

A healthy change

Dear citizens of Astoria: I have been going to a Clatsop County schools for 12 years now, and I believe the lunches have gone backward in taste, nutrition, and quantity. A question that very often comes to mind is, "Are these lunches making children fat, and destined to an obese future?" Obviously we are going wrong somewhere, since the majority of the U.S. suffers with obesity. I say let's make a change.

It is a proven fact that school lunches enhance the chances of childhood obesity by 20 percent because of the low nutrients and high calorie count. This high calorie count was made to help children who might not have the chance to eat dinner that night. I'd say the parents who can afford such things should also do their best to help other children in the community.

So the main question we face today is, "How are we going to improve school lunches?" One idea that has been spreading all over the nation is creating an edible schoolyard. This system is a way for a school to grow their own food in a greenhouse so they can ensure they have nutrients needed on the daily basis. Another idea would be to ban all soda machines and chocolate milk.

Instead of providing kids with an à la carte menu, which is full of fatty foods, we could get a salad bar. I don't know about any of you but I'm sick of seeing tater tots, pizza, chicken nuggets and chocolate milk on the lunch menu. I'm ready for a healthy change.

SHAILEI WRIGHT
Astoria

Get rid of sea lions

The California sea lions have arrived in the Columbia River this year in record numbers. Down in California they are short on food this year and that is causing them to migrate up here. There is a much larger source of food for them around here: the salmon. As most people know, there is a very popular spring salmon fishery that takes place on the Columbia River. With these huge amounts of sea lions feasting on the salmon, it has a major impact on the salmon. Not only are they impacting the fish, but us, the people, as well.

Salmon have always been a major fishery in Astoria and continues to be. With these sea lions eating a large portion of the salmon, that could have a major impact on the salmon runs. Last weekend I personally witnessed three fish eaten right off of the hooks of somebody fishing. It is bad enough to the point where sea lions are stealing fish off of the lines of fishermen.

When fishing out on the river you can't look around without seeing countless amounts of sea lions. The spring salmon run is probably the smallest of the salmon runs that come through the Columbia, so the fish already have enough troubles getting by with all of the people fishing. In years past sea lions have come in small numbers no where near to the large amounts that swarm the Columbia today, which was never a problem. This year has taken things to a whole new level; sea lions are not only major predators to the salmon, they are also very loud and obnoxious.

Some people say kill them and some people like them; I say find a solution to just get them out of here. The Chinook salmon runs are very important in the Columbia both economically and ecologically. Astoria has always been a fishing town and needs to stay that way. If there are tiny salmon runs due to the sea lions, that won't be possible. The sea lion issue needs a solution very soon before things get out of hand.

CHASE RUSINOVICH
Astoria

Do an autopsy

The sad story reported on April 10 of Jerad Knutson's body being found April 7, after his mysterious disappearance Feb. 27, raises more questions than it answers ("Body in river identified as Jerad Knutson, 20," *The Daily Astorian*). His Facebook page depicts an even more tragic life.

Being that he is representative of a very vulnerable population in our community, why wasn't an autopsy performed?

Promote a healthy Earth

We do not inherit the earth from our ancestors; we borrow it from our children" is a timely Native American proverb that reminds us of the impact of our current actions on future generations. This is an important philosophy to remember as we celebrated Earth Day on April 22 this week. We all need to remember this annual event highlighting the importance of protecting and preserving the earth on which we live.

As holistic nurses, my colleagues and I are committed to preserving the environment and recognizing our connection to the healing powers of Mother Earth. Since we all must share its limited resources and are each impacted by imbalances like earthquakes and drought, we ask all who live on the planet to do the same.

Our precious Earth supplies natural healing opportunities that are available from its sunlight, minerals, and plants. Staying connected to nature is vital to our health and well-being as a human species which is part of the whole planet's biosystem. Human beings cannot function or live well when our water, air, or land are polluted.

Furthermore, there have been increased threats from environmental changes over the years. We, as a global community, have failed to maintain an environment that encourages health and growth — and thus the guaranteed continued success of all who inhabit the planet. And this is the only home we have.

The holistic healthcare community considers the health of the ecosystem in relation to the health of those for whom

we care. Our individual efforts to preserve earth's resources are essential, and it is heartening to see industries and communities nationwide beginning to implement strategies towards this goal. We, the holistic healthcare community, are doing our part to create an environment of peace, harmony and nurturance so that healing may take place when we are doing our work. We ask everyone who reads this letter to do the same.

The worldwide celebration of Earth Day provides a gentle reminder for promoting a healthy environment. It's something every individual can and should play a role in.

KATHLEEN BELL
Chapter leader, Oregon North Coast
Chapter of the American Holistic
Nurses Association
Cannon Beach

Drowning is cited as the cause of death, but don't we owe him some further effort to rule out the possibility that he was the victim of foul play?

