

WELCOME HOME



A few survivor stories for maritime adventure buffs:

• GCaptain reports that a 29-year-old **Columbian man** in a disabled 23-foot skiff was picked up April 26 more than 2,000 miles southeast of Hawaii by a bulk carrier after being **lost at sea** for more than two months (<http://tinyurl.com/2mos-out>).

The Coast Guard brought him back to Honolulu, where he is reported to be in good condition. He is pictured, right, with his interpreter, in a screen shot from a Coast Guard video. He was glad to be on land, and his only wish was that the friends who were with him, but died at sea, could have been rescued, too.

• Also in April, Mashable.com reports that **three castaways**, whose boat capsized at sea, swam 2 miles to uninhabited Fanadik Island in Micronesia. The men **wrote "HELP" in the sand** with palm fronds, and were rescued three days later once they were finally spotted by a Navy plane (<http://tinyurl.com/mash-3found>). They are pictured, inset, waving their life jackets, in a Coast Guard photo.

• Survivor update from The New York Daily News (<http://tinyurl.com/survsuit>): Salvadorian fisherman **Salvador Alvarenga**, who was washed up in the Marshall Islands after being lost at sea for 14 months in a 25-foot fiberglass boat, is being sued. He is pictured, inset, in a photo by Karen Eamshaw.

Alvarenga's fishing buddy died four months into the ordeal. There is no body, because it was tossed overboard. Now the buddy's family wants \$1 million, claiming Alvarenga ate his friend for dinner. By now, he probably wishes he were still somewhere no one can find him.

OUT ON A LIMB



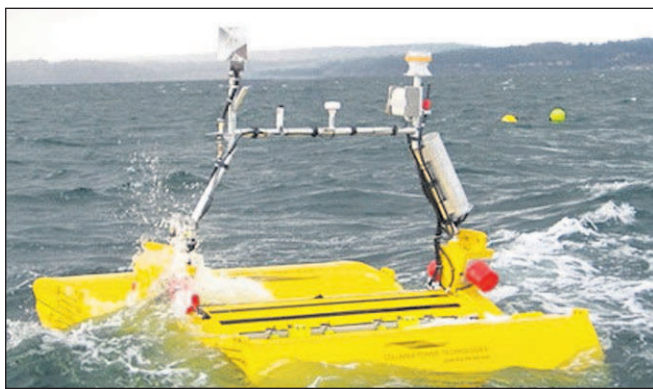
Jeff Ter Har sent in the photo shown of a **giant rhododendron** on the corner of Exchange and 16th streets. "Has anyone ever checked to see how big the biggest rhody is in the world?" he asked. Time for research.

The Guinness World Records website had nothing, so the Ear will go out on a limb and settle on the first entry in the "largest rhododendron" Google search: a Pacific rhododendron tree in **Florence, Oregon**.

Jeff and Wendy Grant's tree was recognized as the state and nation's largest rhododendron of its species in an article that was posted June 5, 2009, in Coos Bay's The World (<http://tinyurl.com/bigrhody>).

The National Registry of Big Trees declared the rhody was 24 feet tall, the circumference of the trunk was 37 inches, and the crown spread measured 21 feet. And remember, that was in 2009.

CATCHING WAVES



Startup **Columbia Power** (<http://columbiapwr.com>) has a new gizmo, **StingRAY**, which **harnesses ocean waves and generates electricity**, according to a story on CNN (<http://tinyurl.com/stingwave>). One is pictured, courtesy of Columbia Power.

The StingRAY is similar to a wind turbine, and is moored to the sea floor. Waves passing turn floats inside a central chamber and power a magnetic generator. An underwater cable connects a farm of StingRAYS to a power grid.

One StingRAY weighs 700 tons and is 65 feet high. Only 8 feet show above the water's surface, and it has navigation lights to alert passing ships. The system is designed to be maintained at sea, and works in water more than 200 feet deep, or about 3 miles off the West Coast. Out of sight, out of mind, unlike windmills.

It's still in the testing phase, so it won't be coming to an ocean near you anytime soon, but perhaps someday ...

In One Ear



by Elleda Wilson

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LIVING THE DREAM



A few years ago, a Russian immigrant in his 60s with affy sailing/navigational skills, **Rimas Meleshyus** (pictured), stopped in Astoria on his way to complete what appeared to be a suicidal **solo sail around the world** in a 24-foot San Juan sailboat.

While traditional sailing skills still seem to elude him, Rimas has crossed the Pacific a few times and has become a master of the **Kon-Tiki** sailing style — named after **Thor Heyerdahl's** raft and its historic expedition — which essentially relies on drifting. On his last around-the-world attempt he drifted past Hawaii, and was towed in to American Samoa. He sold his boat there to buy airfare back to the U.S., arriving all but penniless.

