

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## OUR VIEW

# Good news on affordable housing

## Plethora of projects signals the right direction

**P**robably no core issue on the North Coast has been guaranteed to spark discussion on this page more than affordable housing.

Over the years, we have vigorously campaigned for community leaders to treat the matter as a crisis. We cannot say that has happened, but as we read some recent headlines on our news pages we are encouraged.

Projects moving the front burner and breaking ground are all significant steps toward solving our constant problem. Job creation in the tourism and service industries generally means low-paying positions. So where are those workers going to live?

The showcase cause for celebration is the old State Hotel building on Marine Drive. It will take considerable work and time for the purchasers, all congregants at First Presbyterian Church, to bring the building up to code once the sale is a done deal.

It once was home for 50 studio apartments. Bringing some or all of those back into livable units could help fulfill a dynamic that urban planners often tout — that tenants living full-time in apartments above commercial properties aid considerably in creating a vital downtown core.

On the east side of town, developer Walt Postlewait from Craft3 seeks to build the Northpost Apartments on property between 31st and 32nd streets, near Safeway and the Astoria Riverwalk.



Patrick Webb  
These newly built low-income Driftwood Point apartments just north of the center of downtown Long Beach, Washington, attracted a flood of applicants even while building work was under way.

That will add 66 units to the mix, some to be used as short-term rentals and others for affordable rental apartments.

Another 12-unit apartment complex on Alameda Avenue in Astoria, previously used as a sober-living facility by Klean Treatment Centers, is planned now its Astoria owners have sold the building.

While rents at these may be out of the range of people working low-income jobs, it is pleasing to see more options added to the community's mix.

In Washington's Pacific County, there are significant reasons for celebration. A 27-unit low-income apartment complex called Driftwood Point, on vacant land on 10th Street, just north of central Long Beach, attracted a host of applicants while the finishing touches were

still being put on the buildings.

That project came about, in part, because the Joint Pacific County Housing Authority, the state of Washington, the city of Long Beach, and other advocates acknowledged the need — and looked at potential problems as challenges to overcome rather than reasons not to press ahead.

More recently, a couple has purchased the apartments at Sixth and Washington (which have had an admittedly checkered past), and begun investing in their refurbishment. Once completed, six more homes will be available for people to live on the Peninsula, close to downtown Long Beach.

Several factors contribute to a climate in which private developers are willing to risk investing capital into housing projects. These include

local governments having clearly spelled out zoning and building regulations while addressing environmental and other concerns. Often, these projects succeed, in part, because an agency presents a welcoming and helpful approach. That must be signaled as policy by mayors and commissioners, and not merely rely on the personality of the planner or other staff members who receive the applications.

All this signals more variety in housing options in our coastal communities. Astoria and the Long Beach Peninsula are attractive and desirable places to work. But without an affordable place to call home, that dream is out of reach.

Taken together, these projects show more positive, concrete action than we can recall in a long, long time.

## LETTERS

### Hateful tweets

**H**ow long do we have to put up with President Donald Trump's hateful tweets? His latest attack on Rep. Elijah Cummings and the city of Baltimore was disgusting, immature and not presidential. I was happy to read the reply from the Baltimore Sun newspaper. As my sister in Alaska said, "they nailed him to the wall."

I agree with everything the newspaper said about Trump. If you get a chance, read it.

I feel we are living under a dictator now and I don't like it. I also worry what will happen if he does not get elected. Will he start another Civil War?

