

## 'UNBOUNDED AND INDOMITABLE'



Tuesday was the 93rd anniversary of the Friday, Dec. 8, 1922 fire, that destroyed almost 30 blocks and wiped out most of Astoria's downtown residential and business district, including the *Morning Astorian*. A Frank Woodfield photo of the fire is shown.

Stories gleaned from *The Seattle Star* the day of the fire (<http://tinyurl.com/sstar1208>), and the day after (<http://tinyurl.com/sstar1209>) describe the disaster in detail. For instance, there were only two fatalities — both were businessmen, and were believed to have died of heart failure while trying to protect their wares/property from the approaching flames.

On the day of the fire, it was reported that it started because of a furnace explosion in the **Theil Brothers'** pool room at about 2 a.m. By the next day, **Mayor Bremmer** was convinced it was set by "firebugs," and one woman declared a lumberjack told her, shortly before the alarms went off: "I have set fire to the old town. You will see soon."

"Millions of dollars worth of cash, jewelry and other valuables, lying in the ashes and debris here, were unmolested last night and today," *The Seattle Star* reported. "Soldiers, sailors, National Guardsmen and special policemen, all under orders to 'shoot to kill' any looters, have not reported a single case of attempted theft. One man, with an automatic pistol in hand, has stood guard over \$1 million in gold and greenbacks ever since the heat abated sufficiently to allow him to approach his vault in the smoldering basement."

Damage from the fire was estimated at \$12 million (about \$171 million now), and 2,000 residents were left homeless. On the bright side, other citizens took them all in, and several stations were set up to serve hot meals.

The will to rebuild was there right from the start. "The citizens are showing an unbounded and indomitable courage," *The Seattle Star* declared, "and are responding to the crisis in a spirit that will set about to build a greater Astoria as soon as the immediate task of feeding and housing the homeless is finished." And so they did.

## MISCHIEVOUS MITCH



Much was said this week about **Mitch Mitchum**, capable and active public works director for Astoria, restorer of downtown buildings, business partner, landlord, amazing volunteer, husband and father," **Jan Mitchell** (pictured) wrote. "There is something else to tell, and now is the time.

"Years ago, Mitch and I were talking about Astoria's formidable chain-saw sculpture of a North Coast Native American chief (near the roundabout). One of us thought about giving him a **Santa hat** — I don't recall who — and he said, 'If you make it, I'll see that it gets up there.' I did, and he did.

"Later it got trashed somehow, and he said, 'If you'll make another one, I'll pay for the fabric.' I did and he did. "He apologized for forgetting it last year; he was really already too sick. So, if there was a mystery about where that Santa hat (15 feet plus in diameter) came from, now you know."

"If we can find it," she added, "I think it should be raised this holiday season in honor of the mischievous Mitch I knew."

## WHAT IS IT?



I saw this **unusual vessel** (pictured) out in the wind on Sunday, on **Cullaby Lake**, and wondered if anyone knows what it is, or who," **Gail Galen** wrote. "Coast Guard? It appeared to be a rigid inflatable boat, with an inflatable upper structure — with a fairly powerful motor, able to beat the wind."

Even after dredging the Internet, the Ear still has no clue what the answer is. Do any of you North Coast boat mavens know?

## In One Ear



by Elleda Wilson

[ewilson@dailyastorian.com](mailto:ewilson@dailyastorian.com) (503) 325-3211, ext. 257

## A PLACE TO QUIET THE MIND



Look at the circles near the center of the photo shown, which was taken from space. It's a **labyrinth**, built on **Sauvie Island** in 2006 by Astorian **Richard Bracke**, and is listed on the World-Wide Labyrinth Locator (<http://tinyurl.com/bracke-sauvie>).

Initially, he meditated at that particular spot. "Native Americans spent time there, as did Lewis and Clark," Richard noted. But then, "I was inspired to build the labyrinth to help bring more clarity to my life, and a better sense of connection of spirituality to the self and to nature."

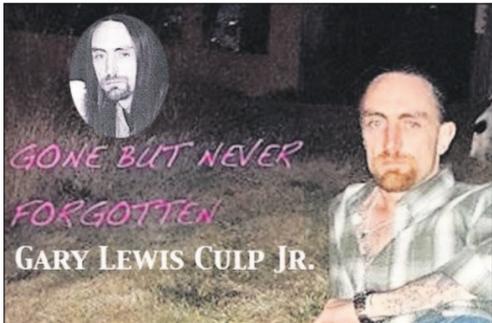
So one day he brought a bucket, and started gathering rocks from the beach. He laid out the design in driftwood first, and gradually replaced the wood with stones. "I had a mission to complete the labyrinth as public art and for people to walk," he wrote. "To me it was a church to pray in, and a few moments to quiet the mind." And, he hoped, walking it would help people see the world, and themselves, differently.

