

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

Hosting thousands of Lewis and Clark Bicentennial visitors without its most famous attraction, Fort Clatsop park is promising the public a trek of “200 years in 200 yards” this weekend.

As archaeologists continue to explore under the foundation of the replica fort destroyed by fire last month, re-enactors portraying members of the Corps of Discovery will make camp just a short distance away and provide visitors a glimpse of the explorers, following their arrival at the spot two centuries ago.

A conference center should be built along the Astoria waterfront — but for half as much money as architects have estimated it will cost, the conference center task force concluded at a meeting Monday.

The task force, which is an advisory group for the City of Astoria and the Port of Astoria, met to evaluate where the project stands and decide what the next steps should be, said its chairman, Terry Finklein. “It’s come to the point where we’ve got plans, we’ve got momentum,” he said, but “we have escalating costs as well.”

As the Lewis and Clark Bicentennial signature event kicks off this weekend at various locations around the Lower Columbia, the Chinook Indian Nation is holding its own separate event.

Tribal leaders, unhappy over the involvement of what they see as rival tribal group in the “Destination: The Pacific” commemoration, backed out of the event last year. The Chinook have agreed to take part only in those Bicentennial programs that don’t include the other group, the Clatsop-Nehalem Confederated Tribes.

Restoration projects are helping improve the habitat of more than 10,000 acres along the lower Columbia River, but there is still much work to do to create a healthy ecosystem, according to a report released Wednesday by the Lower Columbia River Estuary Partnership.

“The river needs sustained care.” Said Debrah Marriott, executive director of LCREP. “The trends that we’re seeing — the habitat that’s been restored, the engagement of citizens, the recovery of species, are all telling us we’re on the right track. We need to continue our efforts.

50 years ago — 1965

Port, city and county commissioners reached agreement Monday morning on a program to finance construction of a \$65,000 dock at the foot of 17th Street to provide a permanent berth for the Coast Guard Cutter Yocona.

The agreement concludes a series of meetings to thresh out details of the cooperative project. The dock is needed because the Yocona must leave its present port docks berth when rebuilding of Pier 2 begins next spring.

The Crown-Zellerbach Corporation was host to newspapermen of Lower Columbia district papers Friday after a special press tour of the new Wauna plant, first opportunity so far given any segment of the public to see the new paper mill in operation.

Representatives of newspapers from Seaside to Portland saw the vast paper machine, major unit of the first phase of the Wauna project, grinding out tissue paper, 194 feet wide, at the rate of a mile of paper a minute.

Feasibility studies for a review of the Army Engineers’ report on the Puget Sound-Columbia River canal project will be completed early next year, Col. C.C. Holbrook, Seattle district engineer, told 500 people at a public hearing at Olympia’s Armory Wednesday.

Col. Holbrook heard a mass of testimony from communities over the area between Seattle on the north, Portland and Astoria on the south, most of it strongly in favor of the feasibility study and of constructing the canal.

75 years ago — 1940

TACOMA — The 2,800-foot center span of the \$6,400,000 Tacoma narrows bridge, third longest suspension span in the world, collapsed in a 35-mile wind today and fell with a roar into waters of Puget Sound.

The North Cove light-house, perched precariously 60 feet from the sea on the north side of the Willapa Bay confluence with the Pacific, was still safe today despite the lashing of a 52-mile gale.

However, future of the 100-year-old light, where the sea has gnawed away protective earth over a century, is believed doomed by Captain H. Winbeck of the coast guard lifeboat station at Willapa Bay.

Captain Winbeck said today, by telephone, he expects the light house to tumble into the sea late this month, if a storm should accompany a scheduled nine-foot tide. High tide today measured only 6 feet, 6 inches. Sixty feet of sandy loam still separate the light from the seas. Winbeck said that 30 years ago, the lighthouse was one mile from the water’s edge.

With the stirring marches of the 249th coast artillery band setting the beat, Astoria’s war veterans and representatives of the various patriotic organizations swung down Commercial Street this morning in the annual Armistice day observance of the cessation of hostilities in the first World war.

Suffragette reminds us how long women waited

OVER DINNER ON A cruise ship nearing Cape Horn years ago, I listened in amazement as a British businessman ridiculed the British women’s suffrage movement, in front of his English wife.

It was the first time I had heard the name of Emmeline Pankhurst mentioned derisively by a 21st century male of any nationality.

My understanding of Mrs. Pankhurst and the movement she inspired was enriched considerably last Saturday when my wife and I saw the movie *Suffragette*. It tells the story of the British woman’s suffrage movement through the perspective of a laundry worker who is jailed for her activities and also loses her son.

The most dramatic element in the Pankhurst story is when a movement woman in 1913 threw herself in front of the racehorse owned by King George V at Epsom Downs. I had seen a photo of this calamity. In the movie, the contemporary newsreel of the suffragette’s funeral is shown in grainy black and white.

*Suffragette* is a reminder of what women went through to get the vote. At the close, there is a listing of when other countries gave women suffrage. France didn’t come until 1947. Switzerland not until 1973.