DIANE FINUCANE  
Warrenton

### Shame on politicians

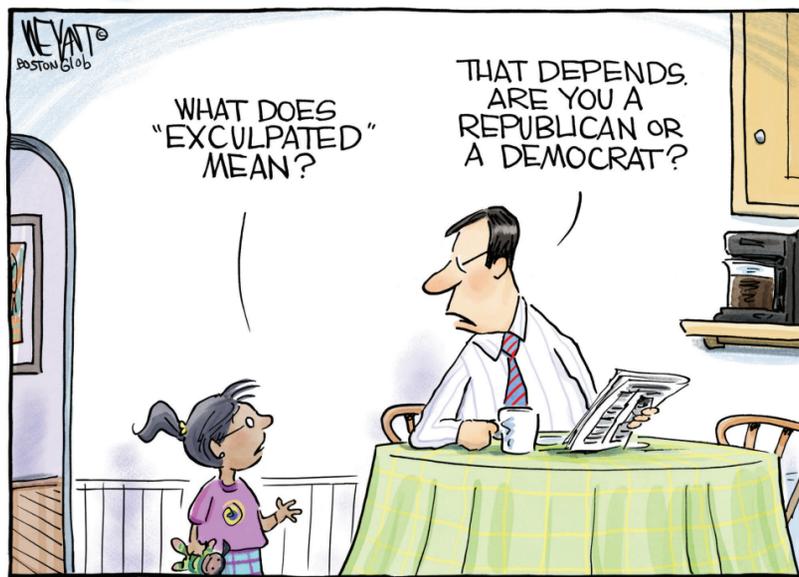
**I**want to congratulate The Astorian's editorial board for printing the opinion piece, written by Dick Hughes, about state Sen. Brian Boquist's statements and actions at the end of the last Oregon legislative session "Boquist decision leaves all unsatisfied" (July 23).

I felt this was an extremely balanced and well-written commentary that gave me a lot of information that I would never have been aware of, except for reading it in the paper.

Approximately 80 percent of the opinion page was taken by this article, and allowed for the writer to state the facts as he understood them, and allowed him to cover this subject better than any politician of either party using their normal spin cycle to paint the picture they want to paint.

I personally detest rhetoric from any side, and I resent false responses from the people who wanted to pretend that they felt personally threatened.

I know that there is a lot of crazy gun violence in this day and age. But what I see is both political parties being as inflammatory as they can be in order to try and sway the public to their view.



Shame on the politicians; thank you, Dick Hughes and The Astorian editorial board.

SCOTT WIDDICOMBE  
Warrenton

### Public at risk

**I**worked for many years at leading facilities as a level one trauma nurse. Providers at leading medical institutions are using a device and procedure that has no Federal Drug Administration testing for safety or effectiveness.

The procedure, called electroshock, involves up to 450 volts and greater to the brain. In the past, it was only approved for use in severe depression and as a last resort, but not any longer. It is used for many conditions, and on our children, veterans and during pregnancy. This is a global issue.

Under the guise of help, it is actually inflicting traumatic brain injuries (TBI) at a minimum, now proven in a court of law. Suits are being pursued around product liability, medical malpractice and against the FDA. There are billions involved in the U.S. annually. Trusted providers are criminally failing in their duty to warn, protect and not harm.

Patients have been discounted in their

complaints by their providers, secondary to fear of litigation. They have been harmed under the guise of help for great profits. It is time to expose this, despite the monies, positions and reputations involved.

I ask that electroconvulsive therapy (ECT) patients now be seen as TBI patients in their outcomes, so that they may access needed rehabilitative services that all other TBI patients have at their disposal. The public is at great risk, and the issue will no longer be swept under the carpet. For information, go to [bit.ly/ECTinjury](http://bit.ly/ECTinjury)

DEBORAH SCHWARTZKOPFF  
McMinnville

### Butchering trees

**G**earhart has a fairly new tree-trimming ordinance, passed a few months ago, to allow residents affected by trees on city dunelands to trim the trees affecting their views, among other reasons.

Unfortunately, the city is interpreting the ordinance much too zealously, leading to maimed and disfigured trees on city-owned parklands. But Gearhart has no parks master plan in place that would curtail this kind of damage. In fact, the city does not even have a parks planning process

## LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

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cess in the works. The butchering of city trees by homeowners with an agenda of their own is the result.

Oregon Coast Alliance (ORCA) has twice called on Gearhart officials to interpret the ordinance more narrowly, and begin a parks planning process, but the city has not responded.

It is certainly past time for Gearhart to begin a parks discussion, before the city's treasured public landscapes are irrevocably scarred. Gearhart's residents need the public process required for a parks master plan, to voice their opinions and craft a framework to protect the public's land.

ORCA wonders why city officials have refused not only to begin a discussion about city parks, but also refused ORCA the courtesy of a response to our concerns. Surely, in a matter touching on the management of public property that benefits Gearhart residents and visitors alike, a response is due, especially as ORCA offered to assist in any way available with launching a parks planning process.

CAMERON La FOLLETTE  
Astoria