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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ROW, ROW, ROW YOUR BOAT



Last July, nautical writer and Astorian **Peter Marsh** met military aviator/rower **Jacob Adoram** at the Portland Boat Show, and saw the 28-foot vessel that Adoram planned to row/drift across the Pacific Ocean from Neah Bay, Washington, 7,145 miles to Australia.

“This may be the finest, most high-tech (high cost) row-boat ever built, befitting a fighter pilot,” Marsh observed at the time.

If we have learned anything from wayward Kon-Tiki-style sailor **Rimas Meleshyus**, it’s that ocean drifting is not for the faint at heart, and is fraught with peril. (Check Peter Marsh’s take on these solo voyages at tinyurl.com/RowKnow)

Adoram’s unsupported trek across the Pacific was touted as “the longest solo, nonstop attempt from North America in the history of modern ocean,” according to his website, jacobadoram.com, which also contains his blog.

Well, against all odds, after 336 arduous days, on June 8, he made it. However, the last few miles of the journey proved problematic, because of strong winds.

“He was meant to arrive at Yorkeys Knob (in Cairns, Australia), but a strong southerly and rough conditions prevented him from turning into the marina,” ABC Far North reported on its Facebook page.

“He pretty much ‘careened’ onto Trinity Beach. ... Locals then helped push him back out to sea and the Volunteer Coast Guard escorted him to Yorkeys Knob ...” Not surprisingly, the media outlet noted, Adoram’s hands were “covered with blisters” and his sea legs made him wobbly. ABC Far North’s photo of his triumphant arrival is shown.

What motivated him to take on such a grueling row? Part of it was introspective, to have time to figure out how he wanted to live his life, he told ABC Far North. But his mission was also to raise awareness and funds to provide safe water for people in need around the world through the Water Mission project (bit.ly/H2OMission).

After almost a year alone at sea to achieve his goal, he was ready to celebrate and have a proper dinner. “First meal after 11 months at sea? Steak!” he posted on his Facebook page (fb.me/jacobadoram). Not surprisingly, he ate two.

PURE NOSTALGIA



Want a glimpse of circa 1940-era Astoria? The Providence Archives in Seattle has a YouTube channel, and one of the entries is a video, “**Naval Station Astoria, Oregon, 1940s**” (tinyurl.com/Naval1940). A still shot from the clip is shown.

Digitized from an original 16 mm film, the video has no sound — and it definitely has that old-fashioned home-movie look and flavor — but it’s two minutes of pure Astoria nostalgia.

POLYNIA MYSTERY



NASA teamed up with **elephant seals** to study **polynyas**, mysterious large holes of open water surrounded by ice that occasionally form on the surface **Antarctica’s Weddell Sea**, and may last for months, despite freezing temperatures, Geek.com reports (bit.ly/helperseals).

The seals were fitted with temporary satellite tags/sensors to collect ocean measurements under the sea ice. Data from satellite images and robotic drifters was also used to solve the mystery. One of the critters is pictured, courtesy of Dan Costa/University of California, Santa Cruz.

The answer? Polynyas are formed due to a convergence of a several factors, including unusual ocean conditions and intense storms swirling over the Weddell Sea. By the way, the largest one, the size of New Zealand, appeared between 1974 and 1976.

TALES OF THE TOWN



From **The Daily Morning Astorian**, Friday, June 20, 1884:

• **Day’s length** 15 hours and 40 minutes, about 18 hours of daylight.

Note: Nothing has changed much in 135 years. Today it’s 15 hours, 46 minutes and 53 seconds from sunrise to sunset.bit.ly/day97103)

• **Uncle Tom’s Cabin** next Tuesday and Wednesday.

