

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



The Daily Astorian/File

A crowd of onlookers gathers at the edge of a landslide on the corner of First and Commercial streets that worsened significantly last night.

10 years ago this week — 2007

As the landslide at First and Commercial continues to move, it is wreaking havoc on streets in the vicinity.

So far, no homes have been damaged, but huge cracks and fissures appeared on Duane Street during the weekend and a stretch of Bond Street below the slide has been closed by falling debris.

Clatsop Community College will serve pie in honor of Pi Wednesday.

There will also be plenty of pies for pitching at "favorite" teachers on Pi Day, a celebration of the circle, according to CCC.

Organized by the math department, the event brings together pie and Pi — about 3.14 — the ratio of the circumference of a circle to its diameter. It recognized the mysterious mathematical constant, a number no one has ever found the end of, with various quizzes and activities, including pie-throwing.

In other words, on Wednesday you can have your Pi and eat it, too.

A self-described "ham family" in Gearhart will again be able to send and receive radio broadcasts from its home, thanks to action by the Clatsop County commissioners Wednesday.

The board voted to grant an exception to Steve and Kelly Larkins for a tower supporting a ham radio antenna that violates the county's zoning ordinance.

The lattice-frame tower, erected last year, exceeds the county's 35-foot structure height limit for residential zones. But the Larkinses argued that state and federal rules should allow them the use of the tower, without which their radio signal can only reach a short distance.

50 years ago — 1967

The historic log at the courthouse, marked with dates of events in the county's past, is being replaced by a new one. The log was beginning to fall apart due to rot.

County commissioner Hiram Johnson said a new log has been purchased from Crown Zellerbach Corp. and will be put in place under the also rotted wooden cover soon. The pole-support roof will have to be replaced, Johnson said.

Fifty-nine girls, aged 16 to 21, all from Western states, were getting acquainted with things at Tongue Point Job Corps Center Wednesday.

Most of them arrived by bus Tuesday evening, the rest came in by later bus Wednesday morning.

Hopes for barge traffic on the Lower Columbia River are much brighter than ever before as result of the double-barreled announcement by Port of Astoria officials this week.

One barrel was the negotiation for a lease with Waterway Terminals to establish a marine terminal for handling barge or ship cargo in part of the big Pier 3 warehouse.

The other barrel was the announcement that Western Transportation company and Milwaukie Railroad have established a joint rail-barge rate for handling canned goods by barge between Astoria and the Milwaukie line's tracks at Longview.

These two actions put a barge line into service, with a terminal here to handle its cargo, and a competitive rate that should attract freight movement, particularly of canned fish.

