

Shepherd: 'I remember those war years quite well'

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Turns out, Fort Stevens was being fired upon by a Japanese submarine.

Fortunately for the residents of the fort and Hammond, the rounds did not hit anything. The fort also did not return fire — it was a long shot to hit something, and it would have given away the fort's location.

If nighttime blackouts weren't already in place, they soon were, as residents had to turn off all lights at night, and "you couldn't even drive your car with headlights on at night," Shepherd said.

"I remember those war years quite well. When the Japanese bombed the fort, I was just a month short of being 10. There were soldiers down here, and sailors at Tongue Point, and Coast Guard in Hammond.

"We had a lot of service people around. When I was in my teen years, my friends and I were able to ride our bikes around town, and there was never a problem with any soldiers."

Including her future husband.

A descendant of Comcomly

Carolyn Petersen met John Shepherd while swimming at Coffenbury Lake, later attended high school and college together, and were married by 1951.

The couple raised their children (four girls, one boy), watched them graduate from Warrenton High School, and saw them become, among other professions, college volleyball players and a fire captain.

Shepherd is also a confirmed seventh-generation descendant of Comcomly, the famous one-eyed chief of the Chinook nation.

In the early days of Fort Astoria, the Hudson's Bay Co. made Comcomly the first official pilot for the mouth of the Columbia River, where the Chinook people would launch canoes and guide the incoming ships upriver.

"I'm a member of the tribe. My kids are all members, as are the grandkids," she said.

One of Comcomly's wives, of the Chehalis, had a daughter named Ka-Hat-Lau, or "Princess Margaret." Margaret married French Canadian Louis Rondeau, who had daughter Mary Angelica Rondeau.

The line eventually led to Agnes Henry and her husband, Arthur Rubens. The Rubens' daughter was Mary Carolyn Rubens, who married Conrad Petersen, Shepherd's parents.

Shepherd's grandfather on her father's side, Gottfried Petersen, was from Germany. His future wife, Elisabeth Augusta Maria Meyer, "grew up 18 miles away from him in Germany, but they didn't meet until they got to Astoria," she said.

In the book "Clatsop



The Shepherd family, from left to right: Carol, Christine, Carolyn, John Sr., Cynthia, Connie and John Jr.

County, Oregon: Its History, Legends and Industries," by Emma Gene Miller, Shepherd "was one of (Comcomly's) last heirs to get an 80-acre section of land, tax free, in northwestern Washington."

She was given a blue card by the commissioner of Indian affairs, allowing her to fish free of charge in Oregon, although the card has probably expired, she said.

"But I'm still a member of the Chinook tribe and have been for a long time," she said. "My mom was on the council, and for a long time we've been fighting for recognition."

Meanwhile, John Shepherd was originally from Terre Haute, Indiana, joined the U.S. Coast Guard, and just by chance ended up on the North Coast of Oregon.

"There were so many places along the way he could have gone, and I never would have met him," said Carolyn Shepherd. "I was way out here in the boonies at the very tip of Oregon.

"He was on a cutter heading to Alaska. He had never seen the Pacific Ocean. He had never seen any ocean."

As the ship continued up the coastline, "six men were taken off the cutter. He was one of them, and was sent to Neah Bay, and ended up in Hammond," at Point Adams.

How did they meet? "John was swimming at Coffenbury Lake (just miles from where they would live) with a friend. A bunch of my buddies came out and we were going to go swimming. We were already in our swim suits and were starting to go in the water, and here come these two guys out of the woods. That's the first time I saw John."

Carolyn "had on the craziest clothes," she said. "Jeans, a brown sweater and a black straw hat," she said. "He said it was love at first sight, but I can't believe him. I must have looked like a clown."

And "he was such a handsome guy. He was four days short of his 18th birthday."

And thus began the future Shepherds of Hammond.

Carolyn and John both graduated from Astoria High

School, Class of 1949, when school-age children in Hammond could choose which school to attend.

"John had gotten out of the Coast Guard and had not finished high school, so he joined me for his senior year at Astoria," Carolyn said.

They continued their education at the University of Oregon, Carolyn graduating in 1953, John in '54.

"We got married after our sophomore year (June 17, 1951), then we lived in the housing that was provided for married couples. Twenty-eight dollars a month rent."

Carolyn already had a teaching job lined up at Warrenton, and John joined Conrad Petersen at Warrenton Electric, later becoming a partner in the business. Eventually, he owned and operated Shepherd Electric in Hammond with his son, John Jr., for 14 years, retiring in 2001.

