



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

The U.S. Coast Guard has an important job when it flies low over local houses, Capt. Michael Farrell jokingly told people at the Seaside Chamber of Commerce meeting Friday.

“That’s because we’re on a mission from the CIA,” he revealed. “We are spying on you!”

Still joking, Farrell, the Coast Guard commander for Air Station Astoria and Group Astoria, advised residents to wear aluminum foil helmets ... to foil the spying.

He became more serious as he related that the efforts of the Coast Guard at Grays Harbor, Tillamook Bay, Cape Disappointment and Air Station Astoria save 1,750 lives and \$1.5 million in property each year. Cape Disappointment alone averages more than one search-and-rescue case a day, he said.

“What does the Coast Guard do for you? We spend your tax dollars,” Farrell said. Sending boats and helicopters out is expensive, especially since every hour a helicopter flies requires 20 hours of maintenance, he said. But he asked the assembled when they were stranded in the ocean, “do you really care how much it costs?”

Mark Youso believes condominiums and expensive houses may replace low-income housing in Seaside, to the point where some poorer people have to leave.

“Cannon Beach is slowly moving north, is my take,” he said.

Youso, the president of the Clatsop County Rental Owners Association, said increasing interest rates and property taxes are making it harder to own an apartment building.

And baby make three.

The bald eagle pair that make their home in a tree next to Astoria’s Skyline water tower have hatched a new offspring.

“It’s kind of a gray color,” said Georgia Forrester, who lives across the street and keeps a close eye on her avian neighbors. She first noticed the eaglet Monday. “Every once in a while it sticks its little head up,” she says. “It almost looks like a little ostrich.”

50 years ago — 1966

A red granite shaft marking the site of the first post office west of the Rockies, established in 1847, was formally dedicated Friday following the chamber of commerce luncheon.

Chamber members, a delegation from the Daughters of American Revolution and other citizens attended the ceremony, which included remarks by Ed Ross, donor of the shaft and of the lot where the 1847 post office stood, and presentation of a U.S. Flag by the DAR chapter to the city.

Northwest states’ representatives appear to have won a preliminary battle last week in the war over water that may be fought bitterly for the next several years.

Hearing on western water use before a congressional committee ended in a recommendation for a federal study. Efforts by southwestern states to get a recommendation for importation of water were thwarted. The importation would of course be from the Columbia River.

This water war will be a tough one. We in the northwest have little numerical strength against such populous states as Texas and California. We will have to make logic and justice stand up against the angry pressure of thirsty folk who want water and intend to tolerate no obstacles in the way of quenching their thirst.

75 years ago — 1941

The third of a series of the six 42-ton four-motored Boeing clippers being built for Pan American Airways landed on the Columbia River off Tongue Point at 12:11 this afternoon for formal delivery to Pan American representatives here and took off for San Francisco at 1:18.

Measurements made by the national park service of the large Douglas fir tree in Queets valley, which lies in Jefferson County, Washington, reveal a diameter of 17 feet one inch. Press reports from Aberdeen disclose that the thickness of the tree is several inches less than it was several years ago. This reduction in girth is not attributed to shriveling old age or deliberate reduction, but rather as a result of bark scaling off. If it continues for some time, the Clatsop fir will end up the bigger of the two.

A possibility that midget auto races might be staged on Gyro field this summer was revealed Wednesday when Bobby Rowe, Portland sports promoter who heads Bobby Rowe incorporated, met with Astoria Regatta association and city officials here.

President Roosevelt disclosed today that a new civilian defense program so wide in scope that it may profoundly affect every man, woman and child in America , is about ready for his final approval.

Administration officials charged with developing the program have been secretive on its ramifications. Indications have been that the scheme may permeate the American communities in months to come almost as thorough as did the NRA (National Industrial Recovery Administration) in the early days of Mr. Roosevelt’s administration.

Tired of campaigns’ negativity?
Go to a graduation ceremony

A graduation ceremony is an antidote to the ugliness and cynicism of this presidential campaign season. The constant negativity on the airwaves is all about the past. Graduations are about the future. They celebrate accomplishment.

We traveled last week to our son’s graduation from the University of Nevada, Reno. Harrison’s fascination with aquatic science and the outdoors was ignited by Lee Cain and his salmon biology program at Astoria High School. That experience eventually led to a graduate degree in natural resources and environmental science with an emphasis on hydrology.

Contrary to my preconception about Reno’s desert environment, the graduation was held in a tree-bordered quadrangle that lies at the heart of the old land-grant campus.

As the early morning light played through the groves of old trees, the audience drifted in to rows of white chairs. All around us were families anticipating their sons’ and daughters’ moment. A young black man in academic gown came to the row where his family sat. One by one, he embraced siblings, mother and father, grandfather and grandmother. Behind us was an Indian family who embraced their graduate.

Brass from the Reno Symphony played the processional.

The university president, Marc Johnson, acknowledged the contrast between America’s political carnival and the reality of this event.

‘The time has come,’ the Walrus said,
‘To talk of many things;
Of shoes — and ships — and sealing wax —
Of cabbages —and kings —’

Through the Looking-glass

of Cabbages and Kings

The Pittock Mansion in Portland.