But Rimas is also a master at bouncing back. He stayed with friends in the Astoria area for a while before heading back to California, where, miraculously, someone gave him a 30-foot sailboat. Soon after, to the dismay of many, Rimas unexpectedly set sail again without warning and unprepared. He simply disappeared. His many Facebook (www.facebook.com/rimas.meleshyus) followers agonized and scolded him, but there was no reply.

As skilled at drifting as Rimas has become ... landing, not so much. After 46 days at sea, he was rescued off the coast of Hawaii, and towed to Hilo. Despite having no food or water for three days, he was in remarkably good shape. He'll stay in the South Pacific for several months, getting his boat ship-shape and stocking up properly to continue his trip around the world. Want to contribute? Go to <http://tinyurl.com/help4rimas>

No matter what people think of his sailing abilities, it's pretty hard not to admire his resolute determination to live his dream. "Since I left Soviet Union, I never back again," Rimas wrote on his Facebook page recently. "My dream to sail around the world is huge. That's why I love America of freedom." May he have fair winds, following seas and a friendly tow at the other end.

HOORAY FOR BATTLESHIP DAY



The **May 13, 1908**, edition of **The Morning Astorian** mentioned **Battleship Day**, and printed a proclamation from the mayor, **Herman Wise**, dated May 12: "To the Public: (Rear) **Admiral (Charles S.) Sperry** wires that he will bring the **Atlantic fleet** close by the mouth of the Columbia River at noon on Wednesday, May 20. There being a general desire on the part of the public to view the splendid marine spectacle, the like of which the people living along the Pacific Coast may not soon again have the opportunity to witness, I most respectfully and earnestly request that all business houses suspend business on that day so far as the same may be practicable." Pictured, in a Library of Congress photo, the fleet visiting San Francisco Bay May 8, while on their way north.

The mayor's proclamation was a success — also in the May 13 issue, in the "Terse Tales of the Town" section, a special committee from the Astoria Retail Clerks' Association announced it had already convinced 40 merchants to close up shop, and they expected to convince the remaining stragglers that evening. Undoubtedly, Battleship Day was a rousing success.

HAVE WHEEL, WILL TRAVEL



One unicyclist Vincent Boudriau of Montreal, Canada (pictured), rode through town last Friday, and was spotted by **Michael "Sasha" Miller**. Vincent had already left by the time the Ear got in touch with him, but he did reply by email.

"Astoria was a beautiful city, quite welcoming!" he wrote. "I will never forget that truck who waited for me to finish the bridge before passing me. I appreciated this! Otherwise, the scenery was pretty, small cafés and breweries, too."

How did he wind up in Astoria? "I planned a 10,000 kilometer trip to do in four months," he explained. "I started in Vancouver, B.C., on April 28. The first part of my trip is the West Coast (Vancouver, Seattle, Aberdeen, Astoria ... to San Francisco and San Diego, with a small detour to Yosemite).

"After that and a conference in Banff (Alberta, Canada), I will continue through the Baja California, take a ferry and head to Mexico City. After a plane to Miami, I will ride the East Coast to Montreal."

If you're wondering, no, he doesn't have a cause, and he is totally self-supporting. He started unicycling in 2011, with the goal of becoming a good mountain unicyclist, he wrote on his Facebook page, www.facebook.com/vincentunicyclist. After lots of training and practice on a 36-inch wheel, he has become a proficient long-term, long distance unicyclist.

"I didn't only unicycle for the past six years, though," he wrote. "I am currently studying plasma physics, and I hope to write my thesis before December 2016." For now though, he's having the time of his life.

TRISKAIDEKAPHOBIA



Do you have **triskaidekaphobia** (fear of **Friday the 13th**)? Hopefully not, but here are a few random tidbits related to the fateful date anyway:

Famous daredevil **Sam Patch**, who successfully jumped off a cliff near Niagara Falls in 1829, then jumped from Genesee Falls on a Friday the 13th later that year, and was, shall we say, less successful, according to LiveScience.com (<http://tinyurl.com/13fri13>).

Discovery.com says that on Nov. 13, 1789, **Benjamin Franklin** wrote "Everything appears to promise that it will last; but in this world nothing is certain but death and taxes" (<http://tinyurl.com/DiscFri13>). Truer words were never spoken.

As a parting shot, Discovery reports the Stress Management Center and Phobia Institute in Asheville, North Carolina, says that as many as 21 million people in the U.S. are so frightened by Friday the 13th that \$800 to \$900 million is lost in business because of it. And that's really scary.

WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Not so long ago there was a tempest in a teapot when the United Kingdom's Natural Environment Research Council ran an internet poll to name their new \$288 million polar research vessel.

The most popular name, by far, with 124,000 votes, was **RRS Boaty McBoatface**, submitted by **James Hand**. "I would say 90 percent of the entries at that point were really quite funny, so I thought, I'll throw one into the ring and just see what happens," Hand told BBC Radio Jersey. Other oddball suggestions included It's Bloody Cold Here and Big Metal Floaty Thingy-thing, Vox.com reports (<http://tinyurl.com/notboaty>).

The research council, while amused, didn't go for it, however, and named the vessel a far more dignified **RRS Sir David Attenborough**, after the beloved and respected British TV presenter and naturalist, who turned 90 recently. An illustration of the vessel is shown, courtesy of the research council.

The rejection of Boaty McBoatface didn't sit well with some. "It even caused a rift in government, when (Jo) Johnson (UK's science minister) said the ship would need a more suitable name than 'Boaty McBoatface,' prompting British Culture Minister Ed Vaizey to go on the record supporting the 'will of the people,'" Vox.com says.

However, Boaty McBoatface lives on as the name of the research vessel's high-tech remotely operated subsea vehicle. The people have spoken — and someone was actually listening.



COMMUNITY NOTES

SATURDAY

Angora Hiking Club — 8 a.m., Sixth Street parking lot. Portland 4 T Trail hike. For information, call Arline LaMear at 503-338-6883 or Craig Holt at 503-325-8207.

Lower Columbia R/C Society — 8:30 a.m., back room at Uptown Cafe, 1639 S.E. Ensign Lane, Warrenton. Local Academy of Model Aeronautics (AMA) chartered radio control model aircraft club meets for breakfast and business. All model aircraft enthusiasts are welcome. For information, call 503-458-5196 or 503-325-0608.

Sit and Stitch Group — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Custom Threads, 1282 Commercial St. Knitting, crocheting and needle work. For information, call 503-325-7780.

Pug Socializing Club — 1

p.m., Carruthers Park, Warrenton. For pugs and their owners. For information, call Dave Kinney at 415-827-5190. Join online at <http://tinyurl.com/socialpugs>

Columbia Northwestern Model Railroad Club — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Carter at 503-325-0757.

Spinning Circle — 1 to 3 p.m., Astoria Fiber Arts Academy, 1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to <http://astoriafiberarts.com>

SUNDAY

Angora Hiking Club — 1:30 p.m. social, 2 p.m. spring potluck meeting, Seaside Hostel, 930 N. Holladay Drive. For information, call Nguyen Trung at 503-738-7911.

Authentic Spiritual Conversations — 3 to 4:15 p.m., Seaside Public Library conference room, 1131 Broadway. Exploring spiritual questions, doubts, practices and longings in a space where everyone's needs are respectfully held. All faiths, including "spiritual but not religious," agnostic and atheist are welcome. For information, email info@cgifellowship.org or call 916-307-9790.

Line Dancing — 5:30 to 8 p.m., Seaside American Legion, 1315 Broadway. For information, call 503-738-5111. No cost; suggested \$5 tip to the instructor.

MONDAY

Chair Exercises for Seniors — 9 to 9:45 a.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. For information, call 503-325-3231.

Scandinavian Workshop — 10 a.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. Needlework, hardanger, knitting, crocheting, embroidery and quilting. All are welcome. For information, call 503-325-1364 or 503-325-7960.

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60. For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. Cost is \$6. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$5 for

seniors and \$7 for those younger than 60. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3502 Monday or Thursday.

Astoria Rotary Club — noon, second floor of the Astoria Elks Lodge, 453 11th St. Guests always welcome. For information, go to www.AstoriaRotary.org

Knochlers Pinochle Group — 1 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Cost is \$1 per regular session per person. Players with highest and second highest scores split the prize. Game is designed for players 55 and older, but all ages are welcome.

Mahjong for Experienced Players — 1 p.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. For information, call 503-325-3231.

Astoria Alzheimer's & Other Dementia Family Support Group — 2 to 3:30 p.m., first-floor conference room, Clatsop Care Center, 646 16th St. Open to all family members of people with dementias. For information, call Rosetta Hurley at 503-325-0313, ext. 222, or email support@clatsopcare.org

Line Dancing for Seniors — 3 to 4:30 p.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. Not for beginners. For information, call 503-325-3231.

Astoria Toastmasters — 6:30 p.m., Hotel Elliot conference room, 357 12th St. Visitors welcome. For information, go to www.toastmasters.org or call 503-894-0187.

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