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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

'STILL AMAZED'



An enormous **white sturgeon**, 9.5 feet long, was found dead June 22, by PacifiCorp hydro foreman **Todd Engelbrecht** while checking the Keno Dam spill gate on the Klamath River, according to a story on HeraldandNews.com (<http://tinyurl.com/fishbody500>).

Initially thought to weigh in at around 250 pounds, Oregon Fish and Wildlife biologist **Bill Tinniswood** later decided the fish more likely weighed **500 pounds**. It is shown in a photo courtesy of Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

"It was quite a surprise," Englebrecht said. Tinniswood noted that the animal was "the biggest freshwater fish I've ever touched in my life."

So, how did it get that large? This sturgeon, an untagged female, was probably one of the 1958 transplants from the Columbia River, when it was hoped the group would and could restock their new home. Which didn't work out, by the way, but sturgeon can live a very long time — they can reach over 100 years old (<http://tinyurl.com/oldfish100>) — so it's not a stretch that this one could have been one of the originals.

Ironically, this fish was loaded with millions of eggs because she apparently hadn't found a suitable mate, and the eggs kept accumulating. Other than that, Tinniswood observed she was in good shape, and isn't sure how she died. She had a head injury, but he couldn't tell if it happened before or after her death.

"I am still amazed," Tinniswood admitted, "something this big is swimming in our waters."

GIVING BACK



Troy Haskell, aka handyman Fix-it-Troy (pictured inset), is on a mission to help his friends, Astorians **Carl and Carol Abraham**, with their medical expenses. He's built a **one-of-a-kind table**, made mostly of discarded gun stock material and driftwood, and he's auctioning it off to the highest bidder.

The table is on display until July 9 at **Roby's Furniture and Appliance**, 1535 Commercial St., where a blue box is set up to hold the sealed bids. The winner will be announced July 14, and 100 percent of the proceeds will go to the Abrahams.

"I'm doing this because of the example Carl and Carol have always shown," Troy explained, noting that the couple has always been active in giving back to the community. "I'm just trying to make sure they get back a little of what they've given."

THIS LITTLE PIGGY CAME HOME



The Ear cannot resist, and must update the theft the **cocktail toe** from the Downtown Hotel Sourdough Saloon in Dawson City in Yukon, Canada. One of the bar's favorite mummified human toes, used as a garnish for its famous Sourtoe Cocktail, was stolen. It is pictured in a photo from the "missing toe" flyer posted all over town.

It's a mystery why the appendage was swiped, but never mind. The Royal Canadian Mounties followed up on the toe-napping, and the Alaska Dispatch News reports that the contrite thief has returned the missing digit, via the mail, accompanied by a sincere letter of apology (<http://tinyurl.com/hometoe>).

"We're happy as clams about it," saloon "toe captain" Sue Taylor said. Toe-tally awesome.

AN INGLORIOUS FATE



Also from the Saturday, June 30, 1888 edition of *The Daily Morning Astorian*, but worthy of separate note: "In the senate, last Thursday, Senator Mitchell introduced a bill to **establish a lightship and flag signal on the bar** at the mouth of the Columbia River, at an estimated cost of \$60,000 (about \$1.5 million in 2017)."

It appears this is how the first U.S. Coast Guard lightship on the Pacific Coast, **Light Vessel (LV) 50**, got its start. Built in 1892 in San Francisco, the 112-foot long ship was towed to the mouth of the Columbia River. Rigged as a sail-schooner with a wood-planked steel hull, the equipment aboard included two signal lanterns (with eight oil lamps each) and two fog signals — a 12-inch steam whistle and a hand operated bell — according to the Coast Guard website (<http://tinyurl.com/uscg50>).

Gale force winds hit LV 50 on Nov. 28, 1899, causing the ship to break her anchor chains and head for Peacock Spit near Cape Disappointment — where it stayed. No one could haul it off, even after six months, according to HistoryLink.org (<http://tinyurl.com/uscg50a>). A new approach was clearly needed.

In June 1900, a plan was concocted to move the lightship overland about 700 yards to Baker Bay. Two Portland house movers were hired to pull it off in 35 days for \$17,500 (around \$450,000 in 2017). Work started in February 1901, but it was no 35-day venture. The movers hoisted the vessel onto a cradle they'd built, then pushed it through the woods on rollers. On June 2, 1901, the LV 50 was finally relaunched in Baker Bay — and sent to Portland for repairs. A photo of the moving enterprise by J.F. Ford is shown.

There were other incidents and expensive repairs and refits, and in 1909, the LV 50 was retired from duty. It was kept in Astoria, where an inglorious fate awaited. In 1915, the lightship was surveyed and condemned, then sold at public auction for \$1,667.99 (about \$40,000 in 2017). Later it was used as a freighter in Alaskan waters, and was last known as the *San Cosmo & Margaret* up until 1935. Sadly, what became of it after that is unknown.

