

# 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 — 2006

Trees and lawn furniture soon will sprout from the concrete slab where the old Astoria Safeway once stood. At Monday's meeting, the Astoria City Council approved a site plan for the downtown plaza and authorized \$90,400 to pay for eight benches, four picnic tables, 54 planters, a \$6,500 portable aluminum stage, two trash cans, 29 trees and plenty of shrubs and flowering ground cover.

Astoria's John Warren Field may not be every Clatsop County resident's favorite choice, but it's the best option for locating a new Clatsop Community College campus, college president Greg Hamann told the Warrenton City Commission Tuesday evening.

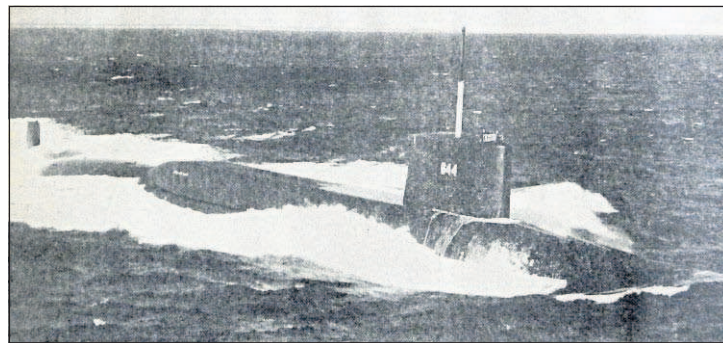
"We are going to try to pick the best possible site based on the criteria we developed for ourselves," Hamann said during his presentation of the "site selection process."

Despite almost 30 years of experience building in Astoria, Jim Wilkins failed to follow the proper procedures when he performed an excavation in Uppertown that's blamed for damaging more than two dozen nearby homes, lawyers told a jury Wednesday in Clatsop County Circuit Court.

No one was injured when an Astoria police officer's gun accidentally went off while he was arresting a suspect in the parking lot of the Crest Motel, 5366 Lief Erikson Drive, early Friday morning after a high-speed chase. The accidental discharge happened as Sgt. Brad Johnston drew his Glock 9 mm handgun as he approached the man's van, which had stopped in the parking lot after a 70-mph chase that started at 39th Street at 1:52 a.m. The bullet went into the back end of the van, where the door meets the floor.

"It's a very rare occasion for an accidental discharge to happen in our agency," said Astoria Police Chief Rob Deu Pree.

### 50 years ago — 1966



To the many things named for Lewis and Clark can now be added a nuclear submarine. The USS Lewis and Clark, SSBN 644, was commissioned recently at Norfolk, Va., the 33rd type submarine to join the field.

Development of a new industry in the Pacific Northwest through extraction of minerals from the vast deposits of "black sand" at the mouth of the Columbia river was announced Thursday.

Officials of the Washington Minerals Profit Corp., Tacoma, said a plant would be built near Ilwaco for commercial processing of the deposits.

Astoria drag boat owner George Moskovita Monday alerted the lower Columbia River area drag boat fleet to the presence of Russian trawlers fishing off the Washington coast.

Danny Hampton, operator of Moskovita's trawler Rodoma, reported five Russian trawlers fishing abreast about 25 miles off the mouth of the Columbia River nearly ran him down Monday morning. He said he had to take evasive action to avoid them.

Four blocks of city-owned land in West Slope addition will be offered for public auction sale as a unit at a minimum price of \$4,569 under terms that require the purchaser to develop streets and sewers, the city council decided Monday night.

Rep. Wendell Wyatt, Astoria Republican, told the U.S. House of Representatives Thursday that the presence of four Russian drag boats fishing on the U.S. continental shelf is an "outrageous situation."

Wyatt charged that the U.S. State Department has not shown enough concern about this problem. He said he has protested to the department repeatedly, calling for it to work toward an agreement with the Russians under which they would observe the same regulations for conservation of fish stocks as our fishermen do.

### 75 years ago — 1941

A total of 65 Clatsop County manufacturers and processors of products varying from wooden shoes to canned salmon are listed in a directory of manufacturing and processing plants issued by the Pacific Power & Light company covering the Columbia basin area which it serves.

The directory, attractively bound and well decorated, has just come off the press and is ready for distribution, according to Arthur Dempsey, district manager for the company.

"Such a commodity index of the area is particularly timely now because sudden demands of the national defense program have exhausted many normal sources of supply and purchasing agents frequently are hard pressed to find new ones," Dempsey declared.

