

OPINION



the Astorian

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WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Folk built Astoria's civic furniture

You remember the day when you learn a certain lesson.

One of mine occurred in the late 1990s. Anita Decker called to ask whether she and Cheri Folk could come by my office. I said yes.

In agreeing to that meeting, I realized that whatever it was they wanted, I would say "yes." That was because of their credibility and my respect for both of them.



STEVE FORRESTER

In that moment I realized that charitable giving is relationship-driven. Getting to know Cheri, who died last week at the age of 74, was one of the delights of the long campaign to acquire and restore the Liberty

Theatre.

My mother and Cheri came of age in different eras, but they were a lot alike. While my father was the prominent figure in our family's newspapers, my mother had the head for business. And like Cheri, mother was largely self-taught. During my orientation to Astoria in 1988, my mother signaled her admiration for Cheri.

The board of directors that drove the Liberty Theatre's restoration was a gathering of strong personalities. It was an example of how people of often different political inclinations get to know each other well by working for a shared community goal.

During one of my many conversations with Cheri, I joked that she should write for *The Astorian's* editorial page. "You wouldn't like that, Steve Forrester!" she responded.

Over a period of some five years, Cheri and I made the pitch for gifts to numerous prospects. As we walked them through the bedraggled, unrestored building, Cheri's refrain was, "Can't you just see what this could become?"

Cheri succeeded me as president of Liberty Restoration Inc. Her contributions to what I call the civic furniture of Astoria



Cheri Folk, second from left, fundraising for the Liberty Theatre in 2014 with community leaders.

IN OREGON BANKING, SHE BROKE GLASS CEILINGS AND EARNED THE RESPECT OF HER PEERS IN A 36-YEAR CAREER.

were several and widespread. She belied the image of the banker as an impersonal and distant figure.

In Oregon banking, she broke glass ceilings and earned the respect of her peers in a 36-year career. Without a college degree, she quipped to a colleague,

"I'm the girl at school who was good at math."

When the Bank of Astoria merged with Columbia Bank in 2004, she and another groundbreaker, Melanie Dressel, head of the Tacoma, Washington, parent bank, handled the transition. Dressel died at age

64 in 2017.

If you stay in one place long enough — especially in a small town — you meet a lot of people. Many of them make a lasting impression. Some of those acquaintances — fleeting or long term — change you. Cheri made that kind of difference in my life. I'm grateful that I had the opportunity to know this remarkable woman.

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

LETTERS

Follow the money

In response to the front-page article, "Apartment project blends workforce housing, vacation rentals" (*The Astorian*, June 19): There has been a push to curb short-term rentals with arbitrary rules and fees imposed on local property owners, which seems excessive, unfair and a deliberate bias against local people who just want to maintain their property and/or pay property taxes.

Preservation has been important for Astoria, yet it takes money for restoration/maintenance. Follow the money. Developers, generally with cookie-cutter corporate hotels, want our waterfront, while we the citizens sacrifice our own need for income and loss of property values due to the riverfront view now being blocked, especially in the "Bridge Vista zone." A vista?

Is it OK to eliminate locals, the citizens who live and work here, paying property taxes for years, who bear the burden of maintenance/preservation alone, especially if divorced or widowed? Does eliminating locals pave the way for developers so they can add 34 Airbnb-type vacation rentals?

Why discourage short-term rentals with no history of complaints, infractions or police calls? For those who vote on this issue, do they understand the positive impacts on communities? I question the veracity of their decision, and the arbitrary rules and excessive fees.

Have they stayed in an Airbnb or researched the reviews? The extra money of "sharing" helps with preservation, taxes and offering guests real hospitality.

Please don't deny the opportunity for local citizens to follow part of the money.

LaREE JOHNSON
Astoria

Need to act now

Regarding the editorial "Oregon lawmakers need to take a timeout" (*The Astorian*, June 22), there are several things I'd like to point out.

Perhaps the most important is that the writer seems to confuse democracy with politics. Our representative democracy is, and has been, mainly a fairer way to get things done than was/is feudalism, monarchy or dictatorship. We get to vote for representatives, who then in turn vote on issues we communicate are important to us.

Democrats have supermajorities in both houses, and are pretty united on HB 2020. Democracy would say, "This is the

will of the majority of the people, and should become law."

Politics is the art of not only getting elected, but getting your way once there. I give the Republicans credit here — they did the only thing they could to get their way. Good politics. I'm waiting for the next move from the Democrats.

I also take issue with the editorial's assertion that the bill would be disastrous for working-class Oregonians and do little to prevent climate change. California's experience has been pretty good for workers, and the more cities, states and countries that provide some examples of actions to be taken, the more likely that the climate crisis can be overcome.

Whether the legislature acts or not, we have to tackle this problem. It would be so much easier if they did act. A timeout is just not feasible. We need to act now.

BOB GOLDBERG
Astoria

Proving the point

Waiting in line at the pro shop, I noticed the golf tournament on TV. "What tournament is that?" I asked innocently.

After a long, slow moment the golf pro said, "That would be the U.S. Open Golf Tournament." Something in his reply hinted that a person purporting to be a golfer, who didn't know the U.S. Open was being played, should walk away and leave the links open for a true golfer.

I took no offense, paid my money and went on to the course. And proved his point.

JIM HALLAUX
Astoria

Fix nursing contract

Iam responding to the article "Nurses accuse Columbia Memorial Hospital of hoarding cash" (*The Astorian*, June 28), concerning the nurses' contract dispute with Columbia Memorial Hospital. I was diagnosed at CMH with Stage 4 pancreatic cancer in mid-February of this year. Since then, I have been treated — and cared for — at CMH.

My type of cancer has a very grim prognosis, and limited treatment options. When diagnosed, I was offered participation in various clinical trials at prestigious hospitals nationwide. Instead, I chose to be treated at the CMH/Oregon Health and

Science University/Knight Cancer Center here in Astoria. After four months, I could not be more pleased with that decision.

The particulars of my situation have required visits to the emergency room, an in-patient stay, and weekly chemotherapy infusions. Every aspect of my treatment and care has been outstanding. The oncologist is first-rate. The nurses could not be better.

And the same can be said of all the ancillary staff, too numerous to mention here, but nonetheless important and crucial to patient outcomes. Even the hospital administration has been compassionate and generous.

What all this means is that CMH is a well-run hospital, equivalent in every way to hospitals far larger and more prestigious. In particular, CMH is undoubtedly superior to Providence Seaside Hospital and Ocean Beach Hospital.

The fact that the nursing staff at CMH is paid less, with fewer benefits, than the nursing staff at Providence Seaside or Ocean Beach seems like an aberration, which I strongly urge the hospital administration to fix, as soon as possible, effective with the next contract.

BARRY PLOTKIN
Astoria

MEANWHILE AT THE GERRYMANDERED BORDER



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