

CONTACT US
ewilson@dailyastorian.com
(971) 704-1718

COMMUNITY

FOLLOW US
facebook.com/
DailyAstorian

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ALMOST NORM AND WILLIE



Astorian **Norm Hooge** submitted a letter to the editor with a title of “**Just missed Willie**” that the Ear commandeered for this column.

“Now I’m on the beautiful Oregon Coast,” Norm wrote. “Born in 1934, I grew up as a farm kid south of San Antonio, Texas. My brother, four years older, enlisted in the Air Force. This made me a single child, living with conservative parents whose life was hard work and community. “My dad was a good farmer/rancher who knew the land. My mother ... had a passion for education and a better life.

“As a child, mother made me take piano lessons. I had little talent, but I guess the experience was good. I was a happy-go-lucky high schooler ...

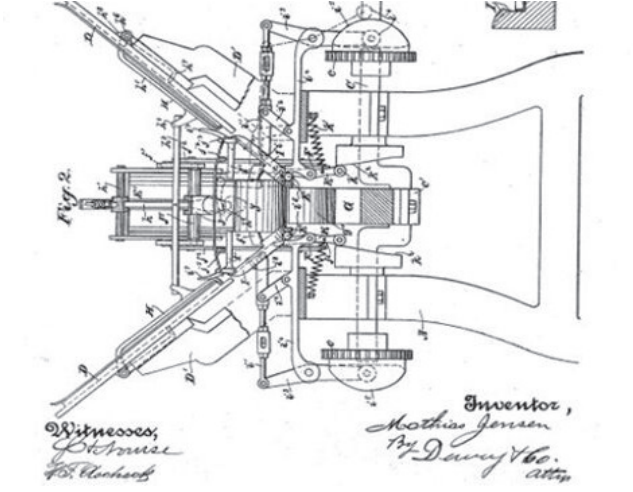
“Anyway, what does this have to do with **Willie Nelson**?” (Who was born in 1933, by the way. He is pictured, inset, courtesy of his Facebook page, @WillieNelson).

“Actually,” Norm continued, “I didn’t know much about Willie until the 1970s when he, Waylon Jennings and others became the outlaws of country music. Then I became a Willie fan, and still am.

“I finally saw Willie play at a beer joint near Helotes, Texas, in the 1980s. I was ready to clean the bus if they would let me hop on.”

“Years passed,” Norm added, “and I finally read one of Willie’s books to learn he was a DJ in the early 1950s — for radio station KPOP, on the farm next to ours.”

JENSEN’S INVENTIONS



From **The Daily Astorian, Aug. 7, 1883:**

- M. Jensen has received a patent for his admirable invention, the can-filling machine.

Note: The Jensen Can Filling Machine was the the first of its kind, invented for the salmon canning industry by Astorian **Mathias Jensen**, and manufactured by Jensen, **Sylvester Farrell** and **John Fox** at the **Astoria Iron Works**.

In November 1893, Jenson applied for another patent for “a device for putting heads upon cans,” and included a complicated blueprint for the design (shown), which was approved on April 10, 1894.

Jensen’s inventions were a boon to the salmon canning industry, which made an extremely popular product. (bit.ly/MJensen1, bit.ly/MJensen2)

TAKE AND BAKE



“You asked for it, so here it is,” longtime Astoria Clown **Bill Landwehr** wrote. “The **Astoria Clowns** will be selling their world famous **crab and shrimp melts** this Saturday, at the Astoria High School parking lot from 11 a.m. until sold out. Drive in, drive out.”

The Astoria Clowns were formed in 1956, and normally attend about 20 parades a year. They also provide scholarships for three high school seniors who are attending Clatsop Community College. Among the groups they support are the Boy Scouts, 4-H, Clatsop County Special Olympics and the Astoria Lions Club. The funds raised from this sale will go toward the 2021 college scholarships.

Anyone who has waited in line to purchase this coveted seafood treat at a local event will also recall it was well worth the wait — so here’s another chance.

“The clowns will be selling ready-to-bake half loaves only,” Bill added. “Crab half loaves will be \$30 and shrimp will be \$25. Cash only, please. Get them while they last!”

MERWYN MEMORIES



Here is the ninth installment of **Daymon Garrett Edward’s** (pictured, inset) memoir about owning and living in the **Waldorf Hotel** (aka the **Merwyn Hotel**) on Duane Street from 1979 to 1980. This excerpt describes another colorful monthly guest.

“**CoCo** was our most eccentric guest, and that is a title not easily won! CoCo and her **black dachshund, Princess**, lived in the front west corner room on the fourth floor, and I inherited CoCo and Princess when I took over the hotel ...

“CoCo had been a fixture in downtown Astoria for years, if not decades ... and when she retired she stayed (at the hotel), living on just her Social Security check.

“CoCo ... had a small refrigerator and a hot plate, both of which were against the hotel rules. Our wiring was old, and never designed to provide that much power to the rooms, and would often blow a fuse ...

“Day after day, the elevator would reach the lobby level and CoCo’s 5-foot waifish stature would struggle with the elevator’s scissor gate. ... Once CoCo emerged from the elevator, she would adjust her classic red coat and black beret over her dyed black bobbed hair.

“She wore black oversized horn-rimmed glasses with Coke-bottle lenses, which made her look like a blinking owl. She would be surrounded in a cloud of eau de toilette and have Japanese geisha red slapped on her trembling lips, sometimes off-kilter, depending on the time of day ...

“CoCo would spend time in the lobby sitting on our oversized red chairs or sofa ... and then CoCo and Princess would go into a comedy routine that they had perfected over the years ...

“CoCo (visited) Safeway for her daily ration of cigarettes and wine, and drop off her empty bottles at different city of Astoria trash receptacles around downtown. She didn’t want anyone to know how many bottles of wine she consumed in a day.

