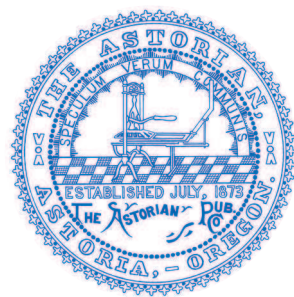


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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

About 150 Clatsop County electricity customers remained without power this morning, the last of thousands of homes and businesses left in the dark by Thursday's powerful windstorm.

The storm, bringing gusts that topped 100 mph, knocked out power to the entire county as trees toppled onto power lines throughout the area.

A major frustration for county residents during last week's windstorm and power outages was the loss of radio station KAST, which went off the air Thursday afternoon and remained silent for two days.

A neglected generator — bought for the radio station by Clatsop County — has been pinpointed as the source of the problem.

But who's to blame for the situation has embroiled county officials in angry debate, including a heated exchange between Sheriff Tom Bergin and the Clatsop County commissioners Monday night.

The back-up generator intended to power the station during electricity outages failed to start, and required several hours of work by a county mechanic to get up and running. Even then, the signal from the station was so weak it could not be picked up more than a short distance away.

Clatsop County Sheriff Tom Bergin, under fire from some quarters over his handling of the county's response during last week's wind storm, said he stands by his decision that the event and its aftermath didn't require the use of his department's emergency operations facility.

50 years ago — 1966

Astoria merchants and their enlarged staffs moved today into the final week of what they believe will be the best Christmas shopping season in the community's history.

Stores will be open all day and all evening through Thursday. Stores will close at regular times Saturday afternoon, Christmas Eve.

Most downtown retail dealers queried by The Daily Astorian in the past few days have reported Christmas business volume up from a year ago — some say as much as 20 percent up.



File Photo

This concrete slab, weighing 7 tons, is the first of 27 that will provide the exterior facing of the new Astoria Library. They will be fastened to steel framework of the building with metal clip angles. Windows will be installed in spaces between slabs.

Possibility that the U.S. Maritime Administration will close the Astoria reserve fleet some time in 1968 was disclosed by J.W. Gulick, acting administrator, in a letter to U.S. Sen. Wayne Morse recently.

The City Council may attempt to annex the Youngs Bay shore area from the old to the new highway bridges across Youngs Bay by voluntary agreement of property owners involved.

The council Monday night heard Ray Wood of the Jaycees report that he has been unable to obtain agreement of all Youngs Bay shore people to annexation to the city.

75 years ago — 1941

It need occasion no surprise that enemy submarines are operating within 20 miles of the nation's Pacific coastline as revealed by the torpedoing of one tanker and the shelling of two others offshore from California Saturday. Such a development of the war was to be expected and unquestionably has been expected by the Navy and Army.

Japan has a good many long-range submarines and logically might be expected to send some of them to prey on our coastal and intercoastal shipping, not alone for the damage done to it but to keep some of our forces occupied on this side of the Pacific. The actual happening brings the war close to home and should be convincing to those prone to scoff at the fear of attacks on the country.

More than 57,000 items of first class mail raced through the cancellation machine at the Astoria post office Monday in the biggest day of business in the post office since 1849, when it was established.

In the previous biggest day in December 1940, the automatic cancellation marker checked off 47,800 pieces of first class mail.

Stamp sales Saturday exceeded \$1,000 with \$850 sold at the regular stamp window, and the balance at the parcel post window.

Ross McIntyre of Portland, representing the Governor's Office, met with representatives of the Clatsop defense council in the City Council chambers today, to discuss general plans for partial, complete and temporary evacuation of communities in the area.

The meeting was called for long-range planning and was not related to any immediate or specific emergency.

Mr. and Mrs. Pete Holstrom said this week they had received word from their son Edward that he was safe and well, uninjured by the Japanese attack on Honolulu. Edward Holstrom is in the Army, stationed at Schofield Barracks, Honolulu, and was there when the Nipponese planes roared their destruction on the American Pacific island.



Useful idiots galore in hacking tale

By PAUL KRUGMAN

New York Times News Service

An editorial in The Times described Donald Trump as a "useful idiot" serving Russian interests. That may not be



exactly right. After all, useful idiots are supposed to be unaware of how they're being used, but Trump probably knows very well how much he owes to Vladimir Putin. Remember, he once openly appealed to the Russians to hack Hillary Clinton's emails.

Still, the general picture of a president-elect who owes his position in part to intervention by a foreign power, and shows every sign of being prepared to use U.S. policy to reward that power, is accurate.

But let's be honest: Trump is by no means the only useful idiot in this story. As recent reporting by The Times makes clear, bad guys couldn't have hacked the U.S. election without a lot of help, both from U.S. politicians and from the news media.

