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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

SANTA CLAUS IS COMING TO TOWN



Where's Santa? The North American Air Defense Command (NORAD) knows, and you can track him Sunday night, too, on their website, noradsanta.org (which also has Christmas music performed by the U.S. Air Force Academy Band, videos and other goodies).

Ever wonder how NORAD got involved with Santa tracking? "The tradition began in 1955 after a Colorado Springs-based Sears Roebuck & Co. advertisement misprinted the telephone number for children to call Santa," the website says. "Instead of reaching Santa, the phone number put kids through to the CONAD Commander-in-Chief's operations 'hotline.'"

"... Col. Harry Shoup, had his staff check the radar for indications of Santa making his way south from the North Pole. Children who called were given updates on his location, and a tradition was born." Pictured, courtesy of NORAD, Col. Shoup and the advertisement that roped him in.

So, how do they track Santa (and yes, there's an app for that)? Rudolph's bright red nose gives off an infrared signature — similar to that of a missile launch, apparently — which allows NORAD satellites to detect the location of Santa's sleigh on Christmas Eve. Now you know.

THE WEATHER OUTSIDE IS FRIGHTFUL

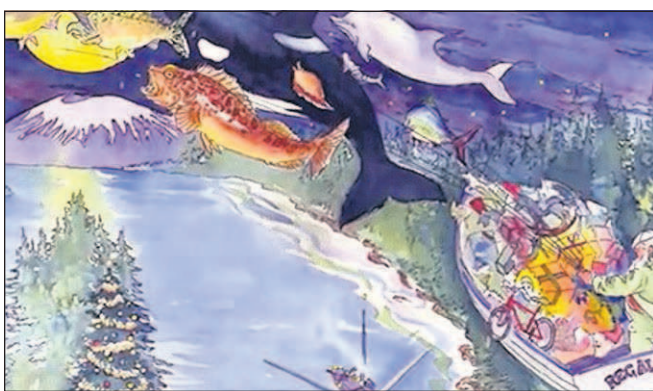


Just in case you were thinking about whining about the weather this holiday season, please note these snippets from the **Wednesday, Dec. 24, 1884** edition of *The Daily Morning Astorian*:

- Best sleighing ever seen in Astoria — since last time.
- Two hundred visitors in Portland are weather-bound. About two thousand residents of the city are hide-bound.
- Seldom has there been more ice seen in the bay than on yesterday morning. Large masses of mush ice and clear crystal blocks were floating past the city, and on the Washington Territory side it looked as though the ice had packed solid. A gentleman from Tongue Point said that it seemed a solid sheet from there to Pillar Rock.

The east wind blew cold all day, and everything that could go on runners was utilized. The boys especially made the most of it and coasted down Main and Benton streets plenty. The Reed came down at 3:30 and reported tough work getting through. There was a steady freeze all day, and it may be that a Christmas blockade is in store for us yet. But after last week, we can stand anything.

'A RIGHT SALTY OLD TAR'



Since Astoria is a fishing town — among other things bright and beautiful, of course — it's only fitting that there should be a maritime version available of Clement Clarke Moore's classic Christmas Eve poem, "The Night Before Christmas."

And indeed, there is one: "The Bight Before Christmas," by Alaskan fisherman and journalist, **Will Swagel**. A bight, if you didn't know, can be a loop of rope, or a curve in the coastline, among other things.

Swagel's version has Santa not in a sleigh, but in a "mythical skiff drawn by eight ocean creatures." Santa, "a right salty old tar," is dressed in red and green rubber. He's also quite aromatic, since he's "all covered with slime and remains of fish heads." This Santa doesn't need milk and cookies, he needs a bath.

You can hear Swagel reading his poem online, and enjoy the clever illustrations by Sitka, Alaska, artist Colin Herforth (one of which is shown), on Swagel's website, thebightbeforechristmas.com

HOME FOR CHRISTMAS



Buddy the cat has had a tough time of it. Recently he turned up, worn out and wretched-looking, at the Helping Hands homeless shelter in Tillamook. Luckily for him, he wound up at **United Paws of Tillamook**, who posted his photo online, and actually found his owners — who are in Louisiana.

When his family left Buddy with relatives about two years ago, while they organized their move to Louisiana, Buddy ran off. He's been missing ever since. They flew back to Oregon twice to look for him, and had almost given up hope of ever seeing their beloved Buddy again.

United Paws wanted to get Buddy home in time for a Christmas reunion. It would be expensive — between airfare for Buddy and a companion, hotel expenses, etc. — so a GoFundMe page was set up by **Anne Harris** (tinyurl.com/Home4Buddy). Money was coming in steadily, but there wasn't enough to get Buddy home by Dec. 25.

Christmas spirit saved the day. "Buddy is going to hitch a ride with someone already traveling to the area," Anne told the Ear. "One of the United Paws volunteers will be taking him to PDX on Friday. His owner will then be meeting him when he gets off the plane, hundreds of miles away." Mr. Buddy will be his family's best Christmas present, after all.

"We are so appreciative of all the offers of help, and of course the donations," Anne added. "We will need some of the money raised for Buddy's expenses, but much of it can now be used to support other adult stray and homeless cats. ... It's nice that, in a way, Buddy is now taking care of other cats."

IT'S ON THE LIST



Here's a Christmas present for fans of "The Goonies," red how and all: The film is among the 25 selected in 2017 to be listed in the **National Film Registry** of the Library of Congress. Which is a big deal, since a movie has to have "cultural, historic and/or aesthetic importance" to even be considered (tinyurl.com/NatFR2017). A screen shot from the movie is shown, courtesy of Warner Brothers.

