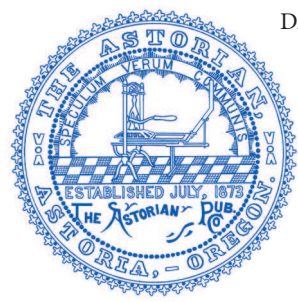


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## OUR VIEW

### 'Bridge to nowhere' now a symbol of success

The 50th anniversary this month of opening the Astoria Bridge is important for many reasons, some concrete and others symbolic. It binds our region together in every sense. Nearly 3 million trips are made across it each year, according to the Oregon Department of Transportation's most recent report, three times more than 30 years ago. Cross-river traffic basically doubled between 1986, when there was still a toll, and 1996 after the bond that paid for the bridge was paid off early and the toll ended.

#### How we got here

The Astoria Chamber of Commerce began lobbying for a Columbia River bridge in 1929. The first car ferry started a few years earlier and could carry only 15 vehicles at a time, sometimes leading to hourslong waits on summer weekends. In June 1930 President Herbert Hoover signed a bill approving construction, but the U.S. economy collapsed and took bridge aspirations down with it. There was another try for a bridge near the start of World War II, but it was nixed due to vague concerns it might interfere with military planes.

Continuing reliance on ferries became less and less tenable. By the mid-1940s, there were long summer backups for a single ferry making an hour round-trip voyage with 26 to 30 cars. By mid-1956, the backup reached 200 cars, even with three ferries running at top speed.

To considerable grousing elsewhere in the state, in 1959 Oregon lawmakers approved bonding for half of construction costs. The Bend Bulletin opined it was a classic "bridge to nowhere": "practically no one lives on the Washington side of the river ... (or) particularly gives a damn whether the bridge is built or not."

It turned out Pacific County state Sen. Bob Bailey did care. By early 1961, both legislatures authorized construction.

#### What it has meant

Bridge completion eliminated a traffic bottleneck at Astoria, permitting tourists and other commerce to travel freely on the coast highway between Oregon and Washington. From a summer peak of a few hundred vehicles being able to cross the river in ferry times, the daily total can now approach 20,000.

Not everyone came out ahead after the bridge went in, starting with the 52 ferry employees who lost their jobs in 1966. With retail dollars surging from Washington to zero-sales-tax Oregon, towns like Ilwaco experienced a hollowing out of their commercial core. This disadvantage continues on the Washington side, though it is offset by large numbers of Oregonians who visit for events such as razor clam digs.

Overall, however, unification of the Lower Columbia economy made possible by the bridge means residents in both Clatsop and Pacific counties are able to take advantage of the best deals for housing, products and services — including health care and college education. For example, Clatsop Community College is the most popular option for graduates of Ilwaco and Naselle high schools, something that would be impossible without a bridge.

#### Looking ahead

Beyond being grateful for the foresight and tenacity that went into bridge construction, what lessons should we take from its half century of success?

Horrible as the recession was, resulting stimulus spending brought the bridge back to nearly good as new. The deck surface still is in obvious need of repair, but assuming it is dealt with, the bridge is in good shape for decades longer. Its importance, and of other bridges in this water-rich place, also demands thorough examination of seismic retrofiting.

Learning from the bridge's success, our region should actively envision next steps for transportation in the century ahead, as the population grows and the sea level rises. The bridge is living proof we are stronger together, and that investments in infrastructure pay big dividends. An icon of Astoria, it is something to be proud about.

## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian. We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy and verbal verification of authorship. Only two letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also

mention the headline and date of publication.

The Daily Astorian welcomes short "in gratitude" notes from readers for publication. They should keep to a 200-word maximum and writers are asked to avoid simply listing event sponsors. They must be signed, include the writer's address, phone number and are subject to condensation and editing for style, grammar, etc.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

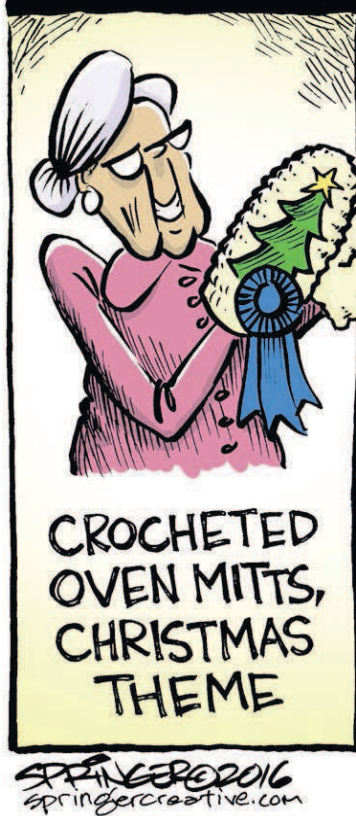
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## BLUE RIBBONS AT THE 2016 OREGON STATE FAIR...



## SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

### Chicago dogs in Manzanita

By R.J. MARX  
*The Daily Astorian*

Jim Mudd knows his Chicago dogs: Vienna all-beef frank, sesame seed bun, sliced tomatoes, pickle strips and even the secret ingredient: celery salt. I know this because I once had a Chicago dog party with these same ingredients, ordered direct from Vienna Beef Products and delivered to my home in dry ice. I fired up the Weber gas grill and cooked them to perfection, spiked with fork tines to let the dogs breathe and the juices sizzle, slightly blackened to perfection.

Let's put it this way: it was a huge hit, even vegans slammed them down — albeit without the frank.

One of the guests was headed to Club Fed for a federal crime — a Ponzi scheme in which he netted a paltry \$2 million. Little did we know at that event as he chugged down dog after dog that this, he felt, was his last meal before his departure. I had purchased about 72 hot dogs and 24 Polish sausages (a misnomer, really, fatter than the hot dogs, but not a Polish kielbasa as many know it) — and thought I would have enough for the 22 guests. Our felonious friend, however, devoured the hot dogs with such gusto that other guests started complaining they weren't "getting enough Polish."

He ended up, I think, eating about eight of the dogs and four of the Polish. Considering that he wouldn't be eating any more for three to five years was some solace, I liked to think I gave him something to look back on as he served his time.

Chicago dogs can do that to people. As a kid in the suburbs of Chicago I was a veteran of Stash's Place, a pioneer of the genre. These were different than the flat-dogs you would get at the Woolworth's counter on a buttered bun. Instead, the buns were soft without being too breadly, the sport peppers sharp and biting and a little too risqué for a 10-year-old, and the Polish sausage serving as a template for all hot dogs to come.

Since that time I order Chicago dogs wherever I see that signature sign.

#### New York didn't get it

In New York they just didn't get it. I don't think they ever knew how to do a Chicago dog, and I scoured the five boroughs and suburbs. I think their allegiance to the "dirty water" dog — served in a Sabrett steam wagon, slathered with sauerkraut and mustard — was just too great.

In Los Angeles, friends told me Pinks was the place to go for most dog-lovers ("Number one in Califor-



R.J. Marx/The Daily Astorian

Jim Mudd serves up a culinary classic.

nia"), but frankly, they didn't really wow me. Yes, I liked the room on Sunset, with the old train motif, but no, it wasn't a Chicago dog. They could do Philly Cheesesteaks like they make in Philadelphia at Great Western on Venice Boulevard, but the Chicago dog was not an option.

My son, Sam, took me to Zach's Shack on Hawthorne in Portland. Their Chicago dog is excellent. Nick's Coney Island makes "good dogs," Sam tells me, but while they say they do Chicago dogs on their site, "the ingredients are wrong. Zach's is legit."

I think Tsunami Dog in Seaside serves the best frank in town, but while you can get the "Kite-Flyer," "Highway 101" and "The Bonfire," the Chi-town connection is lacking. So that brings me to some good news for the local hot-dog purist.

#### Dedicated to Chicago dog

Jim Mudd has dedicated himself to the Chicago dog. That's all he sells at Mudd Dog Stand in Manzanita. Set back in a courtyard on Laneda near the beach, Mudd celebrates the Chicago dog with devotion, manning the cart as his wife Lynn pitches in.

It would be enough for Mudd to stand proud as the Sears Tower of hot dogs carts, but he's got an even loftier side. Mudd is a board member and co-founder of the Mudd Nick Foundation, a charitable organization for kids.

Arts and humanities, science, technology, engineering and math, higher education and careers, camps, literacy, sports, community, children with special needs and talented and gifted — all are supported by the foundation, whose programs are described as "learning experiences that stimulate

children to aspire to their greatest potential and pursue their dreams."

The foundation supports camp and after-school programs that don't receive tax dollars.

"We founded it 25 years ago," Mudd said, over hot dogs.

Mudd and Doug Nicholson, friends since their days at Oregon State University, decided to start a coed golf tournament in 1990, which they christened the Mudd Nick Invitational.

In 2006, the Mudd Nick Foundation was formed as a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and a board of nine directors was selected to develop a mission.

Over the last nine years, more than \$1 million has been raised to support 30 to 50 programs every year.

A former Bridgestone executive, Mudd and his family "moved all over the coast."

"When we retired, we came out here," he said. "This was my parents' home. Since this is the last chapter of my life, I thought what can I do to help? I thought we could open a hot-dog stand, a Chicago-deal like I've eaten all my life, and we'd draw people in and we'd talk about the Mudd Nick Foundation."

It worked. The hot dogs draw people in, and Mudd spreads the word. With international visitors to the coast, Mudd has attracted donations from people around the world. "It's been a great ride," he said.

The Mudd Nick Foundation celebrates its 27th annual fundraiser in September. The pre-golf tournament dinner takes place Sept. 16, followed by the foundation's annual charity golf tournament at Manzanita Golf Course. The annual dinner will be held the next day. They probably won't be serving hot dogs.

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

