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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

An ordinary grocery shopping trip took a serpentine twist last week for Warrenton resident Sherry Hart and her teenage granddaughter.

"This lady was freaking out next to her car," says Will Brinkerhoff, 17, an employee at the North Coast Fred Meyer.

And no wonder.

Two large snakes were reclining on the back of Hart's 1986 two-tone blue Buick Park Avenue, where none had been before.

Recognizing the granddaughter, 17-year-old Paige Hart, as a classmate from Warrenton High School, Brinkerhoff gallantly stepped forward to assist the two damsels in distress.

He pulled up the floor mat and saw "more and more and more and more snakes," he says, including a giant one under the passenger seat.

Eventually more than 20 garter snakes were found inside the car, some pencil-thin and one the diameter of a quarter and 3 feet long.

Noticing the reptilian ruckus, several customers and another Fred Meyer employee, Taylor Hageman, 17, pitched in to help. One man dumped out his groceries and gave Hart the plastic bags they'd been packed in so she could fill them with snakes.

Soon Warrenton police officer Jim Gaebel arrived on scene and opined, according to Brinkerhoff, that one snake must have gotten into the car and had babies.

A lot of babies.

But Hart thinks someone played a prank on her.

"Who did it? We don't know," she says. She believes her car was chosen because a window stuck in the open position made it an easy target.

For Hart and her granddaughter, the experience was far from over. They still had to drive home.

Hart says she told Paige, "You watch for snakes and I'll drive," and urged her to stay calm. "I drove home, parked the car, and as soon as I got out, two snakes fell out of the dashboard right where my feet were," Hart says.

The next day, after a friend pulled off some paneling inside the car, they found yet another big snake. The day after that, three more snakes emerged from her car's innards. One of them bit her as she was pulling it out of the dashboard.

A week after the fateful shopping trip, the Buick remains in the driveway.

"I haven't driven it yet. I come out and check it periodically," Hart says. And she has some practical advice for others. "If your window's broken, get it fixed."

50 years ago — 1966



The Daily Astorian/File Photo

Mark Hatfield's administrative assistant Warne Nunn (left), Dr. E.W. Harvey of the Oregon Otter Trawl commission (center) and state Rep. William Holmstrom were among dignitaries to observe the Russian fleet operating 15 miles off Westport, Wash.

St. Helens and Portland might become salt water ports if a major Northwest — Southwest water transfer proposal materializes, Secretary of State Tom McCall said here.

McCall, Republican candidate for governor, was grand marshal for St. Helens' annual Port O' Fun Festival.

"If the Colorado Basin proposal in Congress becomes law," McCall said, "it could mean an annual diversion of 8.5 million acre feet of Columbia River water — enough to bring ocean salt more than 60 miles upstream from the Columbia's mouth."

A traffic volume exceeding that of last summer by substantial amounts has swamped the ferry service here, and probably was a factor in speeding up work of getting the Astoria Bridge ready to carry traffic.

The State Highway Commission has approved the name "Astoria Bridge" as the official title of the trans-Columbia river span between Astoria, Ore., and Point Ellice, Wash.

The 4.1-mile bridge, which cost more than \$24 million, will be officially dedicated in ceremonies Aug. 27.

75 years ago — 1941

Leo Arany, Astoria airport master, today announced that the Clatsop County Aviation association has suspended flying on the local airport pending completion of adequate ground space.

He said that it may be from six to eight weeks before flying may be resumed at the local airport.

The Knappton mill, its yard office, oil house, office building and more than 1,000,000 feet of cut lumber were wiped out by a fierce blaze of unknown origin, which was first detected in the boiler room and under the mill at about 10 a.m. today.

Two hours later, when the Coast Guard tender Manzanita arrived to save the outer section of docks, the fire had roared through the old mill, which was built by a pioneer operator by the name of Simpson in 1868. Water from the mill's own tank was drained early when the main was caught in the rapid spread of fire.



Submitted Photo

Earth slippage at Ecola State Park in 1961. The landslides moved parking areas and parts of roadways.

