

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

"If we're going to build the thing, let's make it last 50 years."

Some of the logs have split a bit, and there are a few gaps in the walls where the wood has shrunk or settled, but a half-century later, Fort Clatsop is still bringing the Lewis and Clark story to life for thousands of visitors.

On Sunday, some of the people responsible for building the replica fort gathered to share their memories of the project, 50 years to the day after its dedication.

The tiny log structure that is now the centerpiece of the new Lewis and Clark National Historical Park began as a seemingly far-fetched idea of a brand-new service group with lots of enthusiasm but no money or fort-building skills.

It grew into a community-wide project supported by a variety of groups and individuals, who lent money, supplies and labor to make the idea a reality.

While our region celebrates the achievement of obtaining a new national park, the time also is ripe to recognize an earlier success that was no less impressive. It is the preservation of Long Island in Willapa Bay.

This Saturday many dignitaries will meet on the island to officially name the "Don Bonker Cedar Grove" in honor of the retired Washington state congressman who led efforts to save one of the West Coast's outstanding places.

The 274-acre Cedar grove is the last remnant of a maritime forest that covered the coasts of southwestern Washington and northwestern Oregon thousands of years ago. Today, some of the cedars are as old as 900 years. It is rare that such an ancient grove has survived this long, both through natural threats and those imposed by mankind.

50 years ago — 1965

The Oregon Highway commission Monday approved the first major portion of relocating the twisting Columbia River highway between Astoria and Knappa.

The commission approved realignment and widening of 3.5 miles of US 30 between Burnsides and a point east of Knappa High School where the new alignment will join a previously rebuilt segment of the highway.

The new alignment will cut through three mink ranches in the Svensen area, and construction work will not begin until mink pelting is completed next winter, for fear of disturbing the mink.

Robert B. Nash of Everett and Steve Miscoe of Seaside, diving near Neahkahnie mountain recently, found, on the ocean floor, a short distance south of the slide which fell off the face of the mountain last winter, a green starboard light of the type which burned oil, and must have come from a sailing vessel.

One person who saw the lamp stated it could have been from the Upada or Upata. There is a chance it could have come from the same ship as the bell which was recently recovered.

Astoria's 45th annual Regatta celebration officially got underway Thursday night with selection of Sheryl Bettendorf as 1965 Regatta queen in ceremonies at Astoria High School.

A long "Ooooooh," muffled by her hand was all that was heard from Queen Sheryl when the royal robe was placed on her shoulders at a private ceremony in a small room near the auditorium where her Regattaland subjects were awaiting her triumphant return.



Courtesy of Clatsop County Historical Society

Admiral Lawrence Barber of Portland crowns Sheryl Bettendorf 1965 Regatta queen in ceremonies at Astoria High School Thursday night.

Astoria is facing a "critical" coin shortage and according to a local bank spokesman the situation "is going to get worse before it gets better."

Local merchants have been "crying" for coins for the last few months but lately the situation has been growing worse.

Tom Brame, operations officer of First National Bank's Astoria branch, said Monday his bank has only enough coins for one or two days of normal operations.

"It's a nation-wide shortage," Brame said. "Mints are not producing enough coins to meet the shortage and the Federal Reserve system has had to cut its allotment of coins to banks way down," he said.

75 years ago — 1940

Not until he had lined up Al Sehom, Aero club swimming coach of Portland, to make nightly "fire dives" during the three-day water sports program of the Astoria Regatta did William Seeborg, chairman of the water sports, satisfy a burning desire to have the biggest water show ever presented here.

A special platform, 15 feet off the water in front of the marine stadium, will be erected to accommodate the sensational stunt diver. Sehom will saturate his clothing with gasoline. For a moment after a match is touched to his clothes, the diver hesitates and the flames sweep over his body. Then he plunges into the river in complete darkness, save for the light of the "human torch."

The largest fleet of speedboats for this year's Regatta, since the Pacific coast championships drew 72 outboard speeders to Youngs Bay several years ago, will span the Columbia River Thursday, Friday and Saturday of next week.

