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COMMUNITY

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

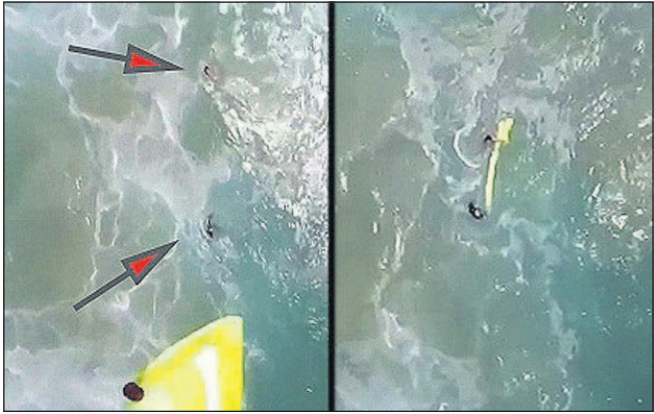
NOTES FROM 1883



From the Friday, Jan. 19, 1883 edition of **The Daily Astorian**:

- Though the comet is moving away at the rate of 20,000 miles a second, it is still visible in the gray of dawn.
- Note:** This probably refers to the remains of the **Great September Comet of 1882**, which Space.com says is probably the brightest comet ever seen (tinyurl.com/comet1882). It was described as a “blazing star” near the sun before it broke up into at least four pieces, and was visible in the morning sky for months.
- During 1882, in the United States, there were 101 persons hanged in a regular way and 57 lynched. There were 750 murders and 383 suicides.
- A medicine of real merit, prescribed by many leading physicians, and universally recommended by those who have used it, as a true tonic, is **Brown’s Iron Bitters**.
- Note:** The main ingredient is alcohol, at 39% (78 proof), which is probably why people thought they were being cured of “dyspepsia, malaria, fevers, loss of appetite, lack of energy,” etc. (tinyurl.com/bitterup).
- **M. Giffard**, lately deceased, has left to the French government a legacy to be devoted to the establishment of a suicidaria, or public institution in which persons suffering from painful and incurable diseases may bring their own lives to an end under the direction of medical experts, and with the consent of their immediate relatives.
- Note:** Giffard was a true believer — he euthanized himself with an invention he created to inhale chloroform (tinyurl.com/mgiffard).
- For sale, on account of departure from the state, one lot in a very desirable locality in this city. Price \$325. Apply to **E. C. Holden**, Real Estate Agent.
- Note:** That’s about \$7,500 now. Just for comparison, and a reality check: A 0.17 acre lot in Astoria, according to current Clatsop Multiple Listings, runs from \$39,995 (no frontage, no view) to \$99,000 (no frontage, Columbia River view). How’s that for inflation?

‘A DELIGHT TO FLY’



An innovative rescue is being touted as the world’s first of its kind: A **drone** operated by a lifeguard at Lennox Head, Australia, not only **saved two swimmers** who were in trouble by dropping an inflatable pod to them — which they were able to use to get safely back to shore — it filmed the entire event, the BBC reports (tinyurl.com/dronerescue).

Better yet, the drone was able to reach the swimmers in 70 seconds; it would have taken a lifeguard at least six minutes. Screen shots of the rescue are courtesy of BBC.com.

“The Little Ripper UAV certainly proved itself today,” **Jai Sheridan**, who piloted the device, told the Sydney Morning Herald, “it is an amazingly efficient piece of lifesaving equipment, and a delight to fly.”

LET’S MAKE A DENT

The **Feral Cat Coalition of Oregon** is offering **free spay/neuter** for stray and feral cats, vaccines included, for the month of February, but space is limited. Specials are available for pet cats, too.



To schedule an appointment, call 503-797-2606 or go to feralcats.com. Or, you can help a local group, **River Song Foundation**. “Next month we will be organizing at least one run to the feral cat spay/neuter clinic,” **Rita Smith** wrote. “We are hoping to line up multiple drivers to assist with the other caregivers, as well. If you would like to drive, need help with cats, or know someone who does, please let us know.” You can reach Rita at 503-861-2003.

