

Food Bank thanks

I would like to express my gratitude to the community for their support for the Astoria/Knapka Christmas Food Basket Program. I retired from the program at the end of the 2016 season. My husband and I have worked with incredible volunteers and supporters.

Thank you to First Lutheran Church for backing the program for so many years. Thank you to the many organizations that held food drives for the program. Thank you to the businesses that donated product or gave us such great deals on what we purchased for the food boxes. Thank you to the Regional Food Bank for all their support and generosity over the years.

Needless to say, I could go on and on about the wonderful experiences we have had through the Food Basket Program. As yet, no one has stepped up to take over.

MYRLE BRUNER
Astoria

Missing Forrester

Gosh, I miss Steve Forrester. He wouldn't have blundered into the error of *The Daily Astorian's* current editorial by echoing *The Oregonian's* editorial board regarding "one-party rule" by Oregon Democrats. It's a silly and misleading political construct.

Just to be clear about my biases: I despise *The Oregonian* editorial board because they despise public employees, and they misrepresent Oregon political reality because of it. And I'm also a retired Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) parasite, as my friends refer to me.

Ever since Oregon Democrats won control of both chambers of the Legislature in 2007 for the first time since 1994, *The Oregonian* incessantly accuses Dems of monolithic control of the state without Republican input. That's pure bullpucky.

The latest example, a recent paean to Dennis Richardson, "Oregon's mixed progress on bipartisanship, personal freedom: Editorial Agenda 2016" (*The Oregonian*, Dec. 30.), concluded: "The election of a Republican to the secretary of state's office provides at least a little balance to Democratic dominance in the rest of state government ... Certainly, Oregon staunchly remains under one-party rule, a phenomenon that's unhealthy no matter which party is in charge." What a crock.

With the exception of 2009, Democrats have never controlled 60 percent of the seats in the House since the supermajority requirement to move tax measures was imposed. Let's be honest, the majority party can't pass anything, whether it's a budget or a transportation plan, or PERS reform, without the assistance of the minority party. And minority parties always whine about being ignored. I should know; I was the minority whip in the House and the Senate for four of my five sessions.

Democrats do not have a supermajority in either chamber to move any revenue measures without Republican votes in the 2017 session. That's a fact, not an opinion.

TONY CORCORAN
Cottage Grove

Lovely dinner

As the last of our customers shuffled out the door on New Year's Eve there was a moment of quietness and realization that we had made it through our 16th holiday season. Each year after Thanksgiving we break out the Christmas décor and get excited to spend the holidays with our regular customers and visiting ones alike.

Something that is a true highlight for us is the annual Christmas dinner at the Urban Café. This event is something that we love to do, and is so special. This dinner provides more than just the dinner; it provides a family-like atmosphere that many crave around the holidays. You can imagine walking into the Urban Café on Christmas Day as walking into your aunt's house who is a little quirky, but

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that's just the way she is. All of your cousins, aunts, uncles and family are in one place to laugh and seek peace together on a cold Christmas Day.

We could never achieve or maintain this tradition without wonderful donations from around the community. A special thanks to Blue Scorch Bakery, Reed and Hertig, Ocean Beauty and Dan from Food Services of America. Their donations help maintain this community funded dinner. All of us from the T-Paul's family invite you to sit and eat with us in 2017.

Eat well, laugh often and love much.

PAUL FLUES
TEONA DAWSON
THE T-PAUL'S FAMILY
Astoria

Inaccurate review

Last month's review of the Buoy 9 restaurant in Hammond ("Mouth of the Columbia: Buoy 9," *Coast Weekend*, Dec. 22) was somewhat scathing and inaccurate. I was appalled with the review, which was way over the top with a very prejudicial tone.

I have known Buoy 9's owner, Vern Keen, for several years, and have often eaten there with our family and friends. Our Portland relatives insist on Buoy 9 each time they visit the coast. They have always enjoyed a quality meal in pleasant surroundings at the Buoy. Besides being a true gentleman, Vern is a hard working, hands-on chef, devoted to his business, employees and customers.

