

## Shut your Mouth

The North Coast deserves to read a Mouth of the Columbia who is a true professional journalist. A first year journalism major learns things that the new Mouth seems to have never learned. In the May 14 *Coast Weekend*, the new Mouth reviewed our restaurant, Drina Daisy, in a less than professional manner (“Drina Daisy Traditional Bosnian home cooking with a bevy of confounding caveats”).

A professional journalist considers their source and the complete context. Reporting an eavesdropped conversation with other customers is questionable, but failing to report that their conceived complaint was answered to their satisfaction is unprofessional.

A professional journalist is culturally sensitive and respectful of other cultures. Disparaging menu items, the lamb, the baklava, and the zeljanica (spinach pie) — that are as good or better than what one would find in a typical restaurant in Bosnia — is unprofessional.

A professional journalist sticks to the things they know. In our coastal community businesses sometimes get caught unprepared for occasional unanticipated surges of demand. See if you can find anywhere a professional waiter/waitress that will claim that they can serve 25 people on 10 tables with optimal attentiveness. Suggesting that our “systems were simply inefficient” and that “even a food service novice could streamline them in no time” is unprofessional.

A professional journalist does their homework and seeks to balance their writing in the context of what other professional journalists have written about the same thing. Drina Daisy has been very favorably reviewed in *The New York Times*, *The Seattle Times* (feature article), *The Oregonian*, *Willamette Week* (multiple favorable mentions in their yearly restaurant guide), *Portland Monthly* (twice), *Northwest Palate*, and was even given high marks, by Oregon’s “Godfather of Food” Gerry Frank.

All of the *Coast Weekend’s* previous Mouths rated us highly. Failing to temper an opinion in the context of so much professional insight is unprofessional.

Mothers are a good source of wisdom for life. My mother taught me, “If you don’t have anything good to say, don’t say anything at all.” I will adapt this to *The Daily Astorian’s Coast Weekend*, “If you don’t have anything good to say, shut your Mouth.”

KEN BENDICKSON  
Astoria

## More than food

I’m writing in response to a poor review of one of my favorite restaurants in town (“Drina Daisy Traditional Bosnian home cooking with a bevy of confounding caveats,” *Coast Weekend*, May 14). I was very disappointed by the seemingly biased opinions of this restaurant. They must be doing something right to outlast a fire in their building, being on the very end of the street where all businesses around them are vacant and condemned buildings, and continuing strong for 10 years.

I moved to Astoria 4.5 years ago, and this was the first place I ate dinner. I like trying new things, and I’d never had Bosnian food, so I was intrigued. From the moment I walked in the door and was blasted with the most amazing Bosnian dance music, I knew this was more than just a place to eat, it was the full cultural experience.

I immediately noticed there were only two people working, the owners, husband and wife, and that was a testimony to me that the food would be straight from the heart, a labor of love. I don’t like making assumptions, and I love learning, so I asked the server, the husband of the chef, as many questions as I could without being annoying. Also, through the years I’ve learned when you ask what dish they recommend, you should never question their answer.

So I started with the lamb dish. This isn’t just a piece of lamb on a plate, this was a full experience. They start by

# Death penalty advocates are wrong

Our honorable district attorney’s column advocating the death penalty (“Death penalty high in voter approval,” *The Daily Astorian*, June 11) appeared, ironically, on the very day that North Carolina’s Gov. Pat McCrory freed the two Brown brothers from their death cells, after 31 years’ incarceration.

They are innocent. How many more innocent inmates need to be freed before our officials realize that humans, and their courts, are fallible? The argument that public opinion approves, (of which I’m not at all sure) is specious. Public opinion supported slavery, witch-hunts, the McCarthy atrocities.

And, no, I am far from the elite or wealthy; I simply believe that no man has the right to another’s life. Our elected officials represent me. They are not authorized to kill in my name.

ELAINE BAUER  
Astoria

bringing you fresh warm bread (handmade by the chef) with the most amazing red pepper spread. Then comes the platter — not a plate — piled high with juicy roasted rosemary lamb, fresh fruit which is displayed as a work of art, and served alongside fresh greens salad with a house made vinaigrette dressing. The best way to enjoy it all is to simply dive in with your hands and a few napkins. After dinner, she served Bosnian coffee and house made Baklava smothered in honey and to die for.

I asked to thank the chef personally that day, and that was the start of a beautiful “food-ship.” She came out and greeted me, I thanked her and explained this was my first Bosnian experience, and she smiled the biggest smile and hugged me. I felt welcomed into Astoria by her.

