

OPINION

editor@dailyastorian.com



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

DEBRA BLOOM
Business Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW



Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

LEFT: The Flavel building in downtown Astoria is in the process of being restored. RIGHT: Work continues on the Flavel building in downtown Astoria.

Downtown draws new generation of entrepreneurs

Astorians are naturally anxious about vacancies in downtown retail spaces. In a letter on this page, one writer recently suggested that he's never seen so many vacancies.

While there are a number of vacant storefronts, it is worth looking back a few decades to recognize how much healthier Astoria's downtown has become.

Thirty years ago the town's persona was much bleaker. The Astoria Plywood Mill (on the site of today's Mill Pond) was in its death throes. The Liberty Theatre was a dead zone, with an owner not interested in reversing its atrophy.

There was no Astoria Riverwalk. In the middle of town, across the street from Columbia Memorial Hospital, was the county fairgrounds — an outmoded facility that needed to be in a different, more spacious setting.

Among planning professionals there is strong consensus that the best thing a town can do to attract businesses is to build and improve infrastructure. In other words, the quality of a town's schools matter as much or more as business recruitment. When the city of Astoria took the first steps in 1989 to create a pedestrian walk along the water-

front, few realized the enormous asset it would become — stretching from the Port of Astoria to Uppertown. Ditto for the Trolley.

In a similar vein, state Sen. Betsy Johnson has said that restoration of the Liberty Theatre was the spark plug that changed downtown's prospects. And subsequently the Hotel Elliot, a notorious fleabag, was resurrected. A slew of restorations followed, with the latest being the two sides of the 900 block of Commercial Street once owned by the Flavel family.

All of this has made Astoria magnetic

to visitors. And some of those visitors have decided to move here. The town's demographic has changed noticeably.

Downtown's vacancies will be filled by the new generation of entrepreneurs, as has always been the case. The empty J.C. Penney location already has generated new activity — a winery and a restaurant.

There is a role that all of us can play in this dynamic. If we value Astoria's downtown and want to keep it vital, patronize the businesses that are there. And when a new storefront opens, pay it a visit.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Remembering Anne

At the end of 10th Street, near where I've stood, often homeless, to drink in the river, to search my own watery depths, there's a sign on the dock's railing. It warns, with a simple stick figure, the hazard the railroad tracks pose to bikers. The sign's been cleaned up now, but someone had written the name "Anne" on it, and drawn an arrow pointing to the crashing figure.

Anne, with her full cheeks, and a red weathered face, told me the story herself. She had been drunk (naturally) and biking on a frigid night. She crashed. She was found unconscious in the morning, with her blood and head partially frozen to our river walk.

Anne was easy to listen to, and I did, when I valued a moment of human fellowship before all the stupidities that keep us rushing about. She used to be a UPS driver. For years, in her life, she packed around her dad's moose head, which had some of the largest horns in the country. She hated panhandlers, but who doesn't need to feel better than someone?

When she came into money, she quickly drank herself to death. With the removal of the writing on that sign, all hint of her being has vanished from our landscape.

But she was just an alcoholic street character, did her life really matter?

MICHAELA. "SASHA" MILLER
Astoria

Can commissioners offer hope to whole county?

It is very important that Clatsop County commissioners understand and are knowledgeable about our timber resources, and what is possible. All the issues of affordable housing, decent-paying jobs, restoration of our communities that are suffering from high unemployment and despair, and the preservation of our environment are all pieces of the puzzle, and interrelated.

Can Clatsop County offer hope to the whole county from Jewell to the coast? Let's be sure the commissioners understand the full picture for our future, and ask them to share what they believe.

ANN FONTAINE
Cannon Beach

A few things for Congress to consider

There are a few things I would like my representatives in Congress to consider.

- Secure the borders between our neighbors.
- Stop chain migration.
- E-Verify all immigrants or green card holders.
- Stop the immigration lottery.
- Give the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) people some kind of security to work, and if they want, a chance to become citizens after passing a test and learn-

ing and speaking English.

