

OPINION



the Astorian

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PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

Volunteers needed for community events

“Remember when ...” is a popular conversation starter when you talk to locals who recall good times growing up in Clatsop County. Those memories tend to be around events — festivals, fairs, state championships, regatta parades. Those events bind the community with a collective memory and identity.



KARI BORGEN

It's festival season again, kicked off with the Crab, Seafood and Wine festival, carrying through the summer with Sunday Market in Astoria, concerts in the Warrenton park, Astoria Pride, Scandinavian Festival, Fair, Regatta, Brewfest ... and I've

just named a few. For those of us without a long history here, it's a time when we can create new memories for a future history that will include us and our festival stories, too.

It's worth the effort to take in our local heritage, culture and food at summer events on the North Coast. For one thing, it's a lot of fun. Who doesn't like the idea of burning last year's bad mojo by throwing your hex on the fire at the Scandinavian Festival? Beer gardens and eating crab? Parade royalty and queenie wrist-waves to the crowd? Count me in.

But for all of us spectators who



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Brightly-colored outfits are an integral part of the Scandinavian Midsummer Festival.

enjoy the fun, music and food that these events bring us, someone had to plan it, find a place for it and recruit people to set it up, take tickets, clean up. Usually those recruits are volunteers.

Volunteers aren't saps with noth-

ing better to do. Most people I know who volunteer have full schedules with work and family. They also have a full life — they prize the good things like festivals and events that make our communities vibrant for the people who

live here. Volunteers share a philosophy — if it's worth having, it's worth working for.

Unfortunately, filling volunteer shifts for events has become a nightmare for event planners. We're all pretty good at coming up with excuses for not volunteering: not enough time, too tired after work, what will I do about the kids/spouse/parents/dog? All the same excuses I use to avoid exercise. But like avoiding exercise, it really comes down to not making it a habit. Volunteering is like exercising your community muscle. The more often you do it, the stronger your community gets and the better you feel.

Think about events lost over the years due to lack of interest. Usually those stories start with “THEY should have ...” or “If THEY only would have” or “THEY should start that up again.”

Guess what. We are THEY. If we want to continue to have collective memories of great fun at local events, we need to exercise our community muscle and volunteer.

There are always opportunities to contribute during the events coming up during the summer. You can search our events calendar at dailyastorian.com/events/. Or spend time with community groups and nonprofits on the North Coast — you can find them in our community pages most Thursdays.

LETTERS

Start with empathy

I have met and helped many homeless people over the years. I have heard many stories of why they are where they are. It is true, as some point out, that some people are homeless by choice.

However, the reason for that choice may not always be what we think. Learning disorders, phobias and chronic, debilitating health issues, for example, are often behind someone's inability to maintain a job or residence. For many, the struggle to maintain a “normal” life becomes too much.

Over 10 percent of the U.S. homeless population is veterans, many with Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). So many things, often out of our control, can trap us in a downward spin cycle. Lack of access to support systems, both familial and community, helps to perpetuate these cycles.

To those who have pulled themselves up and out of difficult or dark places, congratulations.

But not everyone has those proverbial bootstraps. We do not all process and evolve at the same pace. In the meantime, everyone deserves the respect we would hope to receive if we were in the grip of an overwhelming struggle. A hot meal, a safe place to sleep, access to a safety net.

To try to solve the crisis of homelessness, I think we must first decide to come from a place of non-judgment, empathy and understanding. Not always easy, but if we start there, the answers will follow. At the least, we will give our humanity a much-needed workout.

RITA SMITH
Hammond

Teachers not paid enough

As you may have heard, the Red for Ed program had about 25,000 teachers, students and others marching through downtown Portland and more places, demanding a change in educational funding (“Oregon teachers walk out for more funding,” May 8, The Astorian).

Teachers are not being paid enough, while kids are not getting the supplies they need in order to learn. This is a real problem. Without the funds, schools cannot function properly.

Teachers already know that they're not going to become rich from being a teacher — they do it because they love the job and kids. I believe someone who loves seeing people succeed deserves the right to be funded, and well paid.

TRISTIN WALLACE
Astoria

Impeachment? Really?