Wikimedia Commons

We mainly know of
Henry Pittock because of
his Portland mansion.

uct of the Dominican Republic.

The Aces played with less than a full deck on Saturday night, fatally muffing fielding opportunities. They lost by the dismal margin of 17-2. In true baseball fashion, on the following day the Aces beat the Cubs.

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Henry Pittock is one of those Oregonians who was once enormously prominent, but now recedes from view. Portlanders know of Pittock’s mansion atop Willamette Heights. Rescued in 1968, the magnificent home became an iconic historic preservation moment. Restoration of the Old Church would be next.

Thanks to prodding from Christine Lolich, I went to the Pittock Mansion last week to see its exhibit about Pittock as a pioneer printer. There was a painful irony in the exhibit’s celebration of *The Oregonian*’s 19th century emer-

gence as a major voice at a time when the Newhouse family of New York City is dismantling the once dominant journalistic engine.

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President Obama’s pending trip to Hiroshima has ignited the commentariat of historians and politicians. *The Wall Street Journal*’s editorial writers last week published a speech they wished Obama would deliver.

When my wife, daughter and I visited Hiroshima in 2001, two months following the attack on the World Trade Center, we were the only Americans in sight.

The exhibits that Obama will see in the Hiroshima Peace Museum may provide a fuller story than we saw. When we visited, there was scant acknowledgment of Japan’s culpability or its conduct in Asia during the war, such as the Rape of Nanking.

— S.A.F.

Making repairs one community at a time

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

LOST HILLS, Calif. — What is the central challenge facing our era? My answer would be: social isolation.

Gaps have opened up among partisan tribes, economic classes and races. There has been a loss of social capital, especially for communities down the income scale.

Take, for example, the town of Lost Hills. Lost Hills is a farming town in the Central Valley, 42 miles northwest of Bakersfield. It is not a rich town, but neither is it a desolate one. There are jobs here, thanks to the almond and pistachio processing plants nearby. When you go to the pre-K center and look at the family photos on the wall, you see that most of the families are intact — a mom, a dad and a couple kids standing proudly in front of a small ranch house. Many of these families have been here for decades.

But until recently you didn’t find the community organizations that you’d expect to find in such a place. There’s still no permanent church. Up until now there has been no library and no polling station. The closest police station is 45 miles away. Until recently there were no sidewalks nor many streetlights, so it was too dangerous to go trick-or-treating.

Alexis de Tocqueville wrote that Americans are great at forming spontaneous voluntary groups. But in towns like Lost Hills, and in neighborhoods across the country, that doesn’t seem to be as true any more.

Maybe with the rise of TV and the Internet people are happier staying in the private world of home. Maybe

it’s the loss of community leaders. Every town used to have its small-business owners and bankers. But now those businesses and banks are owned by investment funds far away.

Either way, social isolation produces rising suicide rates, rising drug addiction, widening inequality, political polarization, depression and alienation.

Fortunately, we’re beginning to see the rise of intentional community instigators. If social capital isn’t going to form spontaneously, people and groups will try to jump-start it into existence.

Lost Hills is the home of a promising experiment. The experiment is being led by Lynda Resnick, who, with her husband, Stewart, owns Wonderful Co., which includes FIJI Water,

POM juice and most of the pistachios and almonds you eat. You should know that I’m friends with Lynda and Stewart and am biased in their direction. But what they are doing is still worth learning from.

First, they are flooding the zone. They’re not trying to find one way to serve this population. The problems are so intertwined, they are trying to change this community from all directions at once. In Lost Hills there are new health centers, new pre-K facilities, new housing projects, new gardens, new sidewalks and lights, a new community center and a new soccer field. Through the day, people have more places to meet, play and cooperate with their neighbors.

Second, they’ve created a practical culture of self-improvement. You can talk about social reform in ways that seem preachy. But the emphasis here is on better health and less diabetes, a nonmoralistic

David Brooks

way to change behavior.

At the nut plant I met men and women who’d lost more than 100 pounds. One of the workers gets up at 2:45 every morning, so he can hit the gym by 4 and be at work by 6. This guy wants to be around to watch his kids grow, and his self-disciplined health regime has led to a whole life transformation. He’s now taking business and law courses online.

The new institutions here are intensely social. When you go to the health center, you don’t sit silently in the waiting room before going into a small room for your 15-minute visit. Many of the patients have group visits (sort of like Al Anon groups) to meet communally with doctors and encourage one another’s healthier behavior. The medical staffs perform as teams, too. Staff members sit together in a central workroom collaborating all day.

Finally, there are more cross-class connections. Dr. Maureen Mavrinac moved here from the UCLA Family Medicine Department. Dr. Rishi Manchanda was the lead physician for homeless primary care at the Los Angeles VA. These are among the dozens who have come to Lost Hills not to save the place from outside, but to befriend it. Their way of being ripples. I met several local women who said they were shy and quiet, but now they are joining community boards and running meetings.

What’s the right level to pursue social repair? The nation may be too large. The individual is too small. The community is the right level, picking a piece of land and giving people a context in which they can do neighborly things — like the dads here who came to the pre-K center and spent six hours building a shed, and with it, invisibly, a wider circle of care for their children.

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