

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

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From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

*10 years ago
this week — 2011*

Imagine the sound of a chain saw. Now, imagine that sound reverberating off the walls in your bedroom — a bedroom you've paid a few hundred dollars for, while visiting Astoria, maybe for the first time.

That's what work on the Astoria Bridge could sound like — starting next year and not ending until 2016.

The five-year, \$50 million project to repaint and repair the Astoria Bridge has been compared to other sounds, from a motorcycle to a jet engine. But no matter how loud is too loud, it is about to make its way over to the Oregon side.

"We're just starting the public process with the city," said Larry McKinley, regional manager for the Oregon Department of Transportation. "We're looking at four to six years of bridge work to get it up to standards."

SEASIDE — Electric cars may be just around the corner — or, rather, driving down U.S. Highway 101 — and when they do, Seaside may be ready to give them an energy boost.

With the Oregon Department of Transportation already planning to place charging stations in Tillamook, Cannon Beach and Astoria next spring, Seaside businesses are considering how they might operate a station of their own for electric car drivers to recharge their batteries.

Entrepreneurs Chad Biasi and Hans van der Meer, partners in the Portland-based EV4 Oregon LLC, are talking to local businesses about paying \$150 a month for five years for a licensing agreement. If at least six business owners agree, the company would install a two-car recharging station in Seaside.

It was 1943 when Staff Sgt. James H. Lang was captured as a prisoner of war and held for more than two years in Nazi-occupied Europe.

With a smuggled camera and the clothes on his back, Lang survived the 25-month, four-day ordeal, settled back into life in America, raised a family and traveled the world. His POW days had almost been forgotten.

That is, until a box in storage revealed a manuscript and the never-before-seen photos that have now been published almost 60 years later.

"Kriegies & Goons: My Life in Nazi POW Camps," by James H. Lang, has been published three years after Lang's death, and just in time for Veterans Day.

Richard Lang, a retired member of the U.S. Coast Guard and the former Astoria dispatch manager, went to Arizona to move his father's belongings into storage after his father had suffered a stroke and had to be moved into a care facility about a year prior to his death.

That's when he discovered the box that contained the secret life of a POW.

50 years ago — 1971

The U.S. Coast Guard buoy tender Cactus, which grounded on the Grays Harbor jetty Sept. 20, will be decommissioned, according to the Coast Guard's 13th District office in Seattle.

The Cactus, home-based in Astoria, was extensively damaged when she struck the rocks on a sunken portion of the jetty. Rocks cut a 3-foot gash in the vessel's bow section. Sea water flooded the main hold and engine room, causing more damage.

Another buoy tender will be reassigned to Astoria, but her arrival is not expected until next spring. This will be less expensive than repairing the 29-year-old Cactus and keeping her in service, the Coast Guard said.

The Burger Shoppe, just off Marine Drive on Hamburg Avenue and Industry Street in Astoria, opened for business last Wednesday.

The building, a prefabricated structure, measures 12 feet by 16 feet.

The area near Knappa Slough where Lewis and Clark camped briefly on their westward trek could become a national historical landmark.

The Clatsop County Historical Society, after passing a resolution on the matter, appointed a committee of four Wednesday night to examine this possibility. The resolution was sponsored by Knappa logger Robert Ziak and Columbia River Maritime Museum curator Michael Naab, who joined the organization Wednesday, and Mary Louise Flavel, a longtime member.

Ziak said he has the documentation and that this area is almost the only area left "which is almost like exactly as it



The Astoria Bridge is seen above the Holiday Inn Express & Suites in 2011.

was when Lewis and Clark came through."

Dant & Russell, Inc. will not reopen its Westport Lumber Co. mill, according to Bob Smith, who is in charge of production facilities for the Portland corporation.

Smith said the shutdown was due to a number of business factors. The mill was closed in early August due to the company's inability to ship the heavy hemlock lumber by rail because of the West Coast longshoremen strike. At the time of the shutdown, Joe Heigel, Dant & Russell president, said it is not economically feasible to ship hemlock lumber by rail because of its weight. All the lumber from both the Westport mill and Warrenton Lumber Co., another Dant & Russell facility, had been shipped by ship and barge through the Port of Astoria prior to the strike.

Signalitis has come to Seaside.

Formerly a stop-and-go, hurry-through-the-intersection town, two flashing traffic signals recently installed have brought big city boredom to the coast. Now a third blinking black box may soon be looming before U.S. Highway 101 travelers at the Broadway Street intersection.

The Port of Astoria's east and west mooring basins may be merged into one.

Port commissioners, irked at the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for restrictions imposed on use of the East Mooring Basin breakwater, instructed port engineer Tom Amberg to do the preliminary work necessary for moving the East Mooring Basin floats to the West Mooring Basin.

75 years ago — 1946

Construction of the two trawler-tuna combination fishing vessels built for the Pacific Exploration Co. at the Astoria Marine Construction Co. shipyard is nearing completion. These steel-hulled boats are equipped with bait tanks.

Several fishing boats and other crafts are being overhauled and repaired at the yard. The tug Melville, owned by the Knappton Towboat Co., is getting a new bow stem, following a collision with an oil tanker.

Astoria's engineering department is making over the map of the city in an effort to make it more neatly fit the rugged terrain of the peninsula on which the city is built.

The map not only is being reconstructed on paper, but on the ground as well, in a long-range program designed to provide future city planners with adequate information on which to base their projects for the city's growth.

No longer will the city grow haphazardly on a gridiron system of streets arranged merely by drawing lines on paper, without regard for cliffs or gulches, which might make transference of the streets from paper to ground impossible.

A glance at the map of the city will show a vast amount of land plotted in city streets — far more

land than is actually occupied by the present network of streets and houses. It will also show the vast majority of these streets laid out in rectangular pattern — only in parts of the west end has there been an attempt to fit streets to topography.

In far too many cases it has been impossible to build according to the plat, as streets just wouldn't work out on cliff fronts or on gulches.

And in some cases streets that have been built according to old plats have slid down the hill-sides because no thought was given to the sliding ground that prevails on a considerable amount of Astoria's land surface.

It is in an effort to correct such conditions, which have been detrimental to the city's development, that the engineering department is now redrafting the map.

Astoria today observed Armistice Day, the 28th anniversary of the end of World War I, in quiet style.

An American Legion committee headed by Bill Van Dusen lined Commercial Street and other main business streets with American flags, as has been the legion post's custom for many years.

There was, however, no parade and the first main attraction of the day is this afternoon's football game at 2 p.m. between the Astoria Junior High School Fingerlings and Ilwaco High on Gyro Field.

The Astoria Athletic Association was today arranging a compensatory game for the Astoria High School football team, which was denied its first chance at Oregon high school football honors in 25 years Saturday when the northern subdivision of the District 3 championship was decided by ballot rather than gridiron playoff.

The leaking lumber schooner Helen, her holds pumped fairly dry in emergency action by the U.S. Navy here to prevent her sinking, left late Sunday under her own power for the Kaiser shipyards in Portland to undergo repairs.

An auxiliary pump from Portland was put aboard the vessel for the trip upriver to assist ship gear in keeping her dry. Cause of the leak was undetermined.



RIGHT: James Lang was a prisoner of war during World War II in Nazi-occupied Europe. His book, 'Kriegies & Goons: My Life in Nazi POW Camps,' was published in 2010.



The Westport Lumber Co. sawmill in 1971.



James Lang was captured as a prisoner of war during World War II. He used a smuggled camera to document his stay of more than 25 months.