

THE ILL-FATED ROSECRANS



The ill-fated iron tanker **Rosecrans** crashed on the rocks near **Peacock Spit** in a “furious gale” 104 years ago Saturday, Jan. 7, according to the Jan. 8, 1913, edition of the New York Tribune (<http://tinyurl.com/peacockrose>). She is pictured, courtesy of the Saltwater People Historical Society archives.

The story, headlined “Thirty-One Lost on Hoodooed Steamship,” mentions that the ship, once an army transport vessel, left in her wake “marine records strewn with tales of death and disaster connected with her career.” Only four survived this particular incident.

The ship was heading to Portland with a cargo of crude oil when she ran into a 55 mph gale near the Columbia River bar. It was speculated that the officers “lost their bearings” in the storm, causing the ship to be hurled onto the rocks.

The Rosecrans wired for assistance, and the tugs Oneonta and Goliath and life-saving crews from Fort Canby and Point Adams Rescue sped out to assist. “When the tugs reached the neighborhood of the tanker she was found to be hard aground, and the high seas and driving winds made a near approach impossible,” the story says. Instead, they concentrated on looking for survivors in the water. There were none.

In the meantime, the vessel — which by then had taken a severe pounding — shifted and began to break up. Soon she slipped off the rocks and sank, leaving only the masts and funnel showing above water. All seemed to be lost, but incredibly, three crewmen were still clinging to the rigging.

“For many hours they clung there, the waves breaking over them repeatedly,” the story says. “The wind died down somewhat late today, and the lifesavers were able to reach them. Two of the men were taken from their perch, while the third, who had leaped into the sea when the lifeboat neared the spot, was taken from the water.”

The fourth survivor, a lucky man indeed, came ashore six miles north of the wreck at what was then known as Tioga, Washington (a long-gone resort subdivision on the north boundary of Long Beach). The Rosecrans’ disastrous run of bad luck was finally over.

ASTORIA IN THE FOOTLIGHTS

If you loved the book “Astoria: John Jacob Astor and Thomas Jefferson’s Lost Pacific Empire, A Story of Wealth, Ambition, and Survival” by **Peter Stark**, or, if you didn’t have a chance to read it but wish you had, there’s a treat in store for you.



“Astoria: Part One,” by

Chris Coleman, based on the book, is being put on by **Portland Center Stage at The Armory**. Previews are Jan. 14-19, opening night is Jan. 20, and the show runs through Feb. 12, at the U.S. Bank Main Stage in Portland. The story is in two parts, covering two seasons: Part One features 16 actors, and is about the journey to Astoria; Part Two is about the establishment of Astoria. Tickets are available at www.pcs.org (where there’s also a lot of other information) or by calling 503-445-3700.

And here’s a deal for you: Since Coleman and his design and production team spent an afternoon at the Columbia River Maritime Museum as part of the creation of the play, you can get a \$5 discount on tickets by using the promo code “CRMM.” Bravo!

AT LAST, A MUSEUM



While planning continues for a modest Scandinavian memorial in Astoria, in Seattle, the **Nordic Heritage Museum** is embarking on a huge building project on Market Street in the Ballard neighborhood,” Astorian writer and photographer **Peter Marsh** (<http://sea-to-summit.net>) wrote, noting that they have already started driving the 300 pilings needed to prepare the foundation.

“There are 2,700 families in the museum’s membership helping to raise the estimated \$45 million the new building will cost,” he continued. “This will replace the organization’s original home — a small 1907 grade school leased from the Seattle School District.”

An image of the planned completed museum is shown, courtesy of the Nordic Heritage Museum website, <http://nordicmuseum.org/future>

“This will be the only museum in the U.S.,” Peter added, “to honor the legacy of immigrants from the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden.”

In One Ear



by **Elleda Wilson**

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FIRE AND ICE



There’s been a bit of an uproar in the **Titanic** history sector. According to The New York Times (<http://tinyurl.com/titanic-fire>) Irish journalist **Senan Molony**, who has been researching the ship for more than 30 years, proclaimed in a recently aired documentary, “Titanic: The New Evidence” (<http://tinyurl.com/titandoc>) that a **coal fire** on board, not just the iceberg, was responsible for the vessel’s demise.

Molony contends that the fire — which had been raging for three weeks in a three-story-high coal bunker next to a boiler room — weakened the hull, causing Titanic to sink as quickly as it did after the collision with the iceberg, long before help could arrive, in fact, causing the deaths of more than 1,500, including the great-grandson of Astoria’s namesake, **John Jacob Astor IV**.

