United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form.* If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. **Place additional certification comments, entries, and narrative items on continuation sheets if needed (NPS Form 10-900a).**

1. Name of Property

historic name **Nutty Narrows Bridge**

other names/site number

2. Location

street & number Olympic Way, between 18th Avenue and Maple Street ☐ not for publication

city or town Longview ☐ vicinity

state *Washington* code *WA* county *Cowlitz* code 015 zip code 98632

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this ___ nomination ___ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

___ national ___ statewide X local

Applicable National Register Criteria

X A ___ B ___ C ___ D

Signature of certifying official/Title Date

WASHINGTON SHPO
State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.

Signature of commenting official Date

Title State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that this property is:

___ entered in the National Register

___ determined eligible for the National Register

___ determined not eligible for the National Register

___ removed from the National Register

___ other (explain:) _____

Signature of the Keeper Date of Action

Nutty Narrows Bridge
Name of Property

Cowlitz Co., WA
County and State

5. Classification

Ownership of Property
(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- [ ] private
- [X] public - Local
- [ ] public - State
- [ ] public - Federal

Category of Property
(Check only **one** box.)

- [ ] building(s)
- [ ] district
- [ ] site
- [X] structure
- [ ] object

Number of Resources within Property
(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
		buildings
		district
		site
1		structure
		object
1	0	**Total**

Name of related multiple property listing
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

N/A

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register

0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / outdoor recreation

Current Functions
(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE / outdoor recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification
(Enter categories from instructions.)

OTHER: catenary bridge

Materials
(Enter categories from instructions.)

foundation: STEEL
walls: METAL
roof: N/A
other: CLOTH/CANVAS; Rubber

Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance of the property. Explain contributing and noncontributing resources if necessary. Begin with **a summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, setting, size, and significant features.)

Summary Paragraph

The Nutty Narrows Bridge, constructed in 1963, is a squirrel-sized catenary bridge that was erected to create an above-street crossing for Longview squirrels moving bet ween the Park Plaza office building and a city park across the street. It crosses Olympia Way, between 18th Avenue and Maple Street, a major thoroughfare in Longview, Washington and serves the local squirrel population as a means to avoid traffic deaths while crossing Olympia Way. The bridge is supported by metal brackets bolted into trees on either side of the street. The bridge surface is a retired fire hose attached to these brackets. The bridge contains a central decorative truss structure supported by thin cables that are also attached to the brackets. The central suspension structure is composed of aluminum tubing from household television aerial antennae that have been welded together.

Narrative Description

Location and Setting

The Nutty Narrows Bridge is at the north edge of the Old West Side neighborhood and the south side of the Civic Center District in Longview, Washington. Olympia Way serves as boundary between the two neighborhoods. The neighborhood has a mixture of residential and commercial structures and is just to the west of the city's central traffic circle where the public library, U. S. Post Office, and the Monticello Hotel are located, all of which are contributing buildings in the Longview Civic Center National Register Historic District. The surrounding area is heavily canopied and park-like. The approximately 60-foot span hangs about 22 feet above Olympia Way, just beyond the corner of 18th Avenue (between 18th Avenue and Maple Street). The bridge is attached to two large oak trees, one on each side of the street. Only the hanging structure is included in the nomination boundary.

Description

The Nutty Narrows Bridge was constructed in 1963. It consists of a symmetrical catenary bridge with a flattened canvas fire hose deck, and a mock suspension structure at its center. It is approximately 60 feet in length. The bridge deck is bolted to each tree through a closed side angle iron with lag bolts running through the whole width trunk (Photo A). Two large turnbuckle tensioners are bolted through the top of the angle iron with their jaw ends and spaced at the width of the bridge. A wheel-less pulley is attached to each turnbuckle with a lynchpin and secured with an R-clip. A ⅜-inch guy wire is looped around the pulley, left in an open loop for about one foot, and then twisted with itself before entering the four-inch fire hose. The wires are used to stretch the hose flat. One foot into the hose, the wires are kept in place at the outside edges of the hose by rivets. Further along the body of the hose deck, bolts are used instead of rivets every few feet for the same purpose.[1]

A 10-foot section located at the center of the bridge gives the appearance of a suspension bridge–style superstructure. The center 10-foot section of the bridge was "made from aluminum tubing, part of which had been an old television antenna."[2] The horizontal sections of the bridge were made from ¾-inch tubing and the bottom center portion of the bridge was made from 1¼-inch tubing bought especially for the bridge"; it supports the deck of the bridge and keeps the sides the appropriate distance apart, as there are few crossbars across the top.[3] These support bars are split in the center on one side and bolted through to the body of the superstructure.

The suspension structure is based on a long, solid metal tube on each side of the fire hose deck. At each end is a small rectangular tower with a crossbar at the top. At the center of each tower's crossbar is an eyehook through which runs a stability cable made of metal wire that is attached to each tree. The suspension structure is hung loosely and is under no tension at rest, but the stability cable helps keep the superstructure upright. A small American flag is seasonally mounted

[1] Amos J. Peters, "Nutty Narrows Bridge Construction Papers" (Longview, WA, c 1963), Personal Collection of Roger Peters.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

to the corner of each tower. There are two sets of "cables": main cables and suspender ropes.[4] Both are made of metal tubing of various diameters. The main cables start at the base bar and are welded to it and to the tower below the crossbar; together they form an isosceles right triangle. The cables then angle downward toward the center of the bridge, forming a very shallow "V." Fifteen "suspender ropes" hang from the cables on each side of the bridge, connecting with the base tube. The suspender ropes vary in height to follow the incline of the main cable.

This superstructure also supports the sign that hangs centered below the bridge that reads as follows (emphases original):

LONGVIEW, WA. MARCH 19, 1963
NUTTY NARROWS BRIDGE
Constructed by Amos J. Peters, Construction

The sign also features a realistic painting of a squirrel at the left (See Figure 6).

Alterations, Repairs, and Maintenance

Amos Peters took the bridge down in 1983 for repairs and maintenance. When the repairs were complete, a rededication ceremony was held during the 60th anniversary celebration for the City of Longview in July of that year.[5]

In August of 1989, the Nutty Narrows Bridge fell to the ground with one of its supporting oak trees. While the bridge was down, a new fire hose was installed on the roadbed and the sign was repainted. In November of 1989, the bridge was rehung over Olympia Way with one end still attached to the original, non-damaged tree and the other end attached to another tree located next to the fallen tree. So, from 1989 to 2005, the bridge was still hanging from one of its original trees in front of the Park Plaza office building.

The bridge was again taken down for repairs in 1999, and rehung in front of the Park Plaza office building. In May of 2005, the bridge was removed to protect it while one of its supporting oak trees were cut down due to termite damage. At this time the bridge was relocated one block to the west, in front of the Longview Public Library, over the three-lane traffic circle. Due to concerns about it being a potential traffic hazard while drivers maneuvered the traffic circle, the bridge was taken down in early November 2010, when the circle was reconfigured. It was reinstalled at the corner of Olympia Way and 18th Avenue, only a few trees away from its original location and most importantly in sight of the Park Plaza office building, the occupants of which designed, built, and maintained the bridge for its first 30 years.

Given the vagaries of nature and installation to live trees, eventual moves were inevitable. The bridge has been returned as close as feasible to its original location, serving its original purpose and located just north of the office building it was originally designed to serve.

[4] "How the Bridge Spans the Golden Gate," *Golden Gate Bridge Highway & Transportation District*, 2012, http://goldengate.org/exhibits/exhibitarea1b.php.

[5] Amy M. E. Fischer, "A History of the Nutty Narrows," *Daily News*, June 5, 2011, A4.

Nutty Narrows Bridge
Name of Property

Cowlitz Co., WA
County and State

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria
(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- [X] A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- [ ] B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- [ ] C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- [ ] D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations
(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

- [ ] A Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- [X] B removed from its original location.
- [ ] C a birthplace or grave.
- [ ] D a cemetery.
- [ ] E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.
- [ ] F a commemorative property.
- [ ] G less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
(Enter categories from instructions.)

ENTERTAINMENT/RECREATION

Period of Significance

1963, Year of Construction

Significant Dates

1963, Year of Construction

Significant Person
(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

Cultural Affiliation

N/A

Architect/Builder

Amos J. Peters (Designer)

Robert E. Newhall & LeRoy Dahl (Architects)

Amos J Peters Construction Co. (Builder)

Period of Significance (Justification)
The period of significance begins and ends the year that the bridge was constructed, 1963.

Criteria Considerations (explanation, if necessary)
The Nutty Narrows Bridge was removed for repairs in 1983 and rehung. One end was then moved in 1989 due to collapse of one of the original supporting trees. It was moved again in 2005 due to termite damage to on one of the supporting trees. In 2010, it was returned as close as possible to its original site on new trees in sight of its original location. Given the vagaries of nature and installation to live trees, eventual moves were inevitable. The bridge meets Consideration B, since it has been returned as close as possible to its original location, serves its original purpose, and is near the office building it was originally designed to serve.

Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph
(Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance and applicable criteria.)

The Nutty Narrows Bridge, constructed in 1963, is a squirrel-sized catenary bridge that was erected to create an above-street crossing for Longview squirrels moving between the Park Plaza office building and a city park across the street. The Nutty Narrows is the oldest known squirrel bridge in the United States. Envisioned by the owner of a construction company, Amos J. Peters, the Nutty Narrows squirrel bridge was constructed during the month of March in 1963 and reflects a modern design aesthetic combined with the do-it-yourself style of Amos J. Peters. The Nutty Narrows is locally significant to the city of Longview under Criterion A for entertainment/recreation due to its beloved status as a city icon and its provision of opportunity for wildlife viewing. The bridge represents the efforts of a small group of citizens who created a beloved community landmark to save local squirrels from having to cross a busy thoroughfare. The bridge has become a favorite local roadside attraction and has remained an important landmark in Longview, Washington.

Narrative Statement of Significance (Provide at least one paragraph for each area of significance.)

The Nutty Narrows Bridge is significant under the National Register eligibility Criterion A, for its entertainment/recreation-related themes as a reflection of the development of the bridge to solve the burgeoning need for a safe passageway for the city's squirrel population over Olympia Way in Longview, Washington. The period of significance for Criterion A is the year of construction, 1963. Amos Peters, the bridge's designer and constructor, discovered the need for the bridge when he noticed a red squirrel in the road in front of his office building that had met a vehicular demise. Peters envisioned the bridge and then, by constructing it, created one of the most beloved novelty attractions in Longview. After the construction of the Nutty Narrows Bridge, a large squirrel statue was constructed in Amos Peters' memory in a nearby park and four other squirrel bridges have since been constructed within the Longview city limits.