SHORT TAKES



From the Saturday, **June 30, 1888** edition of *The Daily Morning Astorian*:

• **Capt. Carroll**, of the *Ancon*, says that he and his four partners have sold the Bear's News mine in Alaska to some Ohio men for \$2.5 million (about \$62 million in 2017). ... He says he will keep following the sea, because he likes to. That's it.

• There was some excitement at the **Clatsop Mill** yesterday, occasioned by one of the pony saws, which flew out through the roof. No one was injured and the damage was very light.

• A fire last night about 10:30 in **Miss Kitty Burke's** establishment, after considerable racing and chasing around, was found to have scared the denizens and burn a bedstead; fully insured.

• **Thompson, De Hart & Co.** have sent for a diamond drill and are going to bore and determine the value of the newly discovered coal deposits in Columbia and Washington counties.

Note: Yes, there really was coal in Columbia County. A 1945 state Department of Geology and Mineral Industries report says coal was mined on Pebble Creek, south of Vernonia, in the late 1800s and early 1900s (<http://tinyurl.com/columcoal>).

• Editor *Astorian*: I found and buried the body of a man that came in on the beach near here. It was tattooed, and on his right arm was "**R. W. Fletcher** born July," and further we could not read. He is supposed to be a carpenter. **Geo. L. Houk**, North Cove, Washington Territory.

I SEE A SEA MONSTER



Perhaps it's time to ponder our local sea serpent — who apparently wanders between the Columbia River and British Columbia — dubbed *Cadborosaurus* or "**Caddy**" by the *Victoria Daily Times*, and **Colossal Claude** by *The Oregonian*. **Marvin the Monster** is probably the same critter.

Pictured, a photo of Caddy (<http://tinyurl.com/cadboro>). From "Myths and Mysteries of Washington," by **Lynn Bragg**: "In 1934, the first mate on a Columbia River light ship described a 40-foot-long being that he had seen at the mouth of the river in the Pacific: 'It had ... a big round body, a mean-looking tail and an evil, snakey look to its head.' Three years later in the same area, Capt. Charles Graham of the fishing troller *Viv* talked of seeing 'a long, hairy, tan-colored creature, with the head of an overgrown horse ...' The crew from a halibut fishing ship working near the entrance to the Columbia River in 1939 all witnessed a sea serpent lift 10 feet of its neck above the ocean and look directly at the startled men."

In 1963, the Shell Oil Company videotaped a mystery 15-foot beastie swimming in a spiral motion at 180 feet off the coast of Oregon, and they nicknamed him **Martin** (<http://tinyurl.com/cad-claude>). A baby Caddy? Who knows, but he hasn't been spotted again. Yet.

CROWD FAVORITE



Jeff Daly had heard there was an impromptu weekly gathering of hot rods every Wednesday night this summer at the Portland International Raceway, and he wanted to check it out. It's a charity-driven event, **Beaches Summertime Cruisin'** (<http://tinyurl.com/beachescruise>), held by *Beaches Restaurant and Bar* to raise money for local kids in need.

So, last Wednesday, Jeff drove the trusty original 1948 Chrysler Astoria Clown Car — you know the one, it goes down the street backwards — to the event to see what would happen. Jeff's photo of the car is shown.

When he entered, "I just kept driving, and people kept waving me in," he said, "and I found myself in the middle of 400 cars at this weekly gathering, with three people yelling to stop. Not because they thought a car was driving backwards, but instead, wanted it in the middle of the road, as they decided it was an immediate winner the second they saw it, and wanted it in front of the stage."

So, the Astoria Clown Car won a trophy. Jeff hasn't received it yet, so he's not sure what it's for, but he's guessing for "Crowd Favorite" — which the Clown Car is, everywhere it goes.

CHARMING ASTORIA



Astoria is getting some love on the Internet again, this time from *Invaluable.com* (<http://tinyurl.com/Astoria4>), which features Astoria as No. 4 of "The 10 Most Charming Cities in America." So, how did they come to this conclusion?

They compiled a list of 998 "mid-sized cities" with the main criteria for charm being a city's walkability, then the number of shops, art galleries, restaurants and hotels. The city founding date was also rolled in, because "history definitely adds to the charm factor," and also the proximity of the city to "nearby natural beauty."

Back to walkability. Each city had a "walk score" of 80 or better, i.e. you can park and walk to lots of local stores and sights easily. Which is certainly true in Astoria. If you can find a place to park, that is.

"Astoria has a gritty exterior," *Invaluable.com* says, "but an artistic heart with fisherman poets, loggers who double as baristas, and several galleries to peruse."

COMMUNITY NOTES

SATURDAY

Sit & Stitch — 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., Homespun Quilts & Yarn, 108 10th St. Bring knitting, crochet or other needlework projects to this community stitching time. All skill levels welcome.

Detachment 1228 Marine Corps League — noon, El Compadre, 119 Main Ave., 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

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.

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

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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