Western states gave women the right to vote well ahead of ratification of the 19th Amendment to the Constitution in 1920. An assortment is as follows: 1869, Territory of Wyoming; 1870, Utah Territory; 1910, Washington; 1912, Oregon.

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TONIGHT MY WIFE AND I will likely toast each other, because we are both veterans. She was an Army nurse and I was a Marine. We joke that it’s good we didn’t know each other then, because she was in the officer corps and I was in the enlisted ranks.

I was in Vietnam, and she saw what became of men who returned from the war. When she visits with young women who are considering nursing, she often says that it gave her a number of opportunities

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NOVEMBER IS AN IMPORTANT month in the Columbia-Pacific region, because this week in 1805 is when Lewis and Clark’s Corps of Discovery arrived here. This was their perilous time at Dismal Nitch, across the river from Astoria.

On Saturday, a few of us will mark our cult observance of Dismal Nitch Day. Led by the historian Jim Sayce, we will climb to a viewpoint where William Clark wrote that he looked downriver.

—S.A.F.

of Cabbages and Kings



Through the Looking-glass



AP Photo

Christabel Pankhurst, of suffragette fame, entering her car outside the New Alliance Club, Cavendish Square, London, on Feb. 18, 1936, for Buckingham Palace, to be invested by the King, unseen, with the insignia of Dame of the Order of the British Empire, for Public and Social Services.

Western states gave the vote to women well ahead of the 19th Amendment.



Great news! We’re not doomed

By DAVID BROOKS

New York Times News Service

It really matters who the next president is. But there are other things that matter just as much to the nation’s future prosperity.

One of them is: What is happening to health care costs?

If health care costs start to rise again the way they did before, then health care spending will swallow the economy and bankrupt the federal government. If they are contained, then suddenly there’s a lot more money for everything else, like schools, antipoverty efforts and wages.

The good news is that recently health care inflation has been at historic lows. As Jason Furman, the chairman of President Obama’s Council of Economic Advisers, put it in a speech to the Hamilton Project last month, “Health care prices have grown at an annual rate of 1.6 percent since the Affordable Care Act was enacted in March 2010, the slowest rate for such a period in five decades, and those prices have grown at an even slower 1.1 percent rate over the 12 months ending in August 2015.”

As a result of the slowdown in health care inflation, the Congressional Budget Office keeps reducing its projections of the future cost of federal health programs like Medicare. As of October, projections for federal health care spending in the year 2020 were \$175 billion lower than the projections made in August 2010. That would be a huge budget improvement.

The big question is whether these trends will continue. Many people believe that health care inflation

came down for entirely temporary reasons and that over the long run we’re still doomed.

One group in this camp emphasizes that the economy went into the tank, so of course people went to the doctor less often. As history demonstrates, it can take up to six years for a recession’s impact to work its way through the system; then health care costs shoot up just as before.

Another group emphasizes that health care inflation is down because general inflation is down, and once general inflation is back to normal, health care costs will shoot upward.

A third group argues that we’ve recently had a decline in technological innovation. Not many useful but costly new drugs or machines have come on the market over the past few years, but if innovation resumes then so will rising costs.

But other experts say the reduction in health care inflation is partly structural and therefore more longstanding. Some point out that health care inflation really began trending downward in 2003 or 2004, during George W. Bush’s first term and before the recession hit. Second, the reduction in health care cost growth seems to be global. Health cost growth has slowed in just about every high-income country since 2000, possibly as efficiencies are passed from place to place.

Members of the Obama administration like to argue that Obamacare has pushed things along. For example, the Affordable Care Act pushed providers into Accountable Care Organizations. Instead of getting paid for doing more tests and procedures, providers have a greater incentive to just keep people healthy.



David Brooks

The law also encouraged bundling. If you go in to get a hip replacement, the government makes a single payment for all services associated with that episode of care. The law also penalizes hospitals when patients have to be readmitted. There’s been a significant drop in readmissions.

There’s still a lot of uncertainty about which side of the debate is right. The most recent numbers have indicated a scary surge in health care prices, and some firms are projecting 6.5 percent inflation for 2016. While parts of the law reduce spending, other parts may lead to more spending, especially as the industry gets more concentrated.

And yet the weight of the evidence suggests that part of the change is permanent. Moving away from the bad old fee-for-service system has got to be a good thing. The greater pressures providers feel to reduce costs have got to be a good thing, at least fiscally.

Last March, Jonathan Rauch wrote a report for the Brookings Institution, arguing that the health care market is more open to normal business model innovation than ever before. The quality of health care data and analytics is improving exponentially. Pressures to reduce costs are ratcheting up. Profitable niches are growing for efficiency improving products.

In the past, most innovation involved improving quality of care at high cost. Rauch described many entrepreneurs who are providing innovations that maintain current quality of care but at lower cost.

We seem to be making at least some incremental progress toward a structural reduction in health care inflation. Many Americans are feeling gloomy about accomplishing anything these days, but progress is possible. We haven’t whipped health care inflation, or defeated our intractable budget issues. But the evidence suggests we’re landing a few serious blows.