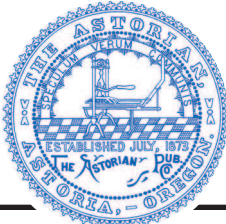


OPINION



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Music festival's decline years in the making

Succession is the most critical factor in the success of nonprofit organizations as well as in family businesses. Without a clear path to a new leader or the next generation, nonprofits lose their way, and family businesses lose their purpose.

Last Wednesday's big story about the Astoria Music Festival's struggle was, among other things, about the lack of succession.



STEVE FORRESTER

I have heard more than one person claim to be the music festival's founder. But this annual event was the brainchild of an alumna of Portland State University's opera program — Katherine Matschiner. She came to Astoria to be a voice

teacher at Clatsop Community College in the early 2000s. Deac Guidi was one of her students.

The most astounding thing that Matschiner pulled off in the inaugural festival was a fully staged and costumed production of Mozart's opera "The Marriage of Figaro." The show's director was Brenda Nuckton, who had done work at the big leagues. The performance played to a near-capacity audience in the Liberty Theatre, which was still in an unrestored state.

My wife and I have supported the festival as home stay hosts and donors from the beginning. In other words, we've had a personal stake in the festival's success. Getting to know our home stay guests has been a delight. Among them were the violinist Adam Lamotte and his wife, Janet Coleman.

There have been many high points in the festival's long run. There was a concert version of Verdi's opera "Falstaff," with Clayton Brainerd in the title role and three stunning voices playing the merry wives of Windsor. Years later, Metropolitan Opera stars Angela Meade and Ruth Ann Swenson sang during the festival.



Cellist Sergey Antonov, shown here with pianist Ilya Kazantsev in 2014, brought star power to the Astoria Music Festival.

And then there was the arrival of Sergey Antonov, the virtuoso Russian cellist. Among an array of excellent soloists and chamber players, Antonov had star quality.

The sad thing about the festival's slow decline, which has been apparent a few years, is that Keith Clark gave us so many great moments. But when it came to taking the advice of smart board members, Clark was tone deaf.

Some eight years ago, Dr. Bill Armington and I participated by conference call in a festival board meeting, as non-directors. The board had put together a sound path for succession at the top. But Clark would not agree to it. That was unfortunate, because there were many younger talents, including Antonov, who easily could have been Clark's protégé and succeeded him. Clark could have maintained laureate status and gone out on a high note.

Happily, the Liberty's director, Jennifer Crockett, is poised to move the festival in a new direction. And Antonov has

signed on. This will bring new life and sparkle to the festival.

A sendoff for Marquis

The March 2 retirement party of Josh Marquis was great fun. The emcee, Buzz Bissinger, captured Josh's eccentricities — including his penchant for telling his friends the same story twice, thrice and even four times.

The evening was also a reminder of what wretched shape the district attorney's office was in prior to Josh's arrival. I had forgotten that Judge Cindy Matyas had been one of District Attorney Julie Leonhardt's deputies. And that Matyas stood up to Leonhardt when the DA sought an indictment that turned out to groundless.

The enjoyment of such events is seeing old friends. Dirk and Amanda Rohne were there. So were Joan Herman and Rebecca Rubens. I especially enjoyed visiting with Pam Trenary, who shares jazz show hosting with Josh Marquis on KMUN. Josh's on-air moniker is the

"DA DJ."

I am a connoisseur of KMUN's jazz hosts. I probably remember some of those men and women whom station managers have long forgotten, or never knew. Such as Elliot Narr, who had moved here from New Jersey and brought an East Coast sensibility to the show. He especially loved playing Stan Kenton. Our newspaper did a cameo of Narr, probably 25 years ago. My other favorites have included Chris Gilde, Ben Hunt and Trenary.

Deep knowledge of performers is what we get from these DJs. I am eternally grateful to Trenary for playing Janice Scroggins one evening. A Portland jazz pianist, Scroggins died at the age of 42. On that night, Trenary played a cut from one of the two albums Scroggins recorded. It is a CD of Scott Joplin rags. America rediscovered Joplin when the 1973 Robert Redford-Paul Newman movie "The Sting" was released. The Houston Grand Opera even mounted a production of Joplin's 1911 opera, Tree-monisha, and the production traveled to Washington National Opera.

The great justice that Scroggins did for Joplin is the slow, deliberate tempo at which she plays his rags. It is not unlike listening to Glenn Gould play Bach.

Gould became an international sensation in the 1950s. His signature moment was playing Bach's piano music deliberately, exquisitely — in a way that startled even the best concert pianists. Partly because Gould was such a sensation and partly because he died at the age of 43, there is a Gould cult.

