

**CONTACT US**  
 ewilson@dailyastorian.com  
 (503) 325-3211 ext. 257

# COMMUNITY

**FOLLOW US**  
 facebook.com/  
 DailyAstorian

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## THE RIGHT LARRY



The Ear has been standing in the corner after last week's gaffe. In the story about the **Astoria Senior Center garden** on 11th Street, the Ear mentioned the wrong Larry as being responsible for all that flowering glory. It is *not* Larry Miller, the senior center's executive director, it's **Larry Allen**, the former president of the senior center, who is pictured in a photo by Colin Murphey. In her note, LaRee Johnson only referred to the gentleman responsible for the garden as "Mr. Larry." The Ear leapt off Mount Assumption, thinking she meant Larry Miller. Nope, she didn't. The Ear extends apologies to all involved.

## A HUGE DIFFERENCE



Some of you folks are fortunate to live within the jurisdiction of the **Warrenton Police Department**," **Jennifer Weber** of Yucca Valley, California, wrote. "I got to experience their kindness even from 1,200 miles away."

"On a recent evening my husband, **Kevin**, suffered a massive heart attack in our Southern California home," she explained. "Alone in a hospital waiting room, I knew my mother, **Leslie Moody**, was camping in Fort Stevens State Park with no cell service, and I was desperate to reach her."

Leslie, a retired nurse, is the family's No. 1 go-to person whenever there is a medical emergency.

"The campground offices were all closed, and I don't know anyone local who could have helped," Jennifer explained. "Distracted, I called the nonemergency number for the WPD, and was connected to a professional and kind dispatcher, **Jodie Frost**, who offered to have an officer try to make contact with my mother ..."

"It was such a blessing that only minutes later, I received a call from **Officer Robert Wirt**. He was supremely helpful, compassionate and generous. He had already located my mother ... (and) he even allowed her to talk to me on his personal cellphone."

Pictured, clockwise from top left, Leslie, Jennifer and Kevin (who is now home, recovering), and two of the Webers' children, Kyler and Kaitlyn. Inset, Officer Wirt.

"Officer Wirt made contact with my family in such a gentle, thoughtful and kind way — we will never forget him," she added. "I thought the good people of Warrenton should know what an asset they have in both Jodie Frost and Officer Wirt ... (They) make the city of Warrenton and its police department shine."

## YOU CAN'T FIX STUPID



Last week, this column mentioned the Alaska Katmai National Park and Preserve's **Brooks Falls brown bears** are starring on the National Park Service's Explore.org webcams fishing for salmon ([bit.ly/bearfalls](http://bit.ly/bearfalls)).

The area is off-limits for tourists, so you can imagine the consternation when webcam footage showed some bozo in shorts (as of Thursday, yet to be charged) wading right into the river to take some selfies with six feeding bears ([bit.ly/bearbozo1](http://bit.ly/bearbozo1)).

The Anchorage Daily News says the National Park Service deemed his actions "unprecedented" ([bit.ly/bearbozo](http://bit.ly/bearbozo)). Stupid is more like it.

## THE SECRET FAMILY



In January, I was contacted by **Esther Larson Johnson** through my Ancestry.com account, and she said our DNA results show us to be first cousins," **Robin Larson Jensen** wrote. As it turned out, a long-held family secret had kept them apart.

Robin's grandfather, **Erick Gunnar Larson** (pictured, left), emigrated in 1922 from Sweden to Tacoma, where his brother, **Axel Larson**, lived. There, Karl met and married **Mary Alice Merrill** in 1926. When she was pregnant with their son, **Richard Riley Larson Sr.** in 1927, the couple fought, and Mary Alice went home to her parents. They divorced, and Erick only saw his son a few times. (Richard is pictured, right, with his wife, Cora. More family photos at [bit.ly/KLarson](http://bit.ly/KLarson))

"Erick" disappeared in 1929 by moving to Astoria. He became a U.S. citizen and changed his name to **Karl E. Larson**. No one in Tacoma knew his location or new name; no one in Astoria knew about his old name or life. In Astoria, Karl and his new wife, **Florence E. Brace**, had two sons, **Allen Leroy Larson** and Robin's father, **Dale Edward Larson** (1934-2018, [bit.ly/delarson](http://bit.ly/delarson)). Every now and then Karl would tell Dale (pictured, inset) he needed to find his "Tacoma brother," but did not explain what he meant.

Other hints of Karl's secret popped up occasionally. Robin remembers going to Sea-Tac International Airport to see him off on a trip to Sweden in 1996. Axel's daughter **Janet Larson** was also there, and asked Karl about the "woman troubles" that caused him to abruptly leave Tacoma. "I don't want to talk about that!" he replied, which left Robin wondering.

By the time Esther contacted Robin with the truth this year, it was too late for Allen and Dale, who both died this spring, to meet their half brother, who died in 2008.

Now that the secret is out, both of Karl Larson's families had a reunion recently. "It was an amazing surprise to find out my dad has a half brother," Robin noted, "and even better to meet his wife and daughter in person, so now we look forward to meeting more of our new-found relatives."

## TAKING POSSESSION



Aug. 19 will be the bicentennial of the day in 1818 when the Navy sloop **USS Ontario**, commanded by **Capt. James Biddle**, came into the Columbia River and he **nailed plaques to trees** on the north and south shores of the Columbia River, claiming sovereignty of the Columbia River Country for the U.S.," **Sue Glen** of the Astoria Daughters of the Revolution wrote.