Axel England, chairman of the speedboat races, said today that 35 outboard speedboats and 12 to 15 of the more powerful and faster inboards are virtually assured for the pits, when racing time arrives next week. Because there will be no motor or boat inspection, permitting any "outboard powered" boat capable of 30 miles an hour to compete, many of the "hell-divers" are reported devising special outfits especially adapted to the Oregon system of handicapping outboards.

Community opens their hearts, homes to fire victims

The stories will remain long after the fires are put out

As fire roared through Canyon Creek and over the hills just south of John Day, those who were ordered to evacuate recall details they probably never will forget.

Dean Elliott, who lost his home of 53 years, remembers the sound of the wind. It was like a locomotive, he said.

His wife, Betty, recalls how the oxygen was sucked out of the air and she could hardly breathe.

Mike Mannell, who was woken by a friend, tells how he ran through the smoke to put a sprinkler on his Harley-Davidson and another sprinkler on his neighbor's house.

If his friend hadn't woken him that morning, says Mannell, whose cabin he had been building for six years burned to the ground, "I probably would have perished in that fire."

And with tears in his eyes, the neighbor, Bryan Nelson, whose home Mannell saved, calls Mannell a "hero."

These stories abound in the canyon. They are told and retold to friends, relatives, restaurant waitresses, store clerks. They are told because people in this community know each other, and most importantly, they care about one another.

The fire, one mile south of John Day, has burned 69,606 acres — about 109 square miles. It has destroyed 39 homes. More than 200 people had to evacuate during the height of the fire, which started as a 10-acre brush fire Aug. 12.

For nearly two weeks, *Blue Mountain Eagle* staffers Cheryl Hoefler and Angel Carpenter have kept a running list of all the donations, services, offers of homes and other resources available to those who were affected by the fire. Response has been pouring into the Eagle's Facebook page throughout the region, asking how they can help.

That's what you do in a crisis.

Danger everywhere

Where I live — on the North Oregon Coast — we are a small community, too. Most all of us have ties to each other — through family, work, volunteer activities, civic duties or friendship.

We also have emergencies. Usually, it's flooding or windstorms in the winter because it rains so much along the coast, where we live on a narrow band of land between forest and ocean.

Our largest, overriding concern, however, is the potential Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake that is



Angel Carpenter/Blue Mountain Eagle

Six-year-old Dalia Nicodemus of Canyon City shows a poster she made for the firefighters who've been working on the Canyon Creek Complex fire.

IMPRESSIONS



By
NANCY
MCCARTHY

That's what you do in a crisis.

sponding to this crisis, I have hope that we will do just as well when disaster hits us on the coast.

The local fire departments, U.S. Forest Service, Oregon Department of Forestry, Grant County Sheriff's Office and Red Cross all began working together to fend off the fire and keep us informed. In only a day or two, when it was obvious the fire couldn't be controlled locally, nearly 1,000 firefighters from throughout the region responded, and two incident commanders trained to supervise massive wildfires took charge.

Meanwhile, local volunteers opened their hearts, wallets and homes to those who needed immediate help.

Where I live, they say not to count on outside help being able to reach us for several weeks — or even months. We will be on our own to cope.

This experience, in this small community, shows me that it can be done.

The details of our potential crisis will be different. We will have different stories to tell. Instead of a wall of fire, we may be fleeing a wall of water. Instead of fire consuming our homes, it will be an enormous ocean wave.

But I hope — and expect — the community response will be the same. We will take care of each other.

Because that's what communities do in a crisis.

Nancy McCarthy is the former editor of the Seaside Signal and the Cannon Beach Gazette. She has been the interim editor of the Blue Mountain Eagle for the past month.

expected to occur 50 to 75 miles offshore and trigger a tsunami that would wipe our communities off the map.

It seems that, no matter where you live, some sort of disaster looms, threatening to destroy all we hold dear.

The difference between the North Coast and Eastern Oregon, however, is that the Cascadia earthquake happens every 300 years, and fires are a real possibility here every 300 days.