“This is a great opportunity to get large (or small) groups of cats altered and immunized for only the cost of gas,” she added. “... There are thousands and thousands of homeless (and owned) cats roaming unaltered. Let’s make a dent in that!”

A VISITOR’S VIEW



Last week, this column ran a story about what a writer from Seattle thinks of modern Astoria. “A **San Franciscan’s Estimate of Our City**,” ran in **The Daily Morning Astorian** in **December 1885**. At the time, the population was about 5,000, and Astoria was a thriving commercial center.

“The streets are planked, and the planks rest on piles — it is a city of innumerable piles,” he wrote, and was doubly impressed that because most of businesses were built out over the river, there was no need there for underground infrastructure. “The surging sea beneath provides a sewer system with which no human agency can compete ... Drinking water, however, is but very feebly patronized. One can never consider an Astorian ashore. He is always three sheets in the wind half seas over, or half over the sea.”

The four sections of the town at the time were Upper Town (canneries), Middle Town (private residences), Lower Town (shipping) and Slum Town (saloons, houses of ill repute, opium dens). Overall, Astoria “contains the most polyglot collection of humanity on the American continent ...” including laborers of many trades and nationalities, and “men and women of culture and refinement ...”

“The place contains two good hotels and a sprightly daily paper,” and the waterfront, then, as now, was compelling, but he was most fascinated by Astoria’s fishermen. “The waters are dotted with boats flitting in and out while the shore is lined with a wilderness of outfits, comprising boats, nets, reels, drying racks and knitting lofts, among which boys are gamboling while men are knitting, mending, drying and arranging their nets.

“Abreast of the city, and looking seaward, the grandest fishing spectacle in the world may be seen. To see the fishing fleet at work is a sight to be remembered ...”

GOODBYE, ALICE



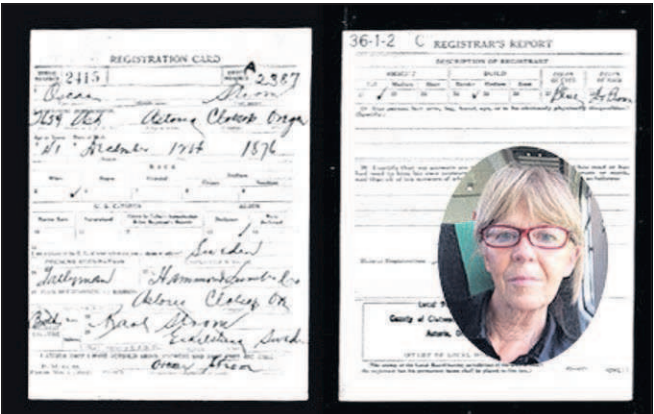
Monday was the 109th anniversary of the demise of the **French ship, Alice**. She was driven ashore in a storm a mile north of Ocean Park, Washington, on Jan. 15, 1909, bound for Portland carrying a cargo of 3,000 tons of cement, according to the Saltwater People Historical Society (tinyurl.com/aliceaground).

Young **Willie Taylor** spotted the wreck accidentally when he followed his dog, who would not stop barking, to a spot overlooking the ocean. Perhaps the dog was making such a ruckus because he was a shipwreck survivor himself, of the schooner Solano in 1907.

Once alerted, **Capt. Conick** and his crew at the Klipsan Lifesaving Station hitched up the horses to the surf boat and wagon, and headed for the Alice. Unfortunately, the awful weather and soft sand did not appeal to the horses, who stopped in their tracks after about a mile. Conick and his crew ventured out into the surf to reach the grounded ship, which was 300 yards offshore, but by the time they got there, the crew had already come ashore in their own boats. No one was lost.

According to fluxstories.com (which provided the photo shown), it was several days before the weather calmed down enough so the Alice’s captain could return to inspect the damage. Not only was there heavy damage to the masts and sails, he was dismayed to find that the weight of the cargo had driven the ship deep into the sand. The Alice could not be saved.

WHERE’S OSCAR?