An autopsy would afford more closure, as well as paying respect to Jerad Knutson's life and showing that as a community, we do care.

DANI WILLIAMS
Astoria

New boat launch needed

The Port of Astoria needs to have more marinas to launch boats. We have the Hammond Marina, John Day Boat Ramp, the East and West Basin marinas. The Hammond Marina and East/West Basin Marinas are full of people's boats, and there is not a lot of room for other people to launch their boats.

We need a new boat launch in Astoria strictly for launching the boats, and no docking. If this happens there would be more money coming in because of the parking fees. People would not have to go from the John Day boat ramp to the mouth of the Columbia River. This would save a trip and money for most people fishing, or even commercial fisherman.

ZACHARY COX
Astoria

Two too many

Personally, I am a strong believer in the legalization of marijuana, but I really don't understand why the city of Astoria alone needs to have three marijuana dispensaries. The city of Astoria has only one liquor store, and there is another one in Warrenton. There are strict regulations made by the state concerning liquor stores. Why, then, do dispensaries not follow the same restrictions?

I understand that the people running the dispensaries are doing so to make a living in a growing market. But as we approach the legalization date, I can't help but wonder why we need three. Wouldn't one be enough to supply the growing population of cannabis consumers? This isn't a crisis for our community, but I think that it is something we need to think about for our community's future.

MEGAN DAVIS
Astoria

Who are they?

If you log on to <http://astoria.or.us/page/92>, you will be quite impressed with a website displaying fine photographs together with the names and biographical sketches of the city's mayor and council members.

If you seek similar information about Planning Commission members (<http://astoria.or.us/page/117>), or Budget Committee citizen members (<http://bit.ly/1CT8MQ3>), you will be disappointed. For the commission and the committee, only the names of individuals serving are provided.

Among its various responsibilities the Planning Commission determines what the good people of Astoria and its visitors will see while walking along the river. Will they be looking at ducks, boats, and a beautiful bridge or will their view be obstructed by ugly warehouses and hundreds of forklift pallets extending over the river?

The Budget Committee is responsible for the allocation of over \$37 million.

Participatory democracy requires transparency, accountability, and integrity on the part of those performing the awesome duties and obligations described above. At a minimum, the good people of Astoria should have basic biographical information about those people who have such power and control over their environment and their finances.

Under the city of Astoria Charter, the mayor has exclusive and absolute authority over the appointment of commissioners and committee members. Mayor LaMear has the ability and the authority to provide her constituents with basic information about those making important decisions affecting their lives. Her Honor can do this with the stroke of her pen.

GEORGE MCCARTIN
Astoria

Straighten the road

Dear Clatsop County citizens: As you all know from experience, the John Day S-curves are a huge inconvenience to the community. They have had multiple traffic incidents in the past years. The most recent occurrences have raised awareness of this significant problem, caused huge delays in schedules and, most importantly, taken innocent lives.

You might be thinking that this has always been a problem, but not this much in a short amount of time. This just goes to show that we need to do something about it. I believe that it would be a great idea to straighten the road in some way. We could round the corners so that they were not so sharp for the log trucks and semis, thus minimizing the chance of another wreck.

Straightening the road would additionally make this section of road safer in the winters. Instead of drivers driving too fast on a curvy road with a high chance of losing control, we could have drivers driving normal speeds on a straighter road with less chance of losing control and potentially causing an accident with another vehicle.

I hope this gets you thinking about the life-threatening problems we have with the roads in our community, and makes all of us realize that something has to be done.

NATHANIEL TRUAX
Astoria

Tsunami prep hurts wallet

Several weeks ago I was contacted by Oregon Public Broadcasting regarding an answer I gave to one of their surveys regarding the preparations we have made for a potential Cascadia Fault earthquake and tsunami.

As part of a remodel of our Seaside home, we added an elevator and roof deck. Since our home is now in a state of Oregon designated tsunami inundation zone, we constructed a very sturdy elevator shaft attached to the exterior of our home, with storage of emergency supplies on the top deck.

Since my wife and I will soon be 80, in the 15 minutes it is predicted that we will have between the earthquake and tsunami it will be impossible for us to walk to an elevation that will be safe. Although the earthquake will disrupt power, we have an emergency battery on the elevator, which will allow us to get to the roof. OPB

wants to incorporate our project into a future program they will produce on preparing for a tsunami.

Our elevator, including the elevator shaft, cost us \$30,000. Since it provided us an ocean view as well as some measure of tsunami protection, we felt that it was a reasonable investment. Like many seniors, we are unable to sell our home because the recession and tsunami threat have made our property's value decline by about 50 percent.

