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WEEKEND BREAK

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Happy Mother's Day!

Celebrating mothers, daughters and their bonds

According to Wikipedia, "Mother's Day is a celebration honoring the mother of the family, as well as motherhood, maternal bonds, and the influence of mothers in society." The Astorian and its readers honored Mother's Day by holding a Mother-Daughter Look-A-Like Contest. There were 34 fun photos submitted and 217 votes for the top photos. Thanks, Mom!

Cindy and Chelsea



Chelsey and Evelyn



April, Abby, Grace, Chloe and Emma

See the rest of the photos inside on Pages B2 B4

Mother's Day: Its US holiday origins and how far we have wandered

By AARON BRENNIMAN
For The Daily Astorian

From its early roots in the 1908 memorial of Ann Reeves Jarvis to her daughter's renouncement of its commercialization, the present-day holiday's lost its way, but thinking differently can help make it count.

My deep contemplation first began about a month ago, when I started receiving Mother's Day emails, then more emails. And as we've gotten closer, the pace has really picked up.

You see, this will be my first Mother's Day since mine passed last June. And I wasn't quite sure I was emotionally prepared for a monthlong inbox shouting it at me.

But the internal stirring's been good for my soul, provoking much reflection, which has been healing, while faith's anchored my perspective.

It's gotten me thinking about what I miss most. And none of what I miss has anything to do with the emails and ads and banners and signs echoing what this holiday's become about — a commercialized version of a sentimental appreciation that initially held such promise. So I took to where I do with most curiosity and interest these days — to Google and look a little more into the holiday's roots.

And what I've found's been quite interesting, but much more so a sad commentary on how far we've wandered from its initial emphasis.

The brief version of its history as a U.S. holiday begins in 1905, the year recognized 'founder' Anna Jarvis held a memorial service for her mother, a peace activist who'd cared for injured soldiers during the Civil War.

Then in 1908, Congress rejected making it a U.S. holiday, but due to Jarvis' continuing campaigning, all U.S. states were reportedly observing the holiday by 1911. President Woodrow Wilson officially made the second Sunday in May Mother's Day in 1914.

But by the early 1920s, the holiday had rapidly departed from Jarvis' initial emphasis toward sentiment, not profit. We see Jarvis' resentment of the commercialization of Mother's Day begin to boil over in protests and boycotts of card-makers, candy manufacturers and carnation sellers, resulting in her arrest, at one point, for disturbing the peace.

Reading up on the younger Jarvis life, her mother's encouragement shines in every turning point, similarly to the nature of mine.

Pause for a moment, fast forwarding nearly 100 years and consider what this day's become today. Cards, balloons, chocolates, brunches, gifts, trips and stuff. It's buy, buy, buy every direction you look, top "gifts mom wants" lists atop every site. It's seemingly more about what you buy than anything else.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not saying gifts don't have their place. What I'm saying is that Mother's Day and how we hold our loved ones in general, is about more than the quick, easy buy a thing. Intentional time and attention are the most important gifts, and in the end, the only one that matters.



The author and his mother near the remains of the Peter Iredale last November.



Aaron Breniman's mother plays in the grass during the author's youth.

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