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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

WHODUNNIT?



As you may be aware, there has been a **full-size skeleton** hanging below the glass floor inset by our fireplace for about four years,” **Tony Kischner**, owner of Astoria’s **Bridgewater Bistro**, wrote.

“I purchased it on Amazon for Halloween, and hung it myself from below the building, which requires a very low tide and a very tall ladder,” he explained. Everyone enjoyed it so much, he just left it there.

“About a year later, and feeling brave, I thought it would be fun to add a sign on the beam from which the skeleton hung that said, ‘I didn’t tip my server.’

“It got a lot of laughs, but after a few negative guest comments, I replaced it with another sign that read ‘I was Shanghaied in Astoria,’ which I thought at least advanced Astoria’s historical heritage.

“All was well until a couple of weeks ago, when ... the skeleton went missing. When one of my staff people pointed out it was gone, I assumed the rope it was hanging from had rotted and broken.” But nope, not so, the sign was gone too.

“**Whodunnit?**” he asks. “Was it actually shanghaied? Could it just be a prank? A disgruntled employee? I have no idea, but I would love to find out, and I’m even willing to offer a free meal for any credible information that leads me to a) my beloved skeleton, or b) the culprit.

“I have already had many regular customers, and especially, their kids, who have been appalled to come in and see no skeleton, so I will have to replace it as soon as I find someone — other than me — willing to climb up that ladder.”

Anyone know where Mr. Bones is? Call Tony at 503-325-6777 if you know where he’s hanging around.

BEWARE OF CHICKEN LITTLE



There seem to be a lot of chickens in Astoria, so: No matter how much you are tempted, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention** suggests you restrain yourself and not “kiss **backyard poultry** or snuggle them and then touch your face or mouth.” OK, fine.

Why? It’s because of a **salmonella bacteria** that backyard poultry carries — which doesn’t bother them one bit, mind you — that can make you sick as the proverbial dog.

You should also get a separate pair of “poultry shoes,” for when you’re roaming around in the yard with them, and keep the shoes outside. Anyway, you can read the extended list of “don’ts” at bit.ly/nochicks

And, of course, the CDC recommends you not allow your poultry pals to traipse around the house, either, the party poopers.

NO, NO GEORGETTE



A rare **giant oyster** was found at an oyster farm in western France in August, TheLocal.fr reports. The mighty mollusk, almost 10 inches long, and weighing in at a little over 3 pounds, is pictured in a photo courtesy of Agence France-Presse (AFP)/Viviers de la Guittière. It’s guesstimated that the bivalve is 13 to 15 years old; they can live from 35 to 65 years.

No, it will not be landing on anyone’s dinner table. Named Georgette, after a retiring worker, the oyster was put back into the Atlantic to keep growing.

“Quite a few people have offered to buy it,” Mathieu Naslin, who found Georgette, noted. “But we would not sell it ...”

EYES LIGHT UP



Mike Duncan wrote in about his former Astoria High School classmate, **Tom Peterson**, who was visiting Astoria from New Mexico, and brought along an incredibly detailed 16:1 scale model of his father’s fishing boat, the **Diehless**, that he had built from scratch.

“While growing up in Astoria (graduated 1970), my dad was a fisherman, and we grew up with life on the waterfront,” Tom explained. “When his legs couldn’t take crab fishing any longer, he decided to become a cash buyer on the river.

“A cash buyer buys salmon at a higher price than the cannery, and receives a commission on what he takes aboard. My dad used the Diehless, and previous boats, to do this job. He was well known on the river.

“The original Diehless was built in 1916 to serve as a tender for the salmon industry on the Lower Columbia River around Astoria. I (built) it in memory of my father, who owned her from the late 1970s through the early 1990s.

“In 1995, he died from a heart attack. When I came up from New Mexico for the funeral, I went to the **Columbia River Maritime Museum**, and purchased a copy of the the plans that replicated the Diehless.

“It took me over 20 years to complete the model, and it was built with all the keel part, ribs, beams and planking that would be in the original.” A video about the build is at bit.ly/diehless

“I brought the model up to Oregon to show my mother,” Tom recalled. “She is 94, and in a nursing home in Lebanon. There is not much mental stimulation in her life. When I opened up the travel case for the model her eyes lit up like old times.”

“Every time I opened up the model in the past week and a half, I saw eyes light up,” he added. “The memories and stories of everyone flooded out. That was worth the effort put into this build.”

