

Urban Core plan

As the Astoria City councilors draft a set of goals (“Library remodel, Heritage Square are priorities,” *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 16) I note that one is to “Complete the Urban Core area of the city’s Riverfront Vision Plan.” This is the area between Second and 16th streets, which is Phase 4 of the plan.

I would respectfully suggest the council, as a public policy, give priority to this long-pending project. Last June, City Manager Bret Estes offered to seek grant support for Phase 4 of the Riverfront Vision Plan. Hopefully, the consultants who designed the first three phases are still available.

It’s been almost 30 years since the city sponsored Saturday work parties to clean up our Columbia River waterfront, as advised by the Murase Plan. Before that, it was unsafe to even go down to the river. The ensuing result of the cleanup became the four-mile Astoria Riverwalk, which Estes, as former community development director, promoted to completion. The Riverwalk has become the signature attraction of Astoria, offering its users a sense of place on the Columbia River.

It was not my intent, in the early 1990s, to go down to the river, loppers in hand, and clean up a 50-foot swath of the river’s edge to have a recent outside developer capitalize on such a grassroots project. Will the council indicate its concern for the Urban Core area of the Riverfront Vision Plan?

JUANITA PRICE
Astoria

Speculation

I write this letter reluctantly, not because I have something else I’d rather be doing, but because I think the subject is none of my business — though, as a resident of the city of Gearhart, I am assured it is my business.

A *Daily Astorian* headline asks “Is gambling ‘good for Gearhart?’” (Feb. 8) in the matter of the owner of a soon-to-open brew pub being required to ask the city for permission to install four video lottery machines in his place of business, on his own property. The question cannot be answered, as no one is qualified to speak for “Gearhart,” much less to know what is “good” for it.

In the course of my life of 79 years, I doubt if many more than half the decisions I have made for myself have been “good” for me. Even less would be the probability that I can know what will be good for another person, and it is entirely out of the question that I can accurately guess what will be good for a town of about 1,000 residents and numerous visitors.

In a free enterprise economy, such as we have in this country, consumers “vote” with their dollars. If a business receives enough “votes,” it will thrive; if it does not, it will wither and die. There is no way to predict its future, because it is not known how future generations will care to spend their dollars. It is hubristic for any group of citizens, including a so-called Planning Commission, to decide now what will be good for my children or grandchildren, or any other future residents of Gearhart.

In the current matter of video lottery games, I am with Thomas Jefferson in principle — whether a man install four or 40 gambling machines, it “neither breaks my leg nor picks my pocket.”

LOUIS SARGENT
Gearhart

Free zoo animals

I am an eighth-grader at Broadway Middle School. Zoos are bad. The animals live in cages, the food is horrible, and the animals only have family to rely on.

First, the animals live in cages. OK, imagine yourself being in a cage, how lonely you would be. And, think how the cheetah and the tiger and the reptiles and the birds are feeling right this very second, all alone and most likely crying — like you probably would be doing.

Second, the food is horrible. The food is pretty artificial. The animals get lazy because

Keep the \$1 trolley ride

The Astoria Riverfront Trolley has been an increasingly “must experience” feature in our city for almost 18 years. The approximately hour-long, 3 1/2-mile trip along the south bank of the great Columbia River has been a true bargain at \$1 per ride (\$2 all day) for the families and tourists visiting the “oldest city west of the Rockies.”

Every year there has been talk by some well-meaning supporters for raising the fare. As a trolley volunteer operator for about eight years, and a former

voting member of the operations committee, I’m hoping the fare will remain at \$1.

We can pay for all regular operation costs of the trolley from this fare and the donations we get. Already, the many hours we put into operating the trolley as volunteers translates into a savings of more than \$50,000 per year. And, as Astoria Ambassadors, the dialogue by the trolley conductor promotes our city and businesses, as well as providing a colorful depiction of history and points

of interest along the way. Also, there could be a reduction in onboard donations if the fare was raised.

I’m hoping this Astoria “magic carpet ride” will remain a real bargain at \$1 for our tourists and local citizens for years to come. By the way, if you’re looking for a real Northwest Columbia River experience, join us this coming season, noon to 6 p.m., on the Astoria Riverfront Trolley.