If I worship at the memory of Janice Scroggins, I am also a member of the Glenn Gould cult. So as we left the Elks Building after Josh's retirement party, I said to Pam Trenary: "I've realized that Scroggins did for Joplin what Gould did for Bach." To my delight, she agreed.

Steve Forrester, the former editor and publisher of The Daily Astorian, is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bill threatens mill jobs

In my 19 years of service at Wauna, I've seen how our industry is changing, the intensely competitive nature of paper-making, and how pennies per case really do matter.

While most people probably don't care about where their toilet paper is made, they should. Because the stuff we make at the Wauna mill is some of the greenest (not literally), most sustainable that you'll find anywhere in the world.

It's clear that state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell doesn't care much about that. Her recent declaration of support for the proposed cap and trade legislation is pretty much a "closing soon" sign out in front of our mill ("North Coast needs clean energy jobs," The Daily Astorian, April 4). Just ask our colleagues at the Camas (Washington) mill and the loss of the jobs there.

I also ask Rep. Mitchell: How much more will this cost all of us in gas taxes at the pump, and increased natural gas costs for all Oregonians?

Mitchell pats us on the heads, promising that the new tax will come back to us in the form of new solar panels for our roofs. What good is a solar panel on my roof if I no longer have a job to pay my mortgage? Plus, I don't live in Portland, where the sun shines a whole lot more than the coast.

People are going to keep using toilet paper and paper towels regardless of whether Mitchell votes for cap and trade. The real question is — does she want it made here or somewhere else like China?

FRANK STUHR
Astoria

Arrogant and dismissive

I work at the Wauna paper mill, and I am offended by the arrogant and dismissive words that state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell recently directed toward hardworking people in her district ("North Coast needs clean energy jobs," The Daily Astorian, April 4). For her to say that Oregon's proposed cap and trade legislation doesn't put hundreds of local jobs at risk is an outright lie.

I have 22 years of service at the mill, and my father had 42 years of service. I've seen millions of dollars of investment in Wauna to keep it competitive with facilities inside and outside our company. Plus, I've seen millions of dollars invested in our local community from coworkers spending money at businesses, and I've watched my coworkers (and myself) coach kids' sports and donate to United Way.

Growing up in Westport, there wasn't

much besides Wauna. I feel lucky that I have a high-tech job close to home that supports my family. If cap and trade legislation is passed, people are going to still want toilet paper. The question is, would you rather buy from the Wauna mill, where it is made in a sustainable way, gives local kids jobs so they don't have to move to Portland, and supports our local economy? Or, would you rather buy it shipped in using more carbon from other states or countries thousands of miles away?

Mitchell is not an expert on paper-making; my family has 64 years of experience in paper-making, and I can tell you that this bill will impact the mill and not improve the environment.

MIKE ROCHON
Astoria

Local jobs at risk

I'm writing to correct some misinformation provided by state Rep. Tiffany Mitchell via a recent guest column, "North Coast needs clean energy jobs" (The Daily Astorian, April 4). Unfortunately, her support for the cap and trade bill glosses over the devastating consequences for hard-working men and women within Oregon's pulp and paper industry.

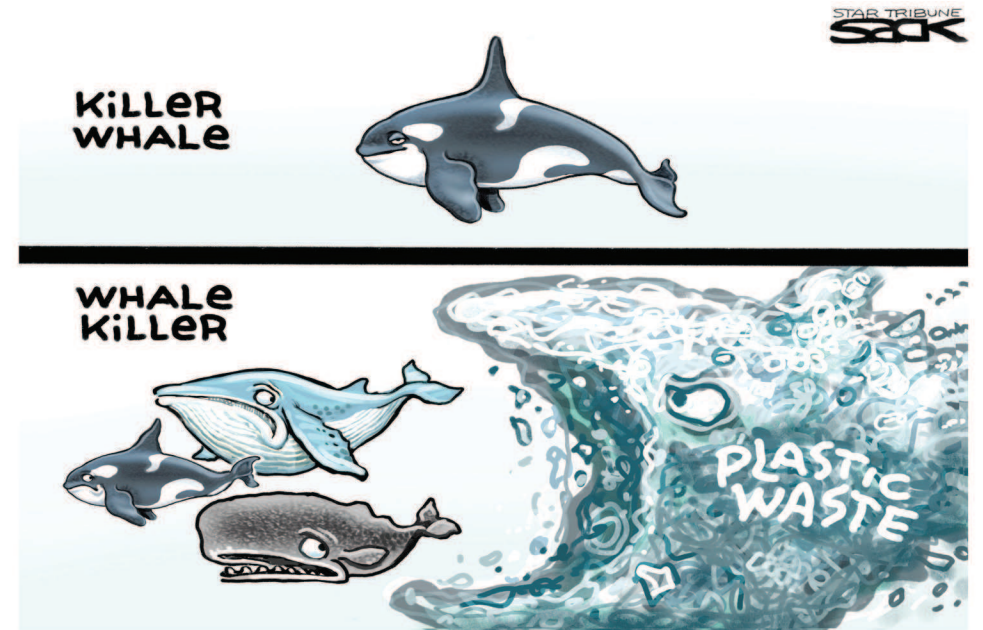
Rep. Mitchell argues that 10 U.S. states have adopted a California-like cap and trade program. This is false. Only California has enacted such legislation. Mitchell also states that the legislation won't have a negative impact on jobs. Also false.