RAISING THE FLAG



Fun rerun from June 6, 2008: **Lynda Stevens** called about a little ritual she sees every morning from her window at work at a local dental office. At 7 a.m., **David Armstrong** walks out of the **Rose River Inn Bed & Breakfast** at 1510 Franklin Ave., which he owns with his wife, **Pam**, and down the hill, carrying a neatly folded **American flag**.

He enters the narrow park just behind the inn on 15th Street, which once was the location of Astoria’s first post office, and raises the flag. He has done this daily for almost two years now.

However, when the Armstrongs moved to the inn, the flagpole was missing its rope, and the park was a mess. The tourists from the sternwheelers moored at the 17th Street Dock were driving by in tour buses, and the couple were a bit glum that the park was not putting Astoria’s best face forward.

So, the Armstrongs took matters into their own hands. They went into the lot, trimmed all of the bushes and spruced it up. A red, white and blue flag flying over the park would have completed the scene nicely, but the flagpole still had no rope.

Armstrong called **Dick Magathan** at Astoria Parks and Recreation Department about it, and Magathan arranged for an **Astoria Fire Department** fire truck to come by and string the flagpole’s rope. Now Magathan makes sure the appealing little park looks trimmed and tidy all of the time. When **Clatsop Post 12 American Legion** heard about the newly rigged flagpole, they donated a flag — the one Armstrong raises every morning.

All of which just goes to show you what one couple’s determination can do to make things a bit better for everyone. And if you’re ever walking down 15th Street, just south of Franklin Avenue, stop, take a look and maybe wander into that park — it’s a little piece of history.

REELY?



Scientists have been, once again, trying to find out if **Colossal Claude**’s Scottish cousin, the **Loch Ness Monster**, aka **Nessie**, really is roaming the loch, Loch-NessHunters.com reports.

To accomplish this, a team took “hundreds” of samples of water from Loch Ness and lochs nearby, and extracted the DNA from each sample, which gave them 500 million DNA sequences. Then the fun began: Comparing the sequences to DNA databases.

One thing the scientists are fairly certain about is that Nessie isn’t a Jurassic plesiosaur — the prevailing theory — which is rather disappointing. And he/she is not a giant shark, sturgeon or catfish, either.

“The remaining theory that we cannot refute based on the environmental DNA data obtained,” the website noted, “is that what people are seeing is a very large eel.” Eel?

“That said, any survey must accept that it may not find all species present because ... there remains the possibility that there is something present that we did not detect ... or our metabarcoding method could not detect ‘Nessie’ because the sequence could not be matched with anything in the sequence databases.”

This would be an excellent time for Nessie to chime in.

WELCOME, IRON HORSE



From The Daily Astorian, Sunday, Sept. 19, 1897: Knappa, Sept. 16 — The long expected arrival of the advance train of the **Astoria & Columbia River railroad** was the occasion for great rejoicing here today. Flags fluttered, and all Knappa was out in holiday attire ... happy school children ... presented the first locomotive with a set of flags and a huge bouquet ...

A wreath with the familiar name of **Hammond** in floral letters was hung across the headlight, and all did their best to make the iron horse welcome after awaiting his coming for so many years — 20 or more.

Note: Another locomotive is pictured. Businessman **Andrew B. Hammond** built the railroad line, which was completed in May 1898 and went from Portland to Seaside. It was absorbed by the Spokane Portland & Seattle Railway in the early 1900s, then abandoned or sold off in the 1990s. (bit.ly/acrr1, bit.ly/acrr2)

SAVE THE MURALS



“Do you love the ‘**Kindergarten Cop**’ murals at **Astor Elementary School**?” Astoria artist **Judith Niland** (pictured) wants to know. “I do! I painted them with the help of friends!” she explained “And repainted three times! But soon they will be gone.”

Why? The renovations planned at the school include destroying the whimsical murals, which have made so many smile. Want to express your dismay? Here’s your chance:

“**Craig Hoppes**, superintendent of Astoria schools, would like to meet with community members who are interested in an update on the (school) facility bond,” Judith wrote. The meeting is at **6:30 p.m. Oct. 2 at Astoria High School**.

“Personally” Judith added, “I am saddened by this loss of what is a piece of iconic local public art and Astoria history. And if you are, too, speak up. Hope to see you there!”