

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

COMPILED BY BOB DUKE

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

*10 years ago
this week — 2011*

Authenticity was in the air at Astoria High School. While many local residents were enjoying post-Thanksgiving turkey sandwiches Friday night, a group dedicated to Scandinavian heritage enjoyed the Sankta Lucia Festival of Lights.

Put on by the organizers of the annual Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival, the event featured Scandinavian dancing, Christmas carols and the presentation of the Lucia Bride with her court of attendants and star boys.

"The Scandinavian countries are dark countries in winter and we all need a bit of light and hope," said Janet Bowler, entertainment chairwoman for the festival.

Behind an unassuming door leading from the McTavish Room on the Liberty Theatre's second floor, one last challenge awaits the completion of the building's restoration.

Out of sight above the Liberty's theatrical stage is an expansive area that Rosemary Baker-Monaghan, the theater's executive director, and a nonprofit developer team plan to renovate.

The final piece of what's been a 13-year project won't come cheaply, however.

Baker-Monaghan estimates the first part of the theater's third and final phase will cost about \$772,000. Some of that money has already been earmarked, including a \$386,000 grant from the Astor East Urban Renewal District and a \$75,000 matching grant from the Ford Family Foundation.

A city code for derelict buildings is bringing down the house — or houses, to be exact, in the semi-abandoned Blue Ridge neighborhood in Astoria.

"The city in their infinite wisdom finally passed the code," said Paul Mossberg, the lone homeownership occupant of the neighborhood. "I've been beating the drum for them to do something because I've been telling them an ordinance not enforced is worse than no ordinance at all."

The City Council adopted the derelict building code in the spring, hoping to address the ramshackled, run-down and abandoned houses that have caused issues in the city for years.

A home and two business properties owned by the Flavel family are among those buildings the city was working to address.

50 years ago — 1971

The Astoria skipper of a four-man crew rescued from Aleutian waters after four days in a raft said the group survived because "we just hung on."

Astorian David Densmore said he and his crew suffered only minor frostbite despite being forced to take to an inflatable raft clothed in shirtsleeves when their 80-foot crab boat Astron exploded and sank Monday.

Densmore said "for the first two days, I thought we'd be picked up. But after the second night, we got kind of doubtful."

The Astron was four hours out of Dutch Harbor on Unalaska Island when an explosion blew through the engine room, setting the craft on fire.

"There was so much fire, we couldn't tell the source," he said. "When we saw we couldn't put it out, we just thought about getting off the boat."

Only one man had time to find a jacket, and it was shared among the crewmen as they floated without food or water in what Densmore called "flat calm."

They were rescued by the Japanese fishing boat Chidori Maru No. 51 off Akutan Island's north head. The Japanese administered first aid and brought the Americans back to Dutch Harbor.

It was almost ten months ago that several homes in the area of 27th Street and Grand Avenue in Astoria started sliding during heavy rains. Residents were evacuated from the area and several homes were damaged.

Since that time, the city has undertaken various corrective measures, according to the Engineering Department. Residents of 27th Street between Harrison Avenue and Marine Drive believe the city has not adequately provided for solving the problems in the area above and below Irving Avenue.



The burning wreckage of an airplane in east Astoria in 1971.



Sankta Lucia Bride Alli Cahill, senior attendants Courtney Carlson and Cari Knapp, plus junior attendants and star boys parade in front of the audience at the 2011 Sankta Lucia Festival of Lights.



The abandoned Flavel home on the corner of 15th Street and Franklin Avenue in 2011.



Rosemary Baker-Monaghan, then executive director of the Liberty Theatre, describes the work needed to complete the restoration on part of the second floor of the performing arts space in 2011.