We are constantly in the emergency planning mode on the coast. We worry about where we would evacuate to escape the wall of water heading toward us 15 minutes after the earthquake drops the ground out from under us. We gather "go bags" — backpacks filled with emergency supplies; we test out evacuation routes leading toward ground higher than 80 feet and we organize Community Emergency Response Teams to help us deal with the immediate crises that will occur when people finally reach pre-established gathering spots.

Hope for the future

After observing and reporting on how John Day and Canyon City area residents and emergency crews are re-

Live life as a series of revelations

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

Let's say you had the chance to become a vampire.

With one magical bite you would gain immortality, superhuman strength and a life of glamorous intensity.

Your friends who have undergone the transformation say the experience is incredible. They drink animal blood, not human blood, and say everything about their new existence provides them with fun, companionship and meaning.

Would you do it? Would you consent to receive the life-altering bite, even knowing that once changed you could never go back?

The difficulty of the choice is that you'd have to use your human self and preferences to try to guess whether you'd enjoy having a vampire self and preferences. Becoming a vampire is transformational. You would literally become a different self. How can you possibly know what it would feel like to be this different version of you or whether you would like it?

In her book "Transformative Experience," L.A. Paul, a philosophy professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, says life is filled with decisions that are a bit like this. Life is filled with forks in the road in which you end up changing who you are and what you want.

People who have a child suddenly become different. Joining the military is another transformational experience. So are marrying, changing careers, immigrating, switching religions.

In each of these cases the current you is trying to make an important decision, without having the chance to know what it will feel like to be the future you.

Paul's point is that we're fundamentally ignorant about many of the biggest choices of our lives and that it's not possible to make purely rational decisions. "You shouldn't fool yourself," she writes. "You have no idea what you are getting into."

The decision to have a child is the purest version of this choice. On average, people who have a child suffer a loss of reported well-being. They're more exhausted and report lower life satisfaction. And yet few parents can imagine going back and being their old preparental selves. Parents are like self-fulfilled vampires. Their rich new lives would have seemed incomprehensible to their old childless selves.

So how do you make transformational decisions? You have to ask the right questions, Paul argues. Don't ask, Will I like parenting? You can't know. Instead, acknowledge that you, like all people, are born with an intense desire to know. Ask, Do I have a profound desire to discover what it would be like to be this new me, to experience this new mode of living?

As she puts it, "The best response to this situation is to choose based on whether we want to discover who we'll become."

Live life as a series of revelations. Personally, I think Paul's description of the problem is ingenious but her solution is incomplete. Would you really trust yourself to raise and nurture a child simply on the basis of self-revelation? Curiosity is too thin, relativistic and ephemeral.

I'd say to really make these decisions well you need to step outside the modern conception of ourselves as



David Brooks

cognitive creatures who are most sophisticated when we rely on rationality.

The most reliable decision-making guides are more "primitive." We're historical creatures. We have inherited certain life scripts from evolution and culture, and there's often a lot of wisdom in following those life scripts. We're social creatures. Often we undertake big transformational challenges

not because it fulfills our desires, but because it is good for our kind.

We're mystical creatures. Often when people make a transformational choice they feel it less as a choice and more as a calling. They feel there was something that destined them to be with this spouse or in that vocation.

Most important, we're moral creatures. When faced with a transformational choice the weakest question may be, What do I desire? Our desires change all the time. The strongest questions may be: Which path will make me a better person? Will joining the military give me more courage? Will becoming a parent make me more capable of selfless love?

Our moral intuitions are more durable than our desires, based on a universal standard of right and wrong. The person who shoots for virtue will more reliably be happy with her new self, and will at least have a nice quality to help her cope with whatever comes.

Which brings us to the core social point. These days we think of a lot of decisions as if they were shopping choices. When we're shopping for something, we act as autonomous creatures who are looking for the product that will produce the most pleasure or utility. But choosing to have a child or selecting a spouse, faith or life course is not like that. It's probably safer to ask "What do I admire?" than "What do I want?"