COMMUNITY

IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

DIFFICULTIES AND LOSSES

The **Columbia River Light-vessel No. 50** (LV50), stationed just outside the Columbia River Bar, tore loose from her mooring in heavy seas during a 74 mph gale on **Nov. 28, 1899**. Her captain skillfully sailed her to a small beach just west of Cape Disappointment, where he and the crew were rescued. The lightship was left behind.

The **Lighthouse Board** Annual Report of Fiscal Year 1901 details attempts to get the LV50 — which was broadside on the beach and "somewhat sunk in the sand" — afloat and launched seaward. In July 1900, the first contractor failed miserably in his attempts to do just that. But then, so did the contractors who followed him.

"The difficulties experienced caused a series of disappointments," the report said, "attended by losses of hawsers, anchors and other gear."

Clearly, a novel approach to solve the problem was in order. Accordingly, in February 1901, an agreement was made with two Portland house movers to haul the 112-foot heavy wooden vessel 700 yards across land, and through woods, to refloat her in Baker Bay for $17,500 (about $569,000 today).

They cleaned out the lightship, turned her so her bow faced the shore, then jacked her up onto a temporary railway they had built just for that purpose. Some repairs — enough to make her seaworthy, anyway — were made once she finally rolled to the edge of Baker Bay.

On **June 3, 1901**, she was relaunched and towed upriver to Portland for more thorough repairs, and eventually returned to her station.

The Chinook Observer reports that after several other costly mishaps, the lightship was retired in 1909, and condemned and sold in 1915.

NAB THE TREASURE

The Goonies still never say die, even though there will likely never be a sequel. Now **The Op** has released a new **board game**, "The Goonies: Escape with One-Eyed Willy's Rich Stuff."

It's part of The Op's at-home escape room Coded Chronicles series, "where players are guided to unlock clues and solve puzzles by a unique code-revealing mechanic."

Here's the synopsis: "… Players (go) on an epic adventure through the trap-filled caverns of Astoria, Oregon. Using the treasure hunting skills of Mikey, Brand, Mouth, Data, Andy, Stef, Chunk and Sloth, players will navigate their way to finding One-Eyed Willy's rich stuff! Can you get the gang to the Inferno, nab the treasure and get to freedom, all while staying one step ahead of the nefarious Fratelli family?"

The game takes two-plus hours to play, just a bit longer than the movie takes to run. Might as well make it a twofer, and do both.

TICKET TO RIDE

Fun rerun: ShawnAnn Hope brought in her childhood scrapbook this week, and one of the little treasures it contained was a **ticket** for the very **last Astoria ferry ride**. She also collected a few wood slivers from the ferry dock on the Megler, Washington, side.

ShawnAnn wasn't sure what the actual date was, and it's not on the ticket, but she did know that she took that last ride sometime in 1966. A little research reveals that the final Astoria-Megler ferry run was made by the **M.R. Chessman** on July 28, 1966, as reported in The Oregonian.

Incidentally, no one knows what finally happened to the Chessman. Sold in 1966, she was sent to a facility in Cat Lai, Vietnam; she is presumed to have been destroyed when the facility was bulldozed after the war. *(In One Ear, 8/5/2016)*

BEWARE THE YEGGMAN

This year, **Dec. 8** marked the 99th anniversary of **Astoria**'s devastating **1922 fire**, which destroyed most of the city's business district.

The Dec. 11, 1922, Morning Oregonian predicted that "human buzzards" such as **yeggmen**, or safe-crackers, would be descending on Astoria, since several banks were damaged or destroyed, leaving their safes unguarded.

