Act.

The so-called "poverty index" for cities was based on four factors: percentage of families with less than \$3,000 income, percentage of unemployment, percentage of persons 25 and older with less than eight years of education, and percentage of unsound housing in the city.

Astoria ranked poorest only in lack of education. A total of 17 percent of 1,174 of Astoria's 6,910 residents older than 25 had less than an eighth grade education.

Curry replied that Astoria had a good number of older residents who did not have the advantages of an education. This tends to color this 17 percent figure," he said.

Racial tension caused by riots in strife-torn Los Angeles was blamed by Tongue Point Job Corps officials Tuesday as the primary cause of a series of fist fights which broke out between white and Negro youths at the center Sunday night and Monday.

More than 600 entries are expected for the 1965 Regatta parade, according to chairman Larry Tyle.

Tyle said Monday plans for the Saturday grand parade were well under way. Entries so far include floats, drum and bugle corps, novelty units and motorized units.

### 75 years ago — 1940

Sailing boats from Portland, Seattle, Tacoma and ports of the Columbia are charting courses for the Astoria Yacht Club where all these craft will have moorings during the 1940 Regatta.

Some of the Puget Sound skippers are sending their boats overland. These are the fast sailing flatties which were not designed for the deep sea route from the sound. A new class of sailing craft, the finkeel Stars, one of the most popular international racing types, will compete this year for the first time in the Regatta. At least three of the fast 22-foot boats will race here. They have no centerboards.

Admiral Thomas C. Luke has been associated with Astoria Regattas since 1906, and at last he has had his lifetime ambition of being admiral of the event come true, he told the Astoria Chamber town meeting Wednesday, which was gathered as a kick-off meeting for the Regatta, "the greatest in history."



Courtesy of Clatsop Historical Society  
 The oldest celebration in Oregon history, the Astoria Regatta, began in 1894. Here boats gather to celebrate.

The first yacht to arrive here for Regatta races came from the most distant port ever to enter the annual water sports program here.

The pleasure boat is the 30-foot ketch Vulcan, 42 days out from Honolulu where the skipper, Harold A. Oakes, Portland High School instructor, has spent the spring and summer.

# War and Peace fills summer hours

If it's summer, it's time to haul out *War and Peace*, Leo Tolstoy's novel that has come to define the concept of an epic. I don't know how many summers ago I started reading this book. Pulling it off the shelf, I was surprised to discover that I'm over half way through it.

Because I am an episodic reader — consuming books and articles piecemeal — my summer appointment with Tolstoy fits me perfectly.

The joy of reading Tolstoy is his ability to convey the atmosphere of a scene — the characters, the smell of the setting, glances, affections, rivalries — in one paragraph.

In the chapter I just finished, the Tsar has appeared before a group of nobles to appeal for their financial support in the war with Napoleon. Princes, counts and dukes notice tears in the Tsar's eyes as he begs their assistance. One by one, they agree to raise a company of soldiers.

And then reality sets in. Tolstoy concludes the chapter: "The noblemen went back from the assembly to their homes and clubs, took off their uniforms, and with deep misgivings issued orders to their stewards to start raising the levy. They were amazed at what they had done."



MEANWHILE, I AM IN THE grip of another book, *Havana Nocturne: How the Mob Owned Cuba and Lost it to the Revolution*. If you like true crime or are fascinated with Cuba, this is a page-turner — rare for nonfiction. The author, T.J. English, specializes in organized crime.

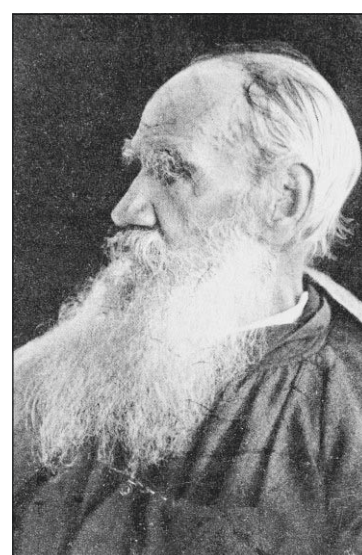
For anyone who hopes to comprehend Cuba, this slice of history is essential. The names that dominate the American side of the story are Charles "Lucky" Luciano, Al Capone, Meyer Lansky, Bugsy Siegel and Santo Trafficante. Beneath the level of those "household" names are others who are new to me: such as Amadeo Barletta Barletto and Amletto Battisti y Lora. English's details of

'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  
 Count Leo Tolstoy, the Russian author of "War and Peace" and other works, is shown in this undated photo.

the life of the prerevolutionary Fidel Castro are illuminating.

I suppose all governments have at least a minimal level of corruption. Postwar Cuba was a culture medium for crime, and that's what drew Meyer Lansky to it. Lansky envisioned a world empire of organized crime, with Havana as its epicenter and the Cuban government as its protector.

