

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

Two months ago, Mitch Michum was fired.

But Friday, the former Astoria public works director's status officially changed from "fired" to "retired." That's the day Mitchum signed a separation agreement with the city of Astoria.

"An old saying goes, 'when you reach a fork in the road, take it,'" Mitchum said today in a written statement. "I believe I've reached a fork in the road. The city of Astoria has decided to withdraw their disciplinary termination of my employment. I have decided to retire," Mitchum wrote.

Appropriately damp weather greeted local citizens and tourists who came to get one last look at Fort Clatsop Sunday before workers begin dismantling the charred structure.

Beginning Thursday the public was able to get a close-up view of the fort, which has been off-limits since fire destroyed the replica Oct. 3. Crews were set to begin demolishing the building today.

In observance of the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial, the Washington State Transportation Commission on Wednesday approved a resolution renaming the Megler Safety Rest Area to Dismal Nitch Safety Rest Area.

The traffic signal at the Safeway intersection on Lief Erikson Drive won't be ready for at least another three months, the Astoria City Council learned Monday night.

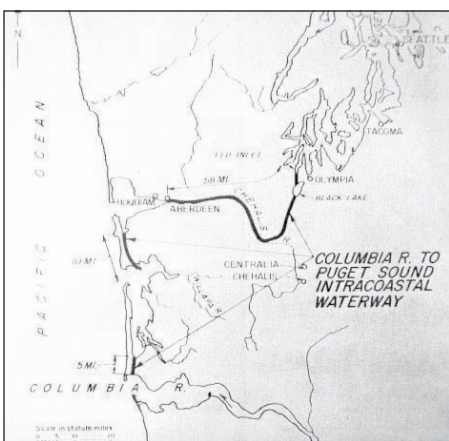
Noting that the signal was supposed to have been operational by Sept. 1, Mayor Willis Van Dusen said "We found out now we're six months off the mark. I feel very disappointed about it."

50 years ago — 1965

A ceremony marking the end of 35 years of toll collections on the Longview bridge across the Columbia River is scheduled for Tuesday by Washington Gov. Dan Evans and Gov. Mark O. Hatfield.

The two governors plan to build a bonfire on the middle of the bridge to burn the last revenue bonds for the span.

Two women who were present at dedication ceremonies when the bridge was opened to traffic in 1930 will assist at the bond-burning.



This map by the US Corps of Engineers shows the apparent best route for a proposed Columbia River-Puget Sound canal.

Do we want federally-paid teachers here in Astoria?

The 6000-teacher corps provided for, at a cost of \$36 millions, in the aid-to-education legislation favored by President L.B. Johnson, is for poverty stricken areas.

As we all here are aware, Sen. Wayne Morse has described Astoria as "the deepest pocket of poverty" in the United States. No doubt, if the teacher corps is established by Congress, we ought to be first in priority to have federally paid teachers assigned to our school system.

Republicans in Congress are viewing the teacher corps with alarm — justified, we believe — that filling our schools with federal employees will lead to federal control of local school affairs.

Since Astoria presumably would be first in line in Oregon for teacher corps invasion, this problem ought to concern us considerably.

75 years ago — 1940

The Fort Stevens garrison of the harbor defenses of the Columbia River, four years ago an impotent collection of 35 men, will shortly attain a total of 2000 to 2500 coast artillerymen — the greatest concentration of men since the war-time days of 1917-18.

The MacDonald Building company of Tacoma, Wash., has started its super-charged, 90-day construction program on 62 buildings on the original Fort Stevens parade grounds to house the 249th regiment of coast artillery. The contract calls for completion of the project January 4. At full strength, when the regiment is moved from its present quarters at Camp Clatsop, the 249th will have 1222 men and 62 officers. Its present strength is about 847 men and 50 officers.

United States naval planes and the destroyer tender that lay below Tongue Point for the past several days left this morning for unknown destinations. Name of the squadron was six planes and the tender were not made public nor was the purpose of their visit here. Naval men have been reticent of late on all activity in this vicinity.

More than 500 tons of dogfish and other sharks have been landed in Astoria during the fall season by a fleet of 12 trawlers engaged in the growing fishery.

You can't build community off of short-term rentals

AN ENTERPRISING filmmaker in Colorado years ago made a short film about the lost people of a mountain community. The movie was a spoof in which archaeologists and anthropologists pretended to stumble on a resort town whose shopping mall and homes were devoid of humanity. "Who were these people," the anthropologists asked as they picked through the minutia of 21st century leisure living.

I think about that film when my wife and I play golf at the Highlands Golf Course. It is a wonderful course that flows through beautiful coastal homes that seldom are occupied. On a big holiday weekend like Memorial Day or Labor Day, some of the homes have people in them.

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SECOND AND THIRD homes that become investments and ceased to house people, are not just a coastal phenomenon. When an Israeli investor about a decade ago discovered a way to turn New York's Plaza Hotel into condominiums, he drained the iconic building of its vitality. At night, The Plaza that faces Fifth Avenue and Central Park is entirely dark. Russian billionaires own a large share of the units.

The New York Times recently documented the large swath of Manhattan buildings that are owned, but never occupied, by investors.

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GEARHART'S STRUGGLE with short-term rentals is related to this phenomenon. Over its long life, Gearhart has been a web of families and individuals — many of whom lived there year-around, others who were summer people or weekend people. The Sandtrap Restaurant at

'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



Oregon Historical Society

This 1926 image shows the first clubhouse built on the spot of the modern-day Sand Trap. The third and final Gearhart Hotel looms large behind it.

the Gearhart Golf Course and the Gearhart Grocery were the melting pot.