"I was meditating with my eyes closed one day prior to building it, and I saw native people going about daily life, then I was surrounded by a circle of elder people ... It was like a vision from the past, and I was being guided by the elders somehow. It was also a practice of letting go of things I do, and making it good enough that I did them.

"People were rather disrespectful in the treatment of the labyrinth and those who walked it at times. From taking rocks out of it, to walking through the middle as others were walking the labyrinth. The whole process taught me a lot, and showed me much about some people's outlook and respect for what they encounter, and how they respond to it."

"It was a great deal of work, and thousands of rocks," he recalled. "As I placed them, they seem to fit together as if they were magnets. It was a great experience."

## WHAT HAPPENED TO GARY CULP?



Nov. 30 is my son's birthday, but he is not here, as he was found in the Skipanon River after he had been missing for three weeks," his mother, **Pamela Griffin**, now of Rumford, Maine, wrote. Her son was 37-year-old **Gary Lewis Culp Jr.** (pictured), who lived at the Harbor Inn in Warrenton before he mysteriously disappeared. The last time family or friends talked to him was around Dec. 15, 2009. His body was found Jan. 9, 2010, on the river bank in the tidal area near Warrenton Deep Sea.

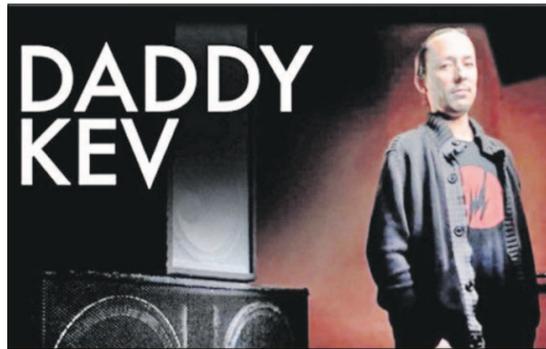
The State Medical Examiner's Office in Portland performed an autopsy, and said the cause of death was drowning. "The autopsy did not reveal any other circumstances surrounding his death," a Daily Astorian story reported at the time, and the Warrenton Police Department asked for the community's help to find out what had happened to Gary. The answer is still unknown.

"I was not impressed with the investigation," Gary's mother wrote. "We were never given a copy of the autopsy."

"He had a backpack which was never seen. I talked to one of his neighbors, who said Gary had shown him a lot of money, which was never found. I am sure there are many more details people know."

"I loved my son and would really like to know what really happened," she added. "If you have any information please email me at [pamelagmaine@aol.com](mailto:pamelagmaine@aol.com). Please help us find out why my son is gone. Let's solve this crime!"

## MIXING IT UP



My nephew, **Kevin Marques Moo** has been nominated for a Grammy!" **Patty Taylor Dutcher** wrote. She lives in Monmouth now, but graduated from Knappa High School ("a million years ago," she said).

"He lives in Los Angeles, and is married to Danyell, with children Lily, Dylan and Oliver," Patty explained. "He does all kinds of professional music engineering feats that are way above my pay grade, in L.A., and travels all over the globe." Kevin is pictured in a screenshot from a Dubspot Interview (<http://tinyurl.com/kevmoo>)

Known professionally as **Daddy Kev**, he's the mixing engineer on the Best Dance Recording Grammy nominee "Never Catch Me" by Flying Lotus, featuring **Kendrick Lamar**, a track from "You're Dead!" on Warp Records. He's also the co-founder of Low End Theory ([www.lowendtheoryclub.com](http://www.lowendtheoryclub.com)), a weekly experimental hip hop and electronic music club, and owns Alpha Pup Records ([www.alphapuprecords.com](http://www.alphapuprecords.com)).

After the nomination, he posted "So surreal, I'm still in shock," on Patty's Facebook page.

The Grammy Awards are Feb. 15. It's going to be a long wait.

## WATCH YOUR TAIL



Did you ever wonder or worry if your horse could be seen by motorists at night when you're out riding? Worry no more, the **Tail Lights Rider Set** (pictured) gallops to the rescue (<http://tail-lights.com/home>).

It has a front light and yes, an LED tail light, which is really a series of lights visible for up to a mile, all adjustable by remote control, including color changes. And, the unit can still be used even when riding bareback.

As the company's motto says: "Be visible. Save your tail."

## ROBOTS TO THE RESCUE?



After the 2011 Japanese tsunami and earthquake, the urgency to improve emergency response and disaster relief fostered the creation of **disaster-response robots**, namely red and yellow 6-foot-tall **JAXON** (yes, named after singer Michael Jackson, pictured left) and 5 feet 6 inches tall **HRP-2 Kai**. The pair were on display and competed recently at the International Robot Exhibition in Tokyo, and are shown in photos from a Discovery News report on the event (<http://tinyurl.com/robotboys>).

