

Urge to educate

I am a member of the ONE Campaign, and I write to you today as President Obama and other world leaders prepare for two critical summits in September that will determine the future of education for millions of refugee children.

As they do so, I am encouraging the president to commit the financing and policy changes necessary to ensure that every refugee child gets a quality education as soon as possible. As a first step this year, leaders need to deliver on the promise of the London Summit, and ensure quality education is provided for at least one million out-of-school refugee children.

I have two young children, and I cannot imagine being forced out of my home, taking flight along with thousands of other desperate people into a life of total uncertainty. There are millions of people living in camps all across the globe, seeking asylum and hope, and children are at the greatest risk, especially from the long-term impact of not having any options for education. Their future, their families' futures and our future are all intrinsically linked; it is not their problem, it is our problem.

If the current education plight is not addressed, one-third of primary children will not reach basic literacy rates by 2050, and universally we will see an entire generation of illiterate adults. I am asking your readers to join ONE and ask President Obama to make sure that the U.S. delivers on a plan to provide one million refugee children with an education this school year.

CRAIG ROTTMAN
Portland

Neglect

The new editor of *The Daily Astorian* advises us to accept the coming of Walmart, Sheriff Tom Bergin encourages us to embrace driving on the beach, the Astoria City Council decides we can afford only a second-rate library, we add pot shops and breweries faster than one can keep track, and tourist traffic alternates between gridlock and unchecked speeding.

The complexities behind these, and other recent developments, are admittedly real — there are no villains — but when taken together, they suggest a neglect of values that define a healthy community.

ROBERT ADAMS
Astoria

Beach privilege

I am a local Astoria resident, and have been for the last few years. I am writing to say I am highly offended at the complete misrepresentation of beach goers who decide to legally drive on the stretch of beach from the shipwreck to Gearhart ("Blue highway," *The Daily Astorian*, Aug. 17).

The "wildlife photographer" who was the main commentator in the article, in my opinion, was completely wrong regarding the privilege of driving on the beach. For starters, I agree that driving on the beach is not a right, but a very rare privilege, especially in this day and age of excessive rules and regulations.

I regularly spend many days each week on the beach, usually spending hours on end every weekend, enjoying the beauty that is the Oregon Coast. Every time, at least one patrol vehicle drives by and waves. I have not witnessed any erratic driving, and most certainly have never witnessed anyone driving through a flock of birds (dogs and people walking are the main culprits in causing the flocks to take off).

As far as the "camping" the photographer spoke of, yes, people do set up tents to block the wind. It's the beach, and many people spend hours on the beach — that doesn't automatically equal camping. But if you go on the beach after dark (which I have done numerous times), there is no one out there.

Out of all the days and hours I have spent on that stretch of beach, I have never witnessed any erratic behavior, no out of control people who are driving in the dunes, or throwing their trash out the window or running into flocks of birds. Yes, you will find a few pieces of litter every now and then, but that is on any beach you go to (especially the ones that are walk only).

Praise for Astoria Regatta

Recently I had the privilege to be a part of the Astoria Regatta celebration, and that reminded me of all I enjoyed and experienced while growing up in Astoria. The celebrations and festivals of the area are unique.

While the Regatta admirals, dignitaries and event organizers did a phenomenal job throughout the week, I write to express how impressed I was with the young women of the Regatta Court. Aubrey McMahan, Brenna Borup, Kristen Travers

and Victoria Holcomb are outstanding representatives of their schools and the community. They displayed their knowledge of the area and their maturity in the interviews and on stage.

I have been an educator for a number of years, and I can assure you that with these young women as representatives of your schools, the future of your community is in good hands.

MIKE BLAIR
Port Orchard, Washington

Driving on the beach is a very rare privilege that I will fight to keep. I just had to write, because I felt that the people (like myself) who truly respect the rules and know what a great privilege it is to be able to drive on the beach were misrepresented, and virtually unheard in the article. The majority are respectful — not out of control, as the photographer would have you believe.

JESSICA CHILDRESS
Astoria

Bad edition

Reading *The Daily Astorian* Aug. 9 edition, I am really dismayed. An editorial about bailing out PERS starts right off the bat calling the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) pensions outsized pensions ("Measure 97 bails out PERS").

If you really look into it, PERS pensions are probably average. A few are a lot. Mine is less. But here we go again, with distortion. This kind of distortion does not help people unite to find a solution. A lot of people get stuck on the word "outsized."