Buoy 9 purchases only quality fresh meats, fish and produce from local suppliers who cater to upscale restaurants, including the Astoria Golf and Country Club.

The Daily Astorian would be well served to review future Mouth reviews before publishing. Local restaurants need our help and support.

MARTY GILL
Gearhart

Good youth facility

I would like to start by saying thank you to the editor for his two great editorials covering the possible closure of North Coast Youth Correctional Facility, "Brown's budget cuts fail state's struggling youth" (*The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 6) and "There's still a good case for youth facilities" (*The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 5).

I have worked as a nurse at this facility for almost 11 years now, and have seen the huge impact our facility has made for the youth in our care. Oregon Youth Authority director Fariborz Pakseresht has said we will close. I would like to say that until it goes before the Legislature and Ways and Means Committee, I'd like to think that there might be a glimmer of hope, at least from my perspective.

The fact that we have been repeatedly told that it is fiscally sound to close North Coast, and will be beneficial for the youth and staff alike, is not an accurate picture from my perspective. While I do understand the fiscal part, it should be noted that there are other small facilities like ours that aren't closing.

It has been well proven that youth do better at smaller facilities than the larger ones. Large facilities have many inherent problems with being so large. Youth lose the close knit family-like atmosphere which extends to our entire facility, not just a unit or two. There is much less smuggling

of contraband into a smaller facility over the larger ones, much less violence, youth are safer — the list goes on.

North Coast has had a proven track record for taking the youth that no one else wants to deal with, and making it work. Our drug and alcohol program is one of the best ones out there. Granted, we don't have a fenced perimeter, nor do we have a fancy new school, but despite this we have always had parole officers who want their youth to come out here for just the reasons I listed. It works out here.

APRIL JOHNSON
Warrenton

Challenges in 2017

In 2017, the city of Astoria will face two new challenges, and continue consideration of two challenges carried over from the past year. Mayor LaMear pointed out that the waterfront bridges at the ends of Sixth through 11th streets need to be replaced; and the old water pipes must be renewed with a redundant system protecting them from landslides ("County leaders share their 'biggest challenges' ahead," *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 2.) Both these projects will be very costly.

Surprisingly, in the same column, the mayor stated that the city must decide the future of the library, whether to construct a new facility or renovate the existing library. Almost six months ago it seems the council decided this issue in favor of renovation, since the price of building a whole new library would be prohibitive. Evidently the mayor plans to revisit this issue now that there are two new members on the council.

The need for a new or improved library has been on the council table for eight years. In October 2013, after being paid \$62,000, a consultant proposed two options: renovate the existing library; and expand the existing library into that area occupied by the historical Merwyn (Waldorf) Hotel. Subsequently, much more money was allocated to employ more experts, primarily to consider using the area adjacent to the Garden of Surging Waves as a site for a library/housing complex.

Finally, last July the majority of the council directed staff to develop a funding strategy for the library. In view of the demands placed on their limited tax dollars, the good people of Astoria will have to be satisfied with library renovation. This would include plumbing and electrical upgrades: necessary alterations to conform to the Americans with Disabilities Act; and improvements to the natural and artificial lighting.

Another urgent problem for the council is the development of a strategy to provide adequate housing in Astoria, especially for persons with low incomes. The council last considered this issue in July 2016. In October 2016 the Planning Commission, however, held a public hearing to amend the code regarding accessory dwelling units; after extensive public input the commission unanimously recommended these code changes to the City Council.

Hopefully in 2017 the Astoria City Council will vigorously and decisively move forward on the library and housing issues.

GEORGE MCCARTIN
Astoria

Skip the conjecture

I have known William Michael Schuster since we both returned from Vietnam nearly half a century ago. We met in Portland, introduced by one of his sisters. We both had been Marines, and our Vietnam tours overlapped in the same places at the same time, but he was artillery and I spent most of my time with infantry and recon, so only back state-side did we get to know each other.

For virtually all of these years we have been close friends — I have admired his intelligence, his humorous eccentricities and his artistry; he paints and draws compulsively.

I know he has been convicted of child sexual abuse, which I find very difficult to believe, despite the claims against him, though he has not contested the charge.