75 years ago — 1942

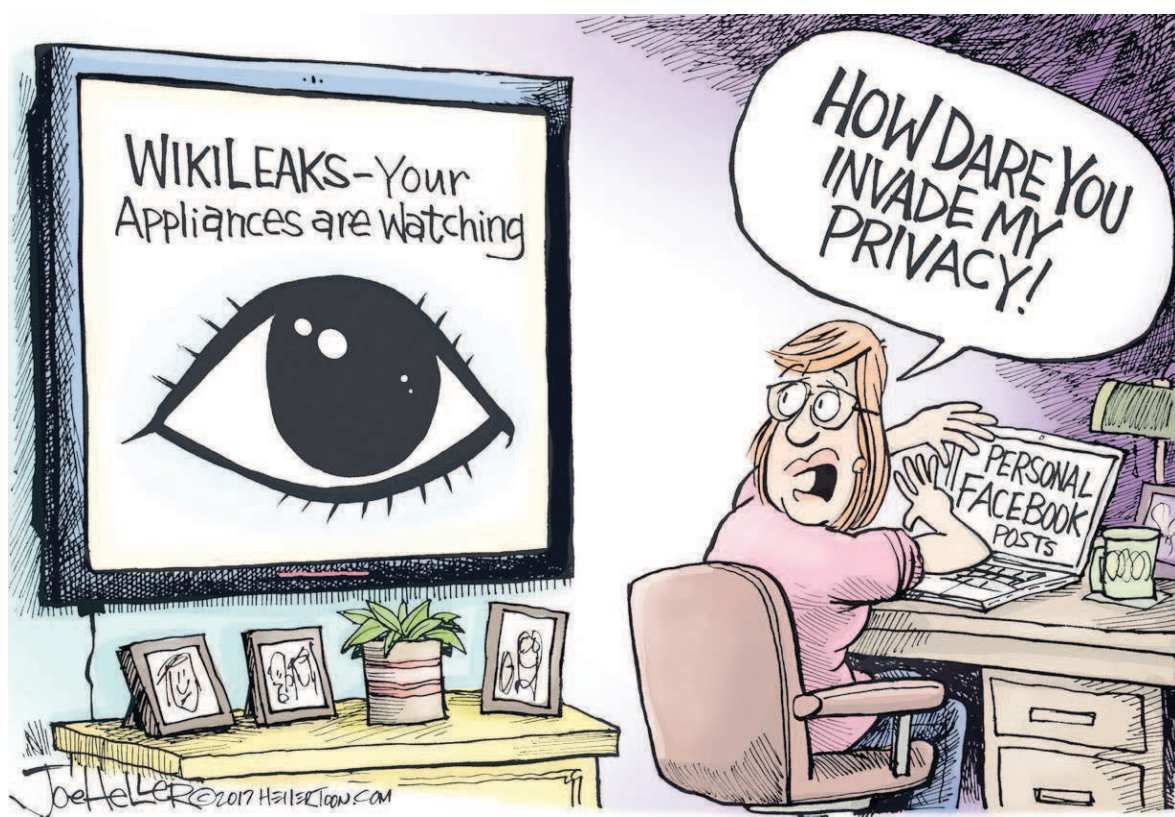
Twelve boys in the Astoria High School manual training department are constructing model airplanes of wood for the Navy bureau of aeronautics, along with students in numerous other U.S. high schools.

The local class, directed by William Cox, will turn out 50 of the solid wooden models of one 30th scale size for the Navy and probably build a few additional models for study by local airplane spotters.

The planes are intended for identification, range estimates and gunnery practice by the Navy. They include models of principal Allied and Axis war plane types.

The price of crabs to fishermen advanced Tuesday from \$1.25 to \$1.50 a dozen and packers said it might remain there or near there through most of the coming crab fishing season.

Packers said the canned market was such as to justify the boost and they hoped to try to maintain the price.



Resist being enslaved by the internet, your phone

By ROSS DOUTHAT
New York Times News Service

So far, in my ongoing series of columns making the case for implausible ideas, I've fixed race relations and solved the problem of a workless working class. So now it's time to turn to the real threat to the human future: the one in your pocket or on your desk, the one you might be reading this column on right now.



Search your feelings, you know it to be true: You are enslaved to the internet. Definitely if you're young, increasingly if you're old, your day-to-day, minute-to-minute existence is dominated by a compulsion to check email and Twitter and Facebook and Instagram with a frequency that bears no relationship to any communicative need.

Compulsions are rarely harmless. The internet is not the opioid crisis; it is not likely to kill you (unless you're hit by a distracted driver) or leave you ravaged and destitute. But it requires you to focus intensely, furiously, and constantly on the ephemera that fills a tiny little screen, and experience the traditional graces of existence — your spouse and friends and children, the natural world, good food and great art — in a state of perpetual distraction.

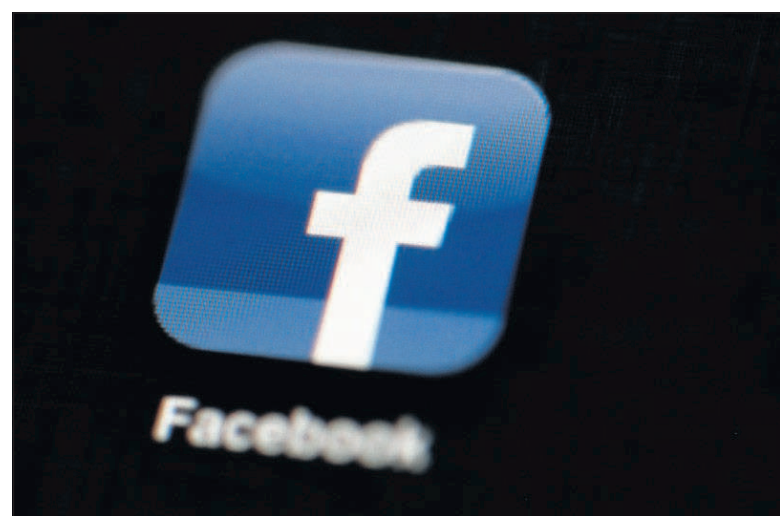
Used within reasonable limits, of course, these devices also offer us new graces. But we are not using them within reasonable limits. They are the masters; we are not. They are built to addict us, as social psychologist Adam Alter's new book "Irresistible" points out — and to madden us, distract us, arouse us and deceive us. We primp and perform for them as for a lover; we surrender our privacy to their demands; we wait on tenterhooks for every "like." The smartphone is in the saddle, and it rides mankind.