Kerstin Colliander-Metzler of Blencogo, Cumbria, U.K. is looking for information about her maternal grandmother’s youngest brother, **Oscar Ström**, born Dec. 12, 1876. She is pictured, with some of his papers.

“(He and my grandmother) had an exceptional bond, and when he ‘had to’ emigrate to the States she, and their mother, were devastated,” Kerstin wrote. “This happened at the turn of the last century, so the chance that they were ever seeing each other again was remote. Well, they never did.”

“He was born in Eskilstuna, Sweden,” Kirsten explained. “He traveled out on a liner from Liverpool and came to Ellis Island, then joined his brother in California for a while. He went on to Oregon, and the last letter came in 1908. Whatever happened after that, we never found out ... I know from his letters that he wanted to go back home more than anything in the world.”

For a while, in the early 1900s, Oscar lived at 2659 Ash St. in Astoria. While here, he worked for Hammond Lumber as a tallyman. His older brother, Evald, lived in San Francisco during the great earthquake of 1906, and he’s buried in Sacramento City Cemetery. But what became of Oscar? Do you know? If so, please contact the Ear at 503-325-3211, ext. 257 or ewilson@dailyastorian.com

“I’ve sworn that I’m going to do everything I possibly can in my life to find out what happened to this man,” Kerstin declared. “If I ever find him,” she added, “... I swear I’ll get myself over to the States once more, to visit their resting places. They have to know they were never forgotten. Soppo, I know! But that’s how I feel.”

READ A GOOD BOOK LATELY?

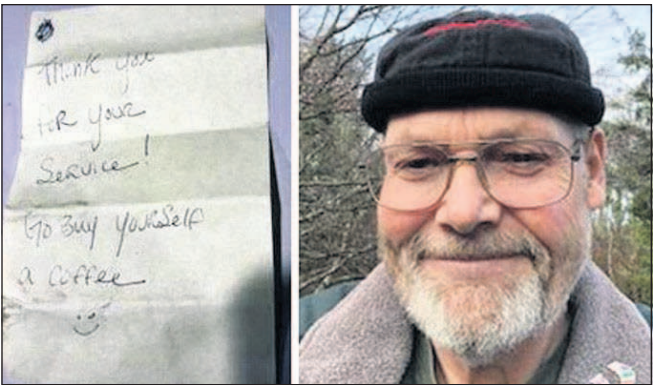


Somehow, the Ear always thought that pirates were too busy swashing their buckles to take the time to peruse a book. Wrong. An oddball maritime history footnote has come to light of late, in the form of **300-year-old scraps of paper** found on the **Queen Anne’s Revenge**, **Blackbeard’s ship** (tinyurl.com/anne-paper). Waterlogged, and stuffed into a cannon, the scraps were remarkably legible, nonetheless, and reveal the “voyage narrative” of a fellow sea captain. Apt reading material, to be sure.

Blackbeard (aka **Edward Teach**) ran the vessel aground in May 1718, off the coast of North Carolina, but it wasn’t found until 1996. Since then, the Queen Anne’s Revenge Project has been doing a painstakingly detailed excavation, just now discovering the literary scraps, shown in a photo by the North Carolina Department of National and Cultural Resources.

In case you’re wondering, the book in question is “A voyage to the South Sea, and Around the World,” by **Capt. Edward Cooke**, first published in 1712.

UNEXPECTED KINDNESS



Here’s a little feel-good snippet for the day: “On Monday, Jan. 15, in the parking lot at Columbia Memorial Hospital, I found a note on my window,” Astorian **Patrick Craig** wrote. “I thought someone hit my truck. I was surprised to find a note thanking me for my service, and enclosed was money for coffee. I have Coast Guard license plates.”

“I just want to thank the person who did this kindness,” he added. “You really made my day. Just one more reason to live in Astoria ... the people.”

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 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 astoriafiberarts.com

SUNDAY

Cannon Beach American Legion Women’s Auxiliary Breakfast — 9 to 11:30 a.m., American Legion, 1216 S. Hemlock St., Cannon Beach.

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.

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.

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 Lew-is 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 AstoriaRotary.org