I have worked for the Wauna paper mill for over 40 years, and I have witnessed the devastation that occurs in a community when a mill closes. So let me share some facts.

The state of California no longer has a single pulp mill in operation. The last two mills have closed since the adoption of California's cap and trade system. Companies who owned those mills shifted production — and jobs — to mills in other states.

Mitchell's comments also ignore analysis from the Oregon Office of Carbon Policy, the agency responsible for drafting the proposal. In their report, Oregon Sectoral Competitiveness under Carbon Pricing, they found that, "On balance, the paper sector is at risk of carbon leakage if Oregon introduces a carbon price without measures to protect against possible adverse competitiveness impacts."

The Wauna mill has always been about being good stewards of the environment. If Rep. Mitchell is serious about protecting jobs in Clatsop County, she will fight to exempt the Wauna mill from the proposed legislation. Anything short will put hun-



dreds of local jobs at risk.

GARY A. ANDERSON
Trustee, United Steelworkers Local 1097
Knappa

Disappointed in prosecutors

I am writing regarding the article by Brenna Visser, "Appeals court overturns murder convictions for Seaside man" (The Daily Astorian, March 22).

As a fairly recent juror myself, I'm very disappointed in the abilities of Ron Brown and Dawn Buzzard to prosecute vicious crimes. Jurors have a very difficult job when the state doesn't present sustainable evidence.

Why was it an error for them to present the bite marks? Did they not get teeth molds from the defendants? Did the victims (plural) had bite marks. Did the state not compare all the bite marks?

The article stated, "the prosecution failed to present an adequate scientific foundation for expert testimony on bite marks found on the victims." Why?

The article also stated that the MRSA — methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus — infection had produced wounds that looked like bite marks. As a retired registered nurse of over 40 years, I'd just bet that the infection didn't cause wounds to look like bite marks, but rather that bite marks caused the fatal MRSA infection.

And, so what if the children's mother was mostly to blame, as the unnamed defense attorney said? If Randy Lee Roden even just had a slight idea that she was torturing and caging these kids, he was just as much to blame, being her accomplice.

The surviving children will never be able to lead normal lives after these experiences! We never hear the courts refer to children as having post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD). These children certainly will.

DODIE TUMLINSON
Seaside

Tax prepared food

Our City Council, at its annual goal setting, made homelessness a priority. Towards that goal, I propose that Astoria levy a sales tax on all prepared food and beverages served in restaurants, deli sections of grocery stores, food trucks, markets and convenience stores. Prepared food includes to-go or delivered orders. Because alcohol is taxed by the state, it is not subject to this tax.

Grocery items like fruits, vegetables, meat, etc., are not taxed. Ashland and Yachats have implemented a 5 percent sales tax on prepared food. We can model our efforts on Ashland's and Yachat's experience. This tax is discretionary tax; if you don't want to pay it, prepare your own meals.

This tax will effect visitors as well as residents of Astoria. Best of all, it will provide necessary support for important and necessary social services like a daytime drop-in center, which will alleviate some of the negative interactions that occur downtown between the homeless and other citizens.

Recently I've traveled and eaten out in five different states, all of which levied a tax on food; I wasn't dissuaded from eating out. I dislike paying taxes as much as anyone, but I believe that this one is worthwhile. This web page describes the experience of Ashland and Yachats with their sales tax on prepared food: bit.ly/2TLS2z6

I encourage the Astoria City Council to consider this proposal. A tax on prepared food will benefit our homeless neighbors; it is a step in the right direction.

MICHAEL ZAMETKIN
Astoria