

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

Plans to designate Astoria as a National Heritage Area hit a snag Monday night.

Despite what Mac Burns, executive director of the Clatsop County Historical Society, called a "terrific opportunity," members of the Astoria City Council did not immediately embrace the idea.

Councilor Blair Henningsgaard and Mayor Willis Van Dusen both expressed concerns fearing the loss of city staff time which would take away from efforts to accomplish other goals.

A National Heritage Area is defined as a place designated by Congress "where natural, cultural, historic and recreational resources combine to form a cohesive, nationally distinctive landscape arising from patterns of human activity shaped by geography."

Calpine Corp., one of four companies working to build a liquefied natural gas plant on the Columbia River, has filed for bankruptcy.

The struggling power generator filed for Chapter 11 protection late Tuesday as it grappled with more than \$22 billion in debt.

The U.S. Highway 101 corridor through Warrenton will not be lined with ugly big-box stores — not if city leaders can help it.

The City Commission approved an amendment to its development code Tuesday that imposes standards on retail developers. The rules would require stores to construct attractive buildings using varied materials and architectural details such as facades, to provide landscaping and shielded lighting, to conceal mechanical equipment and to address pedestrian and traffic safety and access issues.

Each building must also include at least two community amenities, such as a water feature or pedestrian plaza with benches.

50 years ago — 1965

If you haven't done your Christmas shopping yet, better hurry while there's still something to buy.

Astoria merchants apparently are having one of their busiest pre-Christmas shopping seasons in history. Several say it's been the best ever.

The fact that Astoria has been a busy city has been apparent just from size of the bundle-toting crowds on the streets.

Snow and treacherous black ice made travel on highways in the east end of Clatsop County almost impossible today.

Oregon State Highway Department reported packed snow from mile post six east on Highway 26 to the Sunset summit.

The son of an Astoria, Ore., woman was a member of the 10,000-man back-up team for the Gemini space mission.

U.S. Air Force Technical Sergeant Charles W. Hoell Jr., son of Mrs. Esther M. Porko of 671 Florence, was temporarily on duty at Singapore. The sergeant, a para-SCUBA rescue technician, was part of the Air Rescue Service Force deployed around the world to assist, if needed, in recovering the two astronaut crews after their flights and America's attempt at a manned rendezvous in space.

The war in Viet Nam was the overwhelming choice today as the top news story of 1965 in the United States.

75 years ago — 1940

It seems as if Toyland, like the world itself, is divided on the question of "peace or war?" For in this year's Christmas displays, martial toys compete for attention with ones that represent America's peaceful way of life — it's arts, sciences and homes.

You can make it possible for the children in your home to play at farming, homemaking, bridge building, magazine printing and the like. Or you can provide them with exciting toys with which to stage battles across the nursery rug, to build forts, battleships and airplanes, and to carry on naval maneuvers as well.

The badge of Quartermaster Sea Scout, highest award in sea Scouting and comparable to the Eagle badge, highest award in Boy Scouting, was presented to Bryson Laush, member of Astoria's sea scout ship Flying Cloud, at the monthly court of honor held at the county courthouse last night.

The flu epidemic, which centered its earlier attack on Clatsop County schools, has extended to take in the general public indiscriminately. Business executives, leaders of local industry, clerks, longshoremen and county officials were represented in the toll of mild epidemic. Two officers of the cutter *Onondaga* were stricken, one out of action for several days. A local deputy sheriff was back on the job today from a vacation with the flu.

Bright prospects for extensive WPA development at the Tongue Point Naval Air Station are held as a result of a conference here Tuesday between naval officers and a representative of the state Works Progress administration of Oregon.

Some books are worth a second read

I JUST REREAD A BOOK that I first read more than 40 years ago. It was like I was reading it for the first time.

The book is John O'Hara's *Appointment in Samara*.

While just out of college and working as a night copy kid at the Portland Associated Press bureau, I consumed the O'Hara book during breaks. One of the AP editors mocked me for reading this book, which had its heyday prior to World War II.

O'Hara is renowned for his keen eye for social mores and everything from the clothes people wore, the cars they drove, what they drank, their dancing and their sex lives.

In his foreword to the edition I read, the critic Charles McGrath said: "While *Appointment* is dated in some ways, its stinging class awareness — its sense of everyone looking over his or her shoulder and scrambling for a place on the social ladder — feels as current as the novels of Tom Wolfe."

The book is set in the fictional town of Gibbsville, Pennsylvania, in 1930. Gibbsville is modeled on Pottsville, in coal country. Building a picture of Gibbsville in my imagination, I saw how O'Hara could have set the story in Astoria during Prohibition, where salmon was king.

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O'HARA IS OUT OF FASHION. He is so out of fashion that David Remnick, editor of *The New Yorker* recently made no mention of O'Hara in his discourse on the evolution of the magazine's short story. Remnick did mention John Updike, who wrote that O'Hara virtually defined *The New Yorker* story. In fact, O'Hara holds the record for most stories published by the magazine — 247.

During my O'Hara phase, I read a bundle of his short stories, which are like Somerset Maugham's — clearly drawn characters with keen cultural detail and a deft and sudden ending.

Noting that O'Hara's stories are superior to his body of novels, McGrath says: "The stories, by contrast, were almost minimalist,

"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



Submitted Photo

Writer John O'Hara first earned a reputation for short stories and later became a best-selling novelist before the age of 30.