Meanwhile, Carolyn taught English to sophomores, juniors and seniors at Warrenton. "I was also the librarian, because my classroom was the library," she said. She taught and also served on the school board for 19 years, and organized the local Hershey track meets for several years after.

Athletics is also big in the family. Daughter Carol played volleyball on the Warriors state championship team of 1972; and daughters Connie and Cynthia both later played for the Oregon Ducks. The youngest daughter, Christine, was an all-state performer in volleyball. The Shepherd sisters have a combined 10 state titles in track, and still dot the record boards at Warrenton.

John "Johnny" Shepherd Jr., serves as Warrenton fire captain, and Christine is a nurse in Eugene. There are 10 graduates of the University of Oregon in the immediate Shepherd family.

Shepherd's grandchildren include former Astoria track star Charlene Harber (three-time state champion in the triple jump); and Conor Harber, a former Duck playing professional baseball in Mexico.

Complaint: 'I believe we should restore the integrity of our local government'

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An earlier case against La Bonte after she used the sign company she co-owns with her husband to make signs for the city is still under investigation. A preliminary review found La Bonte may not have properly noted a possible conflict of interest in writing. The state investigator did not find evidence that La Bonte used her position to benefit herself financially.

City Manager Bruce St. Denis has characterized Morris' complaints against La Bonte as a campaign of harassment motivated by personal grievances. He told city councilors that La Bonte will receive a letter of education from the state for the complaint about the signs.

La Bonte confirmed with The Astorian that she had seen a draft of the letter and that it was offered to her at the conclusion of the ethics board's meeting last week. Going forward, she said she understands she will need to declare any possible conflict of interest verbally as well as in writing.

Meanwhile, Morris told The Astorian he has filed another complaint about La Bonte. The online petition he recently launched had gath-

ered more than 30 signatures as of Monday. La Bonte said Monday she was not aware of the petition and had no comment about it.

The petition echoes the allegations of the first complaint Morris filed, claiming La Bonte did not disclose financial conflicts of interest with the city when she used Cannon Beach Design Co., the sign company she co-owns with her husband, to order pandemic-related signs for Cannon Beach last year. It calls for her immediate dismissal.

"I believe we should restore the integrity of our local government," Morris wrote in the petition.

In the complaint the state dismissed, Morris alleged that La Bonte improperly disposed of fencing material the city had deemed surplus. He claims she offered it to a contractor who was working on her house in the hopes that she would get a favor in return.

St. Denis pushed back against these claims. In information provided to the state and The Astorian, St. Denis said La Bonte was tasked with disposing of old fencing material that no longer met the city's fencing standards and could not be used.

After checking to see if other organizations wanted the materials, La Bonte finally offered the surplus property to three local contractors and a city handyman, according to St. Denis. The contractor who was working on La Bonte's home took the fence posts, while the other contractors took similar materials that would have otherwise been thrown away.

At the time, a public works employee brought up his concerns about how the city disposed of the surplus fencing with St. Denis. He told The Astorian he was afraid the situation could look bad in the small community. The employee no longer works for the city. He said he was retaliated against.

Morris has claimed La Bonte also retaliated against her home contractor, something the contractor himself denies in a letter submitted to St. Denis and the state in February.

"In no way have I ever witnessed her using her position as the public works director at the city as a means to achieve personal gain or take any inappropriate action towards me or any of my business associates as claimed by Mr. Morris," he wrote.

Fireworks: Fourth of July is weeks away

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The Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, which is organizing the show, has been careful not to broadcast information beyond the local area, said David Reid, the chamber's executive director. They are encouraging people to watch the fireworks from city parks or their own homes.

The chamber is taking other precautions, too: arranging for larger shells and for the barge where the fireworks are launched to be farther out on the river so the fireworks will shoot higher and the show can be seen far and wide without people needing to crowd along the Astoria Riverwalk.

The chamber canceled its official show last year because of the pandemic, but local businesses later joined together to fund a surprise show.

"We still believe that having an organized fireworks display is safer than not," Reid said. "And we learned that last year as we saw more of the personal fireworks going on which leads to gatherings in smaller groups and people closer together without the messaging that goes along with (an organized event)."

In Seaside, between the official and unofficial celebrations, the Fourth of July can sometimes feel like a war zone. The city's fireworks event can draw nearly 50,000 people.

