

## Book for city planners

I've been reading a new book, "How to Kill a City" by Peter Moskowitz. An excellent read, and it should be required reading by all city planners.

One item I came away with is the issues with Airbnbs. These systems pull rental units from the market needed by local workers, as Airbnbs only cater to the tourist trade. Plus, taxing issues arise due to lax control of these.

DICK DARBY  
Astoria

## Thanks to volunteers

The Cannon Beach Library Board would like to thank everyone who helped make our Fourth of July Book Sale a success. We are grateful to everyone who donated books for the sale, and we appreciate the hard work of the 49 volunteers who transported boxes of books from storage, sorted and organized books and served as cashiers and baggers during the sale.

The Fourth of July sale is an important fundraiser for the library; it helps us cover the cost of book purchases and operating expenses. We literally couldn't provide library services without the hard work and contributions of our volunteers, patrons and supporters. We are immensely grateful.

PHYLLIS BERNT  
CARLA O'REILLY  
Co-presidents, Cannon Beach  
Library Board

## Nah. We're the U.S. of A.

To the German people's credit, they didn't elect Hitler to the highest office in their land, not technically. Arguably, it was Hitler's historic promises to, and popularity with, the German working class that compelled the then chancellor of Germany to appoint Hitler "President," according to a trusted source at Seaside's library.

Still, how could the German people both submit to an insane man's regime, and turn a blind eye to the "could-never-happens" that were happening in concert around them? As a question, it has mystified me for most of my years. Now, regrettably, I get it.

Momentously, for the first time in this country's history, we Americans are seeing for ourselves how easily democracy is dismantled by an authoritarian on the make — simply by one denial of access to power, or one retraction of an unalienable right at a time. And, in real time, we're seeing for ourselves how a mad man comes to power.

After what Germany's mad man did to both his own country and much of Europe, one might expect us to steer clear of crazy in government. Nah. We're the U.S. of A. We elect crazy. For a mad man especially, we not only roll out the red carpet; we salute. Now, strategically, as an intended result, a mad man is rendering Americans impotent in fighting off a highly toxic, highly contagious new normal.

Symptomatically, like our caught-off-guard counterparts in



1930s Germany, who unwittingly yielded to Hitler's new normal, we simply can't believe that what we're seeing is really what we're seeing — and that what we're really seeing is really upon us.

Thus, according to the new normal, it's fake news that can't be true. Moreover, says the new normal, further decay of our democracy, brought on by its gremlin-like betrayal, "never-could-happen" is here. The proof will be in the pudding, of course.

If not, in any event, "Order now and get a second one free for just \$19.99. But wait. There's more. Just pay separate shipping and handling."

ANNA RYAN  
Seaside

## Unfair taxation

I see from a July 18 story in The Daily Astorian, "Hotel tax hike will help finance Astoria parks," that the Astoria City Council voted through a 2 percent increase in the local room tax on July 17. The increase was stated in the article to be for programs and operations of the Aquatic Center and athletic programs.

These are wonderful programs, but they have little to nothing to do with our tourism guests who visit the area. The hotels, motels and bed and breakfasts have been paying 9 percent tax on all overnight room revenue, while short-term rentals, such as Airbnb and Vacasa, have paid zero. The city council should have gone after those entities cheating by not paying, before raising taxes on those who have been paying taxes.

Currently, hotels and motels and bed and breakfasts annually contribute to the general fund over \$1.5 million. Why is it that the only entities contributing to this additional tax are the hotels and motels and bed and breakfasts, when so many businesses gain benefits from the tourism industry (retail, restaurants, brew pubs, etc.). Every room

sold here generates three times that amount in local revenue. It is also very interesting that as far as I know, no one ever contacted the hotels and motels and bed and breakfasts about last night's meeting, or sought input from those bearing the tax. That is taxation without representation.

DON WEST  
Astoria

## Heavenly cargo

The other day I was at one of my favorite viewing spots on the Columbia River. It's the one near the Hammond moorage. As I watched a huge cargo container pass by, it took me back to memories many years ago. At the time, the union had a special contract that permitted the ship's deck crew to load and unload the cargo in No. 3 hold of the ship. I can clearly remember loading one two-by-four at a time with my lumber hook. Oh, how times have changed.