Let me explain what I mean by saying that bad guys hacked the election. I'm not talking about some kind of wild conspiracy theory. I'm talking about the obvious effect of two factors on voting: the steady drumbeat of Russia-concocted leaks about Democrats, and only Democrats, and the dramatic, totally unjustified last-minute intervention by the FBI, which appears to have become a highly partisan institution, with distinct alt-right sympathies.

Does anyone really doubt that these factors moved swing-state ballots by at least 1 percent? If they did, they made the difference in Michigan, Wisconsin and Pennsylvania — and therefore handed Trump the election, even though he received almost 3 million fewer total votes. Yes, the election was hacked.

By the way, people who respond to this observation by talking about mistakes in Clinton campaign strategy are missing the point, and continuing their useful idiocy. All campaigns make mistakes. Since when do these mistakes excuse subversion of an election by a foreign power and a rogue domestic law enforcement agency?

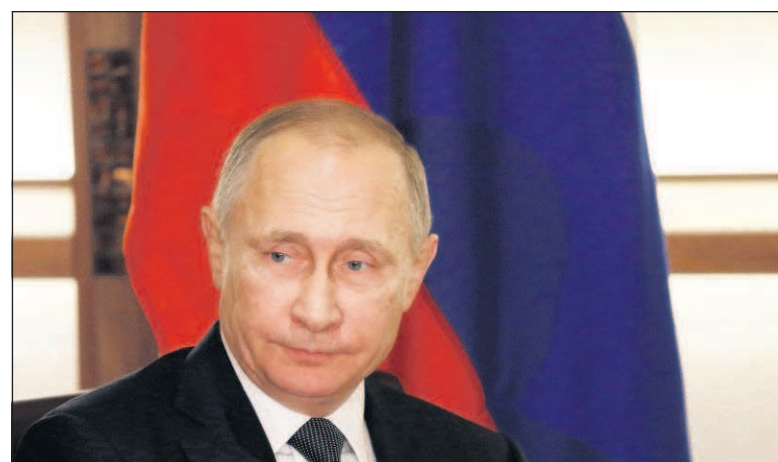
Why it worked

So why did the subversion work?

It's important to realize that the postelection CIA declaration that Russia had intervened on behalf of the Trump campaign was a confirmation, not a revelation (although we've now learned that Putin was personally involved in the effort).

The pro-Putin tilt of Trump and his advisers was obvious months before the election — I wrote about it in July. By midsummer the close relationship between WikiLeaks and Russian intelligence was also obvious, as was the site's growing alignment with white nationalists.

Did Republican politicians, so big on flag waving and impugning their rivals' patriotism, reject this foreign aid to their cause? No, they didn't. In fact, as far as I can tell, no major Republican figure was even willing to criticize Trump



Toru Hanai/Pool Photo

Russian President Vladimir Putin is seen in Nagato, western Japan, Thursday. The Obama administration suggested that Putin personally authorized the hacking of Democratic officials' email accounts in the run-up to the presidential election, which intelligence agencies believe was designed to help Donald Trump prevail. The White House also leveled an astounding attack on Trump himself, saying he must have known of Russia's interference.



Joel Ryan/Invision

The head of the wax figure of President-elect Donald Trump is worked on by coloring supervisor, Verity Talbot, at a studio in west London in December.

It might be more comfortable to pretend that things are OK, that American democracy isn't on the edge. But that would be taking useful idiocy to the next level.

when he directly asked Russia to hack Clinton.

This shouldn't come as a surprise. It has long been obvious — except, apparently, to the news media — that the modern GOP is a radical institution that is ready to violate democratic norms in the pursuit of power. Why should the norm of not accepting foreign assistance be any different?

News media

The bigger surprise was the behavior of the news media, and I don't mean fake news; I mean big, prestigious organizations. Leaked emails, which everyone knew were probably the product of Russian hacking, were breathlessly reported as shocking revelations, even when they mostly revealed nothing more than the fact that Democrats are people.

Meanwhile, the news media dutifully played up the Clinton server story, which never involved any evidence of wrongdoing, but merged in the public mind into the perception of a vast "email" scandal when there was nothing there.

And then there was the Comey letter. The FBI literally found nothing at all. But the letter dominated

front pages and TV coverage, and that coverage — by news organizations that surely knew that they were being used as political weapons — was almost certainly decisive on Election Day.

So as I said, there were a lot of useful idiots this year, and they made the election hack a success.

Now what? If we're going to have any hope of redemption, people will have to stop letting themselves be used the way they were in 2016. And the first step is to admit the awful reality of what just happened.

That means not trying to change the subject to campaign strategy, which is a legitimate topic but has no bearing on the question of electoral subversion. It means not making excuses for news coverage that empowered that subversion.

And it means not acting as if this was a normal election whose result gives the winner any kind of a mandate, or indeed any legitimacy beyond the bare legal requirements. It might be more comfortable to pretend that things are OK, that American democracy isn't on the edge. But that would be taking useful idiocy to the next level.