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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

A FEW ALARMING FACTS



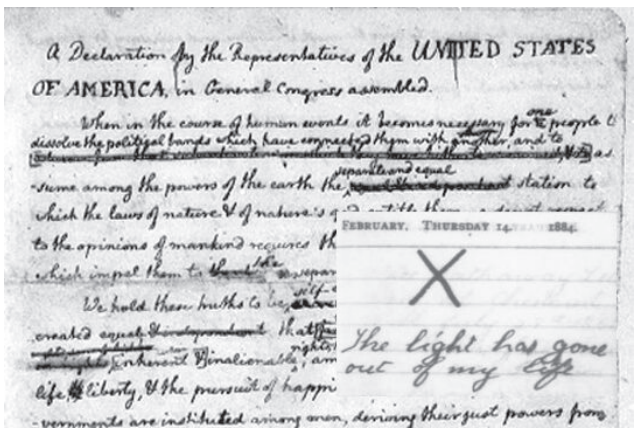
The 10th anniversary of the devastating March 11, 2011, Japanese earthquake and tsunami is today, and the event should give North Coasters some pause for thought, since the disaster originated in an undersea subduction zone very similar to the Cascadia, just off the Oregon Coast.

Here are a few alarming facts to contemplate from LiveScience.com (bit.ly/2011tsu), along with Hokusai's drawing, "The Great Wave of Kanagawa":

- The shaking from the 9.0 magnitude earthquake — which shifted the earth on its axis and shortened the length of a day by about a microsecond — lasted nearly six minutes.
- In the year following the event, there were more than 5,000 aftershocks, the biggest being magnitude 7.9.
- Honshu, Japan's main island, moved 8 feet eastward; the island's north coast dropped 2 feet.
- The tsunami was so far-reaching that it broke icebergs off of Antarctica's Sulzberger Shelf.
- The Pacific Plate slid 79 feet westward near the epicenter of the earthquake.
- The tsunami wave reached a runup height of almost 128 feet at Miyako City in Iwate Prefecture, Japan, and flooded inland for 6 miles in Sendai, a city on Honshu.
- An estimated 5 million tons of debris was swept out to sea in the tsunami's aftermath.
- And, one last note: The earthquake's infrasound (low frequency rumble) was picked up by a satellite orbiting in space.

Here's one more thing to think about: Is your "go bag" ready?

GETTING ACQUAINTED



A little gem for history buffs: The Library of Congress has completed digitizing the presidential papers of 23 early presidents, consisting of more than 3.3 million images, including those of Ulysses S. Grant, who visited early Astorian Adam Van Dusen at his store.

According to Smithsonian magazine (bit.ly/SM23pres), the contents contain 13-year-old George Washington's geometry notes, Woodrow Wilson's love letters, Thomas Jefferson's handwritten draft of the Declaration of Independence (pictured) and William Howard Taft's telegram messages about the Titanic survivors.

Theodore Roosevelt's diary entry on Valentine's Day, Feb. 14, 1884, the day both his wife and mother died, consists of a large black X and the words, "the light has gone out of my life" (shown, inset).

Interested? Get acquainted with these former presidents at bit.ly/LOC23pres

LOCAL BREVITIES



Tidbits from The Daily Morning Astorian, March 12, 1895:

- It is understood from good authority that the light at Cape Disappointment will soon be changed from a first-class light to a fourth-class light, probably a colored light. The light now at the Cape will be removed to North Head, a point about a mile north of the present location.
- A road will be cut through to the new lighthouse from Fort Canby, thence down onto North Beach. This will give an excellent thoroughfare through to the beach, which will be greatly appreciated by the residents of the fort.
- Wanted: Position as driver or salesman in a store. Speak English, Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian. Address C.P.S. in care of Astorian office.

WHO'S THAT LADY?



Richard Botteri, a retired lawyer who lives in Portland, offered up a history mystery, for someone to hopefully solve, about an Italian woman who lived in Seaside in the 1950s who had a connection to Italian dictator Benito Mussolini (pictured). Below is the short version of his story; the full version is at bit.ly/BMusso

In 1955 or 1956, an Italian naval vessel visited Portland (or Astoria), and the Italian woman invited members of the crew to a barbecue at her home. Richard's aunt, mother and sister also attended; he was deemed too young to go.

