Ship Report Transcript
Thursday, June 20, 2024
By Joanne Rideout

It's time for the Ship Report the show about all things maritime. I'm Joanne Rideout. It is Thursday, June 20th, 2024. And today we'll start with a little marine weather and then we will look at some ship traffic.

And then we're going to talk a little bit about something very, very important on the river and in our surrounding waters, and that is buoys of various kinds. We have a couple of different kinds of buoys around here. We have navigational buoys that tell us how to get around, and we have data buoys that gather data about the sea state and the wind velocity and other things like that.

So a very important part of of things for mariners around here are those buoys, because they mark the watery roadway and they also give you valuable information to tell you about what's happening out there on the water.

And today's forecast, north winds 10 to 15 knots, gusting up to 20, sees 3 to 4 feet. Wave detail, northwest four feet high at 5 seconds apart and west two feet at 10 seconds apart. And look at our ship schedule, our inbound hours today. We have two of them so far, the Ocean Tact arriving from Japan headed for Longview. I believe she's coming in to pick up logs at the Port of Longview, passing Astoria around 7:30 a.m. in Longview by 11 a.m.. The ZBB Serenity is arriving from Japan, headed for Vancouver's Anchorage. She will go to the Port of Portland eventually to pick up soda ash, and she will pass that story around 9:30 a.m. and be in Vancouver by 3:30 p.m..

In our outbounders, we have the East Bangkok leaving Vancouver. I think wheat on board, leaving around 6 a.m., passing Astoria outbound around noon time. The Itamos is leaving Vancouver carrying wheat leaving around 2 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 8 p.m.. The New First is leaving Kalama with wheat on board, leaving around 3 p.m., passing Astoria outbound around 8 p.m. and in our Astoria Anchorages, we have the Ocean Jade headed for Kalama to pick up wheat. She'll be leaving Astoria's Anchorage around 11 a.m.. Look for her in Kalama by about 4 p.m. today. The Arya is headed from the Astoria Anchorage to the Crimson Island Anchorage. She will be leaving at about 3:30 p.m. and stopping in the Crimson Anchorage at about 6:30 p.m.. And she that's about, uh, about half an hour or so downriver from Longview on the Washington side of the river that anchorage. And so it's not uncommon for ships to go from one anchorage to another. She may just be trying to get closer to her ultimate destination. Which ultimately will be Vancouver to load wheat. So she's just moving up river a little bit and that gets her, you know, a few hours closer to Vancouver, probably. There's a ship in the berth that she's headed for, and when that opens up, she will zip up to Vancouver and get into that berth. So that's an example of a ship moving from one place to another, and she'll be one anchorage to another and she'll be picking up wheat eventually upriver.

And then we have the research vessel Atlantis, which is at the Port of Astoria docks. She's really cool looking. She has a blue hull, can't miss her if you just drive down to the port and take a look at her. Her tentative departure is on Friday sometime, so she doesn't have much longer to visit us here in Astoria this time around. But she does come in to Astoria fairly often. So we've seen her here before.

We also have three vessels awaiting orders. The marvelous star, the Ocean Lion and the Cape Kennedy, they're all in the anchorage awaiting the opportunity to head upriver to pick up their own cargoes for export.

I've been noticing that we have a new weather buoys offshore off the mouth of the Columbia River, or rather an old one that has been off station for a while and is now back in service. I'm hoping to talk with someone from NOAA about that. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

These data buoys, as they're called, transmit information about wave height and water temperature and wind speed. And they are very valuable for fishermen, marine pilots, ship captains and other mariners who want to know what is happening outside the river's mouth in the ocean in terms of sea conditions when they go out to work at sea. So this data buoy, which is now back in the waters off shore, was out of commission for a while. So more on that in a bit when I get more information about it.

But it made me think about boys in general and how important they are and how mariners on the river here and in waterways worldwide rely on buoys. In our country, the Coast Guard maintains our navigational buoys, which mark the edges of channels: safe, deep areas where vessels can safely travel.

So there are data buoys and there are navigational buoys, and they are both deeply important in the maritime scheme of things. On the river here, we have a system of buoys that mark the ship channel between the mouth of the river all the way up river to Portland and even inland from there.

These create a water highway that lets ships and other vessels know where they can safely travel without running aground. So if you look out at the water, it all looks the same. And if you don't have anything to tell you where to go, you could easily run aground because you can't tell how shallow the water is by just looking at the surface.

So these bouys, these navigational buoys are referenced to nautical charts. These are digital documents. And they used to be printed out. And there are still a lot of printed charts around – you used to be able to go into a like a marine supply store and buy those paper charts. You can still print them out. But in general, they’re digital these days and you can get these digital charts online and you can get one for your area and you can see where the boys are, which helps you know where you are when you see one.

So buoys are marked with numbers, colors and sounds made by bells and horns and other devices, and they're all unique. So you can find a boy or even hear it in the dark or the fog and know where you are. So it's important to be referencing a nautical chart while you're out in your boat, say. So if you come across a buoy, you can look at it and then look on the chart and say, “Oh, that's where we are.”

It's just a way of telling your position, which is always a really valuable thing to know. On the Columbia River off Astoria, you can see these buoys. They are red and green and coming from the ocean, heading inland. The red buoys are on your right and the green are on your left. So red buoys are to starboard and the green buoys are to port.

This is a universal rule in U.S. waters, which is normally expressed as “Red Right Returning” meaning vessels returning from sea should keep those red buoys to the right to stay in the safe channel.

Next time you're near the waterfront on the river, take a look around. You'll probably be able to spot a boy somewhere out there on the water, marking the safe territory for ships. And probably that buoy will

be leading with the falling or rising tide, depending on the time of day. And what's happening at that moment in the tidal cycle.

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