"In the smouldering, blackened crater that was once the business section of Astoria was untold wealth," the story said. "It was estimated that several hundred thousand dollars in gold, silver and gems were in that mass of wreckage. Safes and strong boxes were scattered about. A drill, a bit of nitroglycerine, a touch of soap, and a yeggman could make a great haul."
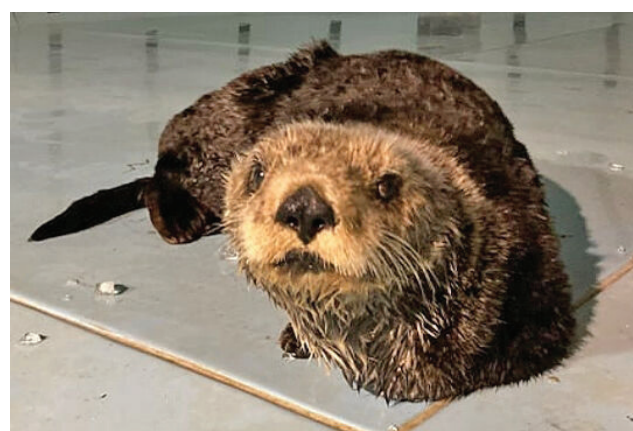
To prevent such an eventuality, U.S. Navy men were on the watch, and civilian patrols kept a vigil to assist the over-stretched police and fire departments. And, the vigilance worked, as far as notorious yeggmen go, anyway, as two of them who arrived in Astoria in a car were caught straightaway. They had two revolvers and $5,000 (about $82,000 now) worth of drugs in their possession.

"… Plans were being made to set up big electric searchlights on all sides of the ruins. The interior of the area tonight was patrolled by armed guards from the naval vessels at dock in the harbor. The guards were instructed to shoot to kill … The destroyed section of the city resembled, to a great extent, the crater of a volcano."

Yeggmen foiled, a "corps of safe experts" would be brought in after the smouldering stopped, to try to open the multitude of safes, "promiscuously scattered through the ruins," which contained much of Astoria's wealth. The fire, and subsequent cooling, would certainly have damaged the combinations and locking apparatus on most of the strongboxes, and an expert, non-larcenous touch would be required to open them.

Just to be sure, after catching the yeggmen, no automobile was allowed to leave the city without a police permit, and only those who had business in town were allowed in. (Photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society)

'SIGHTS AND INCIDENTS'

The **Dec. 11, 1922**, **Morning Oregonian** noted "sights and incidents" of the **Great Astoria Fire**:

• The streets are covered with slush and snow. The pedestrian out after nightfall is constantly being halted by guards. And, as a result of these conditions, the fellows who operate **taxicabs** between the railroad station and the edge of the burned district, a matter of some eight or 10 blocks, are reaping a harvest by charging 75 cents (about $12 now) for the short haul. Jesse James had nothing on Astoria taximen.

• One optimistic Astorian opened up for business yesterday in an automobile. With a stock of candles, cigars and tobacco arranged on shelves built in the tonneau (rear pull-out seating compartment) of his car, he took up a stand at a street corner and did a brisk business.

• … They **saved the canaries** but forgot the furniture: Mrs. J. A. Sampleter's residence, one of the few destroyed, was attacked by fire at about 8 o'clock Friday morning. With her mother, Mrs. Sampleter managed to save her four canaries. They were all that was taken from the home. The woman and her mother are now being cared for by friends.

• The **soft drink stand** is under the official ban in Astoria. All such resorts were closed by police order last night, and will remain closed until complete order is restored … The Astoria force is taking no chances with booze or radicals. (Photo courtesy of the Clatsop County Historical Society)

OTTERLESS

Sea otters are rarely seen in Oregon, yet one had been spotted in the Newport area several times in November. But on Nov. 30, the adult male otter, who had been injured, and was found hauled out on a beach, was transported to the **Oregon Coast Aquarium** for triage and care. He is pictured, courtesy of the aquarium.

The otter was in rough shape. An aquarium press release said, "… the injuries were consistent with those of a **shark bite**." After treatment, he was alert and eating, and was monitored constantly. Sadly, he took a turn for the worse, and died on his third day there.

Please be aware: If you see a sea otter in Oregon, note its location and report it to the **Oregon State Police** tipline at 800-452-7888, the **West Coast Marine Mammal Stranding Network** at 866-767-6114 or the **Seaside Aquarium** at 503-738-6211.