Longview History

Robert L. Long founded the City of Longview in the 1920s and, at the time, it was the largest planned city ever to have been built entirely with private funds.[6] The city was formally incorporated "as a third-class city on February 14, 1924." Long-Bell Lumber started production a few months later in "what was declared" the world's largest lumber mill.[7] The town was grandly planned with the City Beautiful Movement in the forefront of the design. Civic Square and Broadway Street are clearly examples of the movement and other landmark buildings (Monticello Hotel and the Public Library) are impressive in their size and detailing.[8] The town did not grow as quickly as the founders had hoped, but by 1930 the population had reached 10,700 and by 1950, the population had nearly doubled to 20,339.[9]

During the 1960s, Longview continued to grow. Its 1960 population was 23,349. By this time the remaining assets of Long-Bell Lumber were sold to the International Paper Company. Also during the 1950s and 1960s, Reynolds Metal, Longview Fibre Company and Weyerhaeuser all expanded their operations in Longview and development followed.[10]

The neighborhood directly to the bridge's southwest had been rapidly developing since the end of World War II. Most of the neighborhood houses date from the 1940s, 1950s, and 1960s. The Park Plaza office building sits on the site of the neighborhood's old children's park, which likely was the inspiration for the building's name. Amos Peters (who was the building's contractor) and Robert Newhall, among others, owned the Park Plaza office building, which provided the setting for the conception of the Nutty Narrows Bridge.

By 1970, the population had grown by approximately 5,000 people to 28,373. The city continued to grow through the 1980s, when the population grew to 31,052. Longview currently has a population of 36,458.[11]

[6] Daryl C. McClary, "Longview—Thumbnail History," *HistoryLink*, 2008, http://www.historylink.org/index.cfm?DisplayPage=output.cfm&file_id=8560.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Michael L. Neuschwanger, "Longview Civic Center Historic District." National Register District Nomination, May 15, 1985.

[9] McClary, "Longview—Thumbnail History."

[10] Ibid.

[11] US Census Bureau, "Longview City, Washington," *American FactFinder*, n.d., http://factfinder2.census.gov.

The Nutty Narrows

Planning and Construction

In January of 1963, Amos Peters, owner of Amos J. Peters Construction Company, traveled from his home to his office on the second floor of the Park Plaza Building at 1717 Olympia Way. Upon his arrival he saw a squirrel, which he described as a "furry little fellow [lying] dead on the boulevard, peanut still in his jaws."[12] Peters expressed a wish that the branches of the trees growing on each side of the thoroughfare would grow so as to meet in the middle to provide a way for squirrels to safely cross from the park to the squirrel feeder located in the common area of his Park Plaza office building. Amos Peters collected the remains of the dead squirrel and carried it home to show his three children.[13] After some months in the family freezer, the children, unbeknownst to Peters, pooled their allowance money and took the frozen squirrel to a taxidermist for preservation. It was their 1963 Christmas gift to their father. This stuffed squirrel, the inspiration for the Nutty Narrows Bridge, is on display at the office of the Amos Peters Construction Company to this day.[14]

Peters first kept the idea of building a squirrel bridge to himself because he believed others would think he was a "nut."[15] However, after Peters mentioned the idea of the squirrel bridge to insurance man Win Jones, another tenant of the Park Plaza building, "things moved rapidly."[16] With agreement from Frank Willis, the Longview Parks Department superintendent, on February 28, 1963, Peters presented the idea with "a section of the bridge" to the Longview City Council. Before finalizing the design, Peters consulted with architect Newhall and civil engineer Kramer, as directed by the City Council.[17] LeRoy Dahl, an employee of Newhall, participated in finalizing the design. All of the Nutty Narrows engineering and architectural service providers had offices in the Park Plaza office building. Peters promised the "entire initial cost ... together with its future maintenance [would] be financed by Park Plaza." This promise of Peters' was made possible by the fact that Peters (and the others who helped with the design of the bridge) were all part owners of the Park Plaza office building. With approval from the "City department heads," the City Council unanimously passed a motion to accept the offer. At this same meeting, councilwoman Mrs. P. H. LaRiviere, Sr., was reported to have "facetiously suggested the name 'Nutty Narrows'," and thus it has been known ever since.[18] This was likely a reference to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, famous for its 1940 collapse in Tacoma, Washington.

Within two days of the council's decision, news of a squirrel bridge had spread all over the United States. Peters then reported that because of all the national attention, the bridge's design "would have to be slightly more elaborate" than originally planned. After "three or four nights at [his] drawing board" Peters completed the plans for the bridge (See Figure 4). Peters reported that he "did almost all the construction of the bridge" and that during the process he "lost five pounds in weight."[19]

Peters designed the Nutty Narrows Bridge with assistance from Longview architects Robert E. Newhall and LeRoy Dahl. Donald Kramer, a structural engineer, ensured the bridge would maintain stability under high wind conditions. Peters, with a design in hand, along with William J. Hutch, his brother-in-law and co-owner of the Amos J. Peters Construction Company, built the bridge in the company's workshop at a cost exceeding $1,000.

Peters reported that he carefully measured "the distance between the two trees from which the bridge would be supported, at the height of 20 feet." He then "bolted the superstructure to the previously prepared hose and cable so that it would be in the center of the street when it was erected."[20]

[12] Amos J. Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers," March 26, 1964, Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[13] Roger Peters, "Presentation of Roger Peters Regarding Nutty Narrows Bridge to Longview City Council" (Longview, WA, July 25, 2013).

[14] Ibid.

[15] City of Longview, *Minutes of the Longview City Council: 3/28/1963*, 1963, https://www.digitalarchives.wa.gov/Collections/TitleInfo/531.

[16] Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers."

[17] City of Longview, *Minutes of the Longview City Council: 3/28/1963*.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers."

[20] Peters, "Nutty Narrows Bridge Construction Papers."

Worried about the sag that the weight of the bridge would put on the fire hose, Peters returned to his shop and "then tied one end of the cable to a truck and the other end to [his] crane and stretched it a distance of 60 feet" in order to understand how much the bridge would sag when it was placed between the two oak trees. At first the bridge had a "tendency to turn and twist" because of the "difference in tension" on the two ⅛-inch steel cables in the hose. Peters "adjusted the tension until it hung just the way we wanted it to."[21]

Due to safety concerns Peters and Hutch decided to add a ¼-inch aluminum wire and attach "it to either end of the crossbar on the superstructure" and then extended it the "full length of the hose."[22] Eventually, this wire was anchored at both ends on the supporting oak trees.

Peters and Hutch first set the "anchors on the two trees that were to be used for supports." They then "draped the entire bridge over a scaffold on the back of a truck and took it to the park." As a construction company they had a crane truck, which they used to "pick up one end of the hose" and lift it into position.[23]

Peters and Hutch reported that they had "constructed the anchors so that all [they] had to do was drop a pin in to secure the hose in position."[24] They then did the same thing on the opposite side of the street. They used a come-along winch to stretch the hose and cable into place. At this time they connected the aforementioned aluminum support wire onto the trees.

Dedication

On March 30, 1963, a grand dedication ceremony, complete with marching bands and construction of a temporary platform for dignitaries to speak was held at the site of the bridge. The Longview Police closed the street to traffic and the 60-foot-long bridge was hung over Olympia Way.[25] The Kelso Chamber of Commerce sent several representatives with a large box of peanuts labeled "Kelso Nuts for Longview Squirrels."[26] Chief of the State Patrol, Roy A. Betlach (who was representing Governor Albert Rosellini), "was lifted 20 feet above the crowd in a park department cherry picker personnel crane and snipped the bright blue ribbon dedicating what he had earlier called the 'road for rodents'."[27] He commented that Washington roads and bridges were getting smaller "making the job of policing them more difficult."[28] He suggested "the best way to patrol the Nutty Narrows Bridge would be to put an officer in the trees at each end."[29] Betlach gave the address with Councilwoman Mrs. P. H. LaRiviere, Sr. Also in attendance were D. Wiley, carpenter and city clerk; Gale Craddock, city treasurer; Frank Willis, park department superintendent; and over a hundred Longview residents. The "little bridge for squirrel traffic" was finally officially opened in Longview.[30] Harriet Hansen's report for The Longview *Daily News* concluded with "Seattle has its Space Needle, San Francisco its cable cars, Los Angeles its smog, and Longview its 'Nutty Narrows.'"[31]

Reports of the dedication of the bridge spread far and wide. The *Denver Catholic Register* reported on the need for the bridge, as "the bushy-tailed residents, careless pedestrians, had been getting killed right and left as they crossed the street."[32] The large photograph accompanying the article was with a plush toy squirrel.[33] The Longview *Daily News* reported "Clippings have been received at the Longview *Daily News* from the London *Daily Express*; the *News-Sentinel* of

[21] Ibid.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid.

[25] Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers."

[26] "State Patrol Chief Presides at Squirrel Bridge Ceremony," *Daily News*, April 1, 1963.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] City of Longview, *Minutes of the Longview City Council: 3/28/1963.*

[31] Harriet Hansen, "Squirrels Missing as Bridge Goes Up," *Daily News*, March 19, 1963.

[32] "Go by Bridge and Avoid the Crush," *Denver Catholic Register*, undated clipping.

[33] "Squirrelly Idea," *Vancouver Sun*, March 22, 1963; Hansen, "Squirrels Missing as Bridge Goes Up."

Fort Wayne, Indiana; the *Alexandria Gazette* of Virginia; and *The Daily* at Des Moines, Iowa."[34] Even the *Christian Science Monitor* reported the Nutty Narrows to its readership that May.[35]

Local and Worldwide Support

The following day, an imaginary creative story of the inception of the Nutty Narrows Bridge was also published in "Talking Business" a Longview *Daily News* column written by Harriet Hansen, and illustrated with a crayon drawing by Frank Mang. The story envisioned Park Plaza businessmen regularly having coffee together in their "modern office building [facing] a city park." These men had become "real buddies with their bushy-tailed friends." As the story unfolded, "the animals would squeak cheery greetings and then poke hopefully into their human friends' pockets for tasty tidbits." Unfortunately, the "serene situation" was broken with "plaintive cries" after which "the men would rush outside to find that another squirrel had lost his battle with an automobile." The men determined "something must be done." The article then jested that "the Park Plaza Squirrel Safety Committee got right to work on a proposal [for a squirrel bridge] to present to the Longview City Council." The Longview *Daily News* announced that "Squirrels, cars and the Nutty Narrows Bridge in Longview broke into the news across the nation today" because after the decision by the City Council "a local radio station shot the story to the Associated Press." After commentators Frank Hemingway and Don Allen of early morning radio from the American Broadcasting System announced the bridge, Harriet Hansen, the *Longview Daily News* reporter, complained about being "scooped." [36]

