

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

FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian

COMMUNITY

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ADMIRAL BENSON VS. PEACOCK SPIT



Today is the 89th anniversary of the **grounding** of the **SS Admiral Benson** on Peacock Spit, west of the North Jetty. **Capt. Charles C. Graham**, with 39 passengers, 65 crew, and cargo, was on his way from San Francisco to Portland at the time.

The captain wasn't worried, as the sea was calm, so he called for a tow. The next day the Coast Guard arrived and removed 34 passengers and some crewmen. A refloating attempt at high tide failed miserably.

The weather started to get nasty, and on Feb. 17, the Coast Guard returned to remove the last five passengers and most of the crew. Another attempt to refloat the ship failed. On the 18th, the storm got outright ugly, and the rest of the crew were taken off by breeches buoy. The captain insisted on staying aboard until he was sure the ship was unsalvageable.

When the ship started breaking up, he was sure. On Feb. 23, the captain gave in and took the breeches buoy to shore. A hearing on Feb. 25 determined he was negligent, and his master mariner license was suspended for six months.

A salvage crew took two weeks to save what cargo they could, and scavengers took everything else. The Admiral Benson gradually sank into the sand, and now can only be seen at very low tide from its namesake, Benson Beach. (bit.ly/admb1, bit.ly/AdmlBens, bit.ly/AdmlBens1)

WHAT HAPPENED TO MARTY?



Martha Lavonne Benthin Evans (Marty) has been missing exactly 29 years today," her sister, **Linda Benthin-Weirup**, posted on the Finding Marty Benthin Evans Facebook page on Sunday. Marty, 33, left the High Climber Room Lounge in Knappa on **Feb. 10, 1990**, driving a 1984 brown Ford truck, and vanished (<http://bit.ly/DoeNetMarty>).

"She had left a wedding reception to run into the nearby town of Warrenton to pick up something, and had clearly planned to return," Linda explained. "... Law enforcement at the time told (her) family that she had voluntarily disappeared, and refused to take a missing person report."

And this was despite the fact that Marty didn't take her purse, and the only known clothing she had with her was the bridesmaid dress she was wearing. "No missing person report equals no investigation into someone's disappearance," Linda noted. Which means no one was questioned at the time she went missing to see if anyone had seen her, or knew anything about what happened to her.

In fact, Marty wasn't even listed as officially missing until around 2005, when **Det. Matt Beeson** of the Oregon State Police took the case, at which time Linda and her mother gave DNA samples so they could be matched to any unidentified remains that were found.

There is one explanation for Marty's disappearance that hasn't been verified yet. "... There are deep sloughs in the area," Linda said, "and it is also possible that Marty misjudged the road and ended up in the Brownsmead Slough — which has some pockets of extremely deep water."

Adding to the family's frustration, there are rumors of a truck being at the bottom of the slough. "We are always hoping to find volunteer divers," Linda wrote. Oddly enough, even after several seemingly serious offers over the years, not one single diver has followed through.

Marty's whereabouts remain a mystery. If you know anything about what happened to Marty Benthin Evans, call Det. Beeson at 503-861-0781, ext. 34006.

"My sister and I were 10 1/2 months apart," Linda observed. "Very close in age, and thus close in life ... we always stayed connected. Always! Not a day goes by ..."

'IT WAS PRETTY EXCITING'



Merrick Benesch, my son, went to a **Portland Trail Blazer camp** at the Beaverton Hoops YMCA this past summer," **Vicky Rutherford** wrote. "The kids, as part of their attendance, were given discount tickets to go to a game (a choice of two different games)."

"Out of the 300 kids who went to the camp, 13 were selected by a drawing to go on the court with the Trail Blazers and stand during the national anthem."

"The kids got to go into the Blazer area and run out through the tunnel to the court with the Blazers, and then stand with them through the national anthem. When the anthem was over, they left through the tunnel and we watched the game."

Merrick, a seventh-grader at Astoria Middle School, is the tallest boy, pictured at right, in front of **Meyers Leonard**, whom Merrick had a chance to chat with ... looking way up, of course, since the basketball player is 7 feet 1 inch tall.

"It was pretty exciting," Merrick declared, "to be on the court with the Blazers!"

PICKERS SEEK PICKS



The **History Channel** show "**American Pickers**" (@GOTAPICK) is coming back to film in Oregon in April, and they're looking for "interesting characters with interesting items and lots of them!" They also want "different, unusual and unique items — something we've never seen before and with an interesting story!"

In case you're not familiar with the show, **Mike Wolfe** (right) and **Frank Fritz** (left) are "pickers" who roam the country finding valuable antiques hiding in large personal collections. They're "on a mission to recycle and rescue forgotten relics," and "to meet characters with remarkable and exceptional items," and learn some American history along the way. They are pictured courtesy of Cineflix.

Please note, Wolfe and Fritz only "pick" private collections. No stores, malls, flea markets, museums, auctions, businesses or anything open to the public need apply.