Celebrating those who built the roads, dug the rock

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

BY
R.J.
MARX



Author Deb Cuyle is fascinated by the crunch of gravel and the movement of rock, the play of mountains and tides as they shaped Cannon Beach. Her history focuses less on the cultural and social life — so well documented in Peter Lindsey's "Coming in Over the Rock" and Terence O'Donnell's magical "Cannon Beach: A Place by the Sea" than on the men who blasted rock and dared landslides to create a post-card city with international appeal.

This entry in Arcadia Books' Images of America series zeros in on the geography and the particular challenges Cannon Beach, Tolovana and Arch Cape faced in early days, bringing to life the hairpin turns of a logging truck coming down a steep curve and the superhuman efforts of highway department workers as they dug through mud and downpours to excavate thousands of yards of dirt building the tunnel in 1936.

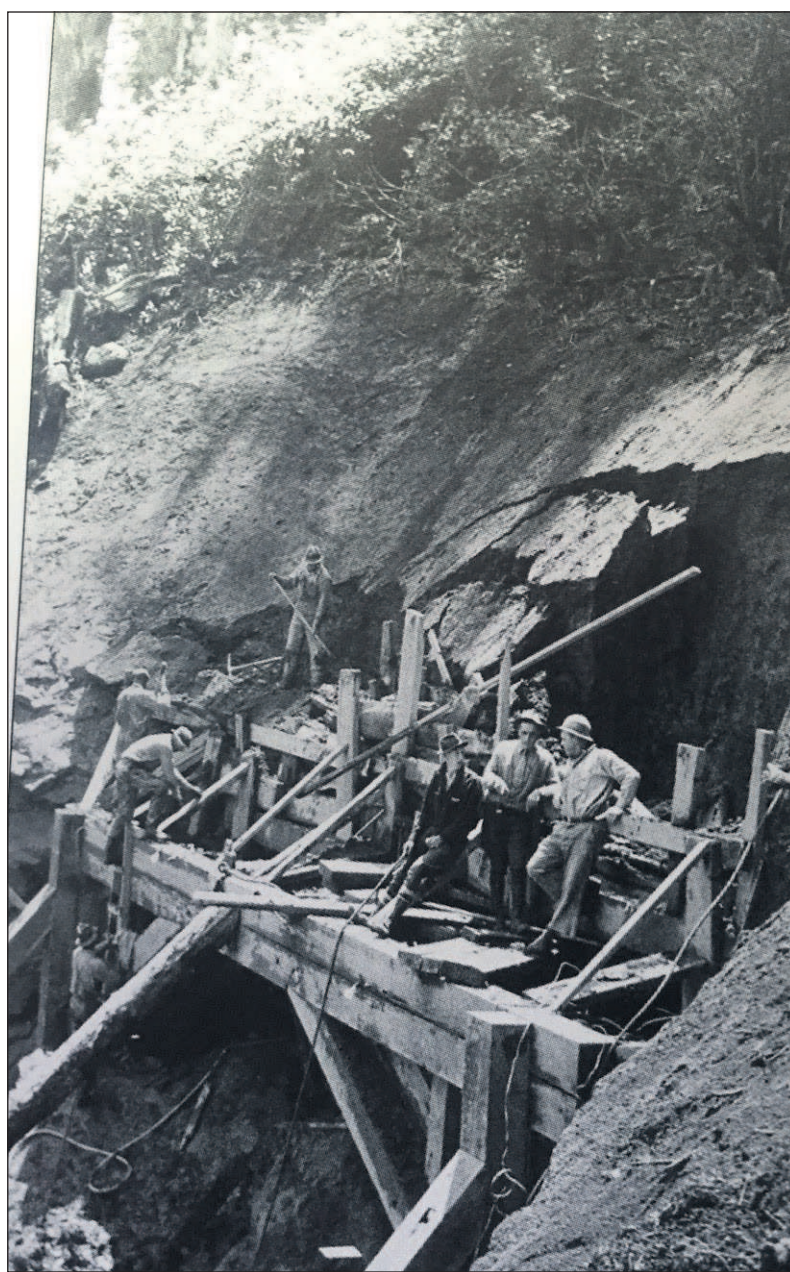
"When people today drive to Cannon Beach via Highway 26 from Portland or the road from Cannon Beach to Seaside, it is hard to imagine those roads were once just muddy paths," Cuyle said in a phone interview.