But you know what hasn't changed? In the heavenly realm, the Master Stevedore still receives one prayer at a time in his heavenly barge — destined for all ports of call — for immediate delivery. So I don't miss the boat.

Get your cargo aboard. The only boarding pass necessary is to really believe that God does answer prayers. So Lord, help us to believe, and heal any unbelief we may have, and anchors aweigh.

JIM BERNARD  
Warrenton

## Transfer cemetery

Anyone who has loved ones in Ocean View Cemetery can see it is not maintained. The city of Astoria — who was paid for perpetual care of the grave sites by the families, and is supposed to maintain this property in Warrenton — admits it is challenging to maintain. They've added the maintenance burden to their Parks Department crew, who are already overex-

tended. Now they want to add more hotel taxes to pay for the cemetery upkeep.

The city of Warrenton leaders decry the state of the cemetery. Astoria leaders point out it is basically a countywide site. This is true.

The solution is obvious: The city of Astoria should transfer the deed of the cemetery site and the cemetery's irreducible fund to the county. In my dealings with Clatsop County, they have proven fiscally responsible and efficient. I also haven't seen elected county commissioners taking trips to Wall-dorf, Germany, en masse, courtesy of taxpayers.

MARY ANN BRANDON  
Warrenton

## Support warming center

As a concerned member of the human community, I'm writing in support of the Astoria Warming Center and its renewal of the conditional use permit granted by the city. The current occupancy at the refurbished First United Methodist Church basement for the upcoming winter season is being challenged, both by the city and by some of its neighbors.

I have volunteered at this center for the past three years, since it first opened at the original Senior Center location. That the weather pattern has gotten worse each year is obvious; the need for a warming center here in Astoria has become more apparent with every passing year.

Yes, there are problems that have impacted the neighborhood, and they need to be addressed and solved by the Warming Center. These problems can, and will be remedied by the clients of the center. The Astoria Warming Center Board of Directors will make this happen, and the surrounding neighborhood will again see the center as a responsive, good neighbor, serving a very real need in our community.

As a responsible community,

let's not throw out the proverbial "baby with the bathwater." Caring communities like Astoria need to find a way to help our most vulnerable members during our rough winter months. The current location of the Warming Center at the Methodist Church is the best overall answer to this crisis, and it should remain at this high functioning church basement.

MARY EKORN JACKSON  
Astoria

## Not in my back yard

"Not in my back yard": This well-known objection is voiced by those who oppose low-cost housing anywhere near their neighborhood. The same is shouted out by those who simply look away, close their eyes, and pretend that, at least in their area, there are no street people.

In Astoria there are women, men and children who have no roof over their head. Some of them are veterans; others have mental or physical disabilities; still others are unable to find affordable housing on their small amount of take-home pay.

Most of us have no experience living on the street, much less finding a safe place to sleep at night. In order to somewhat alleviate the situation, during the long cold, wet winter seasons in Astoria, a warming center was established three years ago. For the last two years, thanks to the community's generosity, it has been located in the Methodist Church.

In the beginning, the center was open during the winter months only, when the temperature dropped below 38 degrees. Thanks to the many donors and the large number of volunteers in the past winter season, the center was open every night.

Shower and laundry facilities are available. The guests of the center are treated to a light supper (and occasionally a full dinner) and breakfast. They must register each evening when they enter the center, and are required to surrender their weapons, if any. Drinking, smoking and unlawful drug use is not allowed.

Notwithstanding that the records of the monitors over the winter months reflect almost no disruption or trouble of any kind, the board of directors for the center are being required to apply for a conditional use permit if they wish to continue this operation.

A public hearing will held before the Planning Commission to consider this application at 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in the council chambers of the City Hall. Those opposing the application will be all lawyered up in order to shut down the Warming Center. Hopefully, enough of the good people of Astoria will appear to convince the commissioners to approve the application.

May those who will decide this matter recall the words of the Nobel Prize recipient, Bob Dylan: "How does it feel? To be without a home. Like a complete unknown. Like a rolling stone."

