

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

COMPILED BY BOB DUKE

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

*10 years ago
this week — 2011*

The sun sets on 2011 Saturday after a year packed with local headlines.

The highlight on the North Coast was the Astoria bicentennial. Paulette McCoy and her committee of helpers put on an astonishing array of events as Astoria celebrated 200 years, reveling in the fact that it is the oldest settlement west of the Rocky Mountains.

It was also the year the North Coast saw its congressman resign after a sex scandal and had its bus system hit the skids. Also, Clatsop Community College hit a budget buzz saw and county commissioners mad an about turn on the liquefied natural gas controversy.

In May, the city hosted the opening ceremony of the bicentennial, which drew important guests, including Gov. John Kitzhaber, U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden and U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, U.S. Rep David Wu, state Sen. Betsy Johnson, state Rep. Brad Witt and state Rep. Deborah Boone.

In August, the party continued with more guests from all over the world.

Sister city representatives from Walldorf, Germany, came to the city to partake in the celebration and planted a symbolic oak tree at Astoria High School.

Lord John Jacob Astor of Hever, a descendent of the fur trader and businessman of the same name, and his family visited from London and New York for the Astoria Regatta festival.

And country superstar Reba McEntire performed at Camp Rilea in August for Regatta, singing "Happy birthday" on stage with Mayor Willis Van Dusen.

"On the wow-factor scale, it's a big wow," Washington state biologist Steve Jeffries said of a surprise sighting of six gigantic blue whales grazing about Guide Canyon, a vast under-sea trench 30 miles west of the Long Beach Peninsula.

These endangered whales, thought to be the largest animals to have existed since the dawn of time, weren't known to spend much time in Washington waters.

"This is the most blue whales we know of ever being sighted off Washington — and only the third confirmed sighting in the last 50 years," said John Calambokidis, research biologist with Cascadia Research.

The place where the Columbia River meets the Pacific Ocean is known as the Graveyard of the Pacific for a number of shipwrecks strewn along the coast from Tillamook to Vancouver Island, British Columbia.

The Columbia River is neither the longest nor the most voluminous major river in the world, but its topography and hydrography cause it to enter the ocean with a sometimes lethal exuberance, especially in winter when the Pacific is anything but peaceful. Winter rains raise the river level, winter winds raise the incoming waves and the meeting is not cordial. And then there are those sand bars.

There are several major ports on the Columbia River, with large cargo ships entering and leaving the river constantly. How they do it safely is the subject of a new book by attorney Michael E. Haglund, who has represented the Columbia River Bar Pilots.

According to the bar pilots, the mouth of the Columbia is "recognized as one of the most dangerous and challenging navigated stretches of water in the world."

That's a bold statement, but "World's Most Dangerous: A history of the Columbia River Bar, its pilots and their equipment," makes a pretty good case to back it up.

The book reads like one part geologic cataclysm with exciting floods, one part high-stakes action and adventure to make Hollywood green with envy and one part boats, fast boats, faster boats and helicopters. It's full of information based on extensive research and scientific data, and an edge-of-the-seat thriller.

50 years ago — 1971

The Christmas shopping season must have been good in Clatsop County this year. Most retailers reported business was up from the previous year.

"It's up 10 to 12%," said Dale Frandsen of Frandsen's Jewelers. He said there had been fewer people shopping, but they were making larger purchases.

Two to 3 inches of standing snow is expected today, tonight and Wednesday morning, before temperatures rise and turn the snow to rain Wednesday afternoon, according to the National Weather Service at the Astoria airport.

A pesky slide on U.S. Highway 30 near Woodson, approximately 3 miles east of Westport, did its dirty work again this weekend.

State highway officials said the hillside slid at about 4:30 p.m. Saturday and closed both lanes of traffic. One way traffic was restored in a half hour but the highway was not completely opened until Sunday afternoon.

75 years ago — 1946

Thomas B. Smith, of Portland, had his airplane grounded by Port of Astoria authorities for "buzzing" the city on Christmas morning and may face charges for reckless flying.

Smith, flying a former U.S. Army training plane, was apparently trying to attract the attention of a friend in the residential district here.

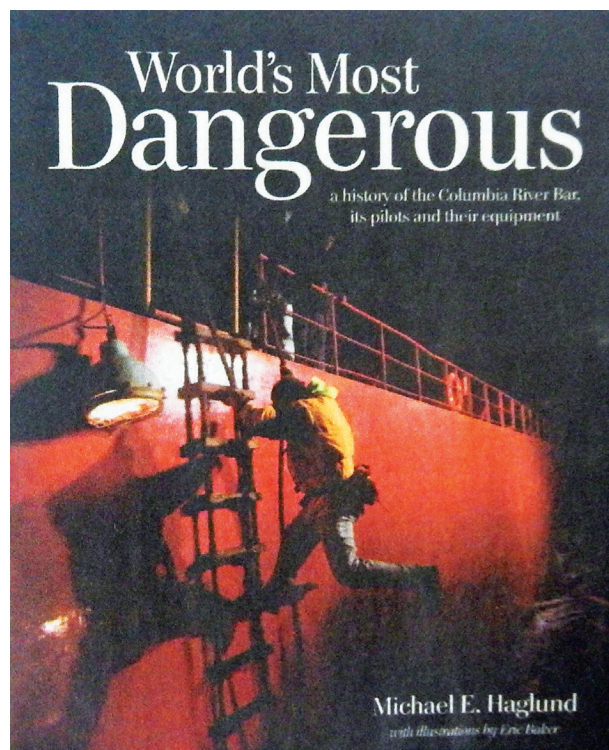
He dove low over the city several times, then gained altitude with a roaring motor that shattered the Christmas morning calm of the community.

As soon as he landed at the airport, Smith was grounded by order of port authorities.

The most elaborately equipped fisheries vessel, the 8,800-ton factory ship Pacific Explorer,



Country music singer Reba McEntire sang at Camp Rilea as part of the Astoria bicentennial celebration and Regatta in 2011.



The cover of attorney Michael E. Haglund's book, which was published in 2011.



Children play in the snow in 1971.



A blue whale was spotted in the ocean near the Long Beach Peninsula in 2011.

sailed into the Columbia River on Sunday and is berthed at the foot of Sixth Street. She will sail for southern tuna grounds within the next two weeks.

Originally recommended for construction by the War Food Administration, the Pacific Explorer is equipped to store large quantities of tuna, can crabs, fillet, package and store bottom fish, and to render oil and make into meal all fish waste.

Rebuilt for the Reconstruction Finance Corporation, the ship, which was formerly the World War I steamer Mormacrey, and four steel trawlers are estimated to cost about \$3.7 million.

They are leased to the Pacific Exploration Co.

Grounded on the sandy beach off Oceanside, California, south of San Diego, the 90-foot Astoria trawler Captain Ludvig, one of the largest ever built in Oregon, has been refloated after suffering damage.

Fishing with lampara gear for sardines in the fog, the Astoria vessel grounded hard while she was being navigated by the crew. Capt. C.E. Christensen, her skipper, had taken a short nap when the Christensen, confused by the reading of a fathometer, ran the boat on the beach.

Sunday night was the year's coldest for the lower Columbia area, with temperatures in some spots falling as low as 20 degrees above zero.



A young girl and her snowman in 1971.