"This sea otter means a lot to many of us Oregonians," **Brittany Blades**, of the Oregon Coast Aquarium, said. "I never thought I would get to see a live sea otter living on the Oregon Coast until three weeks ago, when I saw this otter swimming, foraging and sleeping around Yaquina Head."

LEAVE YOUR LEGACY
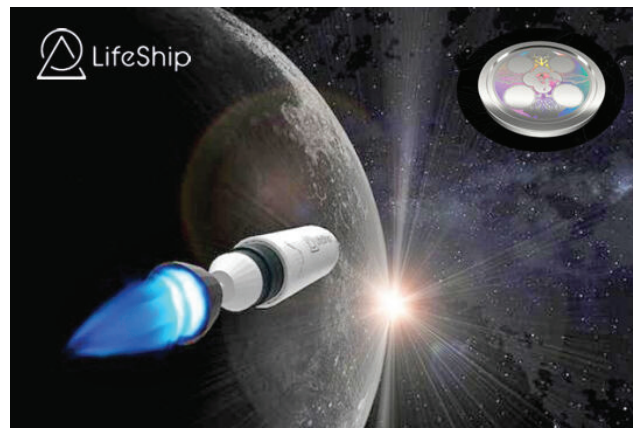
Here's yet another little something for the person who has everything: An opportunity to send their **DNA** and personal story **to the moon** via LifeShip.com for $99. (You can send just your name for free.)
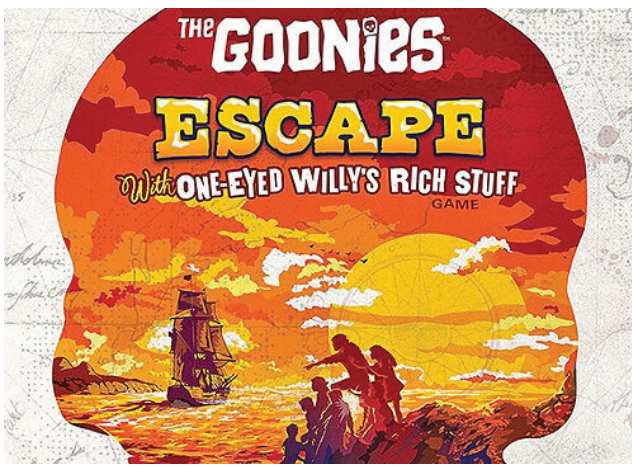
A cheek swab is sent to LifeShip's lab, which extracts the DNA as a solid powder. The powder gets preserved in synthetic amber, which goes into a capsule containing a "biobank with DNA from diverse plant and animal species, as well as an archive of human knowledge and culture."

This archive is being compiled by one of LifeShip's partners, the Arch Mission Foundation, which wants to preserve humanity's knowledge across time and space for future generations.

Back to the DNA … The DNA will fly to the moon on a **SpaceX** rocket that is scheduled to launch in 2023. Once in the moon's orbit, the capsule containing the DNA goes to the lunar surface on **Firefly's Blue Ghost** lander. And there it stays.

"You'll preserve your unique blueprint," the LifeShip website says, "feel forever connected to your loved ones, and leave your legacy in the universe." (Images courtesy of LifeShip)

FLIGHTAWARE

It's anyone's guess how many planes will be on time in the seasonal melee. Wouldn't it be nice to know what's really going on in advance?

There is hope, and a great way to track global flights: **FlightAware,** which touts itself as a "digital aviation company" that "operates the world's largest flight tracking and data platform."

FlightAware "provides over 10,000 aircraft operators and service providers, as well as over 13 million passengers, with global flight tracking solutions, predictive technology, analytics and decision-making tools."

How? FlightAware gets data from air traffic control systems in over 45 countries. The website features live flight data and delays (the MiseryMap), news and commentary about the aviation business and thousands of aircraft photos.

In addition to the website, yes, there's an app for that, too, with more than 10 million downloads. They must be doing something right.