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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

THE CRAZIEST THING



“I was walking my dog Monday morning on the (Astoria) Riverwalk in Alderbrook, behind Violet LaPlante Park, and I discovered a **huge round fish** that’s 6 feet long,” Astorian **Stacey McKenney** said. “It was the craziest thing.”

The fish, which had a top and bottom dorsal fin, but no tail, was partially submerged, and looked like a log at first.

Stacey contacted **Keith Chandler** at the **Seaside Aquarium**, who sent **Tiffany Boothe** over to take a look and some photos (one is shown). Tiffany identified the critter as a mola mola, or **Pacific Sunfish**.

“... Mola mola are one of the largest species of fish in the world,” the aquarium posted Tuesday on Facebook, “and they just happen to visit Oregon’s northern coast during the summer.”

“When we say one of the world’s largest fish, we mean it! Weighing in at a hefty 5,000 pounds, and growing up to 10 feet long and 14 feet tall, the Pacific Sunfish looks like an experimental creature from a mad laboratory.

“Lucky for the rest of us they’re friendly giants, and feed solely on some of the smallest creatures on the planet. Their diet includes jellies, salps and other zooplankton, which all can be plentiful along Oregon’s Coast in summertime.”

“If you would like to see this giant in person,” the post concluded, “head down to the end of 45th Street, take the gravel path down to the Riverwalk, and head downriver just a bit. Warning: This fish has been dead for quite some time, and is quite stinky.”

LAUNCHING LIBERTY



The **miniboat S/V Liberty**, part of the **Columbia River Maritime Museum’s Miniboat Program**, was launched July 25. She was built by a seventh grade class at Wy’East Middle School in Vancouver, Washington (pictured).

Alysia Johnson (pictured inset), daughter of retired bar pilot, **Capt. Robert Johnson**, works for a company running ships that lay fiber optic undersea cables. She coordinated with **Nate Sandel** at the museum, and helped make the launch possible.

“I was able to secure permission from the captain for us to bring the miniboat aboard,” Alysia wrote. “She was an object of some curiosity to the crew, although there are a few people onboard, myself included, who helped launch a previous boat three years ago.

“We launched the boat in calm weather as we were getting ready to start the cable project, and I post weekly updates to our bulletin board with pictures of the GPS track from the website.”

You, too, can follow the the miniboats at bit.ly/trackminis

WHERE’S THE SUB?



Fun rerun: The **Oregon Coast Project’s** dive team hopes to solve a local World War II mystery: Did the submarine chaser SC-536 (pictured, before it was renamed) **sink a Japanese submarine** off the Oregon Coast in 1943?

Robert Wood, a sailor on the sub chaser (now the fishing vessel Moonlight Maid), insists that near Cape Look-out the SC-536 fired a depth charge at an enemy submarine that silenced the vessel below. Even though officers filed reports of the incident, the reports were later dismissed.

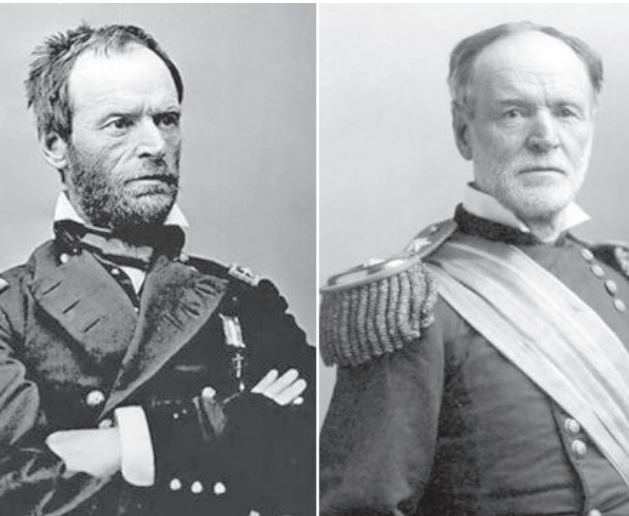
After discovering an “undersea structure,” and compiling infrared images and sonar data that reinforce 1943 first-hand accounts, they are now in the final stages of identifying what might be the sunken submarine.

The team’s blog is here: oregoncoastproject.wordpress.com

(*In One Ear*, 9/28/2012)

Note: This project seems to have fallen off the radar. Update next week.

THE OLD GENERAL



From The Daily Astorian, Aug. 28, 1883:

• From every flagpole yesterday the Stars and Stripes flooded in honor of Gen. Sherman, the general of the Army, who for the second time in three years was at Astoria.

Note: This little snippet was followed by an article explaining the visit of **Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman**, one of the most feared generals in the Union Army, who wrought a path of destruction across the South during the **Civil War**, destroying railroads and capturing cities.

This stopover did not include actually setting foot in Astoria; the general stayed on the deck of the Oregon, which docked here for a short time, and drew a large crowd of admirers.

The “unassuming old man ... has the same twinkle in his eye, the same grim way of closing his jaw, that he had 15 years ago,” the reporter observed, “but the essence of time is dying his hair white, and he doesn’t move so spry as he did.”

When the gangplank went down, Cushing Post No. 14 of the **Grand Army of the Republic** boarded and were introduced to the general by the post commander. “The old general’s face brightened up,” the reporter noted, “and we doubt if any other form of reception would have given him as much genuine pleasure as did that simple little act of courtesy on the part of the post.”