“It’s a perfect storm of extraordinary factors coming together: fire, ice and criminal negligence,” Molony argues. “The fire was known about, but it was played down. She should never have been put to sea.” He argues that the launch and maiden voyage proceeded anyway, because to delay would have been financially disastrous.

This new revelation about the fire comes from an unpublished album of Titanic photos found in an attic, taken during and after the ship was built, and discovered by a descendant of the Belfast ship-building company, **Harland and Wolff**.

In the photos, a 30-foot “black mark” (shown in a screen shot from the documentary) can be seen near where the ship hit the iceberg, and engineers at the Imperial College London who studied the photos said the mark was likely caused by a coal bunker fire. Molony calls this discovery “the Titanic equivalent of Tutankhamen’s tomb.”

A former honorary secretary of the British Titanic Society, **David Hill**, who has been studying disastrous sinking for more than 50 years, isn’t convinced, however. The iceberg “opened up too many compartments to the sea, so that the weight of the water dragged the bow down so low that the ship eventually sank,” he said. “A fire may have accelerated this. But in my view, the Titanic would have sunk anyways.”

WHO GOES THERE?



Marine biology fans take note: Scientists from **Oregon State University’s Hatfield Marine Science Center** are hearing what they call “crazy” calls from the depths of the **Mariana Trench**, according to a story on NewAtlas.com (<http://tinyurl.com/trench-call>). The trench, which is in the western Pacific Ocean, is one of the deepest ocean areas known to man. To give you some idea of how deep, according to Geology.com (<http://tinyurl.com/deepest6>), a 2009 unmanned robotic vehicle reached a depth of 35,814 feet (about 6.8 miles).

OSU scientists have named this eerie new sound, recorded by research instruments at a depth of 3,281 feet, the “**Western Pacific Biotwang**.” You can hear it here: <http://tinyurl.com/osutwang>

Scientists think the calls are from minke whales, but they’re baffled that the sounds occur year-round. Is it a new type of whale song? Could well be, even though new song discoveries are rare.

“It really is an amazing, weird sound,” **Sharon Nieu-kirk**, lead author of the study, noted, “and good science will explain it.”

‘A WONDERFUL PERSON’

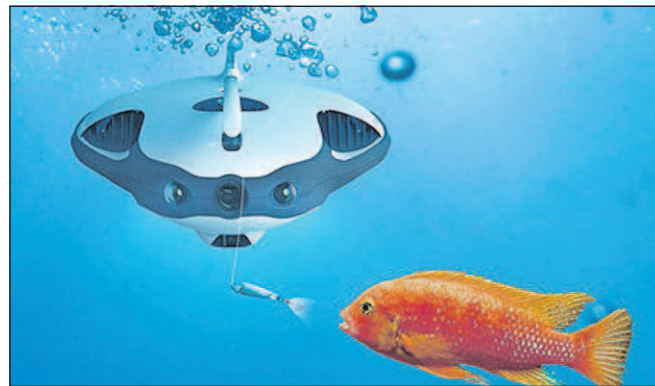


My dear friend, **Patricia Fessler** (pictured), whom I work for on a government work program at her thrift store, **Penny-Wise**, had an accident in December,” **Rebecca Graham** wrote. “She fell at her store, and (her husband) **Peter** took her to the hospital, where she was medevaced to St. Vincent’s in Portland. The next day, she had surgery for a broken hip.

“She is a wonderful person, and has been so prominent in the community. We need support for her for volunteers, cards, best wishes or whatever can be sent to let her know we care about her, and Peter and Penny-Wise.” In case you don’t know, the store profits benefit the Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA) of North Oregon & South Washington Coast.

Want to give Patricia a shout out, or help out? The address is Penny-Wise Thrift Store, 737 E. Harbor St., Warrenton, OR 97146.

GONE FISHIN’



Filed under “You’ve Gotta Be Kidding”: The **PowerRay Fish Finder**, a submersible drone — made by Beijing drone builder PowerVision — “uses sonar to detect fish, blue light to lure them in and a 4K camera to stream all the action back to the boat” to a smartphone app or an optional set of PowerVision Virtual Reality (VR) Goggles, according to NewAtlas.com (<http://tinyurl.com/cheatfish>). A photo of the drone is shown, courtesy of PowerVision.

The PowerRay has an operating time of four hours, can dive to 98 feet, has multiple operating modes, and an optional sonar attachment can detect fish up to 131 feet away. It can also lure fish, and drop bait where you want to cast your line, and even identify fish, if you wish. If fishing ain’t your thing, you can always take 4K underwater photos without having to don a wet-suit, or use it for underwater inspections.