“... CoCo would look one way and then the other, then hold her coat open around the receptacle and drop the wine bottle in, and then saunter away. From the back she looked like a woman flasher ...”

Stay tuned for CoCo, Part 2.

NASTY ASTY’S DEMISE



The cruiser **USS Astoria (CA-34, aka Nasty Asty)**, pictured, sank **Aug. 9, 1942**, in the South Pacific during the **Battle of Savo Island**. She is pictured in a U.S. Navy photo.

Named after Astoria, she was one of three ships that entered the waters around **Guadalcanal** Aug. 7 — third in line after the **Vincennes** and **Quincy** — to support U.S. Marines landing in the area.

Astoria’s **Capt. W. G. Greenman**, who was wounded in the battle, later sent reports describing the action, which started early in the morning Aug. 9, when the convoy was hit with a surprise attack by an “enemy force of unknown number.”

All three ships fired back, but Vincennes was hit immediately, exploded, keeled over and disappeared. Quincy was also hit, set afire from bow to stern, blew up and sank.

“Astoria was hit repeatedly throughout this period,” the captain reported, and fires raged throughout the ship. Bucket brigades were formed, another crew worked to attend to the wounded, and a salvage crew from a nearby vessel boarded to help.

Even after hours of effort, the fires were still not under control, repairs to the holes in the hull weren’t holding and the ship was listing.

The coup de grace was when a 5-inch magazine exploded on the Astoria, blowing a hole in the side of the ship under the waterline. The salvage group quickly scrambled or jumped off the ship. A few minutes later, the USS Astoria capsized and sank to her final resting spot in **Iron Bottom Sound**.

The world did not hear what happened until Oct. 12, 1942, because of a gag order. In the meantime, new vessels called “**Vengeance Ships**,” to replace those lost, were launched. One of them was named the Astoria. (tinyurl.com/USSasty)

‘SPREADSHEET OF TERROR’



The 1998 murder investigation of 15-year-old **Heather Fraser** (pictured) was featured on **Investigation Discovery’s ‘On the Case with Paula Zahn’** last night,” the **Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office** posted on Facebook Tuesday.

“The Clatsop County Major Crime Team and Washington County homicide detectives investigated and determined **Martin Allen Johnson** murdered Heather in his residence in Washington County, and threw her body off the Astoria Bridge ...”

The episode was partially filmed in Astoria, and on the beaches near Fort Stevens, and features some Clatsop County locals, including **Von Baldwin** (who found the body), retired Warrenton Police Officer **Alfonzo Fontana** and Lt. **Kristen Hanthorn** of the Clatsop County Sheriff’s Office.

The episode, “**Spreadsheet of Terror**,” is available online with your cable login information at bit.ly/PZfraser or on the Investigation Discovery GO app.

According to the Washington County District Attorney’s office (bit.ly/WashCoDA), Johnson’s 2001 trial verdict was overturned in 2017, and a new trial ordered.

In November 2019, a jury only took three hours to unanimously find Johnson guilty of eight counts of first degree murder for the rape and murder of Fraser. He was sentenced to life in prison without the possibility of parole.

PEACE TREES



Today is the **75th anniversary of the bombing of Hiroshima**, Japan, which was pivotal in ending World War II.

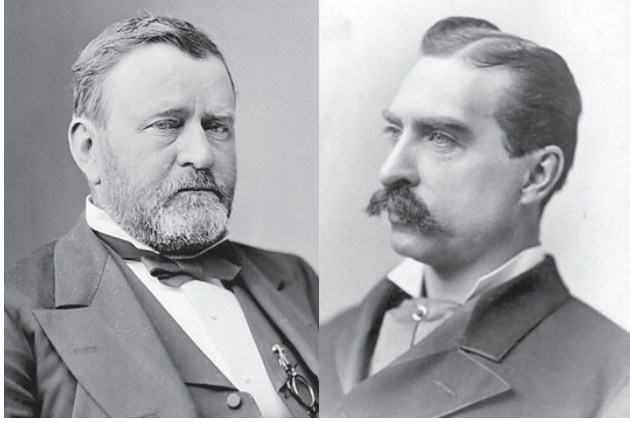
Hiroshima resident **Hideko Tamura Snider** was 10 years old when the atomic bomb was dropped. Her family suffered losses, and she was badly injured. She is pictured in a photo from her Facebook page.

Snider now lives in Medford, and is the co-founder of **One Sunny Day Initiatives** (osdinitiatives.com), an organization dedicated to peace and a nuclear-free future. One of their efforts is bringing seeds from Hiroshima trees that survived the 1945 bombing to be germinated and planted as “**peace trees**” in Oregon.

There are now 45 such trees in Oregon, one of which, a ginkgo, will be planted in **Cartwright Park in Seaside**. The Oregon Department of Forestry, to commemorate the 75th anniversary, released an **online map** showing the locations of the peace trees at bit.ly/PeaceTrees

When told about how many communities had planted the seedlings, Snider wrote that it “filled me with joy, remembering the long journey for both the tree(s) and myself. Thank you, people of Oregon, for your enduring faith in the future, in the resilience of life.”

BULLET CHARM



Civil War history oddity from **The Daily Morning Astorian, Aug 6, 1885:**

It was on the back of **William E. Sheridan** (right), the tragedian, used as a rest, that **Gen. Ulysses Grant** (left) wrote his famous order for **Gen. William Sherman** to advance on the left at the Battle of Lookout Mountain and Mission Ridge.

Sheridan was then a captain in the Army in charge of the signal corps, and personally signaled the above mentioned order, the original autographed copy of which he now has in his possession ... (along with) a bullet which pierced his body through, and came near costing him his life at the same battle. This bullet Mr. Sheridan now wears as a watch charm.