The day following the Longview City Council's meeting the news of the approval of the Nutty Narrows Bridge a story was published on the front page of the *Seattle Times*. The headline stated "Longview's Squirrely Span Not Nut's Idea."[37] When the squirrel bridge was hung, the *Seattle Times* announced, "Longview's most unusual civic project was erected ceremoniously today as a toll-free route for squirrels across a busy street."[38] A few days later, the *Seattle Daily Times* again reported on the Nutty Narrows, saying that "business was brisk on the [...] metal and canvas contraption designed to let squirrels cross busy Olympia Way without becoming traffic statistics."[39] The front page of the *Longview Daily News* announced "only the squirrels were missing" when the bridge was installed under the watchful eyes of Amos Peters, the builder, and Mrs. P. H. LaRiviere, Sr., "the namer." Because there were no squirrels, a photo was taken with a stuffed toy squirrel at one end of the bridge.[40] The Longview *Daily News* reported that spectators tried seeding the bridge with peanuts to attract the squirrels. This same photograph was used by the *Minneapolis Star* on March 20 and the *Vancouver Sun* (British Columbia) on March 22, 1963.[41]

The *Oregonian* announced the bridge to their readers the next day with a photograph of traffic moving underneath the Nutty Narrows.[42] The March 20 report in the *Green Bay Press-Gazette* emphasized traffic detours as a bridge for squirrels was hung.[43] The *Springfield Union* (Massachusetts) also reported the bridge hanging ceremony along with a brief history of the bridge.[44] The *Trenton Evening Times* ran the same story on March 20, 1963.[45] Roger Peters, the younger son of Amos and Elsie Peters, was an avid reader of *Sports Illustrated*, a weekly for sport enthusiasts. He tells the story, still, with surprise on his face, of seeing a report on the Nutty Narrows in the March 25, 1963, issue of *Sports Illustrated*.[46] One of the magazine's artists even sketched a squirrel looking at a sign as it entered the bridge; the sign, situated above a box, read "Deposit exact toll: one acorn." The original sketch was given to Amos Peters.[47]

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[34] "Nutty Narrows Instigators, City Officials, Newspapers, Get Fan Mail," *Daily News*, April 1, 1963.

[35] "Squirrels Have Toll-Free Path to 'Cafeteria,'" *Christian Science Monitor*, May 4, 1963.

[36] "Talking Business," *Daily News*, March 1, 1963.

[37] Associated Press, "Longview's Squirrely Span Not Nut's Idea," *Seattle Times*, March 1, 1963.

[38] "Nutty Narrows Bridge Ready for Furry Horde," *Seattle Times*, March 19, 1963.

[39] "Longview Squirrels Catch On," *Seattle Times*, March 21, 1963.

[40] Hansen, "Squirrels Missing as Bridge Goes Up."

[41] Associated Press, "Squirrelly Idea," *Vancouver Sun*, March 22, 1963; Associated Press, "Untitled Photograph," *Minneapolis Star*, March 20, 1963.

[42] "Nutty Narrows," *Oregonian*, March 20, 1963.

[43] "Traffic Detoured; Bridge Built for Hungry Squirrels," *Green Bay Press-Gazette*, March 20, 1963.

[44] "Now All they Need is Someone to Help The Squirrels Get Idea," *Springfield Union*, March 20, 1963.

[45] "Bridge Built For the Use of Squirrels," *Trenton Evening Times*, March 20, 1963.

[46] Peters, "Presentation of Roger Peters Regarding Nutty Narrows Bridge to Longview City Council."

[47] "Freeloader Freeway in Scorecard," *Sports Illustrated*, March 25, 1963.

Local businessmen used the fun to promote their businesses. Harriet Hansen, columnist for the Longview *Daily News,* featured John Christopherson, owner of the Beachway Shopping Center, when he presented a 100-pound "sack of 'fancy Virginia hand-picked peanuts'" to Dr. Joe Sweeney to feed "the little rascals…outside his office door at the Park Plaza."[48] A second photo shows Harry Calbom, Sr. and Bill Eagen of Development Enterprises promoting their new real estate specialty "squirrel bridges" with a sign at the raising of the bridge. Concluding this column was the note: "we were so sorry to hear that our liaison with the Park Plaza squirrel population, Bill Hutch, was hospitalized midweek."[49] Bill Hutch was a partner in the Amos Peters Construction Company. Later, at the Nutty Narrows dedication on March 30, Martin Insurance Agency prominently parked a car with a rooftop sign announcing, "Sure, we insured the Nutty Narrows Squirrel Bridge."[50]

For the 1963 holiday season, Peters "strung colored electric lights the full length of the bridge and erected a four foot fir tree on the aluminum center span." The tree was decorated with "lights and nuts on the branches." Since that time, the bridge has been decorated annually in the same manner. Roger Peters, son of Amos Peters, has purchased a 4-foot fir tree and hung lights on it every year since his father died in 1984; the Longview Parks Department wires the tree to the bridge and strings holiday lights to outline the bridge.[51]

Peters reported in March of 1964, that the squirrel traffic on the bridge was "heavy at times with as many as five little animal [*sic*] on it at one time."[52] Photographs of squirrels on the bridge taken by Longview photographer Lovell Groves also answered the perennial question, "Do the squirrels use it?"[53] Students, writers, and individuals of all ages who loved animals contacted Peters. Amos Peters was appreciative of the letters and personally answered each one, until they became so numerous that it became a burden. At that point, a year after the Nutty Narrows Bridge had been erected, he began responding with a form letter.[54]

The Squirrels Disappear

During the harsh winter of 1968–1969, use of the bridge diminished. The winter was one of the most severe winters on record.[55] The low temperature was often in the teens between December 28, 1968, and January 25, 1969.[56] However, Win Jones (the insurance man who encouraged Peters to propose the squirrel bridge to the Longview City Council) blamed neighborhood cats for reducing the squirrel population. He urged neighbors of the Nutty Narrows Bridge to put bells on their cats to give the squirrels a chance.[57] But Peters himself reported that dogs jumping at the foot of the trees supporting the bridge were also a problem.[58]

The Longview Sandbaggers, whose purpose was to promote the community using humor and offbeat antics, always took an active interest in the Nutty Narrows Bridge.[59] In September 1969, after Amos Peters, who was an active Sandbagger, caught wind of an excess of squirrels in Salem, Oregon, the Longview Sandbaggers announced they would be building "Nutty Narrows No. 2" for Salem, in a hoped-for squirrels-for-bridge trade.[60] Apparently Don McNeil, Salem's Chamber of Commerce manager had been trying to find a way to reduce squirrel deaths along Salem's State Street for some time.

An article published a week later in the *Oregonian* told the story a bit differently. It said a request for a squirrel bridge had been received from the Salem Chamber of Commerce, after which a meeting was scheduled between Longview Chamber of Commerce manager, Don Mason, and "several Longview men." These men from Longview "[wanted] Salem to provide

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[48] Harriet Hansen, "Squirrel Bait in Talking Business," *Daily News*, March 22, 1963.

[49] Ibid.

[50] *[Photograph]*, n.d., Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[51] Peters, "Presentation of Roger Peters Regarding Nutty Narrows Bridge to Longview City Council."

[52] Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers."

[53] "Squirrels Are Using Bridge—here's Proof," *Daily News*, March 16, 1963.

[54] Doris Disbrow, "[Blurb]," *Cowlitz County Quarterly*, September 2013.

[55] "Animals Vanish: Town Has Bridge for Squirrels—but No Squirrels," *Los Angeles Times*, October 23, 1969.

[56] "Official Weather: Longview, WA:Report for December 1968 – January 1969," *Weathersource*, January 2014, http://weathersource.com.

[57] Win Jones, "Why Not Belled Cats? [Letter to the Editor]," *Daily News*, c 1968.

[58] "Squirrel Bridge Has World Fame," *Daily News*, September 15, 1973.

[59] "Bawdy Baggers," *Daily News*, November 14, 2000. Personal communication with Walter Naze, November 18, 2013.

[60] "Nutty Narrows No. 2 to Be Built for Salem," *Daily News*, September 7, 1969. Personal communication between Doris Disbrow and Walter Naze, November 18, 2013.

them with a few squirrels to replace a dwindling squirrel population in Longview ... An observer said the knowledge-for-squirrels trade with Salem [would] likely be made without a hitch if the Longview builders [could] avoid the obvious reference to the ample supply of nuts around the legislative area." Amos Peters indicated "the Salem bridge [would] likely be longer than Longview's Nutty Narrows and the deck [might] be made of aluminum grating."[61]

Through the years the bridge—and the squirrel population of Longview—continued to receive press. The Longview *Daily News* announced that a reporter-photographer team from the *Los Angeles Times* was in Longview the week of October 5, 1969. They "[did] a story and took pictures of the squirrel span."[62] Amos Peters was interviewed as were others involved in the project, including Don Mason, Longview Chamber of Commerce manager. The theme of the article was to be the fact that Longview had a squirrel bridge, but few squirrels.[63] The article ran in the *Los Angeles Times* on October 23, 1969, with the headline titled "Animals Vanish: Town Has Bridge for Squirrels—but No Squirrels." Accompanying the article was a photo of Peters, up on his cherry picker, hanging an additional sign on the Nutty Narrows that stated "Have Bridge. Need Squirrels."[64] Papers in Omaha, Nebraska, and Peoria, Illinois, also reported on the lack of squirrels in Longview.[65]

A newspaper clipping from "a San Jose, California paper" was sent to Amos Peters; this article reported on Longview's problem with the "ungrateful little beasts...The [Longview] squirrel buffs have now opened a recruiting drive." This report stated the Salem Chamber of Commerce manager offered to supply Longview with a selection of prolific squirrels from the Oregon Capitol grounds if Peters would build a squirrel bridge for them.[66] Multiple publications said the Salem City Council held a "special squirrel session" and vetoed the exchange for two reasons. First, because the proposed bridge would cross State Street between the Capitol area and Willamette University, they were concerned the students from Willamette University might try to cross the squirrel bridge, fall into the street, and hurt themselves. The second reason was that the councilmen did not want to give "free advertising to Longview." To this, the Salem Chamber of Commerce manager replied, "What kind of country would this be, if it had turned down the Statue of Liberty because it might advertise the French?"[67]

On November 7, 1969, C. N. Starr of Louisville, Kentucky, the president of Animal Graphics, Inc., publisher of Gene Gray Wildlife Art, wrote to Peters after reading about "[his] plight in ... the *Louisville Times*." He wanted to send some of their abundant supply of Kentucky's official state animal, the eastern grey squirrel, but thought they would be too difficult to capture. Instead he sent two pictures of them by "Kentucky's famous wildlife artist, Gene Gray." He concluded by thanking Amos Peters for "[preserving] one of America's most beautiful and graceful animals." Peters replied with a letter of thanks for the pictures on December 1. The last paragraph of his letter states, "We have received letters and clippings from interested parties all over the United States, but as yet no squirrels."[68]

The *Springfield Union* of Springfield, Massachusetts reported in December of 1969 that if you had squirrels you should "send them to Longview, Washington." The article then went on to report that Peters was hoping "city fathers of Salem will have a change of heart," but if that didn't happen "he and the residents of Longview [would] gladly accept squirrels from anywhere else."[69]

In the Longview *Daily News* column "City Highlights," Jerolyn Nentl affirmed that the Nutty Narrows was being written about again all over the country. She noted that the *Los Angeles Times* "circulated the story over its syndicated wire service (*the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post Service*)." Nentl stated that "unrelated places have been printing 'our story' about the lighter side of life among their regular reports of wars, demonstrations, and hijackings."[70]

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[61] "Special Bridge for Squirrels in Longview Spurs Push for Similar Salem Structure," *Oregonian*, September 14, 1969.

