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IN ONE EAR • ELLEDA WILSON

## WHISPERING GIANTS



It would be hard not to notice the 18-foot high cedar **Indian head statue** on the east side of the Astoria roundabout. So how did it get there?

Astorian **Ed Johnson** met Hungarian artist Peter Wolf Toth when he was teaching summer classes in Reno, Nevada, in the 1980s, and Toth was carving statues in the city park.

That was when Toth told Ed about his **Trail of the Whispering Giants** project, which entailed putting a statue honoring Native Americans in every state. Oregon didn't have one — yet.

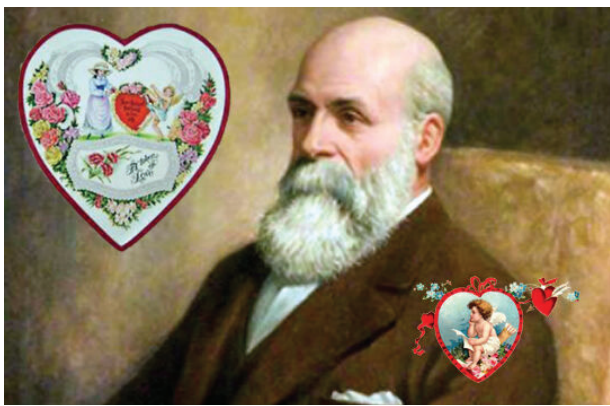
When Ed got back home from Reno, he started a letter writing campaign to invite Toth to Astoria to carve a Whispering Giant here, beginning with then-mayor **Edith Henningsgaard Miller**.

Toth accepted, and stayed at **Joe Herman's** (who did the rock work around the base). Carved from a giant log over several months, **Ikala Nawan**, or Man Who Fishes, honors the tribes of the North Coast, and is No. 57 in the series. It was dedicated in 1987; Johnson family photos are shown.

Toth did not get paid for his work, since he considers the Whispering Giants a gift to his adopted country. By the way, there's another giant in Hillsboro, Kno-Tah, No. 56, also carved in 1987, and another was in Vancouver, Washington, which has disappeared.

So what is Toth doing now? He has completed 74 statues, including in all 50 states, in several Canadian provinces and in Europe, although several are now deteriorating or missing. He has a small roadside gallery in Edgewater, Florida, which Roadside-America.com says "appears to be overflowing with art."

## MARKETING MAVEN



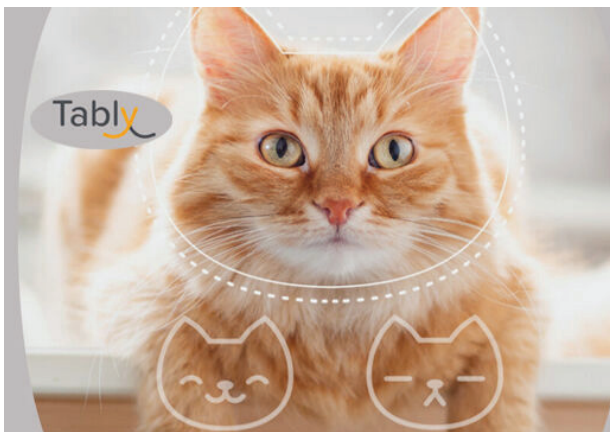
Have you ever wondered who thought of the **heart-shaped box** of candy so often seen, and given, on **Valentine's Day**?

History.com says that **Richard Cadbury**, who went on to inherit the famed British chocolate manufacturing company, was responsible for sales at first. The chocolate-making process had been improved to make a very tasty drinking chocolate, which also produced excess cocoa butter, which was then used to make what was then called "eating chocolate."

Cadbury turned out to be a marketing maven, and in 1861 came up with the idea of elaborate heart-shaped boxes, which he designed, not only to sell the candy, but to be kept as a keepsake to store mementos. Needless to say, the box was, and is, a huge hit.

It's too bad he didn't patent the idea, since Answers.org says that "over 36 million heart-shaped boxes of chocolates are purchased for Valentine's Day."

## FEELING OK?



Ever wonder how your cat is feeling? Well, now there's an app for that, too: **Tably** (sylvester.ai).

Take a photo of your cat's face, and the app uses artificial intelligence trained in vet-approved pain scales to figure out your cat's discomfort level, "based on subtle facial cues," the website says.

"... You won't have to guess if your cat is comfortable, even as they age. Monitor your cat's health painlessly and easily, with results you can trust"; a win-win for cat lovers.

## GIDDY AND BLESSED



"Another adventure in old house research!" **Lauri Krämer Serafin** wrote. She and her husband, **Pete**, own the Forsstrom House on Seventh Street, which was built in 1894, and extensively remodeled circa 1915 by **Dr. Toivo Forsstrom** — a Finnish physician and surgeon who came to Astoria in 1906 — and his fist wife, **Alli**.

In researching the history of their house, Lauri realized that little is known about Alli Forsstrom. After the doctor and Alli divorced, he remarried, and Alli vanished from Clatsop County records.

"There was a lengthy memoir in the summer 2021 **Cumtux** magazine by **Paul Fellman**," Lauri noted, "who was born in the Forsstrom House in 1911. Paul's parents, **Werner and Helena Fellman** ... rented the house in 1911, while the Forsstroms were in Portland ..."

The Cumtux story added some insight, at last, to Alli: "... She spent money like it was water. She owned a Stutz Bearcat, had horses, had their house rebuilt, had the rooms plastered specific colors, then had the walls papered. She put on recitals in her home, starring herself before her guests.

