

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 — 2006

The threat of further flooding at the site of a damaged dike in Knappa prompted the Clatsop County commissioners to declare a local state of disaster Friday to clear the way for emergency repairs to the structure.

Crews began work Saturday morning to buttress the dike, which was breached a week ago when a combination of heavy rain and high tides sent water over the structure.

The U.S. Coast Guard called off the search Tuesday for a missing Columbia River Bar Pilot who fell into the frigid waters of the Pacific Ocean in what is likely the first bar pilot death in decades.

Kevin Murray, 50, an area resident, was thrown into the ocean near Buoy 2, several miles south of the mouth of the Columbia River, during a routine transfer Monday night.

"Don't forget, we're not building a piano," John Carney told a member of his Mount Rainier National Park crew as the two finessed a log into place on the new Fort Clatsop.

The builders of the new replica of Lewis and Clark's winter home strive to strike a balance between ruggedness and durability, laboring to make the new fort sturdy but not too well-crafted.

50 years ago — 1966

Clatsop County could lose its status as a poverty-stricken area in a re-evaluation of counties eligible for federal help under the Economic Development Act, Tom Current of the EDA Oregon branch warned city and county officials at a meeting in Portland Monday.

The EDA is a successor to the Area Redevelopment Administration, which had classified Clatsop as economically distressed and eligible for federal help under the ARA program.

Current told local people Monday that by July 1 a re-evaluation will be finished under which Clatsop could lose this preferred status as no longer poverty-stricken.

Astoria entertained its first visitors from Walldorf, its sister city, Monday.

They are Mr. and Mrs. Wolfgang Sauer who came to the U.S. to visit Mrs. Sauer's parents in Tacoma, Washington, and show them the Sauer's first child, 8-month-old Brigitte Nicole.

Number of telephone, water and power customers in Astoria and in Clatsop County have risen substantially in 1965, indicating a big upward population surge.

The city public works department reported that water records show a gain of 125 families with 476 people from Jan. 1, 1965, to Jan. 1, 1966.

The foghorn on the Astoria Bridge will go under control Monday night, to blow only when surface visibility is less than 2 miles as required by federal regulation.

Oregon Highway department officials said the department has reached agreement with contractor American Bridge Division for control of the horn.

The agreement provides that American Bridge will provide extra help to keep 24-hour watch on the horn and turn it off when federal rules do not require its operation.

75 years ago — 1941

What amounts to a modest arsenal was stolen Saturday from the home of Paul Rose, logger living at Svensen.

The loot, taken out through a window smashed out in back of the residence, consisted of the following guns: one 22 caliber target rifle, one 22 caliber rifle, one 30 caliber U.S. army rifle, and one 32-20 caliber Smith & Wesson revolver. In addition two sport fishing reels and two sport trolling rods were stolen.

Checking on the increased rifle fire in the Svensen area, Sheriff Paul Kearney traced the source of gun fire to the homes of two brothers, the oldest about 13. They admitted taking the guns and fishing tackle, all of which were recovered. The parents told the sheriff that they felt something was wrong with the way the boys were behaving, but the solution of the case was no job for amateurs.

Only in 1918 when Astoria had almost twice its present population during the world war ship building rush, did postal receipts exceed those for the past year.

Despite the fact that the 1940 postal receipts from stamp sales surpassed those of 1939 by more than \$7000, they fell short of the 1918 total of \$78,983.01, the record for all time at the Astoria post office. The 1940 stamp sales amounted to \$78,295.25.

Three hundred and fifty of Oregon national selective draft registrants to be called into service during the week of Jan. 20 will be sent either to Camp Clatsop or to the new cantonment at Fort Stevens.

President Roosevelt today asked Congress for appropriations and authorizations to provide "billions of dollars worth of weapons" for nations fighting against the march of aggressors in all parts of the world.



AP Photo/Rick Bowmer

Ammon Bundy, center, speaks with a reporter at a news conference at Malheur National Wildlife Refuge in January near Burns. Bundy, the leader of an armed group occupying the national wildlife refuge to protest federal land management policies, said he and his followers are not ready to leave even though the sheriff and many locals say the group has overstayed their welcome.