[62] "L.A. Times Doing Story on City's Nutty Narrows," *Daily News*, October 10, 1969.

[63] Ibid.

[64] "Animals Vanish: Town Has Bridge for Squirrels—but No Squirrels."

[65] "City Trying to Recruit Squirrels," *Omaha World Herald*, November 9, 1969; "In My Opinion. A Bridge For Squirrels," *Peoria Journal Star*, March 5, 1970.

[66] "A Town with a Nutty Idea," Undated newspaper clipping (San Jose, CA, n.d.), Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[67] "Longview Squirrel Recruiting: Nutty Job Hard One to Crack," *Seattle Times*, November 16, 1969.

[68] C. N. Starr, Letter to Amos Peters, Personal Collection of Roger Peters, November 7, 1969.

[69] "Squirrels, Anyone? Send Them to Longview, Wash.," *Springfield Union*, December 17, 1969.

[70] Jerolyn Nentl, "Nutty Narrows Bridge Spotlights City Again," *Daily News*, December 23, 1969.

Squirrel-napping

A newspaper article written by Chuck Petzel, a Willamette University sophomore, fictitiously reported on four separate incidents of "squirrel-napping" in Salem, on the Willamette University campus and in Wilson Park. The article reviewed why someone might steal squirrels, including: to be a pet; to eat; to take them to a place with more trees; or (considered to be the most plausible reason) to win the "rumored reward for squirrels offered by the City of Longview, Washington."[71] The article reported that after Salem refused to exchange a squirrel bridge "for breeding stock," Longview began to offer a reward (rumored to be from one to five dollars) for each squirrel brought to the city. Petzel suggested that Longview residents were not told, but it was implied, to get stolen squirrels from Salem, since "Salem wasn't going to protect them, and Longview, having a squirrel bridge, would."[72] Petzel, who also organized a club called "Save Our Squirrels" (known as "SOS" on Willamette University's campus), summarized in his article that prosecution under city and state laws might be plausible. He then mused that federal action, "maybe even the FBI," might be appropriate because it was an "interstate matter."[73] The *Longview Daily News* reviewed the accusations of the Willamette University students and assured them no squirrels had been, or would be, kidnapped. The writer then suggested that Longview be permitted "to buy a few at a reasonable cost."[74]

Don McNeil, manager of the Salem Chamber of Commerce, wrote a letter of mock anger to Don Mason, the manager of the Longview Chamber on March 26, 1970, accusing him (or his constituents) of stealing squirrels from Salem: "Whatta crummy thing to do to a guy ... go steal his squirrels when he's not looking. I am absolutely appalled!"[75] He closed his letter by quoting Salem city ordinance number 94.120: "Thou shalt not steal squirrels on penalty of $500 fine or six months in jail—maximum."[76]

Finally, in the spring of 1970, Peters received an offer for some squirrels from "a nice couple from Salem, Oregon" but he had to arrange to pick them up. In May, he sent his secretary, Phyllis Rasey, to get them. She brought eight squirrels back, placing half at the Nutty Narrows Bridge and the other half at Lake Sacajawea.[77]

The Sandbaggers

The Sandbaggers group has always taken great interest in the Nutty Narrows because Amos Peters was an active member. Park Plaza employees turned to the Sandbaggers for help in the fall of 1972 after they saw people gathering the nuts left daily for the squirrels. Park Plaza employees used the opportunity to generate news about the squirrels and the squirrel bridge: they accused people of "stealing the nuts from the squirrels near the Park Plaza Building and the Nutty Narrows Bridge"[78] In December 1972, men from the club tacked a sign to a tree that announced "These Nuts for four-legged Squirrels Only!"[79] By the spring of 1973 the mischief had stopped and they found the squirrels doing well and "making good use of the Nutty Narrows Bridge."[80]

The preparers contacted the Longview Sandbaggers in February of 2014 to determine whether the Nutty Narrows Bridge had a protective coating. A Sandbagger replied:

> I was there at the time the first squirrel bridge was constructed and this is all I am allowed to divulge. It was fabricated out of the debris from the Roswell flying saucer crash. The reverse engineered coating resists corrosion from pigeon manure and flying chicken poop, it is top secret.[81]

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[71] "Squirrelnapers' Believed at Work in Capitol Area," *Statesman-Journal*, undated clipping.

[72] Ibid.

[73] Ibid.; "SOS Goes Out at Willamette," *Daily News*, undated clipping, Roger Peters Personal Collection; "Willamette Honor Assailed, Squirrels Stolen!," Undated clipping, source unknown, Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[74] "Will Salem Declare War on Longview?," *Daily News*, undated clipping, Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[75] Business Letter to Don Mason, Mgr., Longview Chamber of Commerce, Roger Peters Personal Collection, March 26, 1970.

[76] Ibid.

[77] Amos Peters Personal correspondence to Jean Bartenbach. January 31, 1983. Roger Peters Personal Collection.

[78] "Squirrels Losing Food to Humans," *Daily News*, October 21, 1972.

[79] "Aw...nuts!," *Daily News*, December 16, 1972.

[80] "Local Squirrels Survive the Long, Hard Winter," *Daily News*, May 3, 1973.

[81] Personal Correspondence between Doris Disbrow and Patrick Kubin, March 12, 2014.

Another Sandbagger replied to the inquiry that he remembered the bridge was coated with "some type of boat varnish."[82] This information could not be verified, so the protective coating of the Nutty Narrows Bridge remains a mystery.

Support Continues

Ranger Rick, a children's publication of the National Wildlife Federation, featured the Nutty Narrows in August 1975. The history of the bridge plus two photos made up a full-page article.[83]

On February 11, 1976, the *Longview Daily News* issued a brief statement: "Squirrels residing in trees near Nutty Narrows Bridge in Longview have exhausted their donated nut supply."[84] The appeal came from Park Plaza employees who regularly fed the squirrels. The following day, at least 17 people brought in bags and boxes, large and small, of various types of nuts, totaling 170 pounds of nuts. More were brought in the following day.[85]

Twentieth Anniversary

By the early 1980s the Nutty Narrows Bridge was in serious need of repair. Amos Peters wrote a letter to the mayor of Longview in March of 1983. He wrote, "Due to excessive use of the bridge by our squirrely but adorable little friends, the structure is in serious need of repair. Recently, Congress passed, and President Reagan signed into law, a new federal gas tax to make monies available in part for road and bridge maintenance. I think it would be quite fitting, then, for the Council to request money from President Reagan for refurbishing the bridge, and, in return, we would let him cut the ribbon when the bridge is reinstalled."[86] His letter continues, "If this proposal turns out to be impractical, as an alternative I would like to ask you and the Council for permission to restore the bridge at no cost to the City. Due to growth of the trees, rotting of the fire-hose roadway and severe tilting of the structure, usage of the bridge is presently unsafe. Therefore, I would like to correct the problem before the City is slapped with a big, bushy-tailed lawsuit."[87] A hand-written response from Mayor Raiter was returned to Peters; it said: "Amos—Time for more town publicity – I applaud your effort. I think we should have sent a resolution to President Reagan."[88]

A formal response was dated March 29, 1983, from Corky Gower, the city engineer, where he accepted the offer "on behalf of the City of Longview and its citizens." He also offered "some materials from the Longview Fire Department that may be made available for your use" during this rehabilitation.[89]

By June plans had been completed for a "Double Anniversary celebration." On July 2, 1983, Mickey Mouse and Chip and Dale were to be present for Longview's sixtieth anniversary and "the famous Nutty Narrows' 20th Anniversary." The city was also holding the annual "Go 4th celebration," all in one weekend.[90] Portland television stations recorded the takedown of the Nutty Narrows as well as its restoration and rededication. The Disney characters had been arranged by Jim Elliott, manager of Cowlitz Cableview, to promote the addition of the Disney channel to the local television offerings.[91] It was said Peters was inspired by Chip and Dale's presence to build a parade float to carry a replica of the Nutty Narrows Bridge. A large photo of Chip and Dale greeting Longview children from the float was displayed on the front page of the Longview *Daily News*.[92] This float, carrying the replica Nutty Narrows, continues to appear in Longview parades today.[93]

In addition to all of the festivities on July 2, the "Golden Nut Award" was presented to Amos Peters by "Chip and Dale." The "Golden Nut Award" was written across the top of a 3 × 5 card in script and a gold painted peanut (in its shell) was glued to the left side of card. Typed on the right were the words "A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY," July 2, 1983, 1 pm, Civic Park, Longview," and it is signed "Chip and Dale."

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[82] Personal Correspondence between Doris Disbrow and Patrick Kubin, March 12, 2014.

[83] "People to the Rescue!," *Ranger Rick's Nature Magazine*, September 1975.

[84] "Nutty Narrows Squirrels Need Additional Nuts," *Daily News*, February 11, 1976.

[85] "Overwhelming Nut Response," *Daily News*, February 14, 1976.

[86] "Squirrels, Anyone? Send Them to Longview, Wash." Amos Peters, Letter to George Raiter, Mayor, March 19, 1983.

[87] Ibid.

[88] Amos Peters, Letter to George Raiter, Mayor, (handwritten note returned on top of original letter from Mayor Raiter) March 19, 1983.

[89] LeRoy E. Gower, Letter to Amos Peters, March 29, 1983

[90] "Double Anniversaries," *Longview Chamber of Commerce Newsletter*, June 1983.

[91] Personal communication between Doris Disbrow and Jim Elliott, August 1, 2013.

[92] "Chip Grip," *Daily News*, July 4, 1983.

[93] Dennis K. Weber, Sue Maxey, and Karen Dennis, *Longview*, Images of America (Charleston, SC: Arcadia, 2012).