It rained during the event, so his relatives and their hostess gathered in the kitchen, where his aunt asked about the woman's Mussolini connection. Richard's sister remembers the story.

In 1943, when World War II was going badly for Italy, the woman was Mussolini's secretary and lover. Mussolini had been removed as head of the Fascist Party and was already in trouble. Worse yet, he had been summoned by King Victor Emmanuel III, who had Mussolini summarily arrested and imprisoned at a hotel up in the mountains. Adolf Hitler rescued him, but Mussolini still came to a bad end later.

"The generally accepted history is that Mussolini did not expect to have any repercussions when he went to visit the king," Richard wrote. "However, the woman's story suggests something different. She accompanied him to the meeting, but stayed outside. He warned her that he might be taken prisoner, and if that happened, she was ... (to) not look at him, or acknowledge him in any way."

"She waited in a park nearby, sitting on a swing, attracting no attention. When she saw Mussolini being taken away, she remained in the distance without moving or saying anything. He did not look in her direction. They drove him off. She never saw him again. If her story is true, Mussolini was aware he might be taken. This changes the history of this turbulent time in Italy's past."

Richard and his sister hope to learn the name of the Italian woman (or of any of her family members), and find out how she wound up in Seaside. If you can help, contact the Ear at 971-704-1718 or ewilson@dailyastorian.com

TWO BIRDS, ONE STONE



Jeff Daly posted a news article on Facebook the other day, accompanied by a one-word explanation: "Interesting."

The article, "Historic ferry returns to Astoria as tourist attraction," appears to be from The Washington Times, dated Aug. 1, 2016.

The first three paragraphs are the same as the original Associated Press wire story about the Tourist No. 2 ferry coming home. But then, the narrative rolls off in a decidedly tongue-in-cheek direction:

"Engineers are studying the weight/lift ratio of the ship built in 1924 to determine how many helicopters would be required to place the Astoria icon to a dry resting place in Heritage Square at a spot called the Safeway hole."

"The main floor could be used as a community gathering spot for music, Sunday market and other events. Affordable retail shops will be available for made in Astoria products and the top floor will be made into an Airbnb with income to cover the expenses of the operation."

"Access would be through the Astoria Underground," which is Jeff's local tour business.

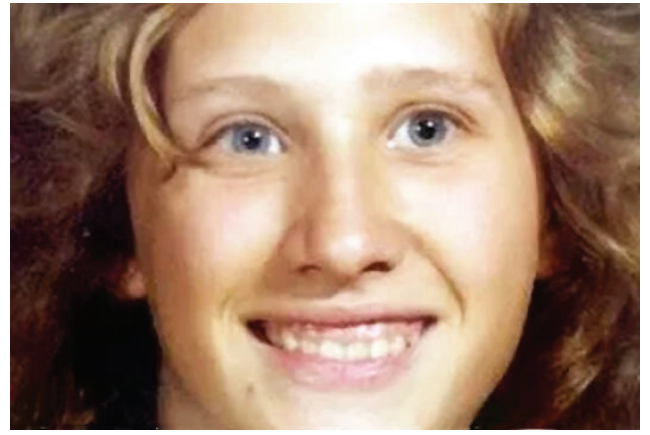
Some actually believed Jeff's "story" was true, and the rest wished it was, since it solved both the what-to-do-with-the-ferry problem and the unsightly hole issue. It wasn't until Jeff suggested that "pilot" Helmet John (John Wedell) — Astoria's street-dwelling icon — "is crunching the numbers and is willing to give it a try," that the gig was up.

Just think about it, though. The Tourist No. 2 is a wooden vessel. How long would she last dry docked?