A little research revealed that Capt. Biddle set out to reclaim these territories for the U.S. from Great Britain after the War of 1812. As he approached the Columbia River Bar, he noted in his ship's log that he found it impossible for a vessel as large as the Ontario to enter because of "its sinuous channel," among other problems.

Consequently, he anchored and took three boats loaded with more than 50 well-armed men to shore at a small cove at **Cape Disappointment**.

"... In the presence of several of the natives, displaying the flag of the U.S., turning up a sod of soil, and giving three cheers, I nailed up against a tree a leaden plate in which were cut the following words: 'Taken possession of in the name and on the behalf of the United States by Captain James Biddle, commanding the U.S. Ship Ontario, Columbia River, August, 1818.'" The Ontario fired a salute to celebrate.

After the ceremony, Biddle headed to the "**Chinoake**" village to visit the chief, then crossed the river, landing near **Fort George**, and "took possession" there, too.

Biddle also makes note in his log that the ship not being able to cross the bar caused a bit of a crisis on board the Ontario, as they could not get access to much-needed wood, water and fresh provisions. Mission accomplished, it was time to move on.

Capt. Biddle died Oct. 1, 1848 in Philadelphia. (<http://bit.ly/CptBiddle>, <http://bit.ly/JBiddle>)

## PICKING UP PUFFLINGS



In Cannon Beach, they love their **puffins**. They do in Irish Loop, Newfoundland, too. From August to October, the **Witless Bay Puffin & Petrel Patrol** launches their annual puffling (yes, it's a real word for baby puffins) rescue efforts, CBC.com reports ([bit.ly/getpufflings](http://bit.ly/getpufflings)).

Juergen (aka Puffin Man) and Elfie Schau started the patrol in 2004. "We were walking down the roads and we saw several dead birds in the morning, and we wondered what happened," Juergen said. He is pictured in a screenshot from a minidocumentary by Sebastien Despres (<http://bit.ly/puffindoc>); a puffling is pictured from the group's Facebook page, Puffin & Petrel Patrol NL.

If pufflings first set out from their nests toward the ocean to find food at night, they follow the moon. Juergen came to realize that on moonless nights, the artificial lighting from headlights and streetlights disorients the birds, causing many to be killed by cars. His solution was simple and effective: scoop the pufflings up at night, then release them the next day.

Now puffling rescue has become popular with both the locals and tourists, and their efforts have paid off. Juergen estimates that overall, more than 10,000 puffins have been rescued.

## TITANIC TIMEPIECE



Another piece of **Titanic** history, a **silver pocket watch**, is going on the auction block Aug. 25 in Dallas, Texas, and is expected to fetch \$20,000 or more. It is pictured, courtesy of **Heritage Auctions** ([bit.ly/cenaiwatch](http://bit.ly/cenaiwatch)).

The watch was owned by Russian immigrant **Cenai Kantor**, who was on the ship with his wife, **Miriam**. She survived the sinking in lifeboat No. 12; Cenai did not. When his body was found, clothed only in his underwear, it was shipped to his widow in New York.

Miriam went to the Legal Aid Society, who helped track down the rest of his clothes and effects, including: a "Russian passport, notebook, assortment of money from Russia, Germany and England, wallets, telescope, corkscrew, silver watch and strap."

Titanic tidbit: The great-grandson of Astoria's namesake, **John Jacob Astor IV**, also died when the "unsinkable" ship went down.

## FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA



**Brothers Across America** — **Jake Grindstaff**, **Gilwon Seo** and **Dakota Daniels** — are deaf young men from Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C., who left Astoria May 31 to bike the Transamerica Trail.

Astorian **Ardi Chapman**, Dakota's third cousin, reports the young men made it to Kentucky for a family reunion in late July, and were featured in a story in the Danville Advocate-Messenger ([bit.ly/3BrosKy](http://bit.ly/3BrosKy)).

Of local note: The reunion included Ardi's first cousin and Dakota's grandmother, **Judy Daniels**, who is originally from Warrenton. Judy's son, **Toby Daniels**, biked across the U.S. in 1991, and Dakota carried his father's original "Across America" sign on this trip.

On Aug. 6, as you can see from the screenshot taken from their Facebook page ([tinyurl.com/3pedalFB](http://tinyurl.com/3pedalFB)), they reached their destination, Virginia Beach, Virginia. Well done, gentlemen.

## COMMUNITY NOTES

### SATURDAY

**Angora Hiking Club** — 9 a.m., Sixth Street parking lot. Gnat Creek hike. Membership is not required to participate. For information, call Arline LaMear at 503-338-6883 or go to [angorahikingclub.org](http://angorahikingclub.org)

**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](http://astoriafiberarts.com)

### SUNDAY

**Seniors Breakfast** — 9 a.m.

to noon, Astoria Moose Lodge, 420 17th St. Cooked to order from menu, includes coffee. Cost is \$5 for seniors 62 and older, \$7.50 for those younger than 62. Breakfasts are open to the public. Proceeds after expenses help support local and other charities.

**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.

### 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.

**Grace and Encouragement for Moms** — 10 to 11:30 a.m., Crossroads Community Church, 40618 Old Highway 30, Svensen. GEMS group is a time for moms to relax and enjoy each others' company. Free childcare is provided. For information, call Rachael Bid-

decome at 503-458-6103.

**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 Suzanne Bjarranson at 503-861-4202.

**Columbia Senior Diners** — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. Cost

See NOTES, Page 4B