DAVID SKARRA
Hammond

they can’t chase after the “food” or their prey in zoos. The animals do not get a lot of food in zoos. And they don’t get enough vitamins, iron, nutrients and bacteria killers. And they are bored enough to sleep all day. Imagine yourself, how worried you would be. If I were you, I would make signs to say free the animals, protest, tell every zoo to let them go and write in newspapers.

So as you can see zoos are bad. The animals live in cages, the food is bad, and they only have family to rely on.

HAYDEN SPRATT
Gearhart

Chopping block

On Valentine’s Day, the state Land Board voted 2-1 to sell our largest piece of state managed land to a private timber company. The Elliott Forest, covering 93,000 acres in the Southern Oregon Coast Range, is a complex, natural ecosystem, containing some of Oregon’s last remaining old growth — one-half of the forest is over a century old. It is estimated that 22 percent of all Oregon coho salmon originate from this source.

Privatizing the Elliot will mean industrial-style logging of the area, loss of public access (including hunting and fishing) and destruction of the forest habitat itself.

State Treasurer Tobias Read and Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, who both voted for the sale, stressed the need for money to finance education. We need to “give our children the world class education they deserve,” says Richardson. The two of them seem to have gotten into the same boat as the Tillamook County commissioners — drawn to the immediate profit the forest can provide, unable to imagine and implement other possibilities for revenue, oblivious to the harm and loss such a short-sighted action creates.

Gov. Brown, who voted against the sale, issued a statement a few days before the meeting describing the Elliott as one of Oregon’s treasures that should be preserved for generations to come, and suggested logging in a sustainable way, and finding other sources of revenue in addition to the forests. Because of a motion made by Brown, the decision was not finalized in the Feb. 14 meeting, but will be brought up again on April 4.

Here are phone numbers for your elected representatives if you wish to give your reaction to this issue: Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, 503-986-1523 (press No. 3 to get through); and State Treasurer Tobias Read, 503-378-4329.

GWENDOLYN
ENDICOTT
Nehalem

Racist effigy

I’m disappointed the town of Warrenton continues to glorify racist effigies, rather than taking pride in their school district for standing on the side of social justice by ridding their schools of the Native American mascot. Below is an excerpt of a statement I read before the Warrenton-Hammond School District in 2016, as they considered their final decision to disband with Native American imagery to represent their mascot:

When humans are used as a mascot, their personhood and culture is trivialized and tokenized; in essence, their power is diminished. Native American lack of control over the images used to represent Indian mascots is a perfect

example of how dominant culture oppresses native “power.”

Many times, in this community, I’ve heard individuals claim the warrior mascot is meant to honor Native Americans. I ask you to consider how we ever honored the native population of this community — the Clatsop, Nehalem and Chinook tribes — by depicting them with a Plains chief head on uniforms and T-shirts, the cartoon Indian images or the disgraceful purple statue?

I’m fairly certain the tiny Indians that make up the larger purple sculpture do not accurately represent any particular tribe. Now, the spear with a feather running through the W... can anyone tell me what native heritage that is associated with?

The warrior mascot does not honor Native Americans, it only generates more psychological harm for a population who has already experienced significant collective suffering. In the sports arena, mascots will always serve as the enemy punching bag of the opposing team. “Whip the Warriors, Beat the Braves, Kill the Indians!”

I’m confident you don’t want Native American children to hear this racist speech, but are these phrases we want any children to hear? I see no difference between these phrases and “Kill the Jews” or “Kill the n-word.”

MORIA GOLUB
Astoria

Regressive plan

I started my morning discovering Packy is gone; my Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) pension might be “retired”; the Ducks lost to the Bruins; my Moda Health insurance plan was hosed by the federal government to the tune of at least \$214 million; Rosie O’Donnell will play Steve Bannon on Saturday Night Live; and, under Oregon HB 2877, which “requires owners of vehicles 20 years old or older to pay \$1,000 every five years,” I will pay the state of Oregon a tidy sum for owning several vehicles over 20 years old.

And then I drove to work. Considering I took my 1989 GMC pickup with 67,500 miles on it, I was wondering how much it would have been worth under Barack Obama’s “Cash for Clunkers” program. Now it seems Oregon legislators favor their own version of “Cash for Clunkers,” in which the state cashes in on clunkers myself and many other Oregonians choose to drive. In many cases, people of meager means are forced to drive clunkers, so it is quite apparent some Oregon legislators didn’t consider the regressive aspects of this proposition.