Note: Teacher **Harriet Beecher Stowe’s** anti-slavery novel was still a hit in post-Civil War, and inspired several touring theatrical companies to adapt it into a play or musical production. This particularly large company of 25 performers was set to be on stage at the **Occidental Hall**, and touted itself as “The Original Boston Double Uncle Tom’s Cabin.” (bit.ly/utcl884)

• Sad news: **Boat No. 10**, belonging to **J. O. Hawthorn & Co.** has been missing since Saturday. The captain’s name is **C. L. Johnson** ... drowned. On Clatsop Spit, on the night of June 12th, **John Huhtala**. ... A reward of \$25 (about \$650 now) will be given to the finder on returning the body to **I. X. L. Cannery**.

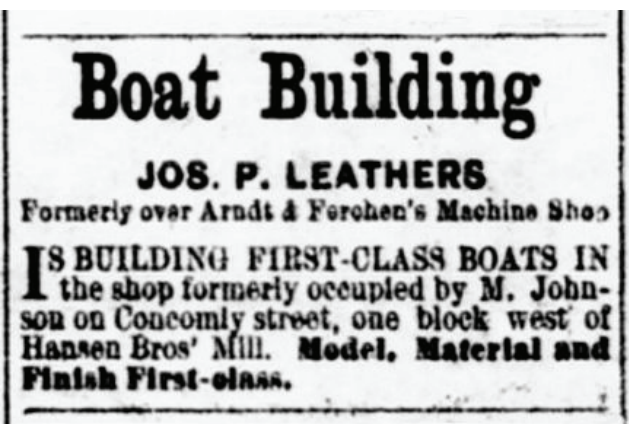
• Lieut. Stoney has arrived at Onalaska, and will explore the great unknown river he discovered in Alaska in July.

Note: **Lt. George M. Stoney’s** first trip to Alaska, in 1883, was to find the missing **Jeanette Expedition**. He didn’t, and he and his crew became stranded themselves. Fortunately, the local Inuit community helped them survive.

As a thank you, the Navy sent Stoney to deliver gifts to native communities on the Alaska Coast. He used the trip to explore the geography of the region, especially searching for a large river that dumped into Hotham Inlet on Kotzebue Sound.

Find it, he did, and he named it the Putnam River. Which didn’t stick, as it’s now the Kobuk. You can see photos of his travels here: bit.ly/LtStoney

HARD WORK AND PERSISTENT EFFORT



An advertisement in the same edition of The Daily Morning Astorian piqued this writer’s curiosity: “**Boat Building — Jos. P. Leathers**. Formerly over Arndt & Ferchen’s Machine shop, is building first class boats in the shop formerly occupied by M. Johnson on Concomly Street (now Astor Street). ... Model, material and finish first class.”

According to “An Illustrated History of the State of Oregon,” Joe Leathers was born in Redwood City, California, in 1859. At the age of 16, he headed for San Francisco and apprenticed himself for four years to **Thomas Vice**, a boat builder, to learn the trade.

He came to Astoria in 1881, and was a journeyman with **William Howard** in 1882, then joined a partnership with his brother, **Richard M. Leathers**, and they opened a small boat building and repair shop.

Something went amiss. The partnership broke up in July 1883, and Joe Leathers opened his own boat building shop. Apparently, his brother did, as well, because he’s listed as having a shop on Lafayette Street (Seventh Street now) in a business gazetteer, suggesting a bit of rancorous sibling rivalry.

Richard dropped into obscurity, while Joe became a prominent Astoria boat builder. One of his most famous vessels was the **Electric**, “a handsome little propeller,” built for **Capt. E. C. Fisher**, which “Lewis & Dryden’s Marine History of the Pacific Northwest” also described as “one of the best steamers of her class on the lower river.”

Other boats and steamers he built include the **Wenona**, **R. Miller**, **R. P. Elmore**, **Sea Foam** and the **Hattie**. He was also very well known for his small fishing boats; using up to 15 employees, he could build an average of about 12 per month during the busy season.

The prolific boat builder became quite prosperous at his trade, and owned city and county adjoining properties, plus 160 acres of timberland.

