

WATER UNDER THE BRIDGE

COMPILED BY BOB DUKE
From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2012

At Knappa Days this weekend, it was like one big, happy family. Kids and adults enjoyed the old-fashioned fun at the two-day celebration featuring lawn mower races, a logging show, children's games, a parade, a community dance, a dog show, a pancake feed, church service, 5K run and walk and even fireworks.

Now in its fourth year, the event was started by the Knappa Business Association to reinforce local spirit.

The docks were hopping for 54 days between the beginning of July and late August, with boat after boat coming in loaded with California pilchards snared from the ocean in seine nets.

After two years of declining harvest levels, the 2012 harvest guidelines for the Pacific sardine fishery shot up by 108%: 109,409 metric tons, compared to 52,526 last year.

The second of three sardine fishing periods this season, which started July 1 and ended midnight Wednesday, was a nearly five-fold increase in duration over last year's second period, which lasted a mere 11 days.

"It's not unusual for the allocation to change on average 40 to 50% each year based on changes to population and the (survey) modeling," said Kevin Hill, a scientist with the Southwest Fisheries Science Center, who synthesizes survey data to help estimate the sardine population each year.

For a brief, tense moment, the bald eagle listed in the breeze, struggling to find flight under its orthopedically repaired wing.

Onlookers gawked as the eagle didn't get high enough and, after a few moments of low-level flying, came to rest at the far end of a field in Olney, in the yard of a home.

As the adult female eagle sat in the yard, still as a statue, the small crowd of Olney residents and their children, who'd gathered to see two rehabilitated eagles released, waited and watched.

One of the eagles, which suffered from malnourishment before being nursed back to health, was already successfully soaring overhead.

The director of the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, Shamelle Fee, began contemplating an attempt to recapture the eagle. Perhaps, she said, the grounded eagle needed more rehabilitation at the wildlife center before it could fly.

Or, perhaps, the eagle was simply exhausted from its first full flight in nearly half a year, after being found in a field with its wing broken in three places.

But then, with a few flaps, the eagle lifted and flew toward a tree. The onlookers oohed, some clapped and Fee said it was up the eagle now — it was free.

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NAHCOTTA, Wash. — An eight-year drought in the natural reproduction of Willapa Bay oysters is on the verge of ending.

Eric Hall, manager at Taylor Shellfish Co. in Nahcotta, said managers are monitoring the latest tests by University of Washington research biologists Alan Trimble and Jennifer Ruesink.

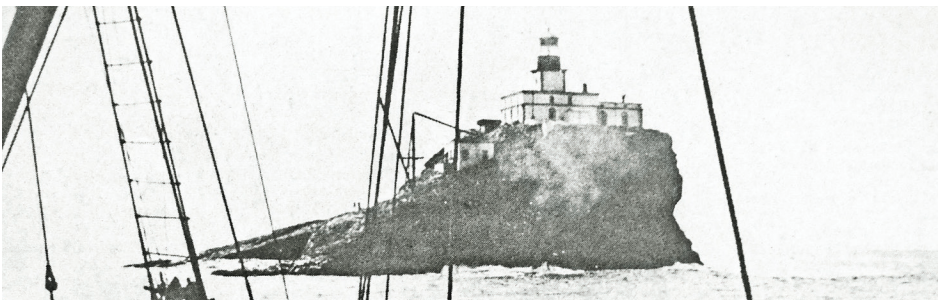
He said their samples show oyster larvae in Willapa Bay are growing fast.

"Their numbers don't look like it will be a boom year, but with the demand up worldwide for oysters, we may make some money," Hall said.