Digital temperance

Which is why we need a social and political movement — digital temperance, if you will — to take back some control.

"Temperance?" you might object, with one eye on the latest outrage shared by your co-partisans on social media. "You mean, like, Prohibition? For something everyone relies on for their daily work and lives, that's the basis for our economic — hang on, I just need to 'favorite' this tweet..."

No, not like Prohibition. Temperance doesn't have to mean teetotaling; it can simply mean a culture of restraint that tries to keep a specific product in its place. And the internet, like alcohol, may be an example of a technology that should be sensibly restricted in custom and in law.



AP Photo/Matt Rourke

The Facebook logo is displayed on an iPad. In a post on Monday, Facebook says it is prohibiting developers from using the massive amount of data it collects on users for surveillance. This includes using such data to monitor activists and protesters.

Of course it's too soon to fully know (and indeed we can never fully know) what online life is doing to us. It certainly delivers some social benefits, some intellectual advantages, and contributes an important share to recent economic growth.

Our devices we shall always have with us, but we can choose the terms. We just have to choose together, to embrace temperance and paternalism both.

But there are also excellent reasons to think that online life breeds narcissism, alienation and depression, that it's an opiate for the lower classes and an insanity-inducing influence on the politically engaged, and that it takes more than it gives from creativity and deep thought. Meanwhile the age of the internet has been, thus far, an era of bubbles, stagnation and democratic decay — hardly a golden age whose customs must be left inviolate.

Resist the wiring

So a digital temperance movement would start by resisting the wiring of everything, and seek to create more spaces in which internet use is illegal, discouraged or taboo.

WHERE TO WRITE

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 • **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D):** 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Web: www.merkley.senate.gov
 • **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D):** 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Web: www.wyden.

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 • **State Rep. Brad Witt (D):** State Capitol, 900 Court Street N.E., H-373, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1431. Web: www.leg.state.or.us/witt/ Email: rep.bradwitt@state.or.us
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 • **State Sen. Betsy Johnson (D):**

Toughen laws against cellphone use in cars, keep computers out of college lecture halls, put special "phone boxes" in restaurants where patrons would be expected to deposit their devices, confiscate smartphones being used in museums and libraries and cathedrals, create corporate norms that strongly discourage checking email in a meeting.

Then there are the starker steps. Get computers — all of them — out of elementary schools, where there is no good evidence that they improve learning. Let kids learn from books for years before they're asked to go online for research; let them play in the real before they're enveloped by the virtual.

Then keep going. The age of consent should be 16, not 13, for Facebook accounts. Kids under 16 shouldn't be allowed on gaming networks. High school students shouldn't bring smartphones to school. Kids under 13 shouldn't have them at all. If you want to buy your child a cellphone, by all means: In the new dispensation, Verizon and Sprint will have some great "voice-only" plans available for minors.

I suspect that versions of these ideas will be embraced within my lifetime by a segment of the upper class and a certain kind of religious family. But the masses will still be addicted, and the technology itself will have evolved to hook and immerse — and alienate and sedate — more completely and efficiently.

But what if we decided that what's good for the Silicon Valley overlords who send their kids to a low-tech Waldorf school is also good for everyone else? Our devices we shall always have with us, but we can choose the terms. We just have to choose together, to embrace temperance and paternalism both. Only a movement can save you from the tyrant in your pocket.

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