“In his business relations, Mr. Leathers has overcome many difficulties,” the Illustrated History of the State of Oregon concluded, “but by hard work and persistent effort, paying the closest attention to detail, he has built up a name and reputation throughout the Northwest.” (bit.ly/JLeathers1, bit.ly/JLeathers2, bit.ly/LewDry)

UNCOMMON MURRE

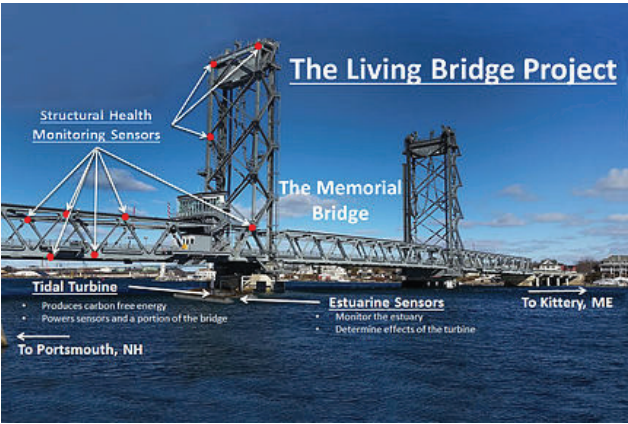


‘We recently rehabbed this resilient **common murre**, who we think was captured by a bald eagle and dropped, because he was found in someone’s backyard!” The Wildlife Center of the North Coast posted on Facebook June 5. “His exam showed old wounds indicating he’d been snatched before, too, so we lovingly dubbed him ‘the murre with nine lives.’”

Just so you know, the Audubon Society says murre’s nest on cliff ledges or on flat stony surfaces near water. “After a common murre hatches,” the post added, “the mom sticks around for about three weeks, and then it’s up to the dad to take care of them until they’re ready to make the plunge and jump off the rock.” Who knows, maybe that’s when the little guy snatched.

Pictured, Haystack Rock Awareness Program educator **Kari Henningsgaard** releasing the newly rehabilitated murre. “After a very brief stint with us,” the post added, “he was released ... in a place where we know he’ll find plenty of friends. Farewell, little friend!”

THE LIVING BRIDGE



There’s a fascinating bridge from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, to Kittery, Maine, whose official name is the **Memorial Bridge**.

It’s nickname, the “**living bridge**,” is more apt because researchers from the University of New Hampshire have installed 40 data sensors on it, and attached a moored floating platform to it that has a weather station and a tidal turbine, NewAtlas.com reports (tinyurl.com/NHbridge). The bridge is pictured, courtesy of the Living Bridge Project (livingbridge.unh.edu)

“We call it a ‘living’ bridge because it can talk to us and provide valuable information about its health — the stress it deals with, the ease at which it moves, what’s happening around it and even under it ...” explained principal investigator of the **Living Bridge Project**, **Erin Bell**. “This bridge is not just for getting us across the water, it can teach us so much more about the world around us.”

One can’t help but think the Astoria Bridge, equipped similarly, would provide some equally useful information.

EMILY TO THE RESCUE



Back in 2012, this column featured a story about **BEMILY** (EMergency Integrated Lifesaving LanYard), a 4-foot robotic buoy that can swim through riptides at a top speed of 24 mph to rescue swimmers in distress that lifeguards can’t reach (emilyrobot.com).

EMILY, by Hydronalix, powered by an electric motor pumping water, is remote controlled, and can survive impacts even with rocks and reefs. Swimmers in trouble can use EMILY as a flotation device until rescuers can arrive, or EMILY and the swimmer can be pulled to shore via an 800-yard rescue line, even through heavy surf and currents.

Depoe Bay got an EMILY back in 2012, and now the **Rockaway Beach Volunteer Fire Department** has one. On June 14, they did a practice run with EMILY with one of their cadets. A screen shot from the Facebook video they posted is shown.

Perhaps more North Coast beach towns would benefit from having one of these devices available.