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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

ELFVING’S SHENANIGANS



Did you know that Astoria’s beloved ferry, **Tourist No. 2**, is believed by many to have her very own ghost?

The ghost is **Capt. Fritz Elfving**, her original captain, whose photo (shown) was hung at the bottom of the stairs of the main passenger cabin when she was the **MV Kirkland** with **Argosy Cruises**.

“Any incident of the photo being removed or relocated,” an Argosy Cruises publication says, “resulted in unexplained events such as shattered glassware, rearranged furniture and other mysterious occurrences.”

Kevin Clark, CEO of Argosy Cruises, says that “there are stories of footprints in a newly vacuumed carpet, or slightly oiled foot prints from the engine room out to the salon, all done after the boat had been closed up for the night.” He kindly offered to see what’s out there in “Argosy folklore.”

“As to the stories of mysterious things happening on the vessel, I have more time on the boat than anyone else in the company,” **Brock Gilman**, a former captain of the Kirkland, responded, “and I had never experienced any of the shenanigans.”

Well, OK, but then there’s this, from one of the other captains, **Vince Tougas**: “Some of the crew were convinced that the boat was haunted, because strange things would happen — many strange noises and some crew say they have seen Fritz’s ghost.”

So there you have it. And by the way, the Elfving portrait was still with the vessel when she was sold to her current owner, **Capt. Christian Lint**. Elfving is home again at last.

HORROR GALORE



Since this **Halloween** will, unfortunately, be a stay-at-home non-event for most, how about binging on some free horror/science fiction **B-movies**?

For a collection of horror titles you’ve never heard of, such as the inimitable “**The Earth Dies Screaming**,” check out “**Classic Horror Films**” at tinyurl.com/hallohorror1.

Then there’s archive.org, which has a plethora of pithy titles, like “Night of the Living Dead,” and one of the Ear’s all-time favorites as an earlet, “The Screaming Skull,” not to mention that cinematic gem “The Wasp Woman.” The whole sci-fi/horror collection is at bit.ly/gasp_yikes.

Bonus bonbon: How about watching the 1931 classic, “**Dracula**” free on PeacockTV.com, starring **Vampira**’s cohort in cinematic crime, **Bela Lugosi** (pictured)? He does not drink ... wine.

OLD TRADITION



From **The Daily Morning Astorian**, Oct. 31, 1884, a glimpse of a **Victorian Halloween**:

“Tonight is All Hallowe’en. The word awakens a good many memories of old times, of nights when around the fireside was gathered in a merry party of young folks and old; some burning nuts, others with a contrivance rigged with a wheel in a candle so that he who missed his bite burned his nose; others bobbing for apples in the tub; others still holding the undivided interest of their awe-struck listeners with the thrilling ghost story, and all enjoying themselves in their own fashion on the 31st of October, the night when old tradition says the spirits of the departed walk the Earth and revisit the pale glimpses of the moon.”

IS THE CAPTAIN HOME?



In 1883, the **mansion** on the corner of Eighth Street was built for Astoria’s most famous Columbia River Bar pilot, **Capt. George Flavel**, and his wife, two daughters and son.

Since Astoria is famous for its plethora of ghosts and paranormal activity, one has to wonder if the Flavel House Museum is a hot spot. The answer appears to be yes.

A “**My Little Cottage**” blog post from May 22, 2009 (bit.ly/spookflavel), notes that one of the museum volunteers told her that a music box that used to be in the music room would randomly play all by itself; one of the blog commentators actually heard it.

The blogger also mentioned seeing a floating clear orb in the same room. “Could this be one of the sisters watching us tour the room they so loved when alive?” she wondered. It should be noted that no camera flash is allowed in the museum.

“I took a few photos (in the main bathroom),” she recalled, “and then felt a tap on my shoulder and heard ‘Look again’” — but no one was there.

“I was last to leave this room. So I clicked another photo and saw an orb was now over the tub area.” She asked out loud, “if someone is in here with me, can you show up more so I can see you better?” A much larger orb appeared.

Judging from the comments at the bottom of the blog, the writer is far from alone in her odd experiences at the house. Kaylene said: “... I, too, have several pictures with orbs ... (and) they are the same as mine, just in different locations. I also had an experience in Capt. Flavel’s room. I felt someone grip my upper right arm as if to pull me back.”

The Biscotti Lady commented: “I ... felt a choking sensation in the captain’s room, as if a portion of the oxygen had been removed.” He died at home, by the way, after a long illness.

Back to the wandering orbs. One YouTuber, **Hot-MamaTravel**, actually has a short video clip of an orb traveling across a room in the house (bit.ly/flavelorb). A screenshot is shown.

“While cruising the Disney Wonder, we made a stop in Astoria, Oregon,” HotMama wrote. “Our highlight was visiting the home of Captain Flavel, where I believe I caught an orb on camera.”

“I saw it as I was filming, and when I said hello to it, the orb stopped then slowly floated by me. Probably just as shocked to see me as I was to see it.”

Maybe a Flavel House visit is in order?

GLAMOUR GHOUL



Halloween requires a mention of Astoria’s own wasp-waisted glamour ghoul, **Vampira**, aka Astoria High School grad **Maila Nurmi**.

