

SALVAGE SURPRISE



From the **George Flavel** Facebook page (www.facebook.com/george.flavel): “April 10, 1929 — Somewhat rusted from their 73-year rest beneath the waters of the Columbia River, but otherwise in excellent condition, a box of one dozen **ship’s axes**, from the bark **Desdemona**, were recovered by an Astoria snag pulling crew last week while clearing drifts in the lower river.

“The axes were found just south of the Desdemona beacon (pictured in a **Frank Woodfield** photo), and just across the channel from the Flavel Dock, where the bark Desdemona, which gave her name to the sands and beacon, ran aground, and was wrecked in 1856.”

WHAT’S COOKING?



“Attention Home Chefs!” **Cyndi Mudge** posted on the Astoria Sunday Market Facebook page. “A **casting agency** contacted us to reach out to our Market fans!” They’re auditioning chefs for the Fox TV reality show competition “**MasterChef**,” and Chef **Gordon Ramsay** is one of the judges (pictured, courtesy of Fox TV).

Here’s the scoop: “(We’re) looking for amazing home cooks across America who do not work as a professional chef, but love to cook and/or bake ... fun personalities, a passion for cooking, and a solid foundation to build upon.”

The **auditions** are from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. April 23 at the Embassy Suites Portland Downtown, 319 S.W. Pine St., and you’ll need to preregister ASAP at www.MasterChefCasting.com, and put “Other” and “Carrie” in the “How You Heard About Audition” section.

Then, you need to email your name, age, phone number, city of residence and occupation, and that you want to audition in Portland, to CarrieCastingChefs@gmail.com. Be sure to include a “few sentences about your passion for cooking and anything unique or interesting about you unrelated to food.”

You’ll also need to make a 30-second video about yourself: “With lots of energy, tell us who you are, where you’re from, how you earn a living, something fun and unique about you, and why you know you could win!” Upload it to YouTube, save as “Unlisted,” not private, and include the link in the email. Bon appetit!

ROBOTS RULE THE WAVES



Here’s one for the history books: The Pentagon’s Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (**DARPA**) is certainly accomplishing its mission “to make pivotal investments in breakthrough technologies for national security” (www.darpa.mil) with the April 7 christening, in Portland, of a 132-foot **robotic vessel** designed to hunt and track enemy submarines.

Officially, it is an Anti-Submarine Warfare Continuous Trail **Unmanned Vessel** (ACTUV), but it’s a lot easier to call the ship by its new name, **Sea Hunter**, which is pictured courtesy of DARPA.

According to the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association (AFCEA) Signal, Sea Hunter was unofficially launched Jan. 27 (<http://tinyurl.com/DARPSea>). On-water tests were successfully conducted Feb. 17 in Portland, and the vessel achieved 27 knots. So far, so good.

Designed to be able to do a 70-day mission with a “high degree of autonomy,” sea trials begin soon in San Diego.

In One Ear



by Elleda Wilson

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A NEW KIND OF TRAFFIC JAM



Former Astorian **Jona Bechtolt** and his partner **Claire Evans** (pictured), who perform as the Los Angeles-based indie pop group **Yacht** (<http://teamyacht.com>), are **nominated** for a **Webby People’s Voice Award**, and you can get in on the voting to help them win at <http://wbby.co/gH7TR>.

So, what’s this Webby award Yacht is being nominated for, you may ask? Webby’s honor excellence on the internet. Specifically, the group is nominated in the Advertising & Media/Websites, Micro Sites, and Rich Media/Media & Entertainment categories for a highly successful team-up with **Uber** to promote a single from their **I Thought the Future Would Be Cooler** album, “**L.A. Plays Itself**.”

How the promotion worked was that whenever a car was ordered for a ride, and Uber surge pricing went into effect — prices multiplying based on the demand for cars, a common occurrence in L.A. — the Yacht song would play. The tagline was, “It’s a new kind of traffic jam. Ask your driver to turn it up.”

Did it work? Like gangbusters. They got huge media coverage, and it was their most successful album launch. You can watch the video for the song here: <http://tinyurl.com/PlayYacht>. “We wanted L.A., the city, to play the song, literally, so we decided to tie it to traffic patterns.” Claire told the Los Angeles Times in an interview (<http://tinyurl.com/Yacht-LAT>). “... By bonding it to that, then we allow Los Angeles traffic patterns to literally play the song for viewers, and for us that’s a nice way of connecting the city to the music that inspired it.”

IT’S JUST A FLUKE



The Ear received a surprise recently from **Jan Johnson**: an envelope full of old photos of the 1987 dedication of the **Indian head statue** near the New Youngs Bay Bridge. Shown, are a few samples: **Peter “Wolf” Toth**, the artist (www.dcschumaker.com), is pictured inset, left, and climbing on the statue; the group gathered for the ceremony are pictured inset, right.