John O'Hara holds the record for short stories published by *The New Yorker* — 247

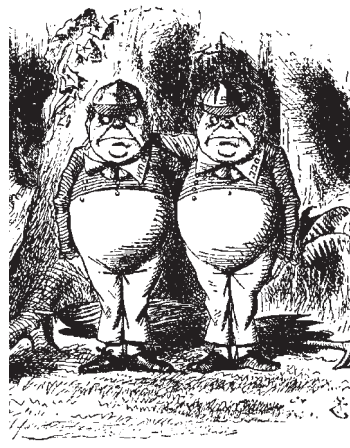
turning on just a line of dialogue or even a passing observation that suggests something crucial has just changed. More Hemingwayesque than Hemingway — more transparent and less mannered — these stories opened a path for such great American story writers as Salinger, Cheever, Updike, and Carver."

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IF ONE IS 40 YEARS OLDER, it is natural that he would see a work of fiction in a much different way than the first time around. I'm enjoying this experience. So next up on my list of reruns is *The Great Gatsby*. Eventually I will get around to *The Red Badge of Courage*. I read Stephen Crane's Civil War novel while in junior

high. I knew I had read something big, and I sensed its emotion. But now I'm eager to see the 80 percent of the book that I missed as an adolescent.

— S.A.F.



What's the matter with Iowa?

By GAIL COLLINS
New York Times News Service

One of the great things about the American political system is the amount of time it gives us to think about corn.

Oh, sure, there's national security and taxes, but you'd be talking about them even if we were living in a monarchy.

Corn only comes up in the weeks immediately before the Iowa caucuses. The issue is our federal ethanol program, which requires gasoline to be laced with biofuel, usually corn-based.

Quick quiz: How do you personally feel about ethanol?

A) If it's good for the farmers, it's good for the country.

B) Look, I've already got the trade pact and Glass-Steagall on my plate. There's a limit.

C) How come the corn growers get all the fun? Why can't we have the first voting in my state so I get some attention for a change?

Excellent point, C. One of the great injustices in our political system is that it guarantees that during presidential campaigns some people will be ignored entirely while others will be treated like a double-discount 60-inch TV on Black Friday. Back in 1992 the fight for the Democratic nomination went on for so long that the New York primary actually became important, and I have warm memories of listening to the candidates argue about who was going to spend the most money on mass transportation. We basked in the golden glow of pandor.

We should demand a little variety in the schedule. At the minimum, we could listen to people talk about corn with a different backdrop. Stand up for your rights, Nebraska.

But about the ethanol program: It has many, many critics. Groups ranging from Oxfam to the restaurant industry claim it drives up the price of food around the globe. Some environmentalists say it's responsible for increased air and water pollution. "Corn ethanol is actually worse for the environment than gasoline," said Scott Faber of the Environmental Working Group.

There are ways to make biofuel without corn that might be better. People have good things to say, for instance, about switch grass. Tennessee has been working on a big switch grass program. Maybe we could move the first primary to Tennessee.

Modern tradition holds that you can't win Iowa (first in the nation!) without selling your soul on ethanol. When John McCain ran his Straight Talk campaign for the 2000 presidential nomination, he boldly declared that the program "doesn't help anybody." McCain lost, and by the time he returned to Iowa he had acquired a whole new take on the issue. ("A vital, a vital alternative energy source.")

Hillary Clinton opposed ethanol when she was a senator from the less corn-intensive state of New York. She favored it when she ran for president in 2008, although perhaps not so intensely as Barack Obama, who helped cut the ribbon on a new ethanol processing plant. But the issue is less of a problem for Democratic candidates, since they don't generally go around complaining about big government putting its fat thumb on the magic of the capitalistic marketplace.

This season, the trick for Republicans is to oppose the ethanol program on principle, while simul-



Gail Collins

taneously making it clear they don't intend to do anything about it. Marco Rubio says it's "not something that I would have voted for had I been in the Senate" while quickly adding that "it would be unfair to simply yank it away."

But — you will be amazed to hear this — there are also Republicans on the far, far extremes.

Donald Trump is "totally in favor of ethanol, 100 percent." He gives the impression that if he were still on TV, he'd have the celebrity apprentices creating ad campaigns around the slogan "Ethanol for One and All."

Of course, it's possible that tomorrow Trump will deny he ever said anything about this at all. Maybe he'll claim he does not remember ever having met an ear of corn.

The most hard-core anti-ethanol candidate is Ted Cruz. Perhaps this is due to Cruz's strict fiscal conservatism. Perhaps there are ... other explanations. "Oil companies give him a lot of money," Trump sniped. Yes! The opposition to the ethanol program includes Big Oil, which resents all that room corn is taking up in the gas tank.

The Cruz campaign says its man is a principled enemy of "all energy-specific subsidies." This is arguably true if you buy the extremely convenient theory that humongous tax breaks don't count.

Since Cruz is currently a favorite in Iowa, people are beginning to wonder if ethanol's power is fading. This is an interesting question upon which it is very difficult to have a rooting interest. We're going to spend the entire month of January watching a battle between Big Oil and Big Corn.

Personally, I'm waiting for the candidate who will promise to make the states take turns. Idaho in 2020. We could hear about potatoes for a change.

Idaho in 2020. We could hear about potatoes for a change.