Castro upset that apple cart.



IN THE AFTERMATH OF last week's big event in Havana, Manny Suarez of Warrenton shared with me an article by Yoani Sanchez, who runs the Havana-based *14ymé-*

### The Mob owned Cuba, and Castro ruined their party.

dio, Cuba's first independent digital newspaper.

Summing up the meaning of a reopened U.S. Embassy, Sanchez wrote: "A conflict of eras is unfolding in Cuba — a collision between two countries: one that has been stranded in the middle of the 20th century, and one that is pushing the other to move forward. They are two islands that clash, but it needs to happen. We know, by the laws of biology and of Kronos, which will prevail. But right now they are in full collision and dragging all of us between the opposing forces."

—S.A.F.



# The junk politics of 2015

By TIMOTHY EGAN  
*New York Times News Service*

When you eat a bowl of Simply Granola in the morning, you may think you're making a healthy start to the day, courtesy of Quaker Oats. But you're taking in the amount of sugar in almost four Oreos cookies.

When you listen to the politicians who want to lead the United States through the treacherous early 21st century, you may think you're doing your job as a citizen of this clamorous and vulgar democracy of ours. You're not. You're getting a sugar high. It feels good. It won't last. And ultimately, it'll make you sick.

I've been trying to eat healthy, metaphorically, for the month of August. But it's been a bust. There's just too much bad stuff to binge on. We have a pending deal with Iran that could imperil Israel, or make the Mideast safer for a decade. We have an approaching visit of a transitional pope. We have a fledgling health care plan that's given coverage to 15 million Americans who never had any — and one party wants to take it away. And we're muddling through the hottest year on record, so far, surpassing the last warmest one, 2014.

And yet, what are the leaders-in-waiting talking about? Roll the highlight reel of our junk politics, starting with the also-rans:

At least one Republican wants to sic the Internal Revenue Service on his political enemies. So promised Gov. Bobby Jindal of Louisiana, in a remarkable statement overlooked at the kids' table debate last week. "I guarantee you under President Jindal, January 2017, the Department of Justice and the IRS and everybody else we can send from the federal government will be going into Planned Parenthood."

## You're getting a sugar high.

Other Republicans think we should be living in a theocracy. "It's time we recognize the Supreme Court is not the Supreme Being," said Mike Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas, testing the latest version of his church-lady demagoguery. He wants to ignore the high court on both gay marriage and abortion — breaking the law while waving his Bible.

Huckabee would also use the force of government to intervene with any woman seeking an abortion, claiming a constitutional right, the 14th and 5th Amendments, to protect a zygote. When he mentioned this Brave New World idea in the debate, no one challenged him. Instead, other candidates were equally extreme, refusing to make abortion exceptions even when the life of a woman is at stake. This is junk women's health care, driven by religious fanaticism.

More empty calories: Scott Walker, the governor whose foreign policy experience is limited to breakfast at the old International House of Pancakes, threatens to start at least two wars upon taking office. He promises to use military action if necessary to coax Iran into doing what he wants it to do. He also wants to pick a fight with Russia, sending weapons to Ukraine and erecting a missile defense system in Poland and the Czech Republic.

Walker's home state of Wisconsin ranks 35th in private-sector job creation. But New Jersey is worse, suffering nine credit downgrades and ranking near the bottom in job growth. Even the governor of the state, Chris Christie, would not rise to Jersey's defense after fellow candidates described Atlantic City as something akin to Baghdad on



Timothy Egan

a hangover.

Those governors want to apply their ruinous models to the rest of the country. In the same vein, a failed former chief executive officer, Carly Fiorina, having fired 30,000 employees and driven her company's stock price into the ground, feels more qualified than ever to be president. She's never held elective office and rarely voted while living in California. A junk comeback.

Which gets us to Donald Trump, who boasts of four company bankruptcies, and paying people to come to his wedding. He is "a very smart person" and will be "phenomenal to the women" just like "the blacks." It's hard for women to attack him, he says, "because I'm so good-looking."

Normal politics can't explain Trump. For that you need Freud. Trump fits the classic definition of narcissistic personality disorder, as Marc C. Johnson, an astute observer of American politics, noted in a recent blog post. Everything that comes out of Trump's mouth is junk, but at least it fits a pattern.

Finally, to the Democrats. A 73-year-old socialist, Sen. Bernie Sanders of Vermont, is getting lots of attention because Hillary Clinton's email story is boring, by Clinton scandal standards. When a noisy intruder, an African-American, jumped to the podium and refused to let Sanders speak, it was widely interpreted as a big problem for the candidate and race relations.

Wrong. The censor with the mouth was, it turns out, a self-described "extremist Christian," from a family that once backed Sarah Palin. Some members of Black Lives Matter distanced themselves from her.

How did this stunt become a thing among the national press corps? Junk media. Sadly, the sugar high goes two ways.

## Where to write

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