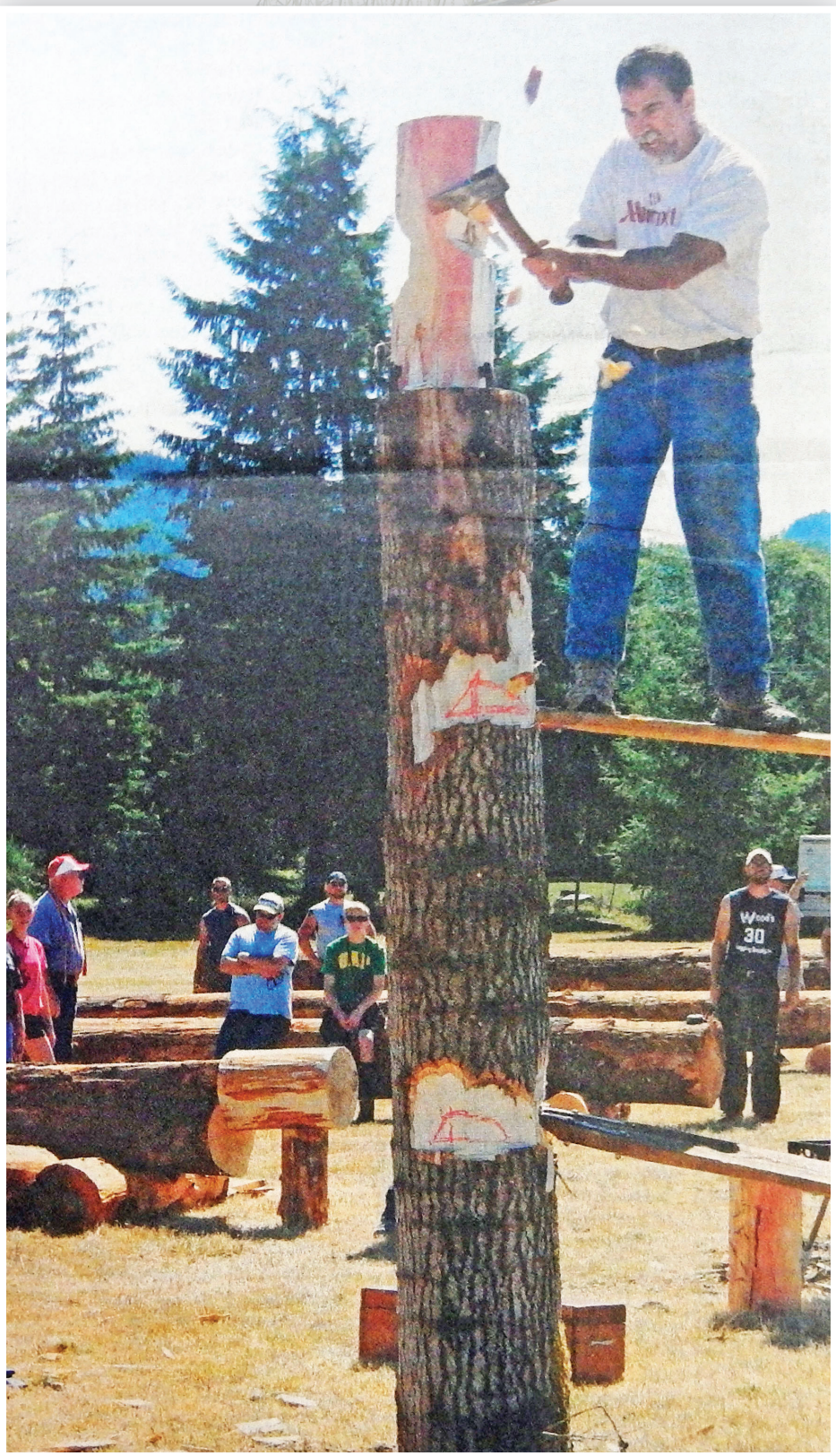
50 years ago — 1972

CANNON BEACH — Ownership of one of Oregon's world-famous landmarks may be returning to the state in the near future.

But the future of the nearly century-old Tillamook Rock Lighthouse may be dimmed by the tower's rapidly deteriorating condition.



1972 — Tillamook Rock Lighthouse, nearly a century old, sea-soaked and rotting, may return to public ownership in the near future, say its present owners, a group of Las Vegas, Nevada, investors. The abandoned, rarely-visited sentinel achieved a unique historic status for its 77 turbulent years of service.



2012 — Dave Cramsey competes in the Springboard Chop during the Knappa Days logging show. In the Springboard Chop, contestants climb a height of 9 feet using two springboard placements and chop through a 12-inch diameter log mounted on top of the spar pole.

The sentinel, abandoned by the U.S. Coast Guard 15 years ago, appears to be succumbing to the elements and the lack of maintenance that preserved the lighthouse through 77 years of use.

"Wherever deep-water sailors rub elbows in waterfront dives — Singapore, Port Said, London," writes author James A. Gibbs Jr., "The name Tillamook Rock can be heard.

"Back yonder windjammers and square-riggers would tack for days off the rock, awaiting favorable conditions for crossing the Columbia River Bar," Gibbs wrote. "The light and foghorn of the lonely outpost would blink and blast at them constantly, warning of the perilous dangers that lurked everywhere."

The Las Vegas, Nevada, group, whose ownership of the weather-worn Tillamook Rock Lighthouse stirred controversy, wants to return it to Oregon's possession.

Harris Sharp, spokesman for Academic Economic Coordinators, says his group is interested in returning the abandoned lighthouse to "some worthy cause" to preserve it as a landmark.

Sharp indicated the board of directors was waiting for a possible reappraisal of the property's value. It is probably the one piece of property the Clatsop County tax assessor has no desire to visit for a first-hand evaluation.

Tillamook Rock Lighthouse remains, as it has since construction started in 1879, a highly dangerous outpost to approach. Though no longer the guardian of the north Oregon Coast, it remains a key navigational guide.

It towers proud and lonely — and dying.