Well, the 186-foot HMS Victory (pictured inset), a wooden British warship launched in 1765, has been successfully dry-docked since 1922. She is a huge tourist attraction at the National Museum of the Royal Navy in Portsmouth, England. (hms-victory.com)

The Tourist No. 2 is only 98 feet long, but there's still a rather major obstacle to making Jeff's pipe dream come true: How to move her safely inland to the Safeway hole. Helicopters? Teleportation? Blimp? That's a conundrum for greater minds to contemplate.

THE MYSTERY CONTINUES



One of Clatsop County's most puzzling cold cases, the disappearance of 17-year-old Joan "Joanie" Leigh Hall on Sept. 30, 1983, got some attention on The Lars Larson Show (bit.ly/LarsonFutch) on Feb. 26. Incidentally, Joanie would have been 55 on Feb. 24.

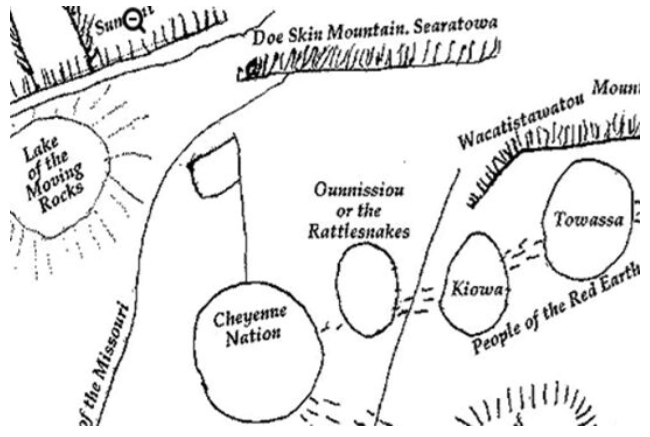
Larson was interviewing Jason Futch, a true crime podcaster and missing persons advocate (anchor.fm/fromthevaultpod). Although he now lives in Florida, Futch used to live in Portland and has been following Joanie's case for several years.

When Futch recently made a public records request to see Joanie's case files, he ran into an unexpected roadblock, which is why he was on Larson's show.

Futch was informed that the investigative records of the Clatsop County Sheriff's Office, Oregon State Police and the Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside and Cannon Beach police departments are all sealed from public disclosure under a protective order signed by Judge Paula Brownhill on Dec. 10, 2018. He also said the records of this almost 40-year-old case are sealed until 2093.

And the mystery continues, with no end in sight.

MONUMENTAL MAP



Fun rerun: A map, drawn by Native American Aricara tribal leader Too Né for Meriwether Lewis and William Clark, was recently discovered by a University of New Mexico graduate student, according to a press release from the Lewis & Clark Trail Heritage Foundation (lewisandclark.org).

Too Né drew the map sometime in 1805 or 1806 and even joined the Corps of Discovery for a bit to attempt to negotiate peace between his tribe and the Mandan.

The map points out landmarks such as "poisoned water" and "place where one consults destiny" along with where several native groups lived, including the Arapaho blue bead people, Kansa bear people and people who carry on their heads. The map is at tinyurl.com/TooNeMap

One historian, Clay Jenkinson, noted that Too Né was as important to the expedition as Sacagawea.

The map, he added, "represents the most important discovery in the Lewis and Clark world since 55 letters by William Clark were discovered in a Louisville attic in the 1980s." (In On Ear, 4/27/18)

SAFE AND SOUND



For North Coast cat lovers: An incredible at-sea cat rescue happened earlier this month off the coast of Thailand, NationThailand.com reports.

When a fishing vessel caught fire and began to sink 8 miles out at sea, the crew abandoned ship. The Thai navy was called in to check for any oil spillage, and as the sailors approached the sinking vessel, they noticed four drenched and terrified cats perched on a beam, with only a few feet left above the water.

The crew immediately took action, Facebook user Nookool.b reported. The crewmen jumped in the water (Nookool's photo is shown, inset) and carried each cat on their backs until all four were saved. A closeup of one of the rescuers is shown, courtesy of YahooNews (bit.ly/fourcats).

The four cats were dehydrated, but not injured, and are healthy. The eight fishermen were fine, too. They were rescued by a passing fishing vessel, according to NationThailand.com.