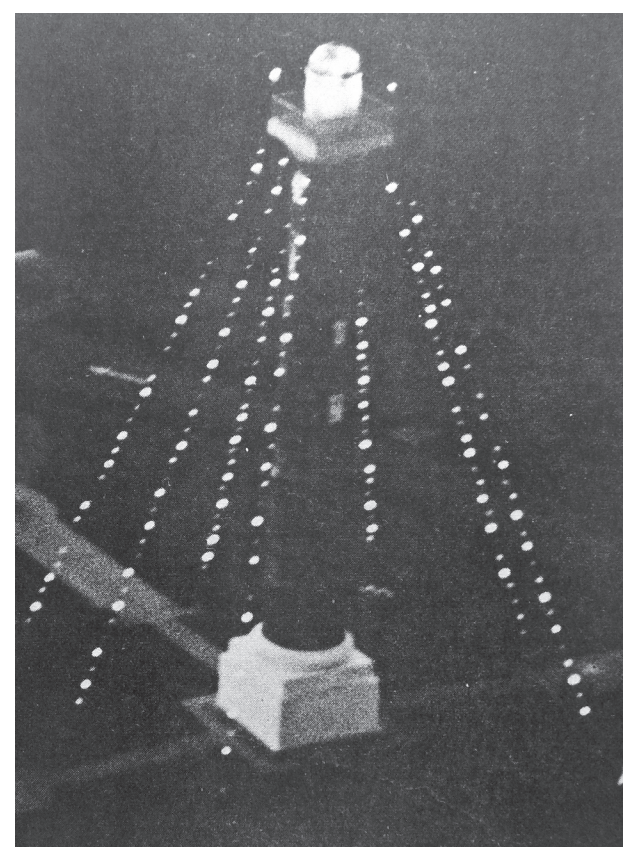
They want more. About 40 young people and the older people and the people in between who gathered at Astoria High School Wednesday night felt they had communicated with each other. As a consequence, the third and supposedly final "rap session" sponsored by the District 1 council of the governor's Commission on Youth may be continued.

The rap sessions that follow may be slightly different from those that have passed, for participants had some suggestions on how to improve the sessions. For one thing, the main thing, they'd like the session to be open ended, without a fixed break-up time.

Young people, particularly, commented on the time it takes for strangers in a group to warm up to each other, get past the testing stage and into the point of real communication. There is also some talk of moving the sessions out of the school environment in hopes of getting more adults to attend them.

75 years ago — 1946

First of the fast Norwegian motor ships of the Fruit Express line to enter the Columbia River since the war is



Christmas lights are seen at the Astoria Column in 1971.



Members of the Astoria Kiwanis cut holly for their annual Christmas holly sale in 1971.

now in Portland.

She is the 18-knot Pacific Express, a refrigerated ship with a capacity of 110,000 boxes of apples and pears or in excess of 70,000 cases of lemons, grapefruit and oranges.

Besides carrying citrons and fruits, the ship has accommodations for 12 first class passengers. She plies between the Pacific coast and Europe. Her European ports of call are Gothenburg and London.

A new Oregon Express, named after the first one, which was a North Atlantic war casualty, has been built. The Fruit Express line had ships ordered in Sweden when Norway was invaded. These were ready for business when the Nazis went out of business.

That big spoonful of cranberry sauce — on your plate, there, next to the white meat — probably came from a spot right close to home, a cranberry bog in Clatsop County.

It doesn't take much land to grow 50 tons of cranberries. A little over 40 acres will do the trick, and those acres are located just north of Gearhart.

Work on construction of facilities for the Columbia River group of the fleet is expected to be finished by the end of October 1947, Capt. H.C. Fischer, public works officer of the 13th naval district, told the chamber of commerce in a U.S. Navy Day speech at Amato's Saturday noon.

Rambeau Flying Service today became the second Astoria flying school to obtain authorization for pilot training under the GI Bill, according to L.R. Chadwick, manager of the service.

The school already has several applicants for flight training, and more veterans are applying all the time.

The chamber of commerce and city will investigate the possibility of obtaining surplus U.S. Navy barracks at the Astoria air station for conversion into temporary housing to ease the acute housing shortage.

Decision to make this investigation was reached at a meeting of the chamber and city housing committee on Tuesday afternoon.