

WHAT IS THAT THING?



Dave Kinney sent in the photo shown, along with a question: “I was wondering if you knew what that National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) equipment is on the causeway on Pier 36?” It looks like one of those robots from a bad 1950 science fiction movie, but yes, indeed, it does have the NOAA insignia on it. But the Ear didn’t have any idea what it is, either.

The Ear emailed Dave’s photo to **Beverly Drury** at the **Point Adams Research Station** in Hammond to see if she knew its purpose. Nope, she didn’t, but she said she’d pass the email around, and someone was bound to know the answer.

She was right. The next day, **Michelle Rub**, a fisheries biologist at the research station, called back. The equipment is actually a radio receiver; it only receives, and does not transmit. It is listening to and recording data from the radio tags on fish and sea lions — each one has its own individual tag — so NOAA can track them. So now you know.

BELOW THE WAVES



You’d be wrong if you think **Boeing** only makes aircraft — they’re also on the cutting edge of unmanned underwater vehicles (UUVs). Boeing claims their newest effort, the 51-foot long **Echo Voyager**, will “change the way reconnaissance, deep sea research and even military missions are conducted beneath the waves,” RT.com reports (<http://tinyurl.com/subboeing>). The submersible is pictured, courtesy of <http://boeing.mediaroom.com>

The Voyager can go to depths of 11,000 feet, be launched without a support ship and, with its hybrid electric-fuel system, can recharge itself and stay submerged for at least six months.

“Echo Voyager can collect data while at sea, rise to the surface, and provide information back to users in a near real-time environment,” **Lance Towers**, of Boeing Phantom Works, said. “Existing UUVs require a surface ship and crew for day-to-day operations. Echo Voyager eliminates that need and associated costs.”

Boeing will begin testing the Voyager off the California coast this summer.

A FOURGONE CONCLUSION



Marine biology enthusiasts will appreciate this: A **four-clawed female lobster**, probably caught in Canadian waters, was recently sold to a wholesale lobster outfit, **Ready Seafood Co.** in Portland, Maine, Yahoo News reports (<http://tinyurl.com/fourclaw>).

Lobsters normally have two claws, one for pinching and one for crushing; this one has a normal right claw, but three fully formed claws at the end of her left arm. She is pictured in an AP Photo by Robert F. Bukaty.

Ready Seafood has an in-house marine biologist, **Curt Brown**, who said that after more than a decade in the business, he’s never seen a lobster with four claws before, but assumes it’s a genetic mutation.

Tasty though she may look, you can put away the nutcracker, as she won’t be gracing anyone’s plate anytime soon. Brown says she will be given to the Maine Department of Marine Resources, and that he’ll suggest they try to breed her in captivity.

Such an exceptional lobster should not remain nameless, so Brown’s wife did the honors and dubbed her **Clawdette**.

In One Ear



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NEWS FROM 1876



Tidbits from the **May 19, 1876**, issue of **The Daily Astorian** (<http://tinyurl.com/DAv1n17>):

•An obstinate d.d. (drunk and disorderly), whom the Police wished to introduce to his Hon. **Judge Taylor** this morning, attracted a larger crowd on Chenamus street last evening than were present at the Centennial opening on the 10th — population (of course) considered. He persistently refused the generous proffer of a wheelbarrow ride to the Palace Hote deCrossbar (hoosegow), but was finally persuaded to navigate the ways with a terrific sea running.

• **Salmon exports:** In the face of a general complaint of scarcity of salmon thus far the present season, we have the consoling reflection that a greater number of cases packed have been shipped, up to this date, than for a corresponding period of time last year ... The stories about scarcity of fish may be classed with the stories afloat about disasters to fishermen on the bay at Astoria, shipwrecks, loss of life, etc. — sensational. Enough fish will be caught and cured to fill contracts, rest assured of that.

•Everybody goes to the **Novelty Barber Shop** to get fixed up in style. Every person may come, and more too, for I have employed a first-class artist who will smilingly manipulate your chin, gracefully curl your mustache, nicely puff your hair, and last of all, but not least, will perfume your clothes with the most popular perfumery in use, “Patchouly” ... **J.L. Campbell**, Proprietor

•Breathes there a man with a soul so dead, who never to himself hath said — “Oh, what a brute I have been! For many long years my poor wife has been stitching away her life, for want of a sewing machine!” To alleviate the wretchedness of such self-accusers, go to **Van Dusen’s** and buy her one today.

BIRTH OF A CORNDOG



Corndog fans: Rejoice! The **Original Pronto Pup** is opening this weekend at 602 S. Highway 101 in Rockaway Beach. The hours are 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. Saturday and 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday. A photo of the place is shown, courtesy of the Tillamook Headlight Herald.