Last year, the official show was canceled because of concerns over the pandemic. The Seaside Chamber of Commerce opted to cancel the show once again this year, citing financial and logistical issues.

"We're not able to get everything together to make a safe show," Brian Owen, the CEO of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce, told The Astorian in May.

Cannon Beach leaders had hoped there would be an event in Seaside to draw some pressure away from their city and popular beaches.

In Cannon Beach, fireworks have long been illegal on the beach itself, but the city routinely deals with impromptu, private shows every spring and summer as tourists flock to the coast.

Enforcement has always been difficult, but last year, city leaders took the additional steps of banning all fireworks in the city as well as on the beach and increasing the fine for violators.

Ahead of the Fourth of July, residents plan to put up signs to remind visitors that fireworks are banned.

Fourth of July is weeks away and summer hasn't even started, but the Cannon Beach Police Department has already dealt with several instances of illegal fireworks.

Someone was able to record a video of a recent incident and pass the information to police. When

officers tracked the fireworks to their source, they found 35 people in a vacation rental. Predictably, no one claimed responsibility for the fireworks.

In Gearhart, the Fourth of July parade will return — with social distancing. "We haven't posted anything but we hope to have the parade back," Mayor Paulina Cockrum said at a recent City Council meeting.

Elsewhere, the Warrenton City Commission approved its traditional Fourth of July parade, and a fireworks show will be held in Ilwaco, Washington, on July 3. Long Beach, Washington, where Fourth of July fireworks and holiday celebrations on the city's famous beach have sometimes sparked outrage in the community, has decided not to hold an official fireworks display.

The city canceled the event last year, too, after it was unable to land a necessary permit from Washington State Parks and amid city leaders' own concerns about the pandemic.

The city puts together its fireworks budget in October, City Manager David Glasson said. With uncertainty at the time about what could be allowed because of the pandemic and the likelihood that festivals and other events would not go forward, the city decided to cancel the event.

Nicole Bales and R.J. Marx contributed to this report.

Crossing: First event was held in 1982

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spending money in the community," said David Reid, the chamber's executive director. "We always look for a bigger community impact."

Event capacity is usually 3,500 people but will be limited to 2,000 this year. About 400 people participated in the virtual event last year.

"We lowered the event capacity just to err on the side of caution," Reid said. "As we finalize event planning, we may increase capacity as restrictions change."

The event was first held in 1982. In 2016, the event was postponed, then canceled, because of stormy weather — marking the first time the race was called off.

Not being able to get event permits was one of the main reasons the event was held virtually last year.

"All the agencies involved have been contacted," Reid said. "Everybody is on board and everybody is enthusiastic. We're not hearing any sort of restrictions."

The chamber will follow health and safety guidelines set by the Oregon Health Authority and the Clatsop County Public Health Department.

"Please know that we are doing everything we can to ensure that this remains a safe and responsible event for all," Lay said. "Registrants should be prepared to abide by any safety standards that may be required at the time of the event."

In addition to the changed capacity limit, the chamber will also be mailing participants event packets to avoid having crowds gather to pick up their race materials. The chamber mailed race packets last year for the first time.

"In the past everyone had to come pick up their packet Thursday, Friday, Saturday or God forbid, Sunday morning," Reid said. "It's going to be very labor intensive on our part, but will reduce crowding ... It may help us out. If it works, it'll be something we continue in future years."

From 8:30 to 11 a.m., the bridge will be closed to vehicles so event participants can travel across the bridge safely. Participants who don't finish the race by 11 a.m. will be picked up by event volunteers so the bridge can be reopened.

Event registration will open on July 14 and details will be announced online at greatcolumbiacrossing.com. Participation costs \$45 per person and is open to all ages.

"We look forward to seeing everyone again this year," Lay said.

The US Mint will soon be releasing the 2021 Version 2 American Silver Eagle. This will be the first redesign since the original 1986 release. This redesign is largely to put new anti-counterfeiting technology into this world-wide popular coin. There is talk about overt and covert anti-counterfeiting measures. For great examples look at the Canadian Maple Leaf, Great Britain Britannica, and the Royal Australian Mint Kangaroo redesigns. The US Mint is keeping somewhat silent on their features.

The US Mint will release/ship to the 13 world wide "Authorized Purchasers" on or about July 1st. My A.P. has told me my order "might" arrive the third week of July, aka somewhere between July 19th and the 30th.

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