"Once she decided she wanted to be queen of the Astoria Regatta. Votes were derived from the purchases of merchandise from local merchants. Dr. Forsstrom spent thousands getting Alli elected ... Despite these eccentricities, she was good-hearted, and most generous to us kids, not having any children of her own."

Lauri emailed Paul Fellman's son, **Bill Fellman**. "I sent him the article," Lauri recalled. "He enjoyed it very much, and stated 'it was just like talking to Dad!' In return, he has gifted the Forsstrom House with Fellman family things and photos!"

One of the photos is shown, taken in 1909, near the time of the Forsstrom's marriage, at Cannon Beach. Pictured, from left, Alli Forsstrom, Dr. Toivo Forsstrom, **Kasten Fellman** and Helena Fellman. So far, it's the only known photo of the couple.

"Such history!" Lauri added. "We are feeling giddy and blessed ... Special thanks to the **Clatsop County Historical Society** for publishing the memoir, and enriching my research."

## 'PERILS OF THE SEA'



The 215-foot windjammer **Emily G. Reed**, launched in 1880, **ran aground** on **Rockaway Beach**, at 1:30 a.m. Feb. 14, 1908, while traveling to Portland with a load of coal.

Heavy weather was partially responsible for the grounding, but most of the blame lies with the inaccuracy of the vessel's chronometers. By the time the captain realized he was too far east, he couldn't turn back. The Emily Reed hit the beach hard, bow first, and started to break up.

The first mate, cook and two seamen set off in a steel lifeboat. They were immediately swamped, and mistakenly presumed dead. Horrified, the captain, his wife, and the other survivors stayed aboard the ship. At daylight, a very low tide made it possible for them to safely wade to shore.

The lifeboat, which had actually been pushed out to sea in the heavy surf, needed constant bailing. Worse yet, their hopes were crushed several times when passing vessels failed to hear or see them.

The first mate's harrowing account of the wreck and their 78-hour lifeboat journey, "Perils of the sea," can be found in the **Barrier Miner** of New South Wales.

"The second night out we saw lights ashore, but it was too dark for us to venture in," he recalled. "There was neither food nor water, and we suffered terribly from thirst.

"Toward evening the cook declared he could not stand it any longer, and took a drink of sea water. He soon became delirious and lay down in the pool of water in the bottom of the boat."

A few days after the wreck, near midnight, the watchman on the deck of the sloop **Tesla**, anchored in **Neah Bay**, Washington, more than 200 miles north of Rockaway Beach, heard a "feeble hail." It was the men in the lifeboat.

Three were "in a pitiable condition," delirious, with swollen tongues from thirst and suffering from exposure. They all recovered, but the cook had been dead for more than a day.

The Emily Reed and her cargo were a total loss, but what remains of the ship peeks out of the sand every so often as a reminder of her story.

## SLIP SLIDING AWAY



Winter tidbits from **The Daily Morning Astorian**, **Feb. 10, 1884**:

- Several joyous parties of **sleigh-riders** were out last evening and enjoyed themselves exceedingly ...

- Several **sprains and bruises** are reported, the result of coasting: in two instances **surgical attendance** was necessary.

- A little daughter of Mrs. Grant's had a **narrow escape** from a dreadful death yesterday.

She was coasting on the hillside by the hospital and ran off the track into the water by the old mill site, the tide being at the flood. Her brother and others fortunately saw her, and she was rescued with no further mishap than a thorough drenching.

- It is learned with regret that there were various casualties at the scene of last evening's coasting on **Benton Street** (now **Eighth Street**, which more than explains the following paragraphs).

The bright moonlight and the superb track brought out a great crowd, and in the course of the evening there were many narrow escapes.

John Irving ... had his left leg broken below the knee. Joseph Langdon ... had his right leg broken below the knee, and Al Johnson is reported to have sustained a similar injury.

## 'FROZEN THEATRICALITY'



**The Daily Morning Astorian**, dated **Feb. 10, 1888**, mentioned a peculiar Victorian era form of entertainment, the **parlor tableau**:

"At the entertainment to be given by the ladies of the Presbyterian church several young ladies will personate, as **living pictures**, Cleopatra, Mary Queen of Scots, Night and Morning, Pocahontas, Sairy Gamp, Betsy Pry and other celebrated characters."

The parlor tableaux usually depicted a famous scene from art, the theater, history, the Bible or a novel. The catch was the participants could not move or speak while they held the pose in "frozen theatricality" for a minute or more.

**Robert M. Lewis**, author of "Tableaux vivants: Parlor Theatricals in Victorian America" in 1888, opined that this peculiar form of entertainment started in England, on the London stage, in 1811. British actors brought the first tableaux vivants to the New York stage in 1831; by the 1840s "living pictures" were a full-fledged American parlor fad.

By the way, tableaux had a comeback with the 2016 **Mannequin Challenge**; the camera moved, the people didn't. Thankfully, it didn't last.

## CLIPPING ALONG



A 110-year-old 131-foot Dutch vessel, **De Tukker**, **is about** to be retrofitted to become a modern commercial **sailing cargo ship** on the North Sea for Dutch start-up company EcoClipper, Maritime-Executive.com reports. She will be the first to ship 50 to 70 tons of cargo in a "sustainable manner" and "environmentally friendly way," the company says, and accommodate 12 paying passengers. The ship is pictured, courtesy of EcoClipper.

Eventually, EcoClipper wants to build a fleet of 200-foot long three-masted cargo ships. Each vessel will be powered solely by around 20 sails, have a crew of 12, along with 36 trainees and 12 passengers, and carry 500 tons of cargo.

What's old is new again. Welcome back, clipper ships.