Amos Peters died in January of 1984 and his wife, Elsie Peters, took up the correspondence with publishers and individuals who inquired about the bridge.[94] The Peters family and the City of Longview carry on the traditions, and the Sandbaggers, of which Mark Peters and Roger Peters are members, carry on the fun.[95] Roger Peters provides the 4-foot Christmas tree every year and employees of the city's Parks Department wire it to the Nutty Narrows. The *Oregonian* printed a large picture of a Longview city employee wiring the annual holiday decorations onto the Nutty Narrows in December 1985. The accompanying story reviewed the history of the squirrel bridge, from the destruction of the "furry friends" to the letters following worldwide reports on the bridge. It notes the 10-foot-high carved wooden squirrel statue that was placed in the park near the bridge by the Sandbaggers in July of that year to serve as a memorial of Amos Peters, a creative, compassionate, fun-loving man.[96]

The Bridge Falls and Then Goes Missing

"The Nutty Narrows has fallen down, fallen down," announced the headline in the Longview *Daily News* on August 10, 1989. The previous day, one of the two oak trees that held the squirrel bridge aloft "toppled dead and twisted onto Olympia Way about 7:30 p.m." After inspecting the situation Roger Peters reported the 10-foot carved squirrel statue "seemed to have a bit of a smirk on its face." He, therefore, speculated, that it was possible that the squirrels "got up there and bounced up and down on the bridge' and caused the collapse." Peters then explained, "I'm saying that acorn in cheek, of course." He went on, then to suggest "Mayor Dennis Weber ... declare Longview a disaster area." Fortunately, no one was injured when "the 60-some-year-old oak simply fell over, breaking off at ground level" from root rot. A large photograph in the local paper showed the Nutty Narrows "attached but slanted downward."[97]

In a letter to the editor published October 31, 1989, M. J. Folsie of Longview pined for "that little bridge." It had been two months, and she complained there was "no sign of its return." She went on to wonder "how can we have a Longview Christmas without its little tree?" She then asked "If there is someone we can talk to or some way we can help."[98] The answer was quick to arrive. The following day Bill Gibbens, Longview parks director, was quoted as saying they were "looking for an alternate location." He went on to announce "we haven't forgotten" and that the city was hoping to erect the bridge within the next month.[99] On November 15, 1989, the bridge was "hoisted into place." Bill Gibbens "said the city received numerous calls from bridge buffs wondering when the Nutty Narrows would reopen. 'People were very anxious to see it go back up.'" Roger Peters added, "One thing we discovered after it came down was how much it meant to so many people in the community."[100]

In 1999, the Sandbaggers alerted the press when they discovered the Nutty Narrows was missing. A Sandbagger (and also a Longview Parks Department employee) told Portland television "that the city had no idea where the bridge was, directly denying the 'irresponsible' rumor that the city had taken the bridge down for repairs."[101] Calls were beginning to come in from the media "far and wide." The Sandbaggers speculated: "jealous bridge thieves from another community stole it" or "international terrorists blew it up in the middle of the night," or even "terrorists from Kelso" (the Cowlitz county seat and local rivals) were responsible. The Sandbaggers insisted it wasn't an "inside job" and they "launched a full-scale investigation of the bridge's disappearance."[102]

Decked out in their usual red and white striped jackets and matching umbrellas (as protection against the rain), the Sandbaggers sought guidance from the great old 10-foot squirrel. The question on just about everyone in Longview's lips was, "Where's the world-famous bridge?" Despite the speculation, an investigative reporter for The Longview *Daily News* found the bridge "in possession of a Longview welding firm" where it was being repaired.[103] "Too bad," a Sandbagger later

[94] Personal letter to National Wildlife Federation from Elsie Peters, May 19, 1985.

[95] "Span for Squirrels Takes on Holiday Motif," *Oregonian*, December 19, 1985. Personal communication between Doris Disbrow and Mark Peters, November 18, 2013.

[96] Ibid.

[97] "Oh, Nuts: Squirrels' Road Rocky after Bridge Collapse," *Daily News*, August 10, 1989.

[98] M. J. Folsie, "Bridge Is Missed. Letter to the Editor," *Daily News*, October 31, 1989.

[99] "Squirrels' Pals Expect Bridge by End of Year," *Daily News*, November 1, 1989.

[100] "Famous Little Bridge Reopens for Squirrel Traffic," *Daily News*, November 15, 1989.

[101] "Span's Disappearance Driving Club Members Nutty," *Daily News*, March 6, 1999.

[102] "Bawdy Baggers."

[103] "Mystery Solved. City Took down Nutty Narrows Bridge for Face Lift," *Daily News*, March 9, 1999.

quipped, that reporter "could have had a Pulitzer."[104] After the parade, for the 1999 Go-4th event, the Sandbaggers held yet another dedication of the Nutty Narrows, celebrating, once again, the rehanging of the little bridge.[105]

In 2005, the bridge was taken down because a support tree was dying. When it was rehung, it was placed in front of the Public Library (approximately 500 feet to the southeast of its original location) on the traffic circle around Civic Center Park.[106] At this location, however, drivers' eyes were taken off the road if they wanted to see the bridge while they maneuvered their vehicle around the circle. In November 2010, the Nutty Narrows made news because, for the first time, it was considered a distraction to drivers.[107] As a result, the Nutty Narrows Bridge was rehung at its current location. The Sandbaggers, once again and true to form, held a "tongue-in-cheek" ceremony before convening at the Monticello Hotel for cake and squirrel-themed cocktails. The ceremony included "speeches, prayer, cheerleaders, a ribbon cutting and a release of doves."[108]

A Continuing Legacy

The Squirrel Fest, a celebration of squirrels, was introduced by the Sandbaggers in August of 2011, and was held at the site of the Nutty Narrows Bridge and the squirrel statue. Fifteen community sponsors were lined up, and the first of three second-generation squirrel bridges was unveiled. At the 2012 and 2013 Squirrel Fests, two more bridges were unveiled. The Sandbaggers' goal is to have squirrel bridges "all over town."[109]

During the summer of 2013, an effort was made to place the Nutty Narrows Bridge on the Longview landmarks list. As part of the nomination process, Doris Disbrow, a local historian, discovered she would need the "owner's signature to complete the nomination process." Roger Peters believed that the City of Longview, who was undertaking all of the bridge's maintenance needs, was the owner. A subsequent records search at the city did not answer the question of who owned the bridge, so the question was referred to the city council. At the June 2013 Longview City Council meeting, Bob Gregory, the city manager, asked city council to pursue the purchase of the Nutty Narrows Bridge. At the July meeting, the city council voted to purchase the bridge, and it was announced that Bob Gregory had given Roger Peters a dollar to make the sale official.[110]

Amos Peters

Amos Peters was born in Leo, Alberta, Canada, in 1916. In 1930, the United States census listed him living with his family in rural Cowlitz County, Washington.[111] By 1948 he was listed in the Longview City Directory as being married to Elsie M. Peters, and his occupation was listed as a carpenter. At the time, the Peters family lived in Longview on 1801 Hudson Street in apartment 4. By 1955, the Peters family lived at 1767 20th Avenue in Longview, and Amos Peters' profession was listed as a general contractor. By 1958, he was listed as a building contractor with an office at 747 Commerce Avenue. In 1960, Peters and his brother-in-law, William J. Hutch, began to advertise for the Amos J. Peters Construction Company with an office in the Park Plaza building at 1717 Olympia Way.[112] By 1969, Peters employed between 6 and 30 people, depending on the work available.[113]

Together Amos and Elsie Peters had three children: Mark, Lynn, and Roger. Amos Peters was an avid sports fan and an active member of the American Baptist Church (now known as the Northlake Baptist Church), as well as the "Rotary Club, Longview Elks, Longview Country Club and the Chamber of Commerce."[114]

Peters was recognized with the E. L. Harper Award from Animal Crusaders, Inc. during the 1963 "Be Kind to Animals Week."[115] In the spring of 1969 Amos Peters received 24 thank you letters from a second-grade class in San Diego,

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[104] "Bawdy Baggers."

[105] "Fund-Raising for Go 4th on Target; Future Still in Doubt," *Daily News*, June 16, 1999.

[106] "Nutty Narrow Back Up," *Daily News*, May 16, 2005; "Squirrels at Risk," *Daily News*, May 11, 2005.

[107] "Nutty Narrows Bridge Getting a New Home," *Oregonian*, November 6, 2010; "Squirrels Will Need Detour for a While," *Oregonian*, November 7, 2010.

[108] "Squirrel Salvation," *Daily News*, November 30, 2010.

[109] "Squirrels Will Soon Get Safe Passage over Nichols Boulevard," *Daily News*, February 1, 2013.

[110] Personal Correspondence with Doris Disbrow, March 24, 2014.

[111] U. S. Census, 1930, McGowan, Cowlitz, Washington; Roll: 2487; Page: 4A; Enumeration District: 0031.

[112] R.L. Polk & Co. Polk's Kelso and Longview (Washington) City Directories. Seattle, Wash: R.L. Polk & Co, 1948-1960.

[113] "Amos Peters Recognized," *Daily News*, May 13, 1969, 7.

[114] "Amos Peters Recognized."

California, for constructing the Nutty Narrows. In 1972, Peters was one of four contractors to receive the first ever SIR award (which represents the values of Skill, Integrity, and Responsibility in the field of general contractors in the Pacific Northwest) from the Oregon-Columbia Chapter of Associated General Contractors. This was considered the highest honor that the industry could bestow in the Pacific Northwest.[116] From the time the Longview City Council approved the building and hanging of the Nutty Narrows Bridge, Amos Peters received letters from all over the world.

Peters died just six months after the Nutty Narrows' twentieth anniversary, in January of 1984. He died at St. Vincent's Hospital in Portland from heart surgery complications.[117] He was noted to have been "one of Longview's first citizens" and the builder of many of the city's best-known landmarks, including: Triangle Mall Shopping Center (1971), Park Plaza Office Complex (19, the Campus Towers (1970) (Longview's tallest building), and the Triangle Cinema.[118]

Conclusion

The bridge has received national recognition during its 50-year history. A year after its installation, Peters had heard news of the bridge being reported in "London, Greece, Germany, Japan, Canada and the Holy Land."[119] According to a "City Highlights" column in The Longview *Daily News* on December 23, 1969, the *Los Angeles Times* sent a reporter to Longview to write "the true story" of the bridge. Once the *Los Angeles Times* "circulated the story over its wire service," columnist Jerolyn Nentl reported that papers in Louisville, Kentucky, and Omaha, Nebraska, as well as other cities reported on the Nutty Narrows Bridge.[120] In March 1963, *Sports Illustrated* described the bridge under the headline "Freeloader Freeway."[121] Thirty years later, an article about the bridge was published in *Highlights for Children*. And today, an entry on Wikipedia states: "It has the title of the 'World's Narrowest Bridge' and also the 'World's Narrowest Animal Crossing.'"[122]

The Nutty Narrows Bridge is unique. While there have been other squirrel bridges proposed, only a handful of cities are known to have constructed them, and except for the new squirrel bridges built in Longview, none of these were in the United States. In the September 6–7, 1969, issue, the Longview *Daily News* reported that Nutty Narrows No. 2 would be built for Salem Oregon.[123] This appears to have been another prank of the Longview Sandbaggers', of which Amos Peters was a member. And, more recently, in 2010, the Arizona Department of Transportation (ADOT) announced plans to spend $400,000 to install rope bridges to save an endangered species of red squirrel, but that was quickly cancelled, as the expense was seen as extreme.[124] The Hague (Netherlands) erected a squirrel bridge in 2012.[125] In 2006, a rope bridge was placed across a road in Fyvie, Scotland, to protect the red squirrel population.[126] In October 2006, the BBC News reported a decision to erect a rope bridge to protect red squirrels in Dundee (Scotland), and noted that Dundee had also taken similar action with other rope bridges in the vicinity.[127] In 2005, the Czech town of Sokolov erected a 23-foot-high cable bridge to protect squirrels from traffic.[128] The Isle of Wight (England) was noted in June of 1996 as the first

[115] "San Diego Second Graders Tell Peters, 'Thank You for Saving the Squirrels,'" *Daily News*, July 25, 1969.

