

Housing opportunity

Astoria Co-op’s new store design is missing an opportunity. We read that Astoria needs more affordable housing for our workforce. There are those in the city who favor selling our parks to provide places for more housing stock. The new Astoria Co-op could place a few apartment units above their proposed 10,000-square-foot store. At their June 8 meeting, the general manager agreed it wasn’t yet designed, and the units would help their employees.

The store uses most of a parcel that is zoned for multifamily units. The co-op’s blog tries to convince us that “height limitations” are a main reason for not adding affordable units. If they ask our city’s planning department, they would learn their site would permit even more than a two story building.

Everything I’ve heard about the owner/architect of the proposed co-op building is very positive. I am surprised he convinced our co-op board to agree to a single story building simply to save money. I have always appreciated the slogan of our founding “Mamas & Papas” that reads “food for people, not for profit.” I will find it very sad if our city pushes to sell one of our parks to use the land for affordable housing, because our co-op store was built on one of our city’s few parcels zoned multifamily.

At our Sept. 17 annual meeting, I hope other owners let our board know we should use our new building to help provide workers and retired people in our city affordable housing. As a co-op member/owner, I am in favor of the new store, but believe we should provide more for our community than what will be shown at our annual meeting — even if we must partner with groups like the Oregon Housing Alliance or Oregon Affordable Housing Management Association.

Since the project has not been submitted to the city perhaps “housing for people, not for profit” should be a new slogan.

GEORGE (MICK) HAGUE
Astoria

No beach camping

I have lived here on our beautiful North Coast for over 15 years now. I feel it is a privilege to live in such a gorgeous environment. I especially enjoy our beaches on a daily basis.

On Monday, the Labor Day holiday, early in the morning as I was entering Del Rey Beach in Gearhart, I was disappointed to see lots and lots of campers sleeping in their tents and camps all up and down the beach. This is not allowed here, and there are signs indicating “No camping, no tents.” Where are these people going to the bathroom? Why are they leaving their trash behind? Is the safety of the beach being compromised?

I am disturbed that Clatsop County is not enforcing such an important law, not patrolling and informing campers that this is not allowed here. Our beaches are valuable and precious, and they deserve all the protection they can get.

KATHY HUMMEL
Seaside

Noise nuisance

I want to reiterate what Val Lefel wrote regarding traffic on 15th Street and Lexington Avenue (“Speed zone,” The Daily Astorian, Aug. 25). The speed, as well as the noise (trucks, motorcycles) is dangerous and bothersome. Mayor Arline LaMear should pay attention to her constituents and remedy the situation.

NANCY HUTCHINS
Astoria

Supporting ACLU

I support the American Civil Liberties Union “They Report to you” campaign. I am sorry our district attorney is opposed to the accountability it represents (“ACLU puts heat on elected prosecutors,” The Daily Astorian, Aug. 29). For a long time Josh Marquis has been on the wrong side of the drug enforcement issue. He opposed legalization of marijuana, and has opposed modernization of drug laws, including quantity possession.

I had the pleasure to serve on the grand jury and was very dismayed to be reviewing mostly drug possession cases. The quantities were minuscule and yet people were charged with felonies. These cases seem to be the majority, thus taking up valuable resources that could be better spent on other criminal cases.

Marquis will say that most of these cases are resolved in drug court, but when defendants are mandated to attend drug rehab, there are no viable residential programs in Clatsop County to address the very real need. These cases are



best charged as misdemeanors, and mandated to an in-county residential rehab program that would truly help those with drug addiction problems.

Drug addiction is a medical problem not a criminal one. Many other states, including California, don’t go after the user, but rather the distributor or dealer. That is worth enforcement and resources. I support Oregon legislation to make possession of small drug quantiles misdemeanors and not felonies, thus freeing our district attorney to go after the criminals, not users.

I also think the ACLU of Oregon is right to hold our elected officials accountable to the people they serve.

TONI LEANCE
Astoria

DA defends status quo

As the Clatsop County district Attorney, Josh Marquis should welcome accountability. Therefore, it is puzzling as to why he would be so opposed to the American Civil Liberties Union of Oregon “They Report to You” campaign (“ACLU puts heat on elected prosecutors,” The Daily Astorian, Aug. 29). It is true that Marquis has never been held accountable in the past. He was appointed to office in the 1990s, and never faced an opponent since that time.

He has always defended the status quo and opposed any effort to improve the criminal justice system. There have been few substantive improvements in the criminal justice system since his tenure began almost 30 years ago. Is that why he is so nervous about the new campaign?

LISA DWORKIN KERR
Cannon Beach

And? So?