I do know what he did do. He killed people. He handled the big artillery guns in Vietnam. He fired so-called "Harassment and Interdiction" missions, which were indiscriminate artillery barrages that destroyed villages, killing men, women and children nearly every day. No court in the world will convict him for that — except the court of his conscience, which has, ever since.

Schuster has Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). Vietnam has been saturated

into his very sense of everything. If anyone wants proof, look at his paintings. Don't expect insanity or emotional breakdowns; obsession with the war as a lifelong wound that never heals — that is PTSD.

I am aware that his mind has deteriorated over time. He sought treatment at the Veterans Administration, but was made homeless by Astoria's gentrification frenzy. He has been in jail for nearly a year, and has been given psychiatric treatment; he faces at least another four years of incarceration.

I take great exception that the prosecution and judge have said that he must have violated other girls ("He let me call him grandpa," girl says of abuser," *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 20). That is unqualified conjecture, and besmirches him without any evidence. Such unproven assertions made by public officials disgraces their positions of trust and the most basic tenant of our laws and judicial system: innocent until proven guilty.

He has not been accused of any other crimes, no matter the conjectural hearsay. Yet these officials apparently felt it was okay to publicly accuse him of additional criminal behavior without a shred of verifiable evidence.

I regard that as criminally offensive.

MICHAEL PAUL
McCUSKER
Waldport

Slow drive

Regarding the story on the Steelers fans gathering at Bubba's in Warrenton for the games ("Steelers fans bring 'Burch to Warrenton,'" *Coast River Business Journal*, Jan. 8): As I read the story I thought, "I hope that I never get stuck behind the guy who takes an hour to drive the 12 miles from Seaside to Warrenton."

HUGH MCKENNA
Warrenton

Ready to rally

I guess there really is a first time for everything. As a

resident of Clatsop County for the last six years, I have paid my taxes, picked up trash on the beach, volunteered for several worthwhile organizations and paid attention to what's happening locally and in the wider community. I grew up in a white, middle-class family in the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s when it was considered very impolite to talk about religion and politics around the dinner table, let alone stand on a street corner in broad daylight with a protest sign.

Now I'm ready to march down a city sidewalk with hundreds of like-minded women and men in support of something I thought was expected in our society — respect. I was wrong and naïve, so consequently I will be walking in Astoria on Saturday, Jan. 21, in the Astoria Women's March. That is the day that women all over the country will be involved in organized activities, marches and rallies to raise awareness of the dangerous tone and rhetoric of the incoming administration.

But this letter is not about what I personally believe. That will be clear enough on Saturday. It is about the fact that I can freely and without fear, express that belief. The fact that I can join a group of local women — some working, others retired, busy with families, businesses and ordinary life — who are taking the time to organize and take action is frankly remarkable.

Bravo, ladies. Bravo to the men, partners and families who support them, and bravo to the community who listens. We are all better for this.

Please support us on Saturday, Jan. 21, at noon, at 12th and Exchange streets, as many of your neighbors and friends from the Columbia/Pacific area will demonstrate for the rights of everyone to peacefully express their opinions about the need to protect the environment, the safety of minorities, women and others, health care and education for all and above all, respectful discourse.

PAT WOLLNER
Gearhart

Make the Leap!

to a happy, healthy you in 2017

Your partner in Health & Wellness

What are your goals this year?

Get Fit

- Cardiac/Pulmonary Rehab **503-338-4052**
- A Matter of Balance class **503-338-7564**
- Strong Women, Strong Bones class **503-338-7564**
- Tai Chi **503-338-7564**

Manage Pain

- Physical Therapy Services **503-338-7555**
- Chronic Pain Management class **503-338-7564**

Eat Healthier

- Diabetes Education **503-338-4012**
- Living Well with Diabetes class **503-338-7564**
- Healthy Eating for Successful Living class **503-338-7564**

Quit Tobacco

- Tobacco Cessation **503-338-7564**

Help Others

- Volunteer **503-325-4321**
- Donate **503-325-3208**

Make the Call!

2111 Exchange Street, Astoria, Oregon • 503-325-4321
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