Now permanent residents feel threatened by a trend toward rentals that carries a level of anonymity. Part of the anonymity is the coming and going to short-term guests, which is akin to being down the hall from a hotel room. Part of it occurs

when properties are owned by legal entities known as LLCs.

Jeanne and Wilson Mark are permanent residents of Gearhart. In her research of the second-home phenomenon, Jeanne has realized that Gearhart

is hardly alone. She's discovered the same debate in the California communities of Carmel and Mammoth Lakes. A story she found in the *Carmel Pinecone* noted that, "One the hottest debates up and down the coast of California is the question of short-term rentals."

The *Los Angeles Times*' extensive coverage of Mammoth Lakes' struggle with short-term rentals introduced the factor of Airbnb. A

city councilman named John Wentworth told the *Times*: "The problem isn't going to go away. It's driven by billion-dollar companies with very sophisticated online technology that have their crosshairs on communities like ours."

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SMALL COASTAL COMMUNITIES like Gearhart and Cannon Beach are challenged to find people willing to serve on city councils and planning commissions or to staff volunteer fire departments. When these towns' homes become investment vehicles — devoid of occupants or filled like hotel rooms — the fabric of human relationships is diminished. At bottom, that is what frightens residents.

—S.A.F.



Enter the age of the outsiders

By DAVID BROOKS

New York Times News Service

As every schoolchild knows, the gravitational pull of the sun helps hold the planets in their orbits. Gravity from the center lends coherence to the whole solar system.

I mention this because that's how our political and social systems used to work but, no longer do.

In each sphere of life there used to be a few big suns radiating conviction and meaning. The other bodies in orbit were defined by their resistance or attraction to that pull.

But now many of the big suns in our world today lack conviction, while the distant factions at the margins of society are full of passionate intensity. Now the gravitational pull is coming from the edges, in sphere after sphere. Each central establishment, weakened by its own hollowness of meaning, is being ripped apart by the gravitational pull from the fringes.

The same phenomenon can be seen in many areas, but it's easiest to illustrate in the sphere of politics, both global and domestic.

In the 1990s, the central political institutions radiated confidence, derived from an assumed vision of the post-Cold War world. History would be a slow march toward democratic capitalism. Nations would be bound in peaceful associations like the European Union. The United States would oversee a basic international order.

This vision was materialistic and individualistic. Nations should pursue economic growth and a decent distribution of wealth. If you give individuals access to education and opportunity, they will pursue affluence and personal happiness. They will grow more temperate and "reasonable."

Since 2000, this vision of the post-Cold War world has received blow after blow. Some of these blows were self-inflicted. Democracy, especially in the United States, has grown dysfunctional. Mass stupidity and greed led to a financial collapse and deprived capitalism of its moral swagger.

But the deeper problem was spiritual. Many people around the world rejected democratic capitalism's vision of a secular life built around materialism and individual happiness. They sought more intense forms of meaning. Some of them sought meaning in the fanaticisms of sect, tribe, nation, or some stronger and more brutal ideology. In case after case, "reasonableness" has been trampled by behavior and creed that is stronger, darker and less temperate.

A group of well-educated men blew up the World Trade Center. Fanatics flock to the Middle East to behold strangers and apostates. China's growing affluence hasn't led to sweetening, but in many areas to nationalistic belligerence. Iran is still committed to its radical eschatology. Russia is led by a cold-eyed thug with a semi-theological vision of his nation's destiny. He seeks every chance to undermine the world order.

The establishments of the West have not responded to these challenges by doubling down on their vision, by countering fanaticism with gusto. On the contrary, they've lost faith in their own capacities of understanding and action. Sensing a loss of confidence in the center, strong-willed people on the edges step forward to take control.

This happens in loud ways in the domestic sphere. The uncertain Republican establishment cannot govern its own marginal members,



David Brooks

while those on the edge burn with conviction. Jeb Bush looks wan but Donald Trump radiates confidence.

The Democratic establishment no longer determines party positions; it is pulled along by formerly marginal players like Bernie Sanders.

But the big loss of central confidence is in global governance. The United States is no longer willing to occupy the commanding heights and oversee global order. In region after region, those who are weak in strength but strong in conviction are able to have their way. Vladimir Putin in Crimea, Ukraine and the Middle East. Bashar Assad crosses red lines in Syria. The Islamic State spreads in Syria and Iraq. Iranian proxy armies roam the region.

Republicans blame President Barack Obama for hesitant and halting policies, but it's not clear the foreign policy and defense apparatus believes anymore in its own abilities to establish order, or that the American public has any confidence in U.S. effectiveness as a global actor.

Where is this all heading? Maybe those on the fringes of politics really will take over. Say hello to President Ted Cruz. Writing in *The American Interest*, Joshua Mitchell of Georgetown argues that we are heading toward an "Age of Exhaustion." Losing confidence in the post-Cold War vision, people will be content to play with their private gadgets and will lose interest in greater striving.

I only have space to add here that the primary problem is mental and spiritual. Some leader has to be able to digest the lessons of the last 15 years and offer a revised charismatic and persuasive sense of America's historic mission. This mission, both nationalist and universal, would be less individualistic than the gospel of the 1990s, and more realistic about depravity and the way barbarism can spread. It would offer a goal more profound than material comfort.

Jeb Bush looks wan but Donald Trump radiates confidence.