Have a sizeable conglomeration of intriguing goodies for the pickers to pore over? Call 855-653-7878, or email AmericanPickers@cineflix.com with your name, phone number, location, description of your collection and photos.

IT'S NEW AND BLUE



Just in case you didn't know it, Thursday was the 160th anniversary of Oregon becoming the 33rd state on Feb. 14, 1859. So what better time to delve into all kinds of Oregon facts, history and trivia with the 2019 Oregon Blue Book (bit.ly/OregonBB)? The front and back covers are shown.

There's a plethora of topics and subtopics, including an almanac, a Notable Oregonians section with biographies, a Jeopardy game, links to Oregon newspapers and historical societies and extensive lists of resources — an interesting read for a lazy rainy day.

AROUND TOWN

Snippets from the **Wednesday, Feb. 15, 1888**, edition of **The Daily Morning Astorian**:

• Somebody's house has got away from him and is reported high and dry, or low and wet, according to the tide, on Miller's sands.

Note: If it's the same **Miller Sands** as today, it's off **Altoona**, Washington, but on the Oregon side of the river.

• During the late cold weather

Anton Huber

swamped out a little over one mile of good trail, connecting Lewis and Clark's river with the (Clatsop) Plains, so that one can now go from **Peter Heckard's**, on the river, to the old school house, (Dist. No. 3.) on the Plains. It is looked upon as a good-sized job and took just 20 days lively swinging of the axe to do it.

Note: Peter Heckard was an Oregon pioneer who settled on a farm in the Lewis and Clark area of Astoria in 1867, and was likely famous for his progeny. His son, **Jason Heckard**, and his wife, **Lucy**, had 15 children. (bit.ly/ccobits)

• The British ship **Rohilla** is reported outside; the captain was asked \$1,000 for towage, and at last accounts he was thinking it over.

Note: No wonder. That would be \$26,446 now.

• The lumber trade of Oregon and Washington territory is one of the domestic industries which is sure to profit by the opening of the **Nicaragua canal** ... the voyage from here to our Atlantic seaboard is five or six months in length ...

Note: Wishful thinking. All bets were on Nicaragua for a canal, starting in 1881. Interest bloomed on and off during the 1890s early 1900s, but the project never got off the ground. In the meantime, the Panama Canal was built from 1903 to 1914, leaving Nicaragua in the dust. (bit.ly/niccanal, bit.ly/pmacanal)

IS THAT YOU, CECIL?



While diving near Cape Brett in **New Zealand**, **Ben Laurie**, 21, had a very close encounter with what appeared to be a 30-foot "**sea serpent**," The Sun reports (bit.ly/pyroserp). A screen shot from his video is shown, courtesy of Pen News/Ben Laurie and The Sun.

"I didn't know what it was at the time, so it was quite a confusing thing," he told The Sun. He thought it was a large clump of plankton, but "one of the guys touched it and said it wasn't soft at all, it was more like a cardboard sort of texture."

Actually, it was probably a **pyrosome**, a colony of billions of sea squirts. We get tiny versions of them washing up on the North Coast; they look like translucent pickles. These giant pyrosomes live at depths of more than a mile, so one scientist told the diver it was a "a once-in-a-lifetime rare thing to see." Good thing he had a camera.

AND THE ANSWER IS ...

In last week's column there was a photo by **Nellie Hux** of a **pole with 21 tires** on it, found on Benson Beach on the Long Beach Peninsula in Washington. Her photo is shown. She wondered what it was used for.

"It might have something to do with mine sweepers," **Dave Moore** wrote. "If you go out to the Hammond River lookout and look to the left, you will see an exact replica of the picture in the paper. It's kinda tucked back a little. That area is where they would resupply the mine sweepers."

"Also, when the Russians had factory ships off the coast, the processors would tie up to the freezer ships, they would lower something that looked like this over the side so the two ships would not bang together while transferring their cargo."

"It looks like some home-made roller gear," **Shawn Nelson** wrote. "From a drag net? Commercial trawler?"

"It's the bumper off a dock; it's connected to the dock sideways along the dock for when boats pull in," an unidentified caller said. "I know, because my dad built docks in Alaska for 50 years."

So there you have it.



COMMUNITY CALENDAR

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 Studio, 1296 Duane St. Bring a

spinning wheel. For information, call 503-325-5598 or go to astoriafiberarts.org

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.

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 other's company. Free childcare is provided. For information, call Christina Leonard at 503-298-3936.

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 Bjaranson at

503-861-4202.

Columbia Senior Diners — 11:30 a.m., 1111 Exchange St. Cost is \$6. For information, or to have meal delivered, call 503-325-9693.

Warrenton Senior Lunch Program — noon, Warrenton Community Center, 170 S.W. Third St. Suggested donation of \$6 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

Knochlers Pinochle Group — 1 p.m., Bob Chisholm Community Center, 1225 Avenue A, Seaside. Cost is \$1 per regular session per person. Players with highest and second highest scores split the prize. Game is designed for players 55 and older, but all ages are welcome.