I stayed a few minutes longer to ask her story of how she came from Bosnia. It was shocking and amazing. I learned of her strength, love, and resilience in a few short minutes. I continued to return and dine there ever since that day not only because the food was amazing, but the experience was warm, welcoming, and as if I was no longer in the states, but in Europe.

So if you like to try new things, want to have a full and fun dining experience, and you have to time to listen to stories of food, love, war, and life, then you need to get yourself down to Drina Daisy today.

SHEENA BLODGETT  
Astoria

## Time to secede

Rural Oregonians in general and East Oregonians in particular are growing increasingly dismayed by the manner in which Oregon’s legislature and Oregon’s urban dwellers have marginalized their values, demonized their lifestyle, villainized their resource-based livelihoods, and have classified them as second class citizens at best.

All the while they cover Oregon’s most fertile and well watered farm ground with urban sprawl, gangs, illegal aliens, homeless camps, welfare tramps, and touchy-feely politics that add little or no value to rural lifestyles. Meanwhile Oregon’s rural residents carve out a resource-based living on marginal farm ground and the leftovers of Oregon’s economic growth, infrastructure and technological innovation.

The Portland metro area is home to 47 percent of Oregon’s voters, and covers a mere 3,776.41 square miles of Oregon’s 98,466 square miles. That’s less than 4 percent of its land mass; 3.83 percent, to be exact.

Five of Oregon’s 36 counties now control 100 percent of Oregon’s legislative activity. None are rural. None are east of the Cascades. None are outside the Willamette valley.

It would appear to any rural resident or outside observer that most of Oregon’s urbanites view Oregon’s rural residents as nothing more than third world inhabitants, occupying their weekend and vacation playgrounds in what they advertise to the world as Oregon’s unique diversity. The political diversity in this state is becoming unpalatable.

Since 1988, Oregon’s urban dwellers have elected a group of individuals that represent nothing short of an aristocracy of political power, they have switched their role in democracy from servant to lord. These people have successfully disenfranchised and subjugated the people occupying everything not Portland or the Willamette Valley.

They have enacted laws with little or no debate and no amendments. They have stated they will fix admittedly flawed

laws after they are enacted, this is backwards legislative procedure designed to exclude and silence opposition, oftentimes with out of state money from East Coast power brokers.

Time for a change. Time to organize. Time to secede or succumb. Thirty-one counties need to put an initiative on their ballot that states: “Should (my) county secede from the state of Oregon and seek a more perfect union elsewhere?”

Imagine for a moment Idaho’s western border stretching to the Pacific, and the state of Oregon shrinking to less than 4,000 square miles of landlocked river view property.

GRANT DARROW  
Elgin

## End death penalty

While the catechism of the Catholic Church upholds the right to defend one’s self, or the lives of those in one’s care (easily found by Googling “Catholic position on the death penalty” and clicking on the official Vatican web site, [www.vatican.va](http://www.vatican.va)), the use of a quote from Pope John Paul II in a guest column by Josh Marquis supporting continued use of the death penalty is a misleading rhetorical device (“Death penalty high in voter approval,” *The Daily Astorian*, June 11).

Following is another quote that more clearly reflects both the official Catholic and the late pope’s stance on this subject:

“A sign of hope is the increasing recognition that the dignity of human life must never be taken away, even in the case of someone who has done great evil. Modern society has the means of protecting itself, without definitively denying criminals the chance to reform. I renew the appeal I made most recently at Christmas for a consensus to end the death penalty, which is both cruel and unnecessary.” (“Homily at the Papal Mass in the Trans World Dome,” St. Louis, Mo., Jan. 27, 1999).

I find it hard to see the death penalty as anything other than revenge. Retribution means repayment, yet, taking a life does not return the other life that was taken, nor does it undo a wrong that was done.

RHONDA GRUDENIC  
Astoria

## Let’s play bridge

You don’t have to be lonely. I am a widow and retired. What to do? This area has five bridge clubs, all part of the American Contract Bridge League.

I’ve never met a nicer group of people. The ladies bring great treats, and there’s always coffee and tea. The men are all gentlemen, and help where needed, setting up tables, etc.

There are three games in Astoria, on Tuesday, Thursday, and Tuesday evening; three games in Seaside, on Wednesday, Friday and Saturday; and one game a month for beginners on a Sunday.

There are bridge lessons available by Ann Marie Gramson and Sandra Baker — they make it fun. Call them for information at 503-739-0896 or 503-440-7363.

I’ve made some wonderful friends, and my days are full. Join me.

