

# GRAB BAG

BOOK SHELF // GLIMPSE // WILDLIFE

## word nerd

By RYAN HUME

### Cutter [kʌt•ər]

*noun*

1. a person who cuts things for a living; used in tailoring and masonry
2. a machine that cuts
3. *Nautical.* a small to medium sailing ship rigged with a single mast that is built for speed instead of cargo capacity. Conversely, the U.S. Coast Guard uses the same term to define any number of different classifications of vessels longer than 65 feet and equipped with living conditions for a permanently assigned crew

#### Origin:

The root verb cut can be traced back to entering Middle English around 1300 as either *cutten* or *kitten* and probably arrived from a Scandinavian source like the Old Norse *kuti*, which means "little knife."

*Cutter*, as it applies to the sailing vessel, is first recorded in 1762, and the term became widespread in both Britain and the U.S. in the 19th century as the popularity of the ship grew. The U.S. Coast Guard adopted the term for general usage upon its inception in 1790 when the maritime force was then known as the Revenue Marine. The force was officially renamed the Revenue Cutter Service in 1863 during the American Civil War.

"The U.S. Coast Guard cutter *Steadfast* returned to homeport in Astoria Thursday. During a two-month counternarcotics patrol off the West Coast, the *Steadfast* intercepted several vessels smuggling cocaine and delivered wheelchairs to a shelter.

"According to the Coast Guard, the 210-foot cutter intercepted more than 4,800 pounds of cocaine with a street value of more than \$71 million."

—"Cutter *Steadfast* seizes cocaine, delivers wheelchairs during patrol," *The Daily Astorian*, Sept. 16, 2016

"If all goes well, and there is scant reason to believe that it will not, the revenue cutter *Perry* will deport tonight for the sound. Whether or not she will ever again return to Astoria is a question that can not be answered."

—"Perry goes to Seattle," *The Morning Astorian*, Thursday, May 26, 1994, P. 6



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