When the Oregon headed out to sea, the general went aft, looking at the shoreline, “as though deciding just where he would station his headquarters in case of need ... It was his last look at the Columbia in an official capacity.”

The legendary Gen. Sherman, 71, died on Valentine’s Day, 1884. Even his funeral evoked a Civil War footnote when **Joseph E. Johnston**, 84, a well-known general in the **Confederate Army**, served as a pallbearer as a tribute to his former enemy.

Out of respect, despite the wintry weather, Johnston would not wear a hat to fulfill his duty. Consequently, he caught a cold, which became pneumonia, and died a few weeks later. (bit.ly/GenWTSherman)

BOLTING BUCKEYE



From The Daily Astorian, Aug. 27, 1882, after the British bark **Glengarry** went to sea the previous afternoon, “**Adventures of a Buckeye**”:

• Early last week a young man from Ohio struck the town broke, and finding no congenial employment, shipped on board the **Glengarry**.

He didn’t know the mizzenmast from the jibboom, but got his advance, and when the ship **Brenham** was swinging alongside, our **Buckeye** friend slid over the vessel’s side and struck out for the shore. Scrambling up the beach, he lit out for the timber. Pursuit seemed useless, and the **Glengarry** went out to sea, minus an able Ohio seaman.

About half past 11 last night, the modern **Leander** slipped into the office and wanted to know if the **Glengarry** had “got out.” We assured him that she had.

“Well,” said the member from Ohio, “I’m all right. I’m the fellow that swam ashore and I’m \$30 ahead.” And he went forth into the dark and voiceless night.

We predict a brief but brilliant career for the gentleman from Ohio.

Note: The **Merchant Seamen’s Act of 1790** rules concerning fugitive seamen were considerably less forgiving.

If the **Buckeye** had been caught, he would have been imprisoned without bail, and fined twice the amount of his advance. If he had hung around town, anyone caught harboring him would be fined \$10 a day, or about \$250 now. (bit.ly/Seamen1790)

However, with that \$30 he swiped, which is about \$760 today, the errant sailor had more than enough to skedaddle a good distance from Astoria, and the coast.

WHEELER-DEALER



“A few weeks ago you ran an article about the board from the ‘**Game of Astoria**,’” **Rosemary Johnson**, Astoria planning consultant, wrote. “I just found my unused game.”

“It was a fundraiser for the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association,” she explained. “The game was then sold to raise money. There were only a limited number printed.”

These civic board games were the brainchild of **Michael Glenn Productions** in Romulus, Michigan, in the 1980s. He was prohibited from using the word “Monopoly,” especially since the game was a direct knockoff, so he called it “**Wheeler-Dealer**” (bit.ly/LATastgame).

As complicated as Monopoly, there were four levels of play. Instead of a jail space on the board, where the player got stuck for two turns, the spot was called “School.” Rosemary sent photos, which can be seen at bit.ly/AstoriaGame

Among the many companies mentioned in “**Wheeler-Dealer: The Game of Astoria**” are Bee-Line Roofing Co., Hauer’s Cyclery, Erickson Floral Co., Labor Temple Cafe & Bar and Loop-Jacobsen Inc. Jewelers.

“You could buy a (game) property as advertising,” Rosemary added, “and smaller donations toward production of the game became ‘Notable Citizens.’ I was part of the original game, and am listed as ‘Curt and Rosemary Johnson.’”

A BIG HONOR



“I wanted to share that I, and my partner, **Andrew Volk**, just last week were named to **Wine Enthusiast’s 40 Under 40 Tastemakers of 2020**,” **Briana Volk** wrote. “The list recognizes the young winemakers, brewers, beverage directors, grape growers and other movers and shakers who are changing today’s beverage industry.” The couple is pictured, courtesy of **Matt Sayles**.

They lived in Portland before moving to Portland, Maine, where they are the co-owners of **Portland Hunt + Alpine Club** (huntandalpineclub.com), which opened in 2013. If Briana looks familiar, there’s a good reason why. Briana **Bononcini** Volk grew up just outside Astoria, and graduated from **Knappa High School**.

The Volks moved back to New England to be closer to Andrew’s roots. Their club has received two nominations for **James Beard** Awards for for Outstanding Cocktail Program, and was named as one of the 19 “Best Cocktail Bars in America” in 2019 by Thrillist.com. You can read the Wine Enthusiast article about the couple’s latest accolade at bit.ly/Volkswine

“It is a really big honor to be placed on this list,” Briana added, “and we were both honestly shocked.”

ROCK THE LIGHTHOUSE



A scary item from **The Daily Astorian, Aug. 27, 1882**:

• Some time ago, we published an item relative to a **15-pound chunk of basalt**, which was blown from the surface of the water to the top of the **lighthouse on Tillamook Rock**.

“The idea of such a weight being lifted to that height, **136 feet**, was a little surprising to many of our exchanges (but) we are assured by Messrs. Rowe and Collins that such was actually the case ...

“That fragment of a Paleozoic age, which has attracted the attention of so many in our office, is simply one of many such chunks that are lifted to the top of the tower when winds and waves sweep wildly over lonely Tillamook.”