[116] "Contractors Honor Lodge, 9 Individuals," *Oregonian*, November 17, 1972, 4.

[117] "Amos Peters [Obituary]," *Daily News*, January 17, 1984.

[118] "Death Claims Builder Amos Peters," *Daily News*, January 16, 1984.

[119] Peters, "Letter to Fellow Animal Lovers."

[120] Nentl, "Nutty Narrows Bridge Spotlights City Again."

[121] "Freeloader Freeway in Scorecard."

[122] "Nutty Narrows Bridge," *Wikipedia*, January 31, 2014, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nutty_Narrows_Bridge.

[123] "Nutty Narrows No. 2 to Be Built for Salem," 2.

[124] "Aw Nuts: Plan to Save Endangered Squirrels Scuttled as Too Expensive," *Scientific American: Blog*, July 2, 2010, http://blogs.scientificamerican.com/extinction-countdown/2010/07/02/aw-nuts-plan-to-save-endangered-squirrels-scuttled-as-too-expensive.

[125] TheHague.com, "No Squirrels Spotted Yet on Bridge," *The Hague Online*, October 10, 2012, http://www.thehagueonline.com/headlines/2012-10-10/no-squirrels-spotted-yet-on-bridge/14496.

[126] "Squirrels Are given Walkway to Safety," *Herald Scotland*, August 16, 2006, http://www.heraldscotland.com/sport/spl/aberdeen/squirrels-are-given-walkway-to-safety-1.98592.

[127] "Call for Squirrel Safety Bridge," *BBC News*, October 4, 2006, http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/scotland/tayside_and_central/5405574.stm.

[128] AFP, "Squirrel Bridge," *Animal Liberation Front*, September 15, 2005, http://www.animalliberationfront.com/News/2005_9/squirrelbridge.htm.

place in the United Kingdom to place rope bridges across roads to protect the red squirrels. Subsequently, in 1998, two more rope bridges were erected at Yarmouth and on Easthill Road (both on the Isle of Wight). [129]

The Nutty Narrows Bridge has been listed in multiple tourist guides as a "must see" in Longview. In June 2013, it was listed on RoadsideAmerica.com, an online "Guide to Offbeat Tourist Attractions" as "worth a detour." Postcards and shirts with a local artist's design were made available for several years. While not the initial intent of the Nutty Narrows Bridge, its value as a means to promote the City of Longview has long been acknowledged. By 1972, the Longview *Daily News* reported that articles had been published about the bridge in London, Bonn, Beirut, Hong Kong, Moscow, Nairobi, Paris, Saigon, and Tokyo and throughout the United States.[130]

[129] Nigel Graeme Weston, "The Provision of Canopy Bridges to Reduce the Effects of Linear Barriers on Arboreal Mammals in the Wet Tropics of Northeastern Queensland" (M.S. thesis, James Cook University, 2003), 46, http://researchonline.jcu.edu.au/1358/.

[130] "Squirrel Bridge Has World Fame." *Daily News*, September 15, 1973.

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Previous documentation on file (NPS):

___preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67 has been requested)
___previously listed in the National Register
___previously determined eligible by the National Register
___designated a National Historic Landmark
___recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #_____
___recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #_____
___recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey #_____

Primary location of additional data:

_x_ State Historic Preservation Office
___Other State agency
___Federal agency
_x_ Local government
___University
_x_ Other
Name of repository: Longview Public Library

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre
(Do not include previously listed resource acreage.)

UTM References ___NAD 1927 or ___NAD 1983

(Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet.)

	Zone	Easting	Northing
1			
2			
3			
4			

Or Latitude/Longitude Coordinates
(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

	Latitude	Longitude
1	46°8'29.10"N	122°56'26.05"W
2		
3		
4		

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property.)
The Nutty Narrows nominated area is located in Section 028, Township 8 North, Range 2 West, in Cowlitz County, Washington. The bridge is located approximately 30 feet above Olympia Way. The bridge is attached to two large oak trees between 18th and 19th Avenues. Only the bridge is nominated.

Nutty Narrows Bridge
Name of Property

Cowlitz Co., WA
County and State

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)
Just the brackets and the bridge span are included in the boundary. Neither of the trees is considered part of the nomination boundary. The boundary was selected to encompass all of the structure constructed by Amos Peters in 1963.

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Doris Disbrow, Adrienne Donovan-Boyd, and Timothy Askin
organization N/A date March 17, 2014
street & number 5521 NE Davis Street telephone 503-201-3592
city or town Portland state OR zip code 97213
e-mail Adrienne.donovanboyd@me.com

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

  A **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.

- **Continuation Sheets**

- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items.)

Photographs:

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map.

Name of Property: Nutty Narrows Bridge

City or Vicinity: Longview

County: Cowlitz **State:** WA

Photographer: **Tim Askin**

Date Photographed: **April 2, 2014**

Description of Photograph(s) and number:

1 of 7: Looking south-southeast at Nutty Narrows Bridge and Park Plaza Building

2 of 7: Looking northwest at Bridge

3 of 7: Looking northeast under the bridge at its full length

4 of 7: Looking east at underside of Bridge

5 of 7: Looking north at connection to tree on the north side of Olympia Way

6 of 7: Looking south at connection to tree on the south side of Olympia Way

7 of 7: Looking southeast at detail of sign

Property Owner: (Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name The City of Longview Attn: Adam Trimble (Historic Preservation Planner)

street & number 1525 Broadway telephone (360) 442-5092

city or town Longview state WA zip code 98632

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management. U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

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Figure 1: General Vicinity Map

