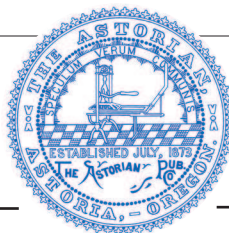


# OPINION

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# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## OUR VIEWS



Brenna Visser/The Daily Astorian  
Jonathan Jessop works on a windmill structure during the Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest last Saturday.

## Festivals define our region for the visitor

**W**e have entered the season of the festival, bringing a bundle of arts and culture to our region.

The Astoria Musical Festival opens today and runs through July 1, packing the town with musicians and concertgoers. It has become one of summer's delights, as its events occupy the historical Liberty Theatre, the Performing Arts Center and the acoustically resonant Grace Episcopal Church.

The Cannon Beach Sandcastle Contest last weekend will be followed by the Astoria Scandinavian Midsummer Festival and the Cannon Beach Comedy Festival this weekend.

The Water Music Festival on the Long Beach Peninsula appears in three installments, beginning in July and ending in December. And August features the Astoria Regatta and Washington State International Kite Festival.

Some of these events — such as the Hood to Coast Run that finishes on Seaside's beach just before Labor Day — test the carrying capacity of our communities. But many others are a comfortable boost for our shops, restaurants and museums.

For many visitors, these festivals define our region. Of course, that's not everything we are. But it's not a bad way to be described.

## J.C. Penney project part of Astoria's comeback

**A**bsentee landlords are the bane of small towns. When they lack pride in the city, it shows in their buildings. Sometimes these property owners are slumlords. But not always. They also can be large corporations whose strategies no longer include large buildings on main streets.

The latter describes the empty J.C. Penney building on Astoria's Commercial Street. In a move that only makes sense in the higher stratosphere of finance, the company abandoned the Astoria store, even though it was highly and consistently profitable over a long period.

The decision to close the store — announced early last year — was an earthquake.

News that Sean Fitzpatrick has purchased the J.C. Penney property is significant for at least two reasons. First of all, it takes the building away from an absentee landlord and puts it in local hands. Secondly, Fitzpatrick's collaboration with chef Chris Hoken of Baked Alaska promises to make the building a new draw on Commercial Street.

This pattern of redemption began some 18 years ago when Liberty

Restoration Inc., a local nonprofit, took ownership of the derelict Liberty Theatre. The building was owned by a Los Angeles man who was a lawyer and accountant. Recognizing the importance of taking the building's ownership local, the Astoria City Council made a \$1.3 million grant to assist the purchase and begin the theater's restoration.

When you see improvement in Astoria's built environment, it is often because an owner who lives here is investing in the town. That is what's happened with the derelict Flavel properties. And this upward momentum will be repeated with the Waldorf Hotel, if its would-be developer gains financing.

A small town's comeback begins when it gains new blood. That happened in

2010 when Sean Fitzpatrick and Anne Carpenter moved here. They began purchasing Astoria apartment properties in 2003. Fitzpatrick and Carpenter have contributed to many aspects of Astoria's culture while maintaining a significant amount of its housing stock.

Repurposing the J.C. Penney building will be a new and significant chapter in Astoria's rebirth.

‘Repurposing the J.C. Penney building will be a new and significant chapter in Astoria’s rebirth.’

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Trump's foreign policy strategy is different

I shake my head whenever media pundits ridicule President Trump for doing foreign relations wrong. Trump's strategy is just profoundly different. His latest North Korea initiative is a good example. President Trump acted like a 72-year-old father with Kim Jong Un as the 34-year-old errant son.

Remember the letter President Trump sent to Kim Jong Un when he canceled their proposed meeting two weeks before it was to have been held? The letter followed classic strategy of a father to a son, with the father having appreciation and optimism but strongly disapproving of unacceptable behavior by the son.

That different strategy of one head of state to another resulted in Trump's having a face-to-face meeting with North Korea. That's something Washington establishment's career politicians haven't been able to do since the end of the Korean war 70 years ago.

President Trump's foreign relations strategy is also different regarding foreign trade. For many years, Washington's career politicians have allowed other countries to take jobs away from American workers. High foreign tariffs make it impossible for American companies to manufacture many things for sale abroad. Yet Washington imposes few, if any, tariffs on goods made by foreigners and sold here. That situation is very unfair to American workers.

The Democratic Party's opposition, highlighted by Sen. Chuck Schumer and Rep. Nancy Pelosi, to correct unfair foreign trade imbalance is an astonishing development. Democrats have moved so far left that their party no longer advocates for working folks.

I never expected that to happen.

DON HASKELL  
Astoria

### Don't separate immigrant children from parents

Only an un-human, inhumane, sick person would separate children from their healthy, caring parents.

MONICA TAYLOR  
Astoria

### Why are we so afraid of everything?

Our government's practice of separating children from their parents at the border, then hiding those kids away, espe-

cially when no laws were broken, smacks of antebellum South and Nazi concentration camps. There is a small comfort knowing that American World War II Japanese internment camps kept families together.

How did our beloved U.S. come to this? Why are we so afraid of ... everything?

RD SMITH  
Gearhart

### Good luck to this year's high school graduates

I couldn't be more proud of all the 2018 graduates. To those who know where you are going next, and/or what you want to do with your lives, and to those who don't have a clue. I was a member of the second group when I graduated in 1969. I loved art and science, skiing and psychology. I didn't know what I wanted to be when I grew up.

I know that some of the graduates are in this pickle, too. Let the pickle be your guide. Take classes in subjects in which you know nothing. Think about going to community college for your basics — save money, and

stay close to home. Write to people you would like to meet, or whom you would like to be your mentors. Get a summer job in sectors that interest you. You will get first-hand experience that will help you land a job later, when you finish your degree.

If you are not going the academic route, think about a trade. The world will always need technicians in all sectors, and some of these degrees can be earned in two years. Travel the world. Keep in close touch with your family, wherever you find yourself. Good luck, and have fun, whatever you do.

REP. DEBORAH BOONE  
Cannon Beach

### How will we look at this in the future?

Why did we inter Japanese families here in the U.S. during World War II? How did good people stand by and let equally good families be subjected to such cruel treatment? Why was this permitted? These people were not a threat.

What were we thinking? Fear? I have

wondered about this, about a very shameful chapter in our history. I know, we were pre-occupied. And the past is the past. Nothing we can do to change what happened then.

In the last five weeks alone, over 1,000 families crossing the border from Mexico, many running from great dangers, have been torn apart, with the children whisked away to foster homes, or "somewhere else." Our Sen. Jeff Merkley went to one of these "somewhere else" places, a vacant Walmart with the windows all blacked out, (no play yard here) for a tour.

Did he, a U.S. senator on a fact-finding mission, get to see how many children were there? And under what conditions these children were being held? No. He was not only turned away without a tour, but they called the cops on him. You can see this on Facebook at bit.ly/2HhWDhy

So I ask, what is going on in that building? Where is the accountability? How can this be happening? How will we look back on this in the future, and say we stood by and did nothing?

CAROL LUCAS  
Gearhart