Cuyle, a former Cannon Beach resident, is the author of "Kidding Around Portland: What to Do, Where to Go, and How to Have Fun in Portland" and "Haunted Snohomish," an Arcadia book paying tribute to the supernatural side of Snohomish, Washington, where she resides.

"This project was kind of a labor of love," Cuyle said. "When I was going to Cannon Beach, I noticed there wasn't a history book. So I came back and talking to Arcadia. 'Why haven't you done Cannon Beach, it's the best place in the world?' They're like, 'We've been thinking about that for 10 years.' So again, I asked, 'Well why hasn't anybody done it?'"

Cuyle's persistence paid off and after preparing a proposal earned a contract with the Images of America series. "When I lived in Cannon Beach I fell in love with it," Cuyle said. "It is hard not to. The way the town is preserved and presented is absolutely stunning. I wanted to learn more about its history and the founding fathers who so eagerly wanted to develop the area."

She launches her journey in 1846, when Lt. Neil Howison sailed the USS Shark into the mouth of the Columbia River. When the ship encountered trouble, Howison ordered the masts to be chopped off and the cannons pushed overboard to lighten the ship, dropping the cannons into the sea. In the 1860s, John Hobson and his business partner M.



Submitted Photo

Workers in 1936 at work on the Arch Cape Tunnel.

Eberman regularly spotted a cannon in a creek as they drove cattle to Tillamook. Retrieval of the weapon didn't come until January 1898, when a mail carrier named George Luce found and retrieved the cannon from which Cannon Beach derives its name.

"Remittance men" — sons of wealthy Englishmen who came to Cannon Beach to work though still receiving money from home — comprised many of the 50 families occupying the 90-mile stretch of land between Tillamook Mountain and Neah-kahnie Mountain in the late 1800s, Cuyle writes.

She presents the old days of horse-drawn carriages, summer tent camps, clearing of the land, the first hotels and automobiles.

In 1891, James P. Austin built the Austin House, which was both a hotel and a post office. More lodgings followed. The Hotel Bill was constructed in 1904, the Warren Hotel in 1911 and the Ecola Inn in 1913.

While variously called Seal Rock, Ecola Creek, Silver Point Cliffs and Brighton Beach, the Cannon Beach name became official in 1955.

Pictures bear witness to the Herculean efforts of construction teams as workers work nonstop during rainstorms in mud and falling rock. And their ingenuity. A photo of the 1936 creation of the Arch of Cape tunnel shows a beached bulldozer dragged by the drums and cables of a "gas donkey," a contraption more commonly used to pull logs from the woods.

"The more I learned about the trials and tribulations these early set-



Author
Deborah Cuyle

ters had to endure, and the incredible amount of hard work involved, the more I realized that the area has tugged at people's hearts since it was first discovered," Cuyle said. "I wanted people to discover how the very important road systems and land developments for Cannon Beach were established."

The highway from Portland to Cannon Beach, originally the Wolf Creek Highway and now the Sunset Highway, was built between 1933 and 1936 by the labor of the Civilian Conservation Corps and the Works Progress Administration in the aftermath of the Great Depression. "It would take days to get from Portland to Cannon Beach," Cuyle said. "Now, we do it in 45 minutes with a stop at 7-Eleven."

Cuyle hopes to bring readers "back and make them remember what it was like," she said. Equal measure is given to the development of Arch Cape, Hug Point and Ecola State Park, with dramatic photos of a 1961 mudslide, or "earth slippage." "I am sure the book is not perfect and was really just a labor of my love for Cannon Beach, but I do hope it will bring happiness to all who read it," Cuyle said. "And when they are sitting with their toes in the warm sand nestled by a beach fire, I hope they will try to remember how Cannon Beach got to where it is today and some of these photographs and information will stick in their minds."

R.J. Marx is *The Daily Astorian's* South County reporter and editor of *the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette*.