Then, also Aug. 9, "The sore loser uprising." Well, when elections are stolen, the loser (the winner) is supposed to walk away in an acceptable manner, being polite and all. And the people's vote? Who cares about that? Do you realize that the writer of this article from *The New York Times* is saying that democracy doesn't matter? Who cares about democracy? Just be polite and leave, loser (winner).

And then the article goes on to say that it would be almost impossible to rig an election in this great country of ours. Excuse me? It is so easy with these electronic voting machines. So if you want to know how the Democratic Primary was rigged, search for "Election Justice USA An Electoral System" on YouTube. Check out "Massive Election Fraud seen in Primaries" from the news show "Redacted Tonight," hosted by Lee Camp, also on YouTube.

I really like the town of Astoria. I like the people there, who seem to care about their town and our country. This issue of *The Daily Astorian* seems more like a newspaper written for people who don't know too much. It reminds me of *The Oregonian*.

So I say poo on *The Daily Astorian's* view of the PERS problem. I say poo on their choice of articles to put in the paper about rigged elections. Instead, they should be bringing to light how our elections are rigged, and what we can do about it.

DIXIE GAINER
Nehalem

Bad planning

Recently a small segment of Astoria's entrenched 16th Street got blacktopped. But-toned up. Put to bed. Praise the Ford ... albeit it's only between the intersections of Duane and Exchange streets.

Still, I joyfully hosed off a thick layer of airborne filth, which for weeks had settled upon the Heritage Museum's western porch, plus adjacent sidewalks. No more dust to track indoors.

Suddenly, glancing north towards the river, my delight turned dark. A murky puddle covered the corner of Duane and 16th. Why? Because at its low spot, where water's naturally going to pool, there's no sewer opening. Instead, said grate lies 9 feet uphill. So over the next hour, my swash meandered east until Duane met 17th in front of the Moose Lodge.

This high level inability to

connect the dots infuriates me on several counts. Hundreds of thousands of taxpayer bucks get pocketed by big-wheel contractors — now well into their third month disrupting major arteries — yet here's vivid evidence that once they're finally out of our hair, they'll leave behind another sappy pedestrian obstacle for local yokels to sputter about.

Yes, indeed, it's no isolated incident. Last year similar mislaid drainage was installed above the crosswalk at Duane and Seventh streets, behind the Clatsop County Courthouse. Doesn't anyone in City Hall oversee repaving? Astoria foot traffic deserves a better return on their dollar, not dolor.

Hefty penalties should be assessed for such asinine engineering to deter further muck ups. This ain't rocket science. Every grade schooler knows water will flow to the lowest point. Slotting a runoff above that spot won't do diddly when rains return.

LARRY ZIAK
Astoria

A hand up

There was a recent article in *The Washington Post* about Albuquerque, New Mexico celebrating the first anniversary of its "There's a Better Way" program, which hires the able-bodied homeless for day jobs keeping the city clean. The program works in partnership with local nonprofits that serve the homeless.

I was trying to figure a way Astoria could fund such a program, and kept stalling at the only choices I thought available: Laying off the city workers who do this work, or raising taxes.

Then, lo and behold, *The Daily Astorian* came to my rescue with a front page article about the Scandinavian monument planned for downtown ("Scandinavian monument planned downtown," Aug. 16). From the article I learned that the city pays a private company to maintain downtown green areas and the Riverwalk, and that the company is paid with tourist dollars, not homeowner taxes.

Well, what do you know? Maybe this program can work here. A private company, not city workers, does certain specific grounds-keeping work, and a company good enough and savvy to contract with the city of Astoria will probably do just fine if that contract isn't renewed.

Or, a new contract with this company could include hiring able-bodied homeless people. And, given the amount of tourists we see each year, I don't see the cost of such a program falling back on Astoria homeowners.

But, finally, wouldn't it be a feather in our cap if we, too, could celebrate giving the homeless a hand up instead of a handout? Something to think about ...

JULIA SNYDER
Astoria

Thank you

The Astoria Open Studio Tour, July 30-31, was a fantastic success with 46 artists all across Astoria inspiring their unique and shirring artistic spaces with the public. Our appreciation is especially extended to the city of Astoria, *The Daily Astorian*, the Astoria Downtown Historic District Association (ADHDA), Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, Coast Community Radio, Fort George Brewery and Buzz and Lisa Smith Bissinger. See the Astoria Open Studio Tour Facebook page for the full list of contributors.