A new salary schedule for Astoria city schools, which provides increases for teachers to continue through the seventh year of continued service, was adopted by the school board Tuesday night.

The existing schedule pays grade school teachers \$90 a month during their first year; \$93.75 second; \$97.50 third; \$101.25 fourth; and \$105.

# The GOP's gay freakout

By FRANK BRUNI

New York Times News Service

Our infrastructure is inexcusable, much of our public education is miserable and one of our leading presidential candidates is a know-nothing, say-anything egomaniac who yanks harder every day at the tattered fabric of civil discourse and fundamental decency in this country.

But let's worry about the gays! Let's make sure they know their place. Keep them in check and all else falls into line, or at least America notches one victory amid so many defeats.

That must be the thinking behind Republican efforts to push through so-called religious liberty laws and other legislation — most egregiously in North Carolina — that excuse and legitimize anti-gay discrimination. They're cynical distractions. Politically opportunistic sideshows.

And the Republicans who are promoting them are playing a short game, not a long one, by refusing to acknowledge a clear movement in our society toward LGBT equality, a trajectory with only one shape and only one destination.

They're also playing a provincial game, not a national one, and scoring points in their corners of the universe at the expense of the Republican Party's image from north to south and coast to coast, a brand that needed a makeover — remember the broadly ballyhooed "autopsy" following Mitt Romney's 2012 defeat? — and somehow didn't get so much as a tweezed eyebrow or dab of blush.

Yes, two of the four longest-lasting candidates for the party's presidential nomination, Ted Cruz and Marco Rubio, are the sons of Cuban immigrants, but much of the oratorical gunfire they exchanged revolved around who would be tougher on immigration. The autopsy didn't recommend that.

Nor did it want Republican leaders to spotlight divisive social issues and hurl anew into the culture wars, which is precisely what Gov. Pat McCrory of North Carolina, who is up for re-election in the fall, just did. He hastily signed a sweeping anti-gay and anti-transgender law that was rushed through the state Legislature as if the state's security and economy were in immediate peril.

It takes forever in this country to build a new bridge, tunnel or train line, but it took no time flat for politicians in the Tar Heel State to convene a special session, formally ostracize North Carolina's LGBT voters and wrap conservative Christians in a tight embrace. Who says America's can-do spirit is dead?

What happened in North Carolina is a problem for Republicans atop the



Frank Bruni



Emery P. Dalesio/AP Photo

People protest outside the North Carolina Executive Mansion in Raleigh, N.C., March 24. North Carolina legislators decided to rein in local governments by approving a bill that prevents cities and counties from passing their own anti-discrimination rules. North Carolina Gov. Pat McCrory later signed the legislation, which dealt a blow to the LGBT movement after success with protections in cities across the country.

major trouble (Cruz, Donald Trump) that they already had. It exposes divides within the party that are ever more difficult to paper over and contradictions that aren't easy to explain away.

While the marriage of the party's evangelical and business wings has never been a cuddly one, it's especially frosty now, their incompatible desires evident in the significant number of prominent corporations that have denounced the North Carolina law and that successfully pressed the Republican governor of Georgia, Nathan Deal, to veto recent legislation that would have permitted the denial of services to LGBT people by Georgians citing religious convictions.

Corporations want to attract and retain the most talented workers, and that's more difficult in states with discriminatory laws. They want to reach the widest base of customers and sow loyalty among young consumers in particular, and the best strategy for that is an LGBT-friendly one, given that eight in 10 Americans between the ages of 18 and 29 support nondiscrimination laws, according to a 2015 Public Religion Research Institute survey.

So they're increasingly at loggerheads with the GOP, whose gay-rights advocates are still in the minority and whose socially conservative members still profit from and promote a derisive view of gays.

What's more, several major companies are so concerned about the brew of misogyny, racism and xenophobia stirred up by Trump that they are debating whether to follow through with their usual sponsorship of the Republican National Convention, as *The Times'* Jonathan Martin and Maggie Haberman reported last week.

The party's anti-gay efforts not only undermine its pro-business stance but also contradict conservatives' exaltation of local decision making. The North Carolina law was drafted and passed expressly to undo and override an ordinance in the state's most populous city, Char-

lotte, that extended LGBT protections against discrimination to transgender people who want to use bathrooms that correspond with their gender identity. The law went so far as to forbid any municipality from instituting its own anti-discrimination protections, lest they contradict the state's.

