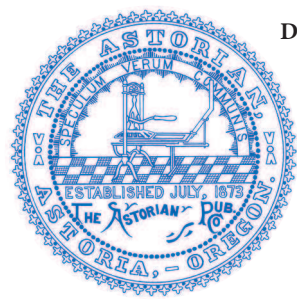


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Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2007

What is lurking in and around Fort Stevens State Park this summer? Is it a large dog, a coyote or perhaps a bobcat?

A few witnesses say that they are absolutely certain it is a cougar — and some say they have seen it more than once.

"It walked around like it owned the place," said Hammond resident Amanda Robison, describing the animal she saw a month ago while driving on Pacific Drive near the park. "I went home and looked it up online and it was definitely a cougar. It had the long tail and the rounded tummy and the slinky kind of body."

CORVALLIS — Seaside has been reduced to blue, red and yellow buildings at the O.H. Hinsdale Wave Research Laboratory at Oregon State University.

The lab has constructed a small model of downtown Seaside to study the effects of a tsunami. Currently, the effects of tsunami waves on the model of Seaside are merely observations since the lab is conducting two other studies in the same pool. At the December conclusion of a study examining how tsunamis shift sand along coastlines, being conducted by a Princeton university researcher, the miniature Seaside will take front-and-center.

Jon Englund's controversial Astoria waterfront development project hit a roadblock Tuesday, amid detailed arguing over procedures.

Astoria Planning Commission members debated the subject at the special meeting Tuesday and wound up back where they were two weeks ago — deadlocked.

But the commissioners did eventually approve a staff report recommending denial of a conditional use permit, despite remaining split down the middle on the issue.

50 years ago — 1967



The Daily Astorian/File

This is one of West Coast's new Mini-liners which make two round-trip flights daily to Olympia, Aberdeen, Hoquiam and Astoria providing convenient connections from Seattle, Portland, and south to San Francisco.

The U.S. Coast Guard had a busy weekend as an enormous fleet of sport fishing craft, estimated at several thousand boats, put to sea in search of salmon.

The most spectacular rescue involved extricating two people trapped inside the cabin of a cruiser just inside the Columbia River mouth Sunday afternoon.

The rescue took an hour.

The City Council informally approved at a Tuesday breakfast meeting the appointment of a municipal committee to carry out additional studies of a possible half million dollar off-street parking project taking up two downtown half blocks on Marine Drive.

Richard Paulsen and Chairman Robert C. Larson of the Planning Commission both urged upon the council Tuesday the necessity of taking some such measure to save the downtown core area from murderous competition from a possible new shopping center on the city fringes or even outside the city.

The Sunset Empire continued in the dry grasp on one of the most serious, prolonged spells of heat and drought in modern history this week, but the weatherman held out some dim hope of rain Friday.

75 years ago — 1942

Prospects of a severe automobile dim-out in Astoria, which will reduce driving and pedestrian traffic to the safety level of zero-zero on certain streets for the duration, were aired here today following a meeting Monday with Capt. William J. M. Rogers, military adviser to the Oregon state defense council.

Dim-out rules for vehicles prescribe headlights reduced to a maximum of 250 candle power. Present auto lights average 25,000 candlepower in the upper beam and 75,000 in the lower. Reducing the lights to the maximum allowed in dim-out means reducing speed of travel to 10 miles an hour, or less.

The defense council has need for about 100 more trained firewatchers, according to David Lewis, coordinator. The duty of the watchers will be to spot and report fires during a raid, and to keep an eye on homes and business establishments for fires.

Tom Murphey, personnel man with the Kaiser Shipbuilding corporation, will be back in Astoria this weekend or the early part of next week to take welders from the local vocational school who have qualified since his first visit, two weeks ago. Charles F. Gibson, director of the vocational school, announces.

When Murphey was here before he took every welder at the school who could qualify on the first position test, but within two days the classes were full to overflowing again, Gibson says.



Finding a way to roll back fanaticism

By DAVID BROOKS

New York Times News Service

We're living in an age of anxiety. The country is being transformed by complex forces, such as changing demographics and technological disruption. Many people live within a bewildering freedom, without institutions to trust, unattached to compelling religions and sources of meaning, uncertain about their own lives. Anxiety is not so much a fear of a specific thing but a fear of everything, an unnamable dread about the future. People will do anything to escape it.