DOROTHY HANSEN  
Seaside

## Subsidize Amtrak

Gail Collins’ column, “Let’s do some railing” (*The Daily Astorian*, May 29) provides welcomed support for fixing Amtrak, but repeated errors about Amtrak and the issue of “profitability” that really should not appear ever again in public news media.

Contrary to assertions by Collins and U.S. Sen. Chris Murphy from Connecticut, Amtrak does not make a profit from operating trains on the

Boston-Washington North-east Corridor (NEC). In fact, the NEC is the most heavily subsidized portion of Amtrak, consuming extremely high capital costs when measured by passenger-miles of travel provided per dollar expended. One passenger mile equals one person transported one mile.

According to a written statement by an Amtrak executive, Amtrak’s “cross-country money-losers” — such as the Amtrak trains that connect Oregon to Washington state, California and 43 states to the east — actually do not consume any federal subsidies. More, if all these “money-losers” were eliminated, the revenue lost would exceed the costs saved from their discontinuance, thus increasing, not decreasing, Amtrak’s federal subsidy needs. Each time Amtrak has eliminated “money-losing” trains, Amtrak revenues declined more than did its costs.

In fact, no national, intercity rail-passenger service on planet Earth earns a true profit; every nation’s rail-passenger service system costs more money to build, maintain and operate than it generates in direct operating revenue. A few very high-speed routes and trains — France’s TGVs, for example — earn an operating profit. And a very few of them actually cover capital costs as well. But such profits are earned only after national governments first make extremely costly capital investments in tracks, signals, train sets and stations.

If Gail Collins — and the few members of Congress who support fixing Amtrak — are serious, they must first recognize that the U.S. Congress has never appropriated sufficient rail passenger service funding to sustain Amtrak’s existing

skeletal service network, let alone seriously considered appropriating capital investment funds needed to create and sustain modern, comprehensive national intercity rail passenger service.

Amtrak’s total federal subsidy since it began operating in 1971, approximately \$44 billion, is less than the amount of federal general tax revenue money transferred to the Highway Trust Fund over two years, because the federal gas tax does not generate enough revenue.

U.S. taxpayers do not pay too much for rail passenger service; they pay far too little, thus ensuring our nation’s rail passenger service more closely resembles the train service in third world nations than in Western Europe, Japan and China.

J. HOWARD HARDING  
Akron, Ohio

## Don’t harass sea lions

There is nothing funny or amusing about harassing wildlife (“Subman says: ‘We don’t need no stinkin’ whale!’” *The Daily Astorian*, June 19). I would like to inform Subman that hazing sea lions with his boat off the docks in the East Mooring Basin is a federal offense, punishable by law.

Sea lions are protected under the Marine Mammal Protection Act. Signage is posted at the basin, and I quote, “Please do not disturb marine animals. This includes any pursuit, torment or annoyance that has the potential to injure or disturb any marine mammal.” Shame on “The Ear” for making a joke out of this publicity stunt that promotes harassment of sea lions.

It is never OK to intentionally harass or cause stress or harm to any animals, mam-

mals or birds. All animals deserve protection from being tormented by humans, regardless of whether they have fur, fins or feathers. Let us not forget that we are supposed to be the more intelligent species.

STACEY MCKENNEY  
Astoria

## Great instructor

My name is Rory Siqueira, and I am a student at Tongue Point Job Corps Center. I was in Deb Ferguson’s galley class (“Fired teacher files civil rights charge,” *The Daily Astorian*, June 19). She was a great instructor — taught us everything we needed to know, and what it would be like on an actual job.

We thought of cooking things just for the experience of making things we never made before. In order to make these things, we needed certain ingredients, and we would be denied of these things. We had a budget of around \$1,900 a month for food.

So why couldn’t we get those ingredients? The person in charge of the purchase order didn’t think it was necessary for us to have these things. So Deb Ferguson went out and used her own money just for us students. We’re not talking a couple dollars here and there, I’m talking hundreds of dollars. She got the receipts to back it up.

There was no way of stopping this woman from making sure we were taken care of. She treated us like adults — no babies in her class. You wanted to be a baby, you’re in the wrong industry. No favoritism. Everybody was treated the same with respect.

RORY SIQUEIRA  
Astoria

## Let citizens vote

Just a thought: Does anyone in the city of Astoria have the desire or ability to file an injunction against the Astoria City Council to keep the Bridge Vista Plan from being implemented until it can be voted on by Astoria citizens?

Maybe a recall could be on the same ballot. Astorians have been disregarded long enough.

JAMES J. VIRGILLO  
Astoria

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