The frustration of major media outlets and Congressional Democrats is boiling over since Robert Mueller's investigation regarding Russian collusion concerning the Trump campaign came up empty.

The president didn't claim executive privilege, didn't withhold documents, didn't block testimony, didn't give pardons, didn't fire Mueller.

The Waves of Time Cannot Wash Away The Memory of Their Courage



WHERE TO WRITE

• **State Rep. Tiffiny Mitchell** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, H-285, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1432. Email: rep.tiffnymitchell@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/mitchell

• **State Rep. Brad Witt** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, H-374, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1431. Email: Rep.BradWitt@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/witt

• **State Sen. Betsy Johnson** (D): State Capitol, 900 Court St. NE, S-209, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1716. Email: sen.betsyjohnson@oregonlegislature.gov. Web: oregonlegislature.gov/johnson. District Office: P.O. Box R, Scappoose, OR 97056. Phone: 503-543-4046. Astoria office phone: 503-338-1280

• **U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici** (D): 2231 Rayburn House Office Building, Wash-

ton, DC 20515. Phone: 202-225-0855. District office: 12725 SW Millikan Way, Suite 220, Beaverton, OR 97005. Phone: 503-469-6010. Web: bonamici.house.gov

• **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden** (D): 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Web: wyden.senate.gov

• **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley** (D): 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Web: merkley.senate.gov

• **Port of Astoria**: Executive Director, 10 Pier 1 Suite 308, Astoria, OR 97103. Phone: 503-741-3300. Email: admin@portofastoria.com

• **Clatsop County Board of Commissioners**: C/O County Manager, 800 Exchange St., Suite 410, Astoria, OR 97103. Phone: 503-325-1000.

But special prosecutor Mueller, in his swan song, said this: “If we had had confidence that the president clearly did not commit a crime, we would have said so ... We did not, however, make a determination as to whether the president did commit a crime.” How can anyone prove they did not commit a crime that's not described?

It was an investigation that should've never been opened. It was based on a dossier made up by a Trump-hating foreign agent Christopher Steele, and secretly paid for by the Hillary Clinton campaign. The FBI even leaked the document to friendly media outlets and when the story broke, and pointed it out as corroborating evidence to the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) court.

That is prosecutorial misconduct, using the unlimited financial and technical resources of the government to go after political enemies. The FISA court —

meant to protect President Donald Trump's rights — allowed those rights to be trampled on by a partisan Department of Justice, the FBI and CIA.

Regarding the “coverup,” a West Texas reporter once put it this way: “While we recognize that the subject did not actually steal any horses, he is obviously guilty of trying to resist being hanged for it.”

WAYNE MAYO
Scappoose

Support food bucks

We all know it's hard to focus when you're hungry. Having children who are well-fed and not hungry makes a difference in their individual performance, and also how much they are contributing to or disrupting the classroom situation.

Currently there is a bill, SB 727A, that

would fund expansion of the Double Up Food Bucks Program, that matches Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) dollars spent on produce at farmers markets around the state.

This program incentivizes the purchase of healthy fruits and vegetables, making sure that all people have access to fresh produce and giving the opportunity for everyone to live a healthy life.

Programs like Double Up Food Bucks not only prevent food insecurity, but also promote healthy eating. This relatively small investment in nutrition will lead to the betterment of the health of all our citizens, but particularly our children.

With the exciting investments on the horizon for schools, the legislature should support SB 727A to help our kids arrive to school ready to learn.

BRIAN BABBITT
Astoria

Negative evidence?

I do not normally read political news. But since The Astorian boldly headlined “Mueller: Russia report did not exonerate Trump” (May 30) because of federal rules, (which I assume, require evidence), I decided to investigate Mueller.

There have been unsubstantiated web rumors that he was a serial killer. After 448 pages of testimony I could find no evidence of that. However, I found no evidence to exonerate him either. If I had confidence that he clearly did not commit a crime, I would say so.

Is this now the American justice system? It is my understanding that there is either evidence or not. This system employed by Mueller says there was no evidence, but equally no ... what? Negative evidence? Evidence that something did not happen?

What a load of drivel.
ROBERT LIDDYCOAT
Seaside