"HRP-2 Kai is now recognizing debris and thinking with a sensor on its head about where to put its foot," **Fumio Kanehiro**, a researcher who helped develop the robot, said.

JAXON, developed by the University of Tokyo, moved forward by bending its back and putting both hands on the floor because it realized the ceiling was too low to stand, and cleared a path of debris.

These boys aren't quite ready for prime time, yet, as there are still glitches to iron out, and both are a little wobbly on rough terrain. Poor JAXON had a rather embarrassing moment when he tumbled and had to be carried out on a stretcher.

**Shuji Yumitori**, head of a robot development division, is undaunted. In five years, with improvements, "they'll be wonderful robots," he declared.

## COMMUNITY NOTES

### SATURDAY

**Lower Columbia R/C Society** — 8:30 a.m., back room at Uptown Cafe, 1639 S.E. Ensign Lane, Warrenton. Local Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) chartered radio control model aircraft club meets for breakfast and business. All model aircraft enthusiasts are welcome. For information, call 503-458-5196 or 503-325-0608.

**Holiday Bazaar** — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Appelo Archive Center, 1056 State Route 4, Naselle, Washington. Photos with Santa available from 1 to 2 p.m.

**Columbia Northwestern Model Railroad Club** — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Carter at 503-325-0757.

**Astoria Chapter Daughters**

of the American Revolution — 2 p.m., at the home of Sue Glen, 90329 Hawkins Road, Warrenton. Program: the DAR chapter in Moscow, Russia. Members and women interested in membership may call Sue Glen at 503-861-0574 for information.

### SUNDAY

**National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support Group** — 2 to 3:30 p.m., Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway. Family to Family Support Group, for anyone with friend or loved one suffering from a serious brain (mental) illness. For information, contact Myra Kero at 503-738-6165, or [k7erowood@q.com](mailto:k7erowood@q.com), or go to [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)

**Military Officers Association of America** — Lower Columbia River Chapter, 5 p.m., annual

Christmas Dinner and meeting, Astoria Golf and Country Club, 33445 Sunset Beach Lane, Warrenton. A meal with three entrée choices is planned. All officers and warrant officers of the U.S. armed forces, active, former, reserve or retired are welcome. For information, contact Capt. R. "Steve" Stevens (USCG retired) at (503) 861-9832.

**Line Dancing** — 5:30 to 8 p.m., Seaside American Legion, 1315 Broadway. For information, call 503-738-5111. No cost; suggested \$5 tip to the instructor.

### MONDAY

**Scandinavian Workshop** — 10 a.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. Needlework, hardanger, knitting, crocheting, embroidery and quilting. All are welcome. For information, call 503-325-1364 or 503-325-7960.

**Senior Lunch** — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60. For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

**Columbia Senior Diners** — 11:30 a.m., Peace Lutheran Church (lower level), 565 12th St. Cost is \$5. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

**Warrenton Senior Lunch Program** — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$5 for seniors and \$7 for those younger than 60. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3502 Monday or Thursday.

**Astoria Rotary Club** — noon, second floor of the Astoria Elks Lodge, 453 11th St. Guests always

welcome. For information, go to [www.AstoriaRotary.org](http://www.AstoriaRotary.org)

**Parkinson's Support Group** — 1 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church library, 565 12th St. For information, call 503-338-8469 or 503-440-1970.

**Peninsula Quilt Guild** — 1 p.m., Peninsula Church Center, 5000 N Place, Seaside, Wash. Newcomers welcome. Bring nonperishable food donation. For information, call Janet King at 360-665-3005.

**Knockers Pinochle Group** — 1 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Cost is \$1 per regular session per person. Players with highest and second highest scores split the prize. Game is designed for players 55 and older, but all ages are welcome.

**Seaside Lions Club** — 5 p.m., West Lake Restaurant & Lounge, 1480 S. Roosevelt Drive, Seaside. For information, call 503-738-7693.

**Line Dancing for Seniors** — 6 to 7:30 p.m., Astoria Senior Center, temporarily located at 1555 W. Marine Drive in the old Astoria Yacht Club. For information, call 503-325-3231.

**Pacific County (Wash.) Democrats** — 7 p.m., North County Annex, 1216 Robert Bush Drive, South Bend, Wash. For information, email Diane Knutson at [dlknutson69@yahoo.com](mailto:dlknutson69@yahoo.com)

### TUESDAY

**Stewardship Quilting Group** — 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. All are

See NOTES, Page 2B