



A pigeon takes flight near patrons of a food truck in downtown Astoria.

Photos by Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

PIGEONS OF ASTORIA

The birds thrive despite feeding ban

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The pigeons follow Michael Cook. He has what they want: packets of Chips Ahoy! cookies that he buys at Deals Only just for them. Cook, who is homeless and uses a wheelchair to get around, suffers from a variety of medical issues and can't have a pet. "It's hard enough to take care of myself," he said. But the pigeons can take care of themselves. They remember Cook and as he travels through downtown, they find him. If he is still and holds crumbs loosely in an open hand, they will hop onto his outstretched arm. There's a pigeon with fluffy feathers around her feet that at least one man in Astoria — the owner of Boomer's All-American Cuisine, a food cart on Duane Street — refers to as Fancy Legs. There's also the Black Knight and Hansel and Gretel. Dale Brechlin and his employees used to feed these and other pigeons until they were told not to. You may not like it — and it's technically against city law — but all around town, all the time, there are people from all walks of life, of all ages and political persuasions, out there feeding pigeons.



Pigeons search the sidewalk for scraps of food near City Hall.

The city rarely deals with pigeon-related calls. City Planner Nancy Ferber can't recall a single feeding complaint, but there have been a couple of dead pigeons on the sidewalk staff has had to scoop up. In the 1980s, it was a different story. In fact, the 1980s are the reason why innocently tossing bread crumbs to pigeons is now an illegal — if rarely policed — activity. A pigeon problem In 1981, Library Director Bruce Berney declared that Astoria had a pigeon problem and worried about the

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'I REMEMBER AN UNNAMED LEADER OF AN UNNAMED INSTITUTION CHASING A POOR OLD WOMAN WITH A WALKER DOWN THE WATERFRONT BECAUSE SHE WAS FEEDING PIGEONS.'

John Goodenberger | historian

Boaters unload on Port

Upset over closure at East Mooring Basin

By EDWARD STRATTON
The Daily Astorian

Several angry boat owners from the East Mooring Basin unloaded Tuesday on the Port of Astoria over the closure of a causeway to their vessels, excoriating the agency over its handling of the crumbling marina. Port commissioners apologized to tenants and promised to figure out how to reopen the causeway as soon as possible, as did Jim Knight, the Port's executive director, who defended his reasoning for closing pedestrian access. Vehicles have been restricted from the aging causeway for several years. The Port decided shortly before Thanksgiving to immediately close pedestrian access as well following a recommendation from state bridge inspectors concerned about severely rotten substructure. Several of the approximately 20 vessels at the east side marina have since moved to the Port's West Mooring Basin, while many of those remaining have had to use skiffs to reach their boats.

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Police say homeless cleanup a success

Camps were cleared in early November

By KATIE FRANKOWICZ
The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Police Department has called a sweep of homeless camps in the woods on the east end of town a success, but some have criticized how the city went about cleaning up the sites. City work crews and volunteers cleaned up seven camps in the woods in early November, roughly two months after police first hiked up and down steep dirt trails in the area and identified around a dozen sites. Police had delayed the planned sweep for a week after hearing from campers who claimed disabilities and said it would be difficult for them to move everything in time.

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Grocery Outlet approval comes with big price

Left-turn lane could be costly

By R.J. MARX
The Daily Astorian

SEASIDE — The developers of a Seaside property intended to house a new Grocery Outlet got what they were asking for Tuesday night from the Planning Commission: approval to build an 18,000-square-foot retail building at Avenue N and U.S. Highway 101. But the developers — Main & Main Capital Group of The Colony, Texas — may not like the conditions, which require

a recommended left-turn lane in accordance with the state Department of Transportation. Construction of a turn lane, originally proposed as part of a state highway upgrade scheduled for 2020, was delayed indefinitely because of a lack of state funds. Developers would need to come up with the \$3 million estimated to add the turn lane. The new store is a permitted use under the city's zoning, but the city's highway overlay requires a Planning Commission review of any project that will generate a significant number of vehicle trips. With an estimated 1,300

daily trips, commissioners were wary of adding to already long traffic backups without the southbound left-turn lane. Jeff Hazen, executive director of the Sunset Empire Transportation District, asked the commission to consider the impacts of the store on the surrounding area. "My concern is bus delays, especially in the summer months," Hazen said. "We just want to make sure you take that into consideration and the board recommend that the conditional approval of a left-hand turn lane be put on the applicant."

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Jeff Hazen | executive director of the Sunset Empire Transportation District