Apparently conservatives love the concept of local control when the locality being given control tilts right, but they have a different view when it leans left. Rural sensibilities must be defended while cosmopolitan ones are dismissed.

North Carolina harbors both. Its tensions are America's in miniature, and in terms of gay rights, they're a reminder that the Supreme Court's ruling last June to legalize same-sex marriage nationwide was hardly the finish of the fight.

That ruling was certain to prompt the kind of backlash now occurring in North Carolina, Georgia and elsewhere, because the steadily growing majority of Americans who favor gay equality is not yet overwhelming, and the climate of acceptance changes greatly from state to state and county to county.

Too many of us LGBT Americans and our allies were too busy celebrating to stay alert to that. Too few of us acknowledged the tenaciousness of opponents who will resort to whatever they must, including the hallucinated specter of male sexual predators entering women's restrooms, to sweep aside anti-discrimination laws that include us and to turn public sentiment against us.

They will lose in the end — whether that's 10, 20 or 30 years from now. Meanwhile, they'll do undeniable harm to the Republican Party nationally and force tough, coalition-straining choices upon it.

They'll also steal oxygen from matters more central to this country's continued vitality and prosperity.

Look, I used to be a restaurant critic. I know dessert is important. But if you want to make America great again, you can't waste time worrying about who's cutting the wedding cake.

## Open forum

### Kudos

Kudos to Joshua Bessex for the photographs of the plane that was lifted from the river on Tuesday. This type of on the spot photojournalism will remain in *The Daily Astorian* archives for many years to come.

While all of us in Astoria empathize with the families of the two people who died in the crash, the fact will remain that we, as a community, were there for them in their time of need for closure. Thank you to all the Clatsop County personnel who contributed to this recovery. It was very important.

BOB POTTER  
Astoria

### Don't raise age

It seems as if some of the current crop of political hopefuls in this presidential race would like to change the Social Security system by increasing the retirement age on benefit entitlements. There is, at least, one big problem with this concept.

Many of us have retired from jobs — some of them with or under the auspices of the federal government — that require us to retire at 60 or 65 years of age. So if the age to qualify for Social Security benefits were raised, it would require many of us to fill the gap by spending the last 5 or 10 years of our working lives slinging hash at Mickey Dee's because we would be unable to continue, by law, with our previous careers.

Once again the powers that be in

Washington, D.C., would seek to pay back the money that they have pilfered from the Social Security fund by creating potential hardships for those who would otherwise be entitled to benefits from the Social Security system.

This hardly seems equitable, but I guess it must be an acceptable way of doing business for the federal government; after all, elected officials have their own retirement plans that we, as taxpayers, pay for, but have nothing to do with the success or demise of the Social Security system — so why do they care if the system goes bust?

And, don't even get me started on the GI Bill, in the 1960s and 1970s, or I will run out of words to post this, for sure.

That's what I think; I could be wrong.  
DAVID GRAVES  
Astoria

### No LNG

Even the name Oregon LNG rankles. A more honest name would be Exploiting Oregon LNG. There's no Oregon in OLNG, and nothing Oregon gets from it.

Oregon LNG is a subsidiary of Leucadia Corporation, a Wall Street stock-holding company which specializes in investing in businesses that are either distressed or poorly managed. Its core strategy is to buy assets when their prices are low and sell them after their prices rise (Wikinvest).

In 2007, Leucadia bought the bankrupt Calpine Corporation's property

lease of 94 acres on Warrenton's Skipanon Peninsula in a New York bankruptcy court for \$4.25 million. Leucadia pledged \$500,000 to back its new LNG Development Co.

To get its money back, Leucadia needs to get completed permits to build an LNG terminal on the leased Skipanon land. Then it can sell the lease and permits and walk away with a very fat profit.

Any promises Leucadia/OLNG makes about jobs or community investment, about environmental mitigation or safety, are just smoke and snake oil. They won't be here if the terminal is ever built. And the sad truth is, the state doesn't have anywhere near enough inspectors to assure that any successor company does what the permits specify.

The sole purpose of the OLNG effort is to deliver a profit to Wall Street investors. Meanwhile, the people, the businesses and the communities here suffer extensive business and environmental damage, endure years of disruption and are placed in potential catastrophic danger.

Warrenton's City Commission must support the findings of its own hearings officer, who listened to hours of public testimony and studied the issues and Oregon's laws for months, and reject Oregon LNG. Commissioners will be long remembered either way, either for standing up for their community, its people and our special place to live, or for selling out to Wall Street.

ROGER ROCKA  
Astoria