Some of us come wired better than others. As a case in point, while the rest of us do OK, homeless people seem to lack basic living skills. And, as if programmed to self-destruct, homeless people appear purposefully to take the wrong road at every juncture in their lives. This leads many onlookers to both divert their eyes, and reserve their acts of kindness for those who don’t set themselves up to fail.

The American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (ASPCA) is more deserving of our sympathies, according to some. The homeless are unworthy, unfixable, and flat-out unlovable, the hardcore say. And? So? Among God’s children, it is the least lovable who need love most. What’s more, it’s a common but monumental misconception that all homeless people deserve their plight.

Blessedly, the help given the homeless by Clatsop County is bountiful in its mercy. And specific to the shelter residents at Helping Hands Re-entry’s Seaside Emergency Relief Center (<http://bit.ly/2vJbHc>), not even Santa Claus forgets the homeless in their misery during the holidays. This is because a tiny band of self-appointed volunteers have seen to it. With bells, Santa Claus caps, seasonal ditties and jokes, they show up every Christmas to both hand out gifts, and give the shelter residents hope.

The first Christmas had taken shape to offset dread of the holidays spent alone. The takeaway was so curative that a partner in “doing good” has helped faithfully since then. Christmas 2017, in honor of Candi Ross, will mark the fifth

consecutive year that “loving the unlovable” overcomes, while its purveyors take away an abundance of indescribably buoyant joy.

Please join us in our annual servitude to the perceived least of the least. As one of the “Christmas for homeless shelter” attachments, I can attest that you will forget your worst circumstances, feel on top of the world, and enjoy Christmas like you didn’t think you could. Planning is in progress now. Thank you; and God bless you in advance.

ANNA RYAN
Seaside

Too many intoxicants

In trying to assess the many changes that are happening in Astoria now, one in particular seems to me to have drawn insufficient public discussion: the ever-increasing number of commercial outlets for intoxicants. Our town of 10,000 people now has six marijuana stores, four breweries, a distillery, and a place specializing in hard cider, not to mention bars, a wine store, the state’s liquor store, and groceries selling beer and wine. Not surprisingly, Willamette Week recently identified Astoria as the best place in Oregon to get drunk.

Most of us, I think, do not object to intoxicants in moderation. They offer a partial, if temporary, release from some of life’s difficulties, but to make their availability omnipresent, as we have done in Astoria, creates serious problems. Among them is what appears to be an increase in impaired driving. The official records may not reflect this, since our overworked police department does not have the resources adequately to enforce traffic laws.

It is, as many have observed, a rare day now when one does not see speeding or the running of stop signs, and it is reasonable to assume that some of this increase is due to impaired driving, and traceable to Astoria’s focus on the profits from intoxicants.

Another problem with having so many outlets for alcohol and marijuana is that it makes recovery from addiction more difficult. It is harder to break a craving if you are everywhere confronted by what you want to avoid.

Most important, too much marketing of alcohol and marijuana makes a strong impression on children. To permit, for example, a large marijuana store to locate in the middle of one of Astoria’s primary business blocks is to imply to children that intoxicants are safe, important for a good life, and greatly to be anticipated. The lesson is too simple.

Were I a young parent, I would think carefully before choosing Astoria as a place to raise a family.

ROBERT ADAMS
Astoria

Draconian budget cuts

The Trump administration has promised to slash funding for important programs like the arts, humanities, public media and medical research. The total amount, just \$741 million for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is a very small percentage of the proposed \$4.1 trillion budget for 2017-18.

Yet, should Trump prevail, funding for CPB would soon be cut to zero, and the NEA and NEH would be eliminated entirely, the first time any president has proposed such a measure. That’s shameful, espe-

cially in light of proposed spending increases for defense and homeland security at the expense of programs that inform and enrich us.

CPB, for example, provides Americans with universal access to educational and informational programming, one of America’s best investments, costing approximately just \$1.35 per citizen per year. Such funding goes to local radio stations like Coast Community Radio (KMUN, 91.9 FM). We coast dwellers depend on such stations for local news and entertainment. Why, then, threaten such federal-supported agencies that enrich us and provide much-needed services at low cost?

I strongly oppose congressional proposals to reduce investments in public broadcasting, the arts and humanities and health care. Moreover, it doesn’t make sense to reduce spending on Medicaid, food stamps and assistance programs for the disabled, while increasing already-inflated military budgets and adding incredibly expensive ships and planes to our fleets. For example, at \$13 billion, the USS Ford is the most expensive ship in history. The F-35 \$400 billion stealth fighter plane program is another example of reckless, unnecessary spending.

To find out just how valuable your tax dollar investments can be, check out the three-part Discovery Channel series, “First in Human.” It’s about saving lives through medical research, the right thing to do. Trump has proposed a \$5.8 billion cut for National Institutes of Health (NIH) in 2018, though Congress, in one of those rare, makes-good-sense bills, approved a \$2 billion increase for 2017.