- Make all states, counties and cities non-sanctuary places.
- Stop paying able-bodied people Medicaid or welfare.
- Give Social Security and Medicare to only people who have earned it. Don't pay Social Security to non-citizens.
- Make a law that the government, states, counties and cities, or any other government only pay Social Security tax. All other retirement is to be paid out of the employee's wages, and taxes paid on same, like self-employed people do.
- Stop all Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) cost of living increases. Go back to the 1980s.

I would also like the state constitution changed to 36 senators, and one coming from each county. That way, the valley couldn't control all the money sent to Salem.

DALE E. ANDERSON
Nehalem

Missiles, drones, tanks, oh my

Donald Trump wants to have a military parade in Washington, D.C.? That would be a splendid reminder of where our money is spent — \$700 billion just this last year in direct spending. That's more than the next 10 countries (including Russia and China) combined. We could put those overseas images of parades of soldiers and hardware to shame

(think 10 times bigger). Let's see what we are paying for as we approach tax-due season. Missiles, drones, tanks, oh my.

What we're not getting, and could easily afford, is single-payer health care, help for the homeless, free education or even a decent infrastructure. With some adjusted priorities and leadership we could do all the aforementioned, and feed the world's poor (United Nations estimated at 60 billion) and have money left over to still militarily outspend the rest of the world. And, for our entertainment: drone-kill anyone who does not believe that "we're the greatest."

I have a feeling the military and most politicians don't want this parade, as it may expose the country for what it is: Less a democracy and more a military plutocracy.

Every year about military budget time, the bogeyman of Korea is trotted out. The budget passes and things calm down. Regular as an atomic clock.

JOE LaPOINT
Seaside

Cannon Beach branding proposal needs work

After reading the article "New Cannon Beach logo and tagline designed to be 'fresh' and 'contemporary'" (Cannon Beach Gazette, Jan. 9), describing the Chamber of Commerce's new branding proposal, I have

come to conclusion that the age and income selective theories behind the program are not reflective of Cannon Beach's residents, or the merchants who focus on serving tourists, regardless of age or income.

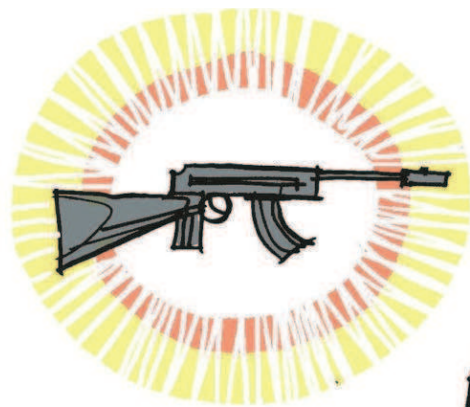
The philosophies and strategies, as defined by the chamber, must be examined and questioned by the City Council and residents who feel passionate about our exceptional Cannon Beach. The chamber's new branding will be directed to "attract a demographic of affluent millennials," as "we have to appeal to a younger market."

Cannon Beach is not a place for "affluent millennials." It is a place for every one of us who want to take a breath of the sea air, watch the surf, walk in a rain forest, find the right spot to take a photo of Terrible Tilly between the needle rocks, throw a ball for the dog, and find that there is still a place to be in the moment . . . a moment in place of amazing natural beauty.

There is no argument that the chamber and the city need to adopt a single and repeated brand of wording and artistic design for Cannon Beach activities. But please, make this marketing program about the place, and people who care take of, and give our town its flavor, not credit cards with a high limit and a certain age group.

Cannon Beach deserves better. Cannon Beach deserves authentic.

LOLLY CHAMPION
Cannon Beach



THE IDOL WORSHIPPER

FITZSIMMONS
THE ASTORIA DAILY ASTORIAN
CAGLE CARTOONS.COM