"With its keen focus on kids of agency and adventure, 'The Goonies' protagonists are Tom Sawyeresque outsiders on a magical treasure hunt, and the story lands in the continuum between where 'Our Gang' quests leave off and the darker spaces of Netflix's recent 'Stranger Things' pick up," the Film Registry explained. But Executive Producer **Steven Spielberg's** "fingerprints" on "every second" made it a shoe-in.

Richard Donner, who directed "The Goonies" and another film selected this year, released a statement after hearing the news. "I thank the National Film Registry for choosing 'Superman: The Movie' and 'The Goonies' as films to be treasured," he said. "They are both special films in my life, as was the cast and crew for both. It's wonderful to see them listed among so many great films."

Hey, you guys ... a celebratory truffle shuffle or two are in order.

LOOSE MOOSE



One lucky **bull moose** in Spokane, Washington, is going to have a Merry Christmas, after all. Things looked pretty grim Dec. 5, though, when he somehow horribly entangled his antlers in a swing set, UPI reports (tinyurl.com/mooseknot). The more he struggled to free himself, the worse the situation became.

Thankfully, the homeowner called Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, who sent Wildlife Conflict Specialist **Kyle Westerman** and Wildlife Officer **Jolynn Beauchene** to the rescue. As the first order of business, Officer Beauchene shot the 900-pound moose in the rump with a tranquilizer dart.

"We had to wait for the perfect shot," Westerman said, "because you want to make sure the dart goes into a big muscle mass." As soon as the moose was safely napping, they got to work cutting off the chains wrapped around the moose's antlers. Just for good measure, they tagged his ear before they woke him up and let him loose. A still shot from a WDFW video is shown.

It was a relief to learn that the next day the moose was just fine — and avoiding the swing set.

DEAR SANTA



According to the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program, children were writing **Dear Santa letters** to newspapers by at least 1874, certain Santa could not miss a letter that had been published in a newspaper (tinyurl.com/santaltr). Apparently, the oldest such letter found in Historic Oregon Newspapers is from 1890, in *The Daily Morning Astorian*, dated Dec. 19:

"Griffin & Reed of this city are daily in receipt of a number of letters addressed to Santa Claus. The following is a specimen of one received yesterday from Gray's River ... 'Dear Santa Claus; bring my little sister a doll and a doll wagon and some candy and some nuts and some peanuts, and a tin horn. Bring me an air gun and a buck saw and a knife and some candy and some nuts and some peanuts. Frank.'"

From the *Oregon City Courier*, Dec. 18, 1908: "Dear Santa Claus, I want a horse, a train of cars, a drum and a football. I guess you can send a horn. My Grandpa Burns is the policeman, and I'll tell him not to bother you on Xmas, cause he might think you was a robber going down the chimney. Please send my little sweetheart Willa Jones a dollie and a go-cart. Her stocking is small, but you can put them under the foot of her bed. Good-bye, Santa Claus, from your loving friend, Orville E. Burns. P.S. Please bring Emma Ellis a real live horse. She wants one."

As a parting shot, this whopper from *The Sunday Oregonian* is dated Dec. 21, 1919: "Dear Santa Clause. I've been waiting for you a long time. I am nine months old. I want a trunk full of silk dresses and a necklace with my Mothers picture and a ring, with a ruby. I've been a awful good girl. Arvilla"

WHERE NEXT?



The saga of Astoria's wayward sailor/Kon Tiki drifter, 65-year-old Russian immigrant **Rimas Meleshys**, continues.

In his ongoing quest to sail around the world alone, he wound up being towed into Saipan in October, after his calls for help were finally heard. He'd been at sea for 137 days (missing for 77). Rimas planned to stay there for a while to rest, restock and refit his boat for a trip to Japan. Or Alaska. Or Australia. The dream lives on.

Normally very active on his Facebook page, Rimas has been unusually quiet for several weeks. Now the news comes in via the Facebook page of Saipan's Sherri Riggs TV that he's gone. He got a tow out of the reef, and, without a tracking device, is heading for Guam. One problem: The currents in that area apparently don't head that way, and his specialty is drifting, not sailing.

Looks like it's going to be a Christmas at sea for Rimas. Where will he turn up next?

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.

Columbia Northwestern Model Railroading 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 astoriafiberarts.com

Karaoke — 7 to 8 p.m., Seaside Lodge and International Hotel, 930 N. Holladay Drive, Seaside. Free session, all ages, for those who love to sing karaoke. Refreshments served. For information, call 503-738-7911.

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.

Seekers Group — 6 to 7:30 p.m., Pioneer Presbyterian Church, 33324 Patriot Way, Warrenton. Group discusses issues facing religious faith in the modern secular world. All are welcome. For information, call 503-861-2421.

MONDAY — CHRISTMAS DAY

Senior Lunch — No lunch is served today.

Columbia Senior Diners — No lunch is served today.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — No lunch is served today.

TUESDAY

Stewardship Quilting Group — 9:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., First Lutheran Church, 725 33rd St. All are

welcome. Donations of material always appreciated. For information, call Janet Kemp at 503-325-4268.

Do Nothing Club — 10 a.m. to noon, 24002 U St., Ocean Park, Wash. Men's group. For information, call Jack McBride at 360-665-2721.

Senior Lunch — 11:30 a.m., Bob Chisholm Senior Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Suggested donation of \$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. The cost is \$6. For information, call 503-325-9693.

Astoria Lions Club — noon, Astoria Elks Lodge, 453 11th St.

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