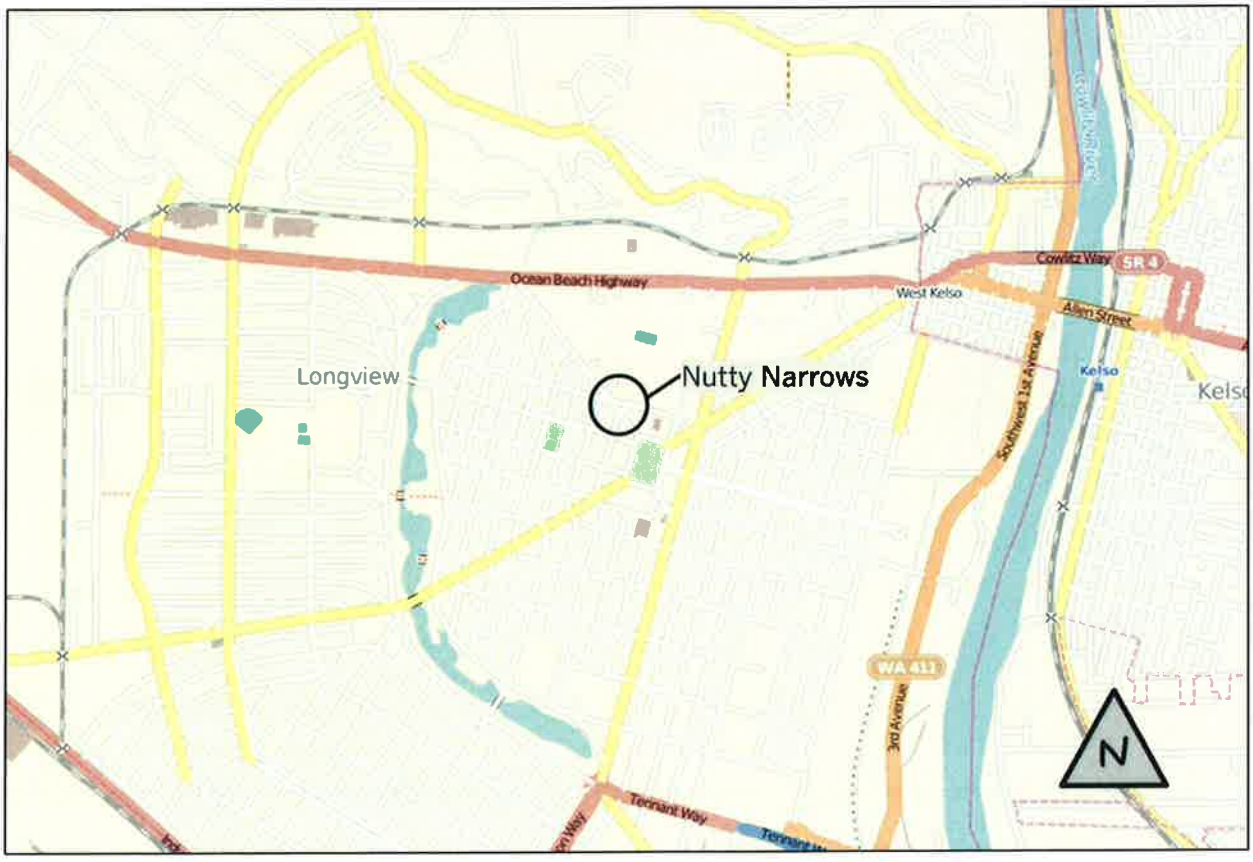


Figure 2: Site Map

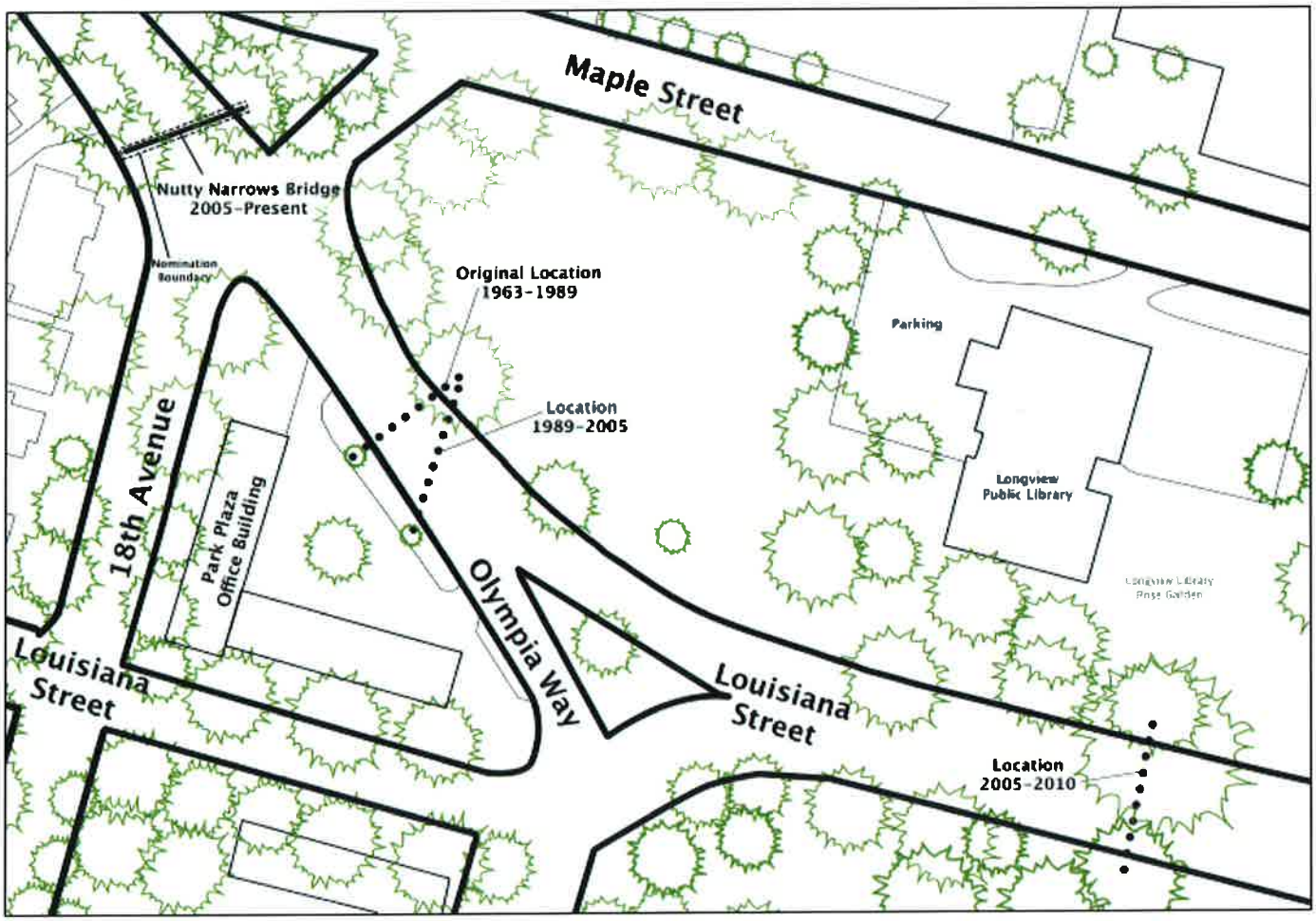


Figure 3: Tax Map (with Nutty Narrow's area highlighted)

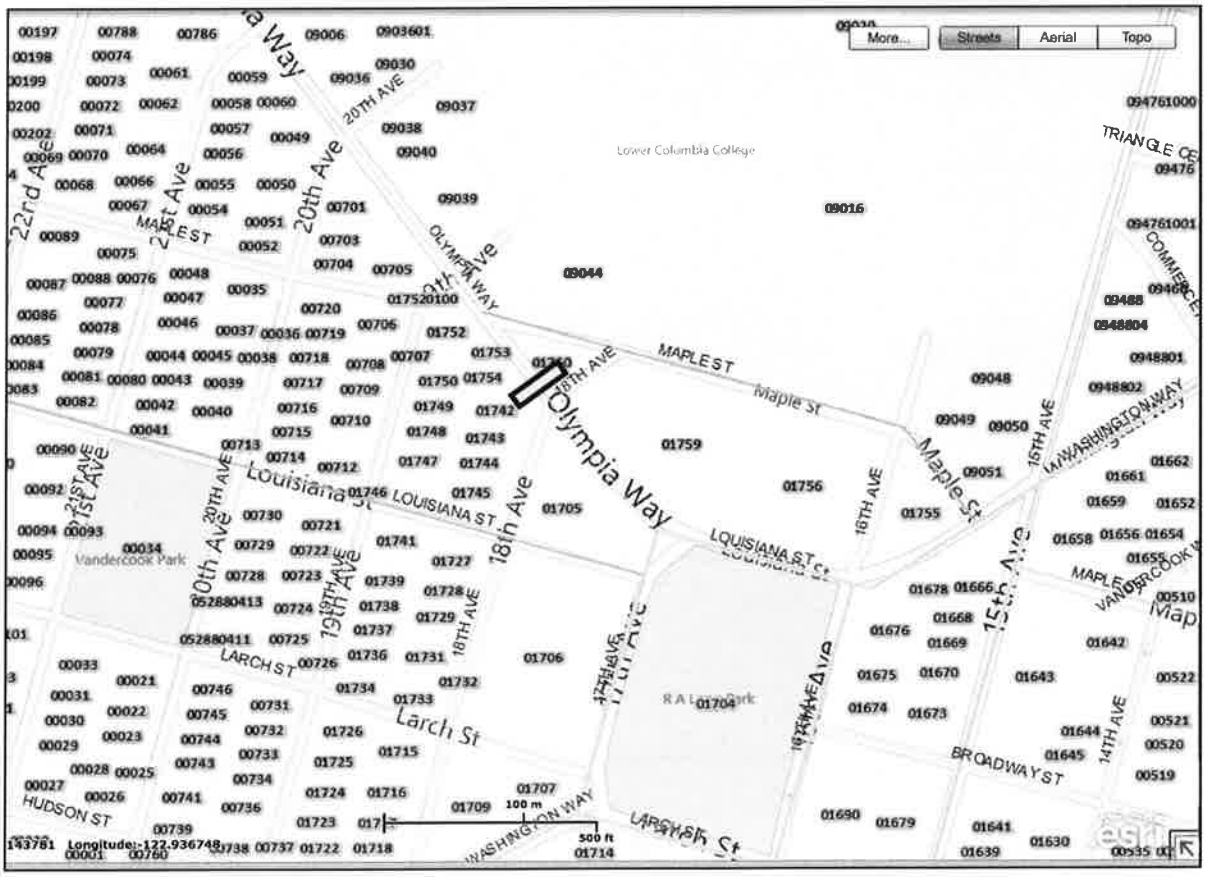


Figure 4: Conceptual Drawing by Amos Peters (From personal collection of Roger Peters)

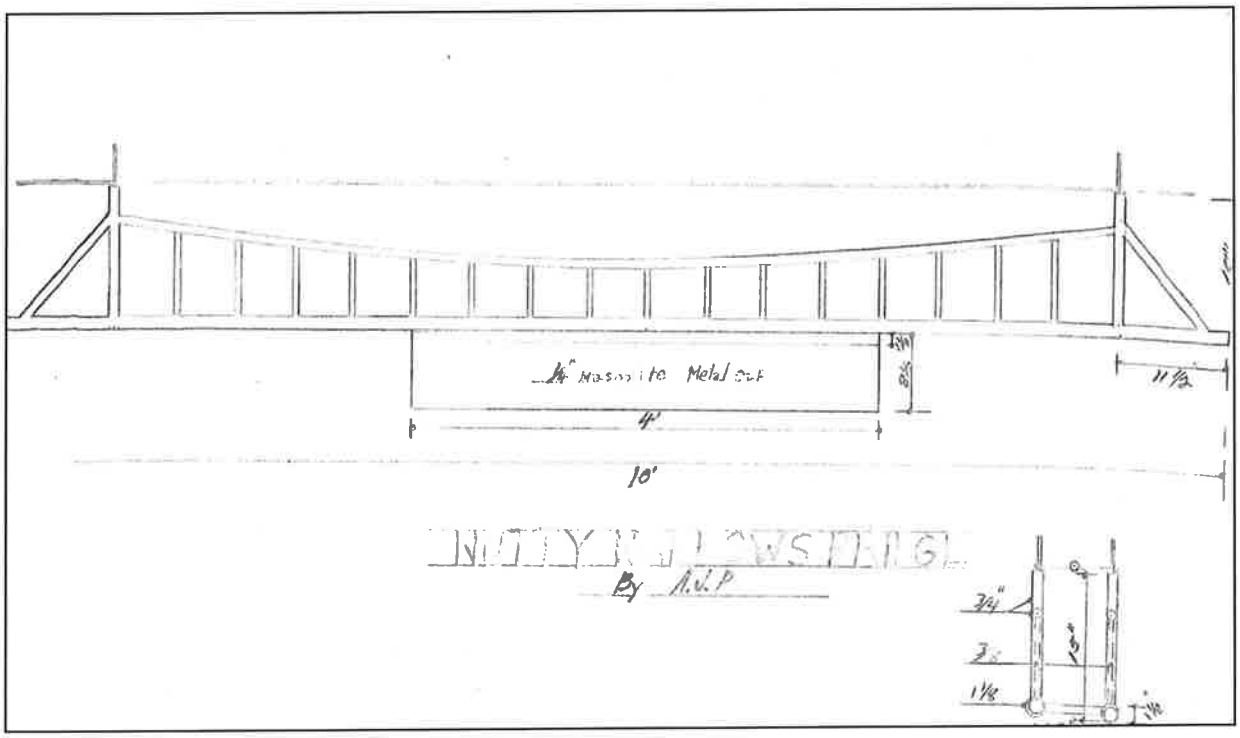


Figure 5: Historic Postcards ca. 1964 (From personal collection of Tim Askin)





Figure 6: Historic Photo ca. 1963 (From personal collection of Roger Peters)