In 1954 Los Angeles, she was the first late-night horror movie mistress on Saturdays with “**The Vampira Show**,” introducing painfully bad movies while sporting talon-length fingernails, long black hair, a skin-tight black dress and ghoulish makeup.

She would start the show by slithering straight up to the camera and belting out a glass-shattering scream. Then, smiling coyly, she would say, “Screaming relaxes me so.” Hear it here: tinyurl.com/vampstream

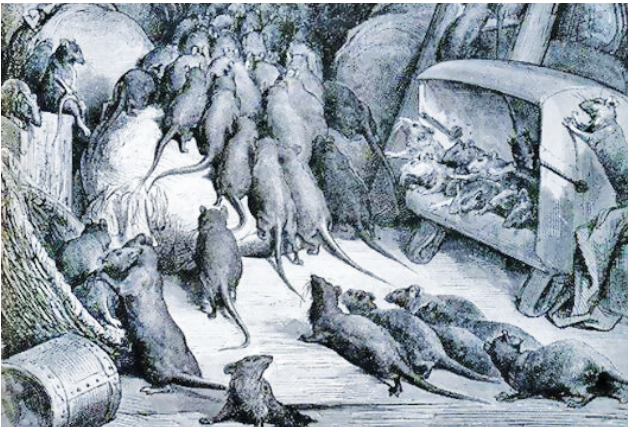
While she achieved fame with her TV show, she also became notorious in 1989 for suing younger horror movie hostess **Cassandra Peterson** (aka **Elvira**) for \$10 million for copyright infringement.

“There is no Elvira. There’s only a pirated Vampira,” Vampira sniped in an Associated Press story. “Cassandra Peterson slavishly copied my product and made a fortune. America has been duped.” The court disagreed, and sided with Elvira; the lawsuit was thrown out (bit.ly/VampGoul).

Vampira found eternal infamy starring with **Bela Lugosi** — the Hungarian actor famous for his portrayal of Count Dracula in 1931 — in what many consider to be the worst film ever made, 1959’s “**Plan 9 from Outer Space**.”

Ironically, the stinker would have been a perfect fit for her TV show. Don’t believe the movie could possibly be that bad? Doubters can make themselves utterly wretched by watching it at bit.ly/Plan9ugh

OH, RATS!



From **George Flavel**’s Facebook page (tinyurl.com/georgeflv): “**Oct. 18, 1907** — A professional **rat exterminator** has been in Astoria for the past couple of weeks and his work has been very successful.

“As soon as he catches a rat in his trap, he would dip it in coal tar and turn it loose to return. Rats have a particular aversion to coal tar and will not stay near it, so after a few rats received the treatment, the premises were entirely cleared of rodents.

“The rats were not killed, but driven away to adjoining properties, so the man had continuing contracts from all the neighboring buildings.”

Pictured, some lovely rats from a **Gustave Dore** illustration, “**The League of the Rats**” (1868). Speaking of rats, and a truly scary story especially appropriate for Halloween time, readers who want their timbers shivered should delve into **H.P. Lovecraft**’s “**The Rats in the Walls**.” You can read it here: tinyurl.com/ratswalls.

When the Ear read it as a child, many sleepless nights ensued, as the dank waterside Victorian-era homestead really did have rats scampering about (loudly) and chittering in the plaster walls. But that’s a tale for another dank and stormy evening.

MONSTER BASH MEMORIES



Fun rerun: “This year marks the 30th anniversary of the **Astoria Monster Bash** (Oct. 31, 1984) sponsored by the city of Astoria and Chamber of Commerce,” **Rosemary Johnson**, city planner, told the Ear.

“The party portion of the original event was held at the former YMCA building, with the crowd overflowing into the Hughes-Ransom Mortuary parking lot. The parade included Disney character actor **Dallas McKennon** as grand marshal, and the party included autographs by the **Goonies**.”

From TheGoonies.org: “Crowds packed the small lobby so tightly that no one could move. Even with a bull horn, instructions could not be heard over the excitement of the multitude of kids.

“Eventually, the adult stars volunteered to come to help control some of the crowd by signing autographs in another room.”

Rosemary is looking for more photos of that day; one is shown. Have some to share? Contact her at rosemary-jcort@gmail.com (*In One Ear*, 10/17/2014)

Note: It’s six years later, and she’s still looking for more photos!

MAINTAIN DECORUM



Since Astoria is believed to be loaded with **spirits**, you might just encounter one. So, what is the **proper etiquette** on such an occasion?

A 1921 article addressed this thorny issue of good form (tinyurl.com/manners-please), and below some hints are offered for your edification:

- We cannot urge you too strongly to appear perfectly natural when receiving a ghost. If you are seated, remain so. You won’t gain anything by standing up.

- Always speak to a ghost when it calls. Never permit it to stand willy-nilly on the doorsill for any length of time. This little courtesy is only its due.

- Make your salutation perfectly natural ... This will start things off pleasantly, and open the way for confidences.

- If the message is of importance, you must conduct yourself accordingly, and listen with an absorbed expression.

Whatever you do, and whomever you meet, just remember this: Maintaining decorum is essential.