You can preorder, starting Feb. 27, at <http://powervision.me/en>, with one caveat: There’s no word yet at how much this little marvel will cost.

ANCHORS AWEIGH



The **Maritime Archaeological Society** (<http://maritimearchaeological.org>) took a trip up the Washington coast to the **Westport Maritime Museum** (www.westportmaritimemuseum.com) to measure a large anchor (pictured, courtesy of MAS) a fisherman had found in his net and donated to the museum.

MAS then posted the anchor (No. 770) on the **Big Anchor Project** website (www.biganchorproject.com), which documents found anchors all over the world, and emphasizes their historical function and importance.

“Sometimes the anchor is the last remaining visible symbol of an incident at sea,” the website says, “whether cut loose in emergency or marking the last resting place of a shipwreck. ... The distribution of particular types may show old trade routes, or mark the progress of exploration, and all this evidence is just lying around us every day.”

If you create an account with Big Anchor (it’s free), you can see the database, which has nearly 700 photographic entries. The oldest category is stone anchors; and the biggest category is stocked anchors, which came into use around 500 B.C.

The Big Anchor project is always looking for images of anchors, so keep your camera handy.

COMMUNITY NOTES

SATURDAY

Sit and Stitch Group — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Custom Threads, 1282 Commercial St. Knitting, crocheting and needle work. For information, call 503-325-7780.

Detachment 1228 Marine Corps League — noon, Uptown Cafe, 1639 S.E. Ensign Lane, Warrenton. For information, contact Lou Neubecker at 503-717-0153.

Columbia Northwestern Model Railroad Club — 1 p.m., in Hammond. Group runs trains on HO-scale layout. For information, call Don Carter at 503-325-0757.

Spinning Circle — 1 to 3 p.m., Astoria Fiber Arts Academy, 1296 Duane St. Bring a spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598

or go to <http://astoriafiberarts.com>

SUNDAY

Angora Hiking Club — 2 p.m., Oregon State University Seafood Lab, Conference Room 231, 2001 Marine Drive. Planning meeting. For information, call Bob Westenberg at 503-325-4315.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support Group — 2 to 3:30 p.m., Seaside Public Library, 1131 Broadway. Family to Family Support Group, for anyone with friend or loved one suffering from a serious brain (mental) illness. For information, contact Myra Kero at 503-738-6165, or k7erowood@q.com, or go to www.nami.org

Pacific Green Party of Clatsop County — 4 p.m., Clatsop

Community College, Art Building, Room 101, 1651 Lexington Ave. Discussions on Rank Choice Voting continue. For information, email pg-platsopcounty@gmail.com or go to fb.me/clatsopcountyppg

Line Dancing — 5:30 to 8 p.m., Seaside American Legion, 1315 Broadway. For information, call 503-738-5111. No cost; suggested \$5 tip to the instructor.

MONDAY

Chair Exercises for Seniors — 9 to 9:45 a.m., Astoria Senior Center, 1111 Exchange St. For information, call 503-325-3231.

Scandinavian Workshop — 10 a.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. Needlework, hardanger, knitting, crocheting, embroidery

and quilting. All are welcome. For information, call 503-325-1364 or 503-325-7960.

Mothers of Preschoolers — 10 to 11:30 a.m., Crossroads Community Church, 40618 Old Highway 30, Svensen. MOPS group is a time for moms to relax and enjoy each others’ company. For information, call 503-502-3118.

Astoria High School Class of 1970 — 11 a.m., Rod’s Bar and Grill, 45 N.E. Skipanon Drive, Warrenton. For information, call 503-791-1231.

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation \$3 for those older than 60; \$6.75 for those younger than 60.

For information, call Michelle Lewis at 503-861-4200.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. Cost is \$6. For information, or to have a meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$5 for seniors and \$7 for those younger than 60. For information, or to volunteer, call 503-861-3502 Monday or Thursday.

Astoria Rotary Club — noon, second floor of the Astoria Elks Lodge, 453 11th St. Guests always welcome. For information, go to www.AstoriaRotary.org

Parkinson’s Support Group

— 1 p.m., Peace Lutheran Church library, 565 12th St. For information, call 503-440-1970 or 503-440-1985.

Peninsula Quilt Guild — 1 p.m., Peninsula Church Center, 5000 N Place, Seaview, Wash. Newcomers welcome. Bring non-perishable food donation. For information, call Janet King at 360-665-3005.

Knochlers Pinochle Group — 1 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Cost is \$1 per regular session per person. Players with highest and second highest scores split the prize. Game is designed for players 55 and older, but all ages are welcome.

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