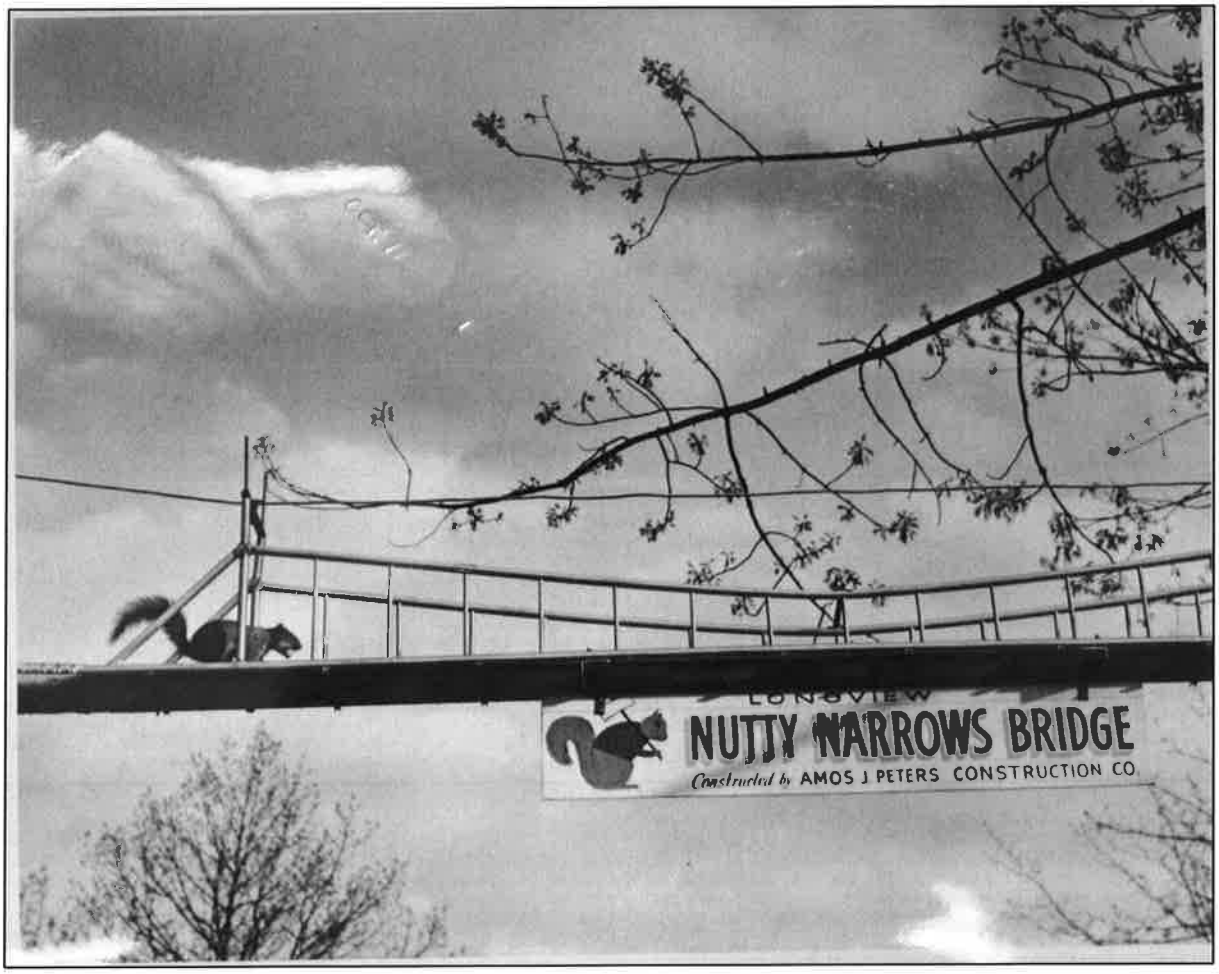


Figure 7: Historic Photo ca. 1963 (From personal collection of Roger Peters)



Figure 8: Amos Peters' Taxidermy Squirrel (from personal collection of Roger Peters)



Figure 9: Original Drawing from the *Sports Illustrated* Article from March 25, 1963 (From personal collection of Roger Peters)



Figure 10: Amos Peters Setting Up the Christmas Tree on the Nutty Narrows Bridge, the *Longview Daily News*, December 20, 1963 (reprinted with permission from the *Longview Daily News*).



CITY'S SQUIRRELS HAVE OWN TREE

The kind Park Plaza keepers of Longview's famous squirrels have provided their charges with an illuminated Christmas tree and the Nutty Narrows Bridge glows above Olympia Way with colored lights. Amos Peters, shown installing the lights, reports that the furry animals think it's great sport to rummage through the Christmas tree branches for the munchy holiday tidbits which are replenished daily.

Figure 11: Amos Peters, ca. 1964 (From personal collection of Roger Peters)



Figure 12. Amos Peters **Memorial** Squirrel Statue and plaque, downtown Longview. Photograph by Tim Askin, April 2014.



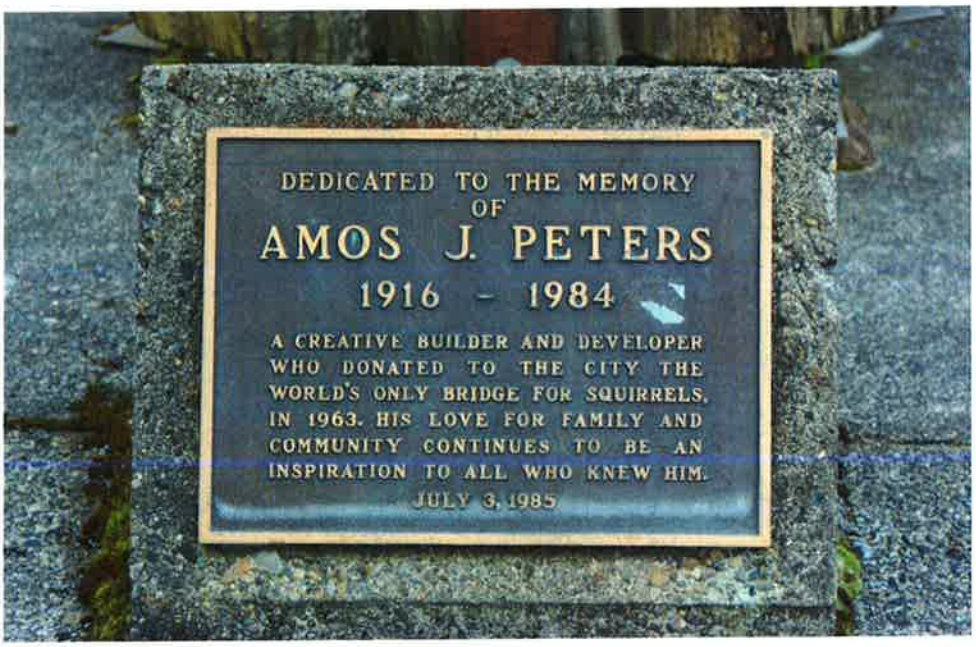


Figure 13. Park Plaza office building before remodel. Photograph by M. Houser, November 2006.



Figure 14. Sole remaining original tree, across the street from the Park Plaza. Photograph by Tim Askin, April 2014.



Figure 15. Article – Seattle Daily Times (Seattle, Washington): March 1, 1963

ACORN ACCESS:

Longview's Squirrely Span Not Nut's Idea

LONGVIEW, March 1.—(A.P.)—The Longview City Council has agreed to construction of the Nutty Narrows bridge.

The Council adopted a resolution last night authorizing construction of the bridge over one of the city's main thoroughfares. It will carry hungry squirrels from the City Park to a feeding station in the courtyard of an office building, which was set up three years ago by a tenant.

Several squirrels have been killed recently crossing the street and a contractor offered to build a four-inch wide bridge at no cost to the city. It will be suspended 20 feet above the 70-foot-wide street.

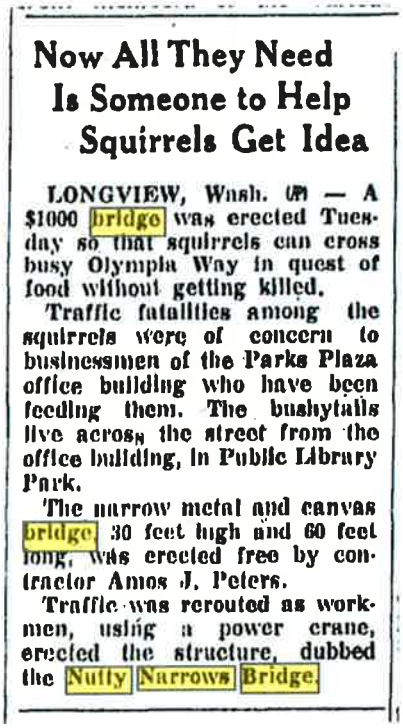
Mrs. Bess La Riviere, councilwoman, named the new avenue.

Figure 16. Article – Oregonian (Portland, Oregon): March 20, 1963



NUTTY NARROWS Bridge for squirrels will carry hungry squirrels from City Park to feeding station in courtyard of office building in Longview, Wash. Bridge is suspended 20 feet above the city's main thoroughfare. (Fardell)

Figure 17. Article – Springfield Union (Springfield, Massachusetts): March 20, 1963



Now All They Need Is Someone to Help Squirrels Get Idea

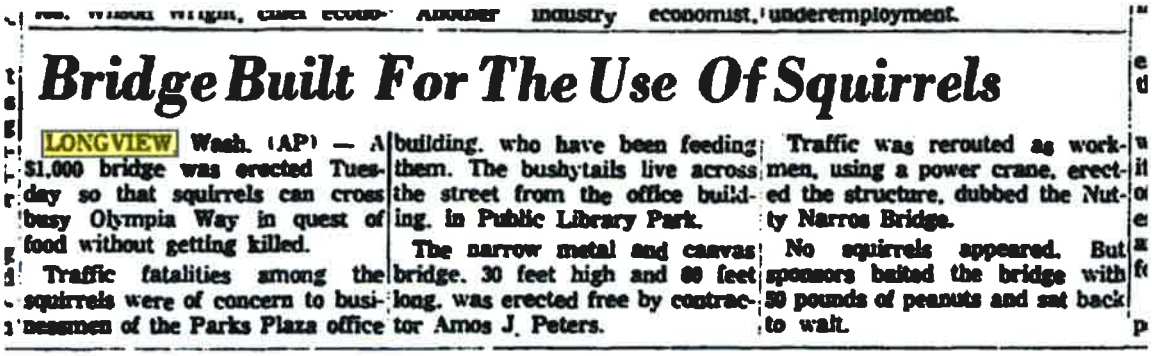
LONGVIEW, Wash. (AP) — A $1000 bridge was erected Tuesday so that squirrels can cross busy Olympia Way in quest of food without getting killed.

Traffic fatalities among the squirrels were of concern to businessmen of the Parks Plaza office building who have been feeding them. The bushytails live across the street from the office building, in Public Library Park.

The narrow metal and canvas bridge, 30 feet high and 60 feet long, was erected free by contractor Amos J. Peters.

Traffic was rerouted as workmen, using a power crane, erected the structure, dubbed the Nutty Narrows Bridge.

Figure 18. Article – Trenton Evening Times (Trenton, New Jersey): March 20, 1963



industry economist, underemployment.

Bridge Built For The Use Of Squirrels

LONGVIEW, Wash. (AP) — A $1,000 bridge was erected Tuesday so that squirrels can cross busy Olympia Way in quest of food without getting killed.

Traffic fatalities among the squirrels were of concern to businessmen of the Parks Plaza office building, who have been feeding them. The bushytails live across the street from the office building, in Public Library Park.

The narrow metal and canvas bridge, 30 feet high and 60 feet long, was erected free by contractor Amos J. Peters.

Traffic was rerouted as workmen, using a power crane, erected the structure, dubbed the Nutty Narrows Bridge.

No squirrels appeared. But sponsors baited the bridge with 50 pounds of peanuts and sat back to wait.