Just in case you don’t know, the cedar statue, made from a giant log, was created by Toth, as part of the Trail of the **Whispering Giants**, to honor Native Americans. The Astoria version, **Ikala Nawaw**, or Man Who Fishes, honors the tribes of the North Coast, and is number 57 in the series. As a little side note, Toth himself is not Native American — he was actually born in Hungary.

But did you ever wonder how one of the giants came to be in Astoria? Jan’s husband, **Ed Johnson**, has the answer. Sometime back in the 1980s, he told the Ear, he taught summer classes in Reno, Nevada. He and his children would go to the city park often, and that’s where he met Toth, who was carving statues there. Toth told Ed he was putting Indian statues in all 50 states (which he eventually did), so Ed asked if there were any plans for Oregon. Toth said not yet.

When Ed got back home from Reno, he started a letter writing campaign to invite Toth to Astoria to carve a Whispering Giant here, beginning with then-mayor **Edith Henningsgaard-Miller**. She wrote Toth an invitation letter, and so did the Kiwanis, the Chamber of Commerce, and the school district.

Toth accepted, and stayed at **Joe Herman’s** (who did the rock work around the base). The sculptor did not get paid for his work, by the way — he considers the Whispering Giants a gift to his adopted country — usually local governments and citizens cover his expenses and materials. It took several months to hand-carve the 18-foot statue, which has presided over the Roundabout ever since.

“It was just a fluke how it all came about,” Ed noted.

‘AROUND THE HOUSE’

Esteemed photographer and Astorian **Robert Adams**, and his exhibit and book containing a series of images of his home and home town, “**Around the House**,” were featured recently in the U.K. publication, *The Guardian* (<http://tinyurl.com/TownAdams>). He is pictured in a photo courtesy of PBS.

Well-known for his landscapes and architectural photos, this time the photographer worked on a smaller scale, concentrating on his domestic life in Astoria. “Beauty, which I admit to being in pursuit of, is an extremely suspect word among many in the art world,” the artist noted. “But I don’t think you can get along without it. Beauty is the confirmation of meaning in life. It is the thing that seems invulnerable, in some cases, to our touch. And who would want to do without beauty? There’s something perverse about ruing out beauty.”

The Ear expects most Astorians would agree with what Robert Adams’ photos show — you don’t have to do without beauty if you live in Astoria.



CAM CUDDLES



Former art major and Seaside resident 32-year-old **Cameron McKirdy** (pictured) has found a new occupation — and a new moniker — in **Samantha Hess’** highly successful Portland business, **Cuddle Up To Me** (<http://cuddleuptome.com>), which offers “fully clothed, completely platonic cuddle sessions of 15 minutes to 5 hours.”

As **Cam Cuddles** (www.facebook.com/camcuddles), he is the first male cuddler she has hired. Cam and Samantha were interviewed and featured in a “Keep Portland Weird!” segment of KPTV’s “**More Good Day Oregon**” on April 8 (<http://tinyurl.com/CamCuddle>). “I’ve had a great response from people,” he told KPTV. “Our clients are people that maybe just got over a breakup, or a death in the family, or even lost a pet, so I’m here for those people.”

He’s not only making his customers happy, he’s pleasing his boss, as well. “He’s done a fantastic job of making people feel as though they do matter,” Samantha said, “and that whatever they’re going through, it’s OK.”

HIS GREAT GIFT



Photo courtesy of National Geographic and photographer Lynn Johnson

I was belatedly looking through my April **National Geographic** **lover** breakfast this morning, when I turned a page and suddenly saw a very familiar face looking back at me.” Astorian **Stewart Bell** wrote. “Sure enough, the caption named **Rod Gramson**, one of four prominent Warrenton brothers (**Gil, Terry** and **Loren** being the others), although he was identified by name only. The story is called “Crossing Over” and is about death, near-death, and the continuing life of organs transplanted from the dead (<http://tinyurl.com/GramsonPic>).”

A portion of the photo is shown, courtesy of National Geographic and Lynn Johnson. Rod Gramson is in the middle, with **Deanna** and **Rich Santana**. The couple’s teenaged son, **Scott**, died in a traffic accident, and his heart was transplanted into Rod’s chest. The parents met with Rod, and the other recipients of their son’s major organs, on the road where he was killed, accompanied by photographer **Lynn Johnson** (<http://tinyurl.com/GramsonVid>).

“Originally I had some real guilt, because here I was, at 67 years old, and this young fellow was 17, you know, and I just felt like he’d been cheated, and I thought at my age, somebody younger should have gotten that heart,” Rod said. “I was hoping that I wouldn’t be a disappointment where their son’s heart went. I’m really happy to be able to meet them.”

“The family of this boy felt like he was still alive in the bodies of those who were surviving because of his great gift,” the photographer said. “At one point, the father put his head on the chest of the elder gentleman who now carried his son’s heart, and he said, ‘You hear that heart beating? Tell me my son is not alive.’”

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