

REGATTA HONORS ASTORIA'S HISTORY

THE 122ND ANNUAL FESTIVAL TAKES PLACE AUG. 11 TO 14

By ELI STILLMAN

The nautical history the North Coast was built upon will be celebrated once again with the 122nd Astoria Regatta festival. With tons of events packed into the remainder of the week Aug. 11 to 14, everyone in the family will find something to enjoy.

Centered in Astoria, the festival is known as the oldest celebration in the oldest Oregon city, which in turn, would make it the oldest celebration in the state.

It's typical that in 122 years, things have a tendency to change. While some aspects of the maritime festival have been altered throughout the last century, many are sticking to tradition.

History and Definition

The story of the festival's conception dates back to 1894, when two Astorians were casually talking about boats. That conversation grew into a celebration to welcome fisherman back from Alaska, as they pulled in the Astoria harbor with fresh fish. It would eventually become one of the premier boating festivals along the West Coast.

Today, the Regatta draws locals from both sides of the river and even some out of town travelers.

The word "regatta" means to actually race boats, which has also played an integral part in the background of the festival. Saturday and Sunday there will be sailboat races that can be viewed east of the Astoria-Megler Bridge. The Astoria Yacht Club is presenting the races, which are sure to be fast, wet and full of excitement.

Regatta Royalty

Since the beginning, there has been a Regatta queen to head the events. Last year Allison Bentley won the crown, and now she will pass down her title to one of the

four princesses. The final decision will be made during the annual coronation ceremony that takes place at 6 p.m. Thursday at the Liberty Theater.

All year, the court has been making appearances in parades and other public events.

In the past, the Astoria Regatta Scholarship Fund has donated upwards of \$18,000 in scholarships to the young women on the Regatta court. The organization hopes to encourage the local high schoolers to continue their education in college.

Bridge Anniversary

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Astoria-Megler Bridge. In conjunction with the nautical festival, there will be a rededication ceremony at 9 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 13. The bridge will be shut down and reopen after city officials make their way across in celebratory fashion.

After the bridge ceremony, there will be the annual Grand Land Parade through downtown Astoria. Starting at noon, the parade is one of the most anticipated events of Regatta. Along with local officials, special dignitary guests from Astoria's sister city of Wall-dorf, Germany will also be present for the festivities.

Tourist No. 2

Prior to the completion of the Astoria-Megler Bridge, which stretches over 21,000 feet, the only way travelers could get across the Columbia was by ferry boat. It's a way of travel many today have grown-up without experiencing, but a few still remember dearly.



PHOTO BY DANNY MILLER



PHOTO BY JOSHUA BESSEX

Above: The Astoria Grand Land Parade, set for noon Saturday, is just one of many exciting festivities of the Astoria Regatta. **Left:** The historic Tourist No. 2 ferry returned to Astoria on Aug. 1. The ferry will take part in the Highwater Boat Parade during Astoria Regatta on Saturday, Aug. 13.

The Clowns

Throughout the festivities, be sure to keep an eye out for the Astoria Clowns. They are fun group of jokesters who have always been an important part of the town's history. In fact, former Astoria Mayor Willis Van Dusen said, "Without the Astoria Clowns, we would not have the Astoria bridge."

The clowns were huge promoters of the bridge when it was still a plan on paper. To get the town on board for funding the bridge in the late 1950s, the clowns painted their bright yellow Chrysler to say "Let's Build The Bridge." Right after the final completion of the bridge, the clowns were one of the first cars to cross over it. Legend has it there were 15 of them in a car that was supposed to seat seven.

Warrenton Concert

A new addition to the festival will expand into the city of Warrenton, as country music comes to Warrenton City Park for a concert



CAN'T-MISS EVENTS

Thursday, Aug. 11

Queen Coronation, 6 p.m.,
Liberty Theater

Friday, Aug. 12

Seamen's Memorial, 3 p.m.,
Maritime Memorial Park

Concert in the Park, 7:30
p.m., Warrenton City Park

Saturday, Aug. 13

Regatta Square, 11 a.m. to 5
p.m., Heritage Square

Grand Land Parade, noon,
downtown

Highwater Boat
Parade, 5:30
p.m., water-
front



FIREWORKS,

dusk, East End
Mooring Basin

at 7:30 p.m. Friday. John Berry and Sherrié Austin will play free sets in the park to whomever wants to come out and enjoy the evening. Austin, a native of Australia, got her start in music opening for Johnny Cash when she was just 14. Since then, she's enjoyed a diverse career, acting in "The Fresh Prince of Bel Air," performing a song featured in the "Baywatch" soundtrack and seeing multiple singles on Billboard's Hot Country Songs chart.

Berry has been performing country music for over three decades. In that time he's self-produced six studio albums, performed for George H.W. Bush and been nominated for a Grammy. The seasoned country stars are sure to bring an entertaining evening to the Warrenton Park for the first time in the history of Regatta.