

# OPINION

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# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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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 — 2008

History. With its 2011 bicentennial approaching, Astoria has a lot to offer.

Speaking to the Clatsop County Historical Society's annual meeting, Dr. Stephen Dow Beckham, a professor of history at Lewis and Clark College, offered guests a glimpse of possibilities for a bicentennial celebration.

Beckham, a contributor to "Eminent Astorians" — a book recognizing the city's bicentennial that will be published ahead of the anniversary — said celebration has been an important part of Northwest life.

He said Native Americans held potlatches to display wealth and personal prowess, using feasts, gifts and dancing.

Scandinavian Days filled the city's streets for the midsummer festivals with parades, picnics and dancing.

The erection of the Astoria Column was complete — but the application of the sgraffito mural around its outside by a capricious Italian artist from New York wasn't — when its dedication took place July 22, 1926.

But, one particular Fourth of July celebration bore particular scrutiny.

Beckham read an 1856 excerpt from James G. Swan, who wrote several books, describing the celebration.

"It was proposed to close the performances of the day by going on top of the cliff opposite and make a tremendous big blaze. This was acceded to, and some six or eight immediately crossed the creek and soon scrambled to the top of the hill, where we found an old hollow cedar stump about 20 feet high. We could enter this on one side, and found it a mere shell of what had once been a monster tree.

"I had with me a little rifle, which measured, stock and all, but 3 feet long. With this I measured across the space, and found it was just six lengths of my rifle, or 18 feet, and the tree — undoubtedly when sound — must have measured — with the bark on — at least 60 feet in circumference.

"We went to work with a will and soon had the stump filled with dry spruce limbs which were lying about it in great quantities — and then set fire to the whole.

"It made the best bonfire I ever saw. And after burning all night and part of the next day, finally set fire to the forest, which continued to burn for several months, 'till the winter rains finally extinguished it."

### 50 years ago — 1968

The 564-foot freighter Japan Azalea, newly build for the log trade between Pacific Northwest ports and Japan, is here this week on its maiden voyage, loading approximately 8.2 million board feet of logs for Shimizu, Japan.

The Japan Azalea docked here Friday night and began loading logs Saturday at the west side of Pier 2.

The Oregon Supreme Court today cleared the way for construction of a huge aluminum reduction plant at Warrenton financed by tax-free revenue bonds for the plant, to be built by a combine of Japanese and American firms.

The court ruled there was nothing in the proposed agreement with Northwest Aluminum Co. that would make taxpayers liable in the event of default on the bonds.

Forty occupants of John Jacob Astor hotel were vacating the establishment Thursday, following issuance of an order by the city government Wednesday condemning the eight-story hotel building.

Leon Overbay, city building inspector, said the order was issued because of long-standing regulations and because of failure to meet sanitary standards.

Overbay said that succeeding owners of the hotel have been on notice since 1962 that they must make various improvements required by the state fire marshal, but that these improvements have never been made.

### 75 years ago — 1943

State Civilian Defense Coordinator Jerrold Owen today warned the people of Oregon to be on their toes. The danger of enemy attack coming from the west, the north or even from the east, he said, is definitely in the realm of possibility.

Commenting on the numerous carefully worded statements by leading military and government officials which in recent weeks have drawn attention to the increasing menace of enemy attacks, Owen agreed the greatest danger to the coast was that of Jap carriers moving in unnoticed.

"But," he pointed out, "Land based planes from Kiska in the Aleutians could fly south over the sparsely settled Canadian wilds and sweep in on Portland or Seattle from the east."

The secret is out! The call for hunting knives broadcast over KAST last week was to equip seamen on a Liberty ship leaving from the port docks here. The knives are essential, for the men use them to open ammunition cans and also to cut loose lifeboats in the event their ship is torpedoed.

The call sent out by the Clatsop County Red Cross chapter was successful as 18 knives were turned in. One woman sent in two from Gearhart by special delivery.

The Red Cross also wishes to thank Billie's appliance store and Dahlgren, McCartney and Snyder for the new phonograph records which they donated.

Ration Chief D.J. Lewis is certain that the fuel oil rationing can be worked out without hardship and all necessary adjustments in allotments made if "the public will only bear with us for a week or so until we get our machinery set up."

Lewis is asking particularly that the public cease the stream of questions which has reached the point of abuse at times against volunteer workers on the fuel oil program and members of the office staff. "These men and women," he explained, "have had no part in determining the allotments. They're only carrying out instructions."



The Daily Astorian

Mark Lund, 19-year-old resident of 136 Lexington, caught this 24 1/2-pound Chinook upriver from Astoria.



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## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at dailyastorian.com/submit\_letters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or 1555 North Roosevelt in Seaside, or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103.

## PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

# We value different opinions

Nobody reads the newspaper anymore. If you believe that, come sit in my chair for a day.

The phone rings at The Daily Astorian all day long from people who read the newspaper. Readers who want to pay their subscription so they keep receiving local news daily. Advertisers who want to place a help-wanted ad because they know that job seekers read the paper.



KARI BORGEN

Community organizers pitching news stories so that the North Coast will learn about their cause. Government officials answering questions from reporters because

they're accountable to voters who get their local news from the newspaper.

Then there are the calls from the readers who hold us accountable.

"I didn't get my newspaper today." (By the way, we have a staffer devoted to taking those calls until 6 p.m. every night so that they can answer questions about missed or late delivery.)

"You got it wrong." We hate to make mistakes, but love the chance to correct them. Even small things count, and we appreciate the readers who let us know when we need to make it right.

"I don't agree with that \_\_\_\_\_." Fill in the blank: opinion, letter to the editor, meeting coverage, story position, photo

placement, cartoon.

I don't mind those calls, either. All of us have unique perspectives based on our experiences. I think that a lot of the dissension we see now is a result of not listening or respecting differing points of view.

Whether we agree or disagree at the end of the call — or agree to disagree — listening to a different opinion makes us think about the other guy's perspective. It makes us smarter about the people we serve on the North Coast.

Of course, everyone's favorite call: "Thank you!"

We have a lot of terrific readers and advertisers who take the time to call and let us know that their carrier does a great

job, that the reporter got the facts right, that the ad worked. And to you I want to say "thanks" for making an employee's day when they get your call.

As I mentioned in my last column, we provide work for nearly 80 local people here. And they are busy every day producing the content, printing, uploading, delivering ... and answering the phone.

Don't get me started about the volume of emails we all get daily.

So when someone says, "Nobody reads the newspaper anymore," I'd challenge them to tell that to our employees who are busy serving the over 15,000 nobodies that read The Daily Astorian in print and online daily.

As always, if you have ideas on how you think we can improve our service to you, let me know at kborgen@dailyastorian.com

Kari Borgen is the publisher of The Daily Astorian.