

Ship Report Transcript

Thursday, June 6, 2024

By Joanne Rideout

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It's time for the Ship report the show about all things maritime. I'm Joanne Rideout. It's Thursday, June 6th, 2024.

Let's take a look at our marine weather forecast. It's looking pretty good. We've got high pressure building over our waters for a return to northerly winds through the weekend. And it looks like the sunshine that we had yesterday might be the norm, at least for the next few days. We have north winds 10 to 15 knots in the forecast, rising to 15 to 20 in the afternoon. Seas 5 to 7 feet. Wave detail north four feet high at 6 seconds apart. West seven feet at 13 seconds apart. And southwest two feet high at 15 seconds apart. So there's kind of a lot going on there. Waves coming from three different directions,

In our inbound ship schedule, we have the East Bangkok arriving from offshore, headed for Vancouver. Not quite sure what her cargo might be, so I'll just take a guess. It's always a good guess to say wheat on these dry bulk carriers, but we'll see what happens. She'll pass Astoria at around 9:30 a.m. in Vancouver by about 3:30 p.m..

The Chem Sol is a chemical tanker arriving from South Korea, headed for Kalama. Her cargo could be tell you in passing a story around noontime in Kalama by about 5 p.m.. The Global Aglaia is arriving from Japan, headed for Portland, cement could be her cargo, passing Astoria around midnight, Portland around 5 a.m. on Friday.

In our outbounders, we have the Roadrunner Bulker leaving Kalama. Wheat on board. They're leaving around 10 a.m., passing Astoria outbound around 3 p.m.. And then we have the USS Augusta, that U.S. Navy ship, that one of two that has been at the port for the past few days. She did not go up to Portland for the Rose Festival and now she will be leaving this morning around 10 a.m. to go out to sea.

And I've gotten a couple of questions from people about why didn't she go up to Portland? All the vessels that come into the river for the Rose Festival are all active duty military vessels, and this vessel was one of two ships that came in and she made one of them may have just been needed elsewhere. And so they may have changed her orders.

The Hakata Queen is leaving Vancouver. Wheat on board. They're leaving around noontime, passing Astoria outbound around 6 p.m.. The African Kite is leaving Kalama. Also wheat on board. They're leaving around noontime and passing Astoria outbound around 5 p.m..

The Comet Ace is a car carrier with brand new Subarus on board, leaving Vancouver, leaving around 4 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 10 p.m.. The Laoura is leaving Portland soda ash on board, leaving around 7 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 1 a.m. on Friday. The Lowlands Angel is leaving Portland, potash on board, leaving around 8 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 2 a.m. on Friday and the Manousus P is leaving Kalama, corn, soy or wheat on board, leaving around 11 p.m. passing Astoria outbound around 4 a.m. on Friday.

And that leaves a couple of ships in our Astoria Anchorages awaiting orders. They are the Cape Kennedy and the Proteas, and both of those ships will eventually head upriver. We hope to pick up cargo.

Well, I got an interesting listener question yesterday about a ship that was sitting in the Astoria, Anchorage this past week. And instead of heading upriver like most do, she instead turned around and headed downriver and out to sea.

Now, this is certainly a bit out of the ordinary and interesting to talk about to explain why this is unusual. Let me start by saying that our anchorages on the river here are waiting areas where ships that enter the river generally wait to go upriver and load cargo. So we see ships anchored in various places along the river corridor in designated anchorages, including Astoria, and eventually they head upriver to ports and then head downriver again with cargo on board. Some ships do come in to deliver cargo.

But occasionally ships deviate from that normal pattern. And this one was one of those cases. This ship came into the river about a week ago, but did not go upriver or even to the Port of Astoria to load cargo. Instead, she stopped in the anchorage here and then about a week later, quietly left the river for the ocean. So one reason why a ship would stop in our anchorage and go no further is engine trouble. And apparently that's what happened to this ship.

Engine trouble is not uncommon with ships, but they need to resolve it if they're going to, for instance, head inland on the winding course between Astoria and Portland. As long as there are known issues, they have to resolve those first. It's just too dangerous.

I don't know much more about this particular situation, but I can tell you that a ship with mechanical problems that is here in our Anchorage could use her time in the anchorage to perform repairs done by her own crew. Some ships have machine shops on board and very knowledgeable crew members that can, in some cases repair and even manufacture parts. Or they can order parts and wait for them to be delivered or have an outside expert join the ship to assist.

And Astoria is a good place for ships to stop because it is out of the turbulence of the ocean and not very far away from the ocean, just 17 miles from the mouth of the river. So another option that Astoria and its Anchorage offer ships, is that it is a safe haven from the ocean. Astoria can be convenient and relatively easy to access port with a safe place to anchor while they sort things out. The Oregon and Washington coast offer few harbors where ships can just duck in if they have a problem.

So Astoria, with its fuel docks, fuel barge and access to a port and safe anchorage, is appealing. This is why research vessels often call here because we are a rare and convenient port on the coast in this region to get fuel, buy supplies, perform crew changes and other necessary land based chores for ships and their crews. It doesn't hurt that we have a city here and a Costco.

Now we see other vessels in our anchorages here near Astoria as well, vessels that are just going about their business. We see barges sometimes anchored off Tongue Point waiting for a tug to pick them up. We also see ships bunkering, that's the process of taking on fuel from a fuel barge in the anchorage.

We see smaller boats called launches, taking inspectors out to ships so they can be inspected before, for instance, taking on agricultural cargoes up river. They also take ships agents out to the ships, which are shoreside officials who help ships, take care of all the protocols and paperwork they have to do when they come here into a foreign port, because the vast majority of our ships here are foreign flagged vessels coming into a U.S. port. And the U.S. Coast Guard is always a presence on the river here doing rescue, enforcement and training.

So there's always a lot going on out there in the Anchorage, even though we seldom see many people, they are there just doing their jobs and making it look easy so we can enjoy these vessels as they pass by.

A quick note about the Rose Festival fleet, because I know that's very high interest. Those ships are now up in Portland at the seawall and they will be there until Monday morning when they will head down river and I will talk about them when they are heading down river.

And also on Sunday when I post the ship schedule and all that, I'll give everybody a rundown of the movements of the fleet as they head downriver and out to sea. Another great opportunity to take pictures or just see them go by.

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