I wonder if any of these state officials will stay up late to see Rosie on SNL, have a 1956 Chevy in the garage or wake up one day and regret not having piped up about the enslavement of an innocent elephant for the past 54 years.

MATT JANES
Astoria

Question on violence

Are we hard-wired to commit violence? Playwright Robert Ardrey and anthropologist Napoleon Chagnon argue that as Cain’s children, we have a natural predisposition for war that becomes highly-destructive and a self-fulfilling prophecy, making war more likely.

In certain circumstances, they assert, we have a predilection for violence, especially when there is high resource competition (territory, food, water, mates or social status). But others argue that there is no evidence whatever that human beings who are nonviolent eventually feel a need to commit mayhem.

Indeed, there’s abundant evidence that people are quite capable of renouncing violence. I agree, recalling political activist Susan Sontag’s cogent observation: “Nobody can think and hit someone at the same time.”

Let’s not forget that we humans also promote constructive social activities including altruism, empathy and volunteerism. Essayist George Saunders framed it well when he eloquently tapped into a desire in all of us to lead kinder, more fulfilling lives. (See his Syracuse University commencement address. Congratulations, by the way.)

Albert Einstein advocated nonviolence when he said “I believe that Gandhi’s views were the most enlightened of all the political men of our time. We should strive to do things in his spirit: not to use violence in fighting for our cause, but by nonparticipation in anything you

believe is evil.”

Psychologist Steven Pinker believes that we humans may slowly be on track toward building a more peaceable future. But you probably couldn’t tell that to the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, Native Americans in North Dakota, black Americans in metropolitan America, Latinos threatened with deportation or Muslims seeking refuge from violence.

There’s a Cherokee story that speaks well to this matter. A young girl was troubled by a recurring dream in which two wolves fought viciously with each other. When she recounted the dream to her grandfather, a village elder renowned for his wisdom, he explained that there are two wolves inside everyone, one peaceful and one warlike. At this, the girl was even more upset, and asked which one wins. Her grandfather’s response: “The one you feed.”

DR. ROBERT BRAKE
Ocean Park, Washington

Population control

The Trump administration’s plan to build a 20-foot high wall along the southern U.S. border with Mexico is effectively a plan to treat the symptoms of a problem, rather than the problem. It also may become \$15 bil-

lion thrown down the political-promise rat hole.

In a recent article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, a border guard stated that a 20-foot wall is expensive, but a 24-foot ladder at Home Depot is cheap. That guard also stated that what he wanted to see was solar powered motion sensors on high steel poles, with GPS tracking and sensor triggered flood lights. This option also allows wildlife to cross the border.

The actual problem in Mexico occurred years ago, with a birth rate of six children per female that grew to a peak fertility rate of 7.2 children in the early 1960s, declining at about one child per decade to 2.3 children per female today, thanks to family planning and birth control technology.

During the period 1950 to 1990 the birth rate far exceeded the job creation rate, which meant there were far more people than jobs, thus suppressing wages, ensuring poverty and creating a huge pool of unemployed who moved north to a country with a lower birth rate, abundant resources and jobs.

So while there will be a relative trickle of immigrants moving across the border in the future, including those from Guatemala, where the birth rate is 3.0, most of the incentive to migrate has already been ameliorated.

The ironic issue is that Trump has made the situation worse by invoking the gag rule and proposing to defund Planned Parenthood to appease the voters who think instinctively, rather than objectively. Birth rates will now go up.

It is in the best interest of the U.S. that birth control technology be available around the globe to make sure that every region’s population is in balance with its resources and its capability to provide jobs. That balance reduces poverty, thereby reducing political and economic unrest and the need to emigrate.

DAVID FITCH
Astoria



Dementia Conversations & Effective Communication Strategies

Wednesday, March 8

1:30 to 4 p.m.

Astoria Senior Center

(1111 Exchange St., Astoria, OR 97103)

The Alzheimer’s Association Oregon Chapter is pleased to present these back-to-back community classes in Astoria: “Dementia Conversations” and “Effective Communication Strategies.”

In the first class, you will learn some tips for breaking the ice and setting the stage for meaningful and productive conversations about dementia. In the second class, you’ll explore how communication takes place when someone has Alzheimer’s, learn to decode the verbal and behavioral messages delivered by someone with dementia, and identify strategies to help you connect and communicate at each stage of the disease.

This class is free, but registration is required.

To register, call 800-272-3900.

Offered in collaboration with:



alzheimer’s association®