Specter of militia past clouds ranchers' legitimate concerns

More than 20 years ago I received an assignment to go to Oklahoma City after the bombing of the Alfred E. Murrah Federal Building. Timothy McVeigh and Terry Nichols conspired to destroy a symbol of government power — without regard for human life.

One-hundred-sixty-eight people were killed and 680 injured in that incident.

The people of Oklahoma City asked themselves, "Why?" and especially, "Why here?"

Jannie Coverdale lost her two grandchildren, Elijah and Aaron, in the blast.

Jim Denny could only identify his 3-year-old son Brandon by a birthmark on the boy's thigh when he arrived at the hospital.

One of the victims, Rebecca Anderson, was a licensed practical nurse who rushed to the bomb site immediately after hearing the explosion. "She was probably the finest woman God ever put on this earth," her husband, Fred Anderson, said.

In the weeks that followed, investigators determined that the killers had links with militia groups throughout the country. The militias and paramilitary organizations sought a New World Order and to create division within the country based on racial heritage or country of origin. All in the name of our "constitutional freedoms."

Scenes of bloodshed also played out in Waco, Texas, and Ruby Ridge, Idaho, where extremists and the federal government dueled in deadly standoffs.

Little has changed since that time — in fact, some militia members have been emboldened by rhetoric in Congress.

Oregon's Rep. Greg Waldman, in urging clemency for Dwight and Steven Hammond — the ranchers jailed for arson on federal property — spoke angrily on the House floor of his constituents' "tension," "frustration" and "anger" over federal land management policies.

These are words that inflame emotions, not soothe them. Any sympathy for armed rebellion in Harney County is misplaced.

The lesson I'm learning in Oregon is many good people want to help the Hammonds but not the Bundys.

Our sister paper, the East Oregonian, wisely notes residents in the sparsely populated high desert area are "largely rebuffing" the militant Ammon Bundy and his followers.

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

By R.J. MARX



But nuance doesn't play well in a crisis. The words 'good' and 'evil' are so strictly defined by each of us in our own way that it's almost impossible to accept shades of gray. Extremism triumphs.

"The real question is how that land should be managed and how grazing and natural resource extraction will remain viable and part of the multiple use doctrine that historically governed public lands," the East Oregonian writes. "Government policy once fostered the timber, livestock and mining industries that became the economic lifeblood of rural Western communities. Current policy — the result of environmental lawsuits and regulatory and legislative changes — is largely responsible for draining that lifeblood."

On the coast, we may be far from Harney County, but many of the same issues prevail. We have thousands of acres of timber and coastal land. We have a federal government overseeing and considering approval of a billion dollar pipeline over the will of impassioned citizens of all political persuasions. We have conflicts between Native Americans and management of their tribal lands.

Fishermen face national and international regulations that may, to their eyes, defy logic.

All these issues must be vigorously debated and legislated.

But nuance doesn't play well in a crisis.

The words "good" and "evil" are so strictly defined by each of us in our own way that it's almost impossible to accept shades of gray. Extremism triumphs.

Events like the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge occupation only set back the conversation — there is little value to legislation from the barrel of a gun or in the aftermath of tragedy.

The bombing of the Murrah Federal Building seems long ago and far away, but the lives lost in Oklahoma City in 1995 are irreplaceable.

"The Oklahoma City blast had repercussions that went far beyond the death toll," we wrote in 1995. "The American people suddenly got a glimpse of a new terrorist threat — a threat from within."

"The antigovernment movement has experienced a resurgence since 2008, when President Obama was elected," writes the Southern Poverty Law Center. Factors fueling the movement include changing demographics driven by immigration, a struggling economy and the election of the first African-American president.

The "inspiration" provided by many in the militia movement is no more of a divine message than that of the jihadists.

We conclude with this message from the Oregon State Police, who issued this statement last Wednesday, on behalf of all 36 sheriff offices in the state. "The sheriffs of Oregon are united in the support of Harney County and its residents. We are supplying logistical and operational support to the community while the FBI works for a peaceful resolution with the militants at the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge," they said. "We want the good people of Harney County and the state of Oregon to know that we will always unite to provide support and assistance to ensure the safety of our residents, for any length of time, whenever criminal activity or an emergency, fractures the peace and security in our communities."

It is those men and women, and all those on the front lines of our nation's defense, who are our real constitutional heroes.

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