Donald Trump is the perfect snake oil salesman for this moment. He lacks inwardness and therefore is terrified by the possibility of anxiety. He has been escaping self-scrutiny his whole life and has become a genius at the self-exculpating rationalization. He took a nation beset by uncertainty and he gave it a series of "explanations" that were simple, crude, affirming and wrong.

Trump gave people a quick pass out of anxiety. Everything could be blamed on foreigners, the idiotic elites. The problems are clear, and the answers are easy. He has loosed a certain style of thinking. The true link between the Trump administration and those pathetic loons in Charlottesville is not just bigotry, but also conspiracy mongering.

In the White House you have pseudo-intellectuals like Steve Bannon who think the world is secretly controlled by the "deep state." You have memos like the one written by the recently fired Rich Higgins, positing a massive worldwide conspiracy involving the American Civil Liberties Union, the Muslim Brotherhood, the United Nations and global Marxism. The alt-right, which has emerged in support of the Trump administration, is marked by the same conspiratorial epistemology. It provides explanations for complex events that allow its followers to avoid anxiety. The leaders of the alt-right claim to possess superior understanding that pierces through the myths that blind common mortals.

The world is secretly controlled by the globalists. The Sandy Hook school shooting never happened. There's a child abuse ring run by Clintonites out of a pizzeria in Washington, D.C. All the ambiguities of life can be explained by pointing to the malevolent webs of secret power that only you — you



AP Photo/Steve Helber

White nationalist demonstrators use shields as they guard the entrance to Lee Park in Charlottesville, Va., Saturday.

precious, superior few — can see and understand.

From here it's a short leap to those losers in Charlottesville. If the alt-right thinks the globalists secretly and malevolently control society, the neo-Nazis go back to the original version and believe that a conspiracy of Jewish bankers does. For them, tribalism is not only a way to feel some vestige of pride in their own lonely selves, it's also an explanatory tool. The world can be a bewildering place, but not if you see it as a righteous war between whites and blacks, between straights and gays. The neo-Nazis are not the first group to discover that war is a force that can give an empty life meaning, even a race war.

The age of anxiety inevitably leads to an age of fanaticism.

The age of anxiety inevitably leads to an age of fanaticism, as people seek crude palliatives for the dizziness of freedom. I'm beginning to think the whole depressing spectacle of this moment — the Trump presidency and beyond — is caused by a breakdown of intellectual virtue, a breakdown in America's ability to face evidence objectively, to pay due respect to reality, to deal with complex and unpleasant truths. The intellectual virtues may seem elitist, but once a country tolerates dishonesty, incuriosity and intellectual laziness, then everything else falls apart.

The temptation is simply to blast the neo-Nazis, the alt-right, the Trumpkins and the rest for being

bigoted, vicious and hate-filled. And some of that is necessary. The boundaries of common decency have to be defined.

But throughout history the wiser minds have understood that anger and moral posturing are not a good antidote to rage and fanaticism. Competing vitriols only build on each other.

In fact, the most powerful answer to fanaticism is modesty. Modesty is an epistemology directly opposed to the conspiracy mongering mindset. It means having the courage to understand that the world is too complicated to fit into one political belief system. It means understanding there are no easy answers or malevolent conspiracies that can explain the big political questions or the existential problems. Progress is not made by crushing some swarm of malevolent foes; it's made by finding balance between competing truths — between freedom and security, diversity and solidarity. There's always going to be counter-evidence and mystery. There is no final arrangement that will end conflict, just endless searching and adjustment.

Modesty means having the courage to rest in anxiety and not try to quickly escape it. Modesty means being tough enough to endure the pain of uncertainty and coming to appreciate that pain. Uncertainty and anxiety throw you off the smug island of certainty and force you into the free waters of creativity and learning. As Kierkegaard put it, "The more original a human being is, the deeper is his anxiety."

Over the next few months I'm hoping to write several columns on why modesty and moderation are superior to the spiraling purity movements we see today. It seems like a good time for assertive modesty to take a stand.

WHERE TO WRITE

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