We expected that this improvement would increase our property taxes, and so it has — but by \$65,000, not \$30,000. The state of Oregon does have a manual for the use of county appraisers that lists \$30,000 as the cost of an elevator, including the new elevator shaft. The Clatsop County appraiser double-counts our project costs because he values the \$30,000 elevator/shaft plus the additional square footage of the living area created by the shaft, which is an additional \$35,000 for a total additional assessed value of \$65,000. Of course the shaft has no floor, no ceiling, has unfinished sides and is unheated, and is clearly fully valued at the actual project cost of \$30,000.

So I appeal to the local property appeals board, the magistrate and tax courts in Salem. What I get is a consistent answer: "We need evidence which can only be obtained by you hiring an Oregon certified appraiser, have him do a full appraisal and bring him to court so we can question him in person." That is a \$1,000 bill, and by the way, you also now owe us over \$5,000 for our attorney's fees.

So my answer to OPB is: The government that on one hand encouraged me to get prepared is, with the other hand,

punishing me (because of their own inability to correctly utilize state data) with the other hand.

JOHN DUNZER
Seaside

Drug test students

Students involved in extracurricular activities, or other school-based programs, should be tested for the use of substances, i.e. marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, etc. Although drug and alcohol use has decreased among adolescents across the nation, it still remains a concern in schools today. Especially in our local districts. The prevention of substance abuse among students should be a common concern, for it has been proven that the discouragement of illegal drug use gives a more proactive workplace for our students.

Students may argue that drug testing invades their privacy, but the participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege. Testing gives students a reason to say no to drugs, and it gives schools the opportunity to prevent the use of illegal substances within their students. School is a workplace, and a place for students to feel safe. Drug testing in schools is directed to address substance and drug abuse that commonly rises within the youth.

I am a student at Knappa High School, and testing the youth within our district involved in extracurricular activities and other school based programs is mandatory. The use of substances has decreased, and students realize that throwing away the opportunity to be involved in extracurricular activities isn't worth the use of drugs.

Testing should be mandatory in all districts in attempt to

decrease the use of illegal substances within our youth.

KACIE CAMERON
Astoria

One dispensary

To the citizens of Clatsop County: Upon the legalization of marijuana there will be an increased use of the drug. Understanding from a business standpoint that marijuana will increase revenue, only one marijuana dispensary is necessary in the area.

Having multiple dispensaries in the area could promote and increase the use of the drug, and although it will be legal, reducing the users would help prevent some of the negative impacts tied to the drug. These impacts include driving under the influence of marijuana, the use of marijuana by minors, and overdosing through the ingestion of the drug.

Needless to say, marijuana use may promote further, more intense drug use and abuse, and marijuana users are often frowned upon in today's society. Limiting the area to just one marijuana dispensary would help reduce the abundance of marijuana-related issues.

RYAN SIMPSON
Knappa

Shelter needed

Astoria has many wanderers who need a place to sleep and eat for the night. Every day is a struggle to find a place you can settle your cardboard box for the night, in hopes that it won't be soggy from the rain the next morning. Not to mention the hunger pains everyday, and having to shamefully ask others for money to fill their stomachs. If there was a homeless shelter, there would be many people who could get a fresh start with their lives, or simply just a good night's rest.

If the homeless people were off of the streets and in a safe shelter, then they'd be able to spend less time bothering people for spare change, and more time possibly trying to get a job. It's easier to save money when you're not spending your last dime every night on the dollar menu at McDonald's. A homeless shelter would provide hope for others to not give up, and encourage them to better themselves.

Not only could it provide food and a cozy bed, there could be help to find jobs or even counseling, if the reason you were on the streets was possibly because of drug abuse or alcoholism. These people need to know that it's possible to come back from rock bottom. If these services were provided, then Astoria would be a much more successful environment.

JOCELYN BURNETT
Astoria



Getting the inside story at the Hanford Nuclear Reservation

Anna King April 30th

In a series of 12 radio pieces, Anna King is bringing the underrepresented women's perspectives of the Hanford nuclear site out of the shadows.

As a Northwest Public Radio correspondent based in Richland, King is the only journalist covering the Hanford Nuclear Reservation full-time. She has closely followed the mammoth on-again, off-again disposal of nuclear waste at Hanford.

TO ATTEND:

For Members:
Dinner & Lecture: \$30 ea.
Lecture only: no charge

For Non-Members:
Dinner & Lecture: \$40 ea.
Lecture only: \$15 ea.

Appetizers will be available at 6 p.m.

Dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m.

The speaker will begin after the dinner service is complete and non-dinner members and guests of the audience take their seats.

Forum to be held at the CMH Community Center at 2021 Exchange St., Astoria.

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