Seaside photographer Sam Foster, organizer of the last known group of visitors to the rock, says the isolated structure is "deteriorated beyond saving."

With him was a special visitor, Oswald Allik — the last lighthouse keeper to leave the rock when the Coast Guard discontinued the service on Sept. 10, 1957.

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A documentary about explorers Lewis and Clark may be filmed in Clatsop County this year. A research team from St. Louis television station KETC-TV toured the county last week in preparation for a possible documentary on the famous expedition.

After a slow start in June and July, Warrenton charter boat operator Bud Charlton said last week that business has peaked and he is faced with turning people away.

"Six weeks doesn't make a good season, however," said Charlton who, like other Clatsop County businesspeople, blames national economic conditions for the season's slow start.

Charlton said he has heard reports from other operators, some in Washington and others in Newport and Depoe Bay, that their charter businesses experienced the same sluggishness in activity earlier in the summer.

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The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency confirmed Wednesday that federal funding will finance 33% of the cost of Astoria's sewage lagoon treatment system. At the same time, the agency cleared up a misunderstanding that arose over whether the downtown interceptor system was eligible for federal funds.

75 years ago — 1947

Besides many salmon fishermen in local canneries, there are a surprising number of tourists who find the August salmon run interesting.

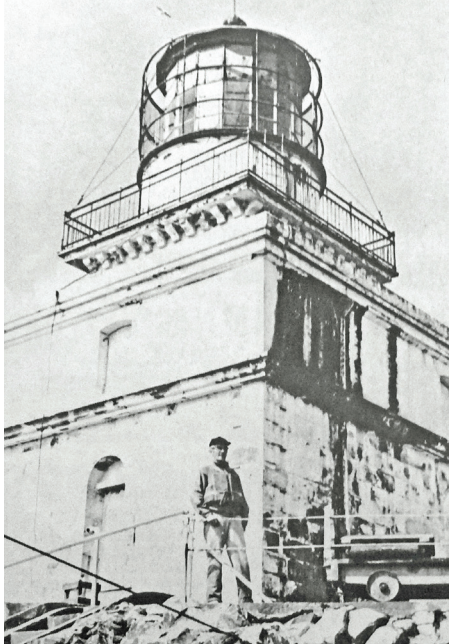
These tourists crowd receiving docks, where they are impressed by fishermen bringing many fish without bragging about their catches.

Some of them listen to the wisecracks of the fish receivers, who are a clever and capable part of the canning business. Visitors appear to appreciate fish receivers with more understanding than their friends and neighbors.

Herbert Erickson, age 28, an Astoria fisherman, and his boat puller Eldon Korpela, 21, of Astoria, escaped from their burning gillnet boat at the Union Fishermen's Cooperative Packing Co. oil



2012 — Jeremy Milliron releases an adult eagle found earlier this year in a field at Walluski Loop and Highway 202.



1972 — Tillamook Rock Lighthouse near Cannon Beach.



2012 — Sardines missing their heads or tails are plucked from a conveyor belt and separated for use locally as crab bait.

dock Wednesday night by diving into the river.

Erickson suffered painful arm burns. Just as he touched the starter button on his gillnet boat, an explosion knocked him out of the cabin against the stern. Korpela was thrown into the river.

Hoses were played on the roaring flames. They threatened to sweep the oil house, which contained gasoline and motor lubricants. If the oil house had caught fire, serious damage to net racks and other properties of the company would have resulted. Astoria fire equipment joined the battle.

The boat, still tied to the oil dock, sank after its cabin was destroyed by the fire.

The 1947 Salmon Derby will be featured in an issue of National Geographic magazine, it was announced this week by A. Bancroft Wells of the Portland Chamber of Commerce.

Leo A. Borah, who wrote an article on Oregon in last December's issue of National Geographic, was in Portland last week en route to British Columbia.

Before leaving, he accepted an invitation to the Salmon Derby as a guest aboard the yacht of John A. Zehntbauer, president of Jantzen Knitting Mills, to obtain information for his Salmon Derby article.

Luck and skill last year obliged J.J. Waldo, of Portland, with a prize-winning 49-pound and 2-ounce Chinook salmon landed on the last day of the derby. The catch was made by a 50-year-old auto parts salesman aboard the 26-foot pleasure boat Kermath.

A plea for more fishermen to register boats for the Salmon Derby went out today as officials stated that most of the boat space registered has already been exhausted by out-of-town entries.

Advance sales of the \$2 ticket entries for the derby jumped this week. The first book of 50 tickets was reported sold by McGregor's Supply Co., which won initial selling honors for the second straight year.

Al Hetzel, a secretary with the Chamber of Commerce, supervising boat registration for the sponsoring Astoria Regatta Association, expects more boats to register since the commercial fishing season closes Aug. 26.

But he requests that boat owners register now so that advance requests for boat space, particularly for busy Saturdays and Sundays, can be filled.