Also, "bravo!" to our local artists for all your hard work.

Thank you all for making this event such a success and an enjoyable experience.

REBECCA RUBENS
President, Astoria Visual Arts
ANNIE ESKELIN
Coordinator, Astoria Open Studio Tour

Amendments

We need to get the government of this country back into the hands of "we the people." We need a Constitutional Convention now, to get our country back into our hands. Some of the most important issues to address are as follows, in proposed amendments for the U.S. Constitution:

No. 28: Elected officials shall not serve more than two consecutive terms in the same office. After being out of an office for at least one term, the voters may re-elect a person back into that office. Elected offices were never intended to be lifetime careers.

No. 29: Appointed officials shall not serve in office for longer than one and one half times the length of time that the person making the appointment serves in the office from which the appointment is made.

No. 30: Elected officials shall not pass any law, rule or tax that does not apply equally to all citizens of the U.S. Congress and the president should not be above the law of the land.

No. 31: All laws not specifically included in the Constitution shall have an expiration date. Laws currently on the books shall be assigned an

expiration date by the body which originally passed the law, not to exceed 50 years in the future. Laws approaching expiration, if deemed appropriate to continue, may be assigned a new expiration date, by a simple majority vote of the sponsoring body, unless otherwise challenged.

No. 32: Any child born in the U.S. to parents who are not in the country legally shall not be considered a citizen of the U.S. unless proper naturalization processes are followed (modifies Amendment XIV).

No. 33: No person, who is not in the U.S. legally, shall be entitled to benefits derived from public money, including but not limited to, schooling, welfare aide and medical assistance.

CLEVE ROLFE
Seaside

Ferry future

Not long ago, a friend in Astoria sent me an article from *The Daily Astorian* regarding the return of Tourist No. 2 to her home ("Tourist No. 2 is 'a floating museum,'" Aug. 2). I was surprised that in part of the article it mentioned the plans for Tourist No. 2 were uncertain. Another thought was that she be placed in Heritage Park.

Wouldn't it be more meaningful if she were back at the site of the old ferry slip down by 14th Street? I know that the slip is all but gone, but what if something like a concrete pad extending three feet beyond the measurements of Tourist No. 2, and two feet above the high water line of the Columbia? Doing this would make maintaining her much easier and might relieve any anxiety of the cost of Coast Guard inspections since she wouldn't be in the water.

Add to that a replica of the ramp that was used to board and unload vehicles for the ferries. The timbers wouldn't have to be as heavy as they used to be, since there would no longer be vehicular traffic using the ramp, unless it happened to be a catering truck for those special events held on board.

And let's not forget a mock-up of the lift pilings and mechanism that used to raise and lower the ramp. Since the

ramp would not have to move with the tide, and Tourist No. 2 would be on a solid pad, the ramp wouldn't have to move.

What better place for Tourist No. 2 to spend her days where she spent so much time with her sisters? She would certainly look better there than sitting in a park.

BRUCE D. QUINN
Keizer and Grand Rapids,
Michigan

Don't trivialize

In reading the article "Blue Highway" (*The Daily Astorian*, Aug. 17), I was surprised at the snarky response to the safety concerns expressed by citizens over the matter of cars on the beach. The person making that comment was Sheriff Tom Bergin.

I never thought I would see the day when the chief law enforcement officer in the county would seek to minimize citizen concerns over safety and lawlessness on public beaches. Bergin states "It's a very small group of people who complain. They own these homes along the beach and want their own little walking space. It's not going to happen."

That is an outrageous statement. First, he indicates that only beach homeowners care about safety and lawlessness, and secondly, that they are only complainers who want a private walking trail. Is Sheriff Bergin aware of the law in Oregon that intends for people to safely use public beaches?

His elective office is charged with the responsibility of law enforcement. He says that there's only a few complainers who are only trying to close public beaches. I don't believe this is true, and I don't think Sheriff Bergin has any reason to question the motives of the public. I am not a beach front homeowner but I, too, have witnessed speeding cars and reckless driving on the beach. Although this is by a minority of motorists, it is still an important problem, and should not be trivialized by an elected official.

I recommend to the sheriff: Less personal opinion, more professionalism.

JACK OSTERBERG
Astoria

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