Draconian cuts in much-needed programs like NIH, CPB, NEA and NEH just don’t make sense.

DR. ROBERT BRAKE
Ocean Park, Washington

Cavalier attitudes

I’ve appeared before the Planning Commission and now the Astoria City Council and watched them openly flout their own development code (“Astoria council approves Shooting Stars child center,” The Daily Astorian, Sept. 6). Take note, all you developers.

It even got humorous Tuesday night, when it was implied that talking to one’s baby in the womb, or singing to the baby while changing its diapers, makes one an educational institution.

What’s more disturbing to me is, after watching both bodies go through hand-wringing machinations over the safety of our homeless population, they turn around and show a cavalier disdain for the most vulnerable, our children, as evidenced in the councilors’ commentary.

CHRIS CONNAWAY
Astoria

Arming the world

Advocates of Second Amendment rights to keep and bear arms often support their position by arguing that if more people were armed at all times and in all places, we the citizens would be much safer than if guns were restricted or confiscated. The hypothesis is based on the belief that responsible armed citizens using overwhelming firepower would quickly neutralize any errant maniac attempting to carry out an act of terrorism using gun violence.

Should the U.S. extend the Second Amendment argument to North

Korea and their very successful program to develop intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM) with nuclear warheads? After all, they just want to join the small club of nuclear armed-nations now numbering less than 10 out of 200. North Korea simply recognizes the grave danger the world is in when nations don’t arm themselves.

Won’t we all be safer now that at least one more country is properly armed? Should we be encouraging them, and helping the other 190 nations get armed? Isn’t North Korea just trying to help? Similar to when heavily armed “peace keepers” show up at rallies these days with their AKs to “protect” the public from violence. Where is your respect for the Second Amendment principle if you wish to deny North Korea its inalienable right to bear arms?

CHRISTOPHER FARRAR
Astoria

Resist the Liar in Chief

Each day we wake up in our warm comfies, drink our warm java and think about the day ahead. Each day we are confronted by another lie, and the grandiose dreams of Mr. Donald Trump; and each day we ask ourselves, “When will this nightmare end?”

It’s not a political issue any longer, it has now become a moral issue. Are we going to let Trump take us all down into the swamp with him and his minority of supporters, or stand up for what is right and just? The true American Dream belongs to all of us, not just a few.

Trump has proven in the past, and now the present, that he is a bigot, misogynist and a racist. Is this the person we want to represent us, a walking narcissist who thinks of himself, family and cronies first? We thought he would change, so we gave him a chance.

Is this the new norm? Stirring the pot of hatred — it is now acceptable to some to follow this deplorable thinking and practice hate and bigotry. It may have always been with us, but Trump has made it acceptable to promote this ugliness in the open.

I have witnessed the pain of my Muslim friend who gets hit on the head with a water bottle flung at him on mass transit in Portland, and told to go back home. Pure evil that Trump has made acceptable through his uneducated and repulsive words. The America I want, and I believe the majority wants, is one that practices not tolerance, but acceptance of persons regardless of ethnicity, political ideology, culture, religion, social status or the person we choose to love.

It is unbelievable to me, as a believer in Christ, that anyone would see the qualities of Jesus in Trump. But these are the people who voted for him in droves. Really? What would Jesus do? It is time to stop pretending. This is not a dream, as Trump would say, it’s a stark cold lurid dream. We can stand by and look like fools to the rest of our world, or make a call for change.

I urge my fellow Americans to oppose this agenda, write your letters, post your signs, walk the walk, speak up and don’t be shamed by the minority. If we do nothing, we are complicit. Our children deserve so much better than this. Resist the Liar in Chief. History is watching; what will you tell your grandchildren?

PAUL FLUES II
Astoria

Debarking dogs is cruel

It is disturbing that, in this day and age, a court would order someone to mutilate their dogs, as the Oregon Court of Appeals has done by ruling that five dogs must have their vocal cords cut out because they are “annoying” their neighbors (“Oregon court rules couple must surgically ‘debark’ dogs,” The Daily Astorian, Aug. 31).

Debarking dogs for doing what’s natural is unjustifiably cruel. Debarking is not a minor operation. Like declawing, it is an invasive surgery that puts dogs at risk of hemorrhaging, infection, necrosis, pneumonia and respiratory distress. Vocal cord tissue can regrow within a few weeks, which means the dogs may regain the ability to bark. Will they be forced to go under the knife again?

Dogs who are socialized and live inside with their families are safest and happiest and less likely to keep the neighbors up all night with their barking. A barking dog is usually a neglected dog — be sure to alert authorities whenever you suspect a dog is being denied proper food, shelter, vet care or other basic necessities.

CRAIG SHAPIRO
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