GEORGE McCARTIN  
Astoria

# What to do for little 11-month-old Charlie Gard

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER  
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — One cannot imagine a more wrenching moral dilemma than the case of little Charlie Gard. He is a beautiful 11-month-old boy with an incurable genetic disease.

It depletes his cells' energy-producing structures (the mitochondria), thereby progressively ravaging his organs. He cannot hear, he cannot see, he can barely open his eyes. He cannot swallow, he cannot move, he cannot breathe on his own. He suffers from severe epilepsy and his brain is seriously damaged. Doctors aren't even sure whether he can feel pain.

For months he's been at the Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. His doctors have recommended removing him from life support.

His parents are deeply opposed. They have repeatedly petitioned the courts to allow them to take Charlie for experimental treatment in the United States.

The courts have denied the parents' petition. They concluded that the proposed treatment has no chance of saving the child and would do nothing but inflict upon



AP Photo/Matt Dunham

An exterior view shows the main entrance to Great Ormond Street Hospital in London. American Dr. Michio Hirano of Columbia University, who specializes in treating rare genetic conditions, met this week with other specialists at the hospital treating Charlie Gard, assessing the critically ill 11-month-old for the first time. The parents have fought in court for permission to take the child to the United States for treatment.

him further suffering. They did, however, allow the American specialist to come to London to examine Charlie. He is giving his findings to the court. A final ruling is expected on Tuesday.

The Telegraph of London reports that Charlie's doctors remain unconvinced by the American researcher. Indeed, the weight of the evidence appears to support the doctors and the courts. Charlie's genetic variant is different and far more devastating than the

ones in which nucleoside bypass therapy has shown some improvement. There aren't even animal models for treating Charlie's condition. It's extremely unlikely that treatment can even reach Charlie's brain cells, let alone reverse the existing damage.

What to do? There is only one real question. What's best for Charlie? But because he can't speak for himself, we resort to a second question: Who is to speak for him?

The most heartrending situation

occurs when these two questions yield opposing answers. Charlie's is such a case.

Let me explain.

In my view, two truths must guide any decision: (1) The parents must be sovereign, but (2) the parents are sometimes wrong.

I believe that in this case the parents are wrong, and the doctors and judges are right. Charlie's suffering is literally unimaginable and we are simply prolonging it. This is a life of no light, no sound, no motion, only moments of physical suffering (seizures? intubation?) to punctuate the darkness. His doctors understandably believe that allowing a natural death is the most merciful thing they can do for Charlie.

As for miracle cures, I share the court's skepticism. They always arise in such cases, and invariably prove to be cruel deceptions.

And yet. Despite all these considerations, I would nevertheless let the parents take their boy where they wish.

The sovereignty of loved ones must be the overriding principle that guides all such decisions. We have no other way. The irreducible truth is that these conundrums have no definitive answer. We thus necessarily fall back on family, or to put it more sentimentally, on love.

What is best for the child? The best guide is a loving parent. A parent's motive is the most pure.

This rule is not invariable, of course. Which is why the state

seizes control when parents are demonstrably injurious, even if unintentionally so, as in the case of those who, for some religious imperative, would deny their child treatment for a curable disease.

But there's a reason why, despite these exceptions, all societies grant parents sovereignty over their children until they reach maturity. Parents are simply more likely than anyone else to act in the best interest of the child.

Not always, of course. Loved ones don't always act for the purest of motives. Heirs, for example, may not be the best guide as to when to pull the plug on an elderly relative with a modest fortune.

But then again, states can have ulterior motives, too. In countries where taxpayers bear the burden of expensive treatments, the state has an inherent incentive (of which Britain's National Health Service has produced notorious cases) to deny treatment for reasons of economy rather than mercy.

Nonetheless, as a general rule, we trust in the impartiality of the courts — and the loving imperative of the parent.

And if they clash? What then? If it were me, I would detach the tubes and cradle the child until death. But it's not me. It's not the NHS. And it's not the European Court of Human Rights.

It's a father and a mother and their desperate love for a child. They must prevail. Let them go.