Believe it or not, this event actually has historic, as well as gastronomic, significance. According to Pronto Pup’s website (www.originalprontopup.com), the corndog was invented in **Rockaway Beach** in the 1930s by **George and Versa Boyington**. The story goes that the couple was running a small hot dog stand on the beach, when one day it rained and ruined the buns. Inspired, George thought why not cook the bun with the dog? As a result, he concocted a pancake batter-based mix to dunk the hot dog in before frying it, and the Pronto Pup was born.

The Pronto Pup made its big commercial debut at the Boyingtons’ fountain shop in Portland, and quickly caught on. After World War II, servicemen bought Pronto Pup franchises, which soon popped up all over the country. Although few, if any, still exist, the original recipe is still used to this day.

“Now, the birthplace of the corndog has a new claim to fame,” the Pronto Pup’s website declares. “It is home to the World’s Largest Corndog, and World’s First Riding Mechanical Corndog.” The Ear’s betting Twin Rocks now has some serious competition for being the seaside town’s best tourist attraction.

DRONING ON



No one should be surprised at this bit of news: **Maersk Tankers** — whose vessels we see almost daily on the river — claims to have accomplished the **first drone delivery to a ship at sea**. Apparently, it was part of a test to see if it’s a good idea, and something they should be pursuing as “part of the supply chain,” gCaptain reports (<http://tinyurl.com/seadrone>). The photo of the drone delivery shown is to the Maersk Edgar and is courtesy of Maersk Tankers.

During the test, a drone delivered a small parcel to one of the tankers off Kalundborg, Denmark. The drone was supposed to be launched from land, but bad weather intervened, so it was launched from a nearby tugboat, and dropped the package from about 16 feet above the deck. Clearly, it didn’t contain a dozen eggs.

It is extremely expensive to deliver small urgent parcels (spare parts, medicine, mail) to vessels at sea. “Costs for a (delivery) barge are on average \$1,000 and can easily go up to \$3,000 or more” **Markus Kuhn**, supply chain manager at Maersk, said. “With the current pay-load of drones, on average a vessel has three cases per year in which the barge transport could be substituted by a drone — meaning a potential avoidance of barge costs of \$3,000 to \$9,000 per vessel per year. And if you consider that Maersk Tankers has around 100 vessels, the savings potential could be substantial.”

Once the safety of drone use is assured, Maersk would also use them for ship safety inspections. The Ear bets they’ll save a bundle on that, too.

TAX DOLLARS AT WORK

Well, it seemed like a good idea at the time. The Statesman Journal reports that some environmentally conscious souls in the city of **Salem** decided that it would be a grand idea to rent a gaggle of **goats** (75, to be exact) to chomp on all those nasty invasive plants that were overpowering the native plants in **Minto-Brown Island Park** (<http://tinyurl.com/parkgoats>).



Pictured, **Karen** the goat demonstrates her work ethic, in a photo by Ashley Smith/Statesman Journal.

The goats started their cleanup last October, and the recent report of their progress has caused some consternation. On the upside, the goats were a nice addition to the scenery; on the downside, the total cost of the project was \$20,710.

The cost included \$11,375 for goat rental, \$2,560 for goat monitoring and \$2,041 to have the rest of the blackberry brambles removed because the goats only ate the leaves. There were two other little problems, as well: the goats left a “heavily fertilized area” with an accompanying barnyard stench, and the nibblers found the native plants just as tasty as the invasive ones.

Salem’s goat gaffe went viral, and was even reported in Malaysia — probably because it was later determined that the same job could have been done by a city maintenance operator, or by hiring an inmate work crew, for less than a quarter of what was paid to have it done by goats.

ARE THEY LOOKING FOR YOU?



Judith Niland of the Astor Street Opry Company received an unusual casting call from **Lauren Port** of **Caparelliottis Casting** (<http://tinyurl.com/castnyc>) in New York City.

“We are casting a Broadway revival of a major American play by a major American writer for producer **Scott Rudin**, to be directed by **Sam Gold**, who won a Tony Award this year for his work on the Broadway musical ‘Fun Home,’” Lauren wrote.

“We are seeking an actress in her early 20s to mid-30s who has a mobility disability, and/or is a leg amputee, for a leading role in the play. Actresses do not need to have professional theatre credits, do not need to belong to any union, and do not need to have housing in New York City.”

Interested? Send a picture (scanned photos are OK), resume, age, city/state of residence and union affiliation (if any) to Broadwaysearch2017@gmail.com



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