

OPINION



the Astorian

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OUR VIEW

Celebrate a milestone, then get to work

After the party, Jane Sweet has a lot of cleaning up to do.

Sweet is Warrenton's harbor-master. And her latest project is to maintain and improve the Hammond Marina.

It's a substantial challenge, but one she and the city's leaders have been wanting for many years.

The important facility has always been a key element of the community's economic prosperity, not just during the bustling Buoy 10 salmon season, but year-round. However, it hasn't been dredged in more than a decade, which means about half its 180 slips aren't regularly available for use by boaters.

Behind the scenes, a series of leaders have been working to restore ownership to what many consider its rightful place. Inevitably, changes in personnel and the often snail's-pace progress of federal bureaucracy has meant everyone has been waiting a while.

Along the way, the city missed out on an Oregon Marine Board grant to help dredge the marina, a project estimated at \$1.3 million, in part because it lacked ownership.

That criteria changed — hence the reason for a party — when the



Edward Stratton/The Astorian

Only half the slips are regularly usable at the Hammond Marina, which hasn't been dredged in at least a decade.

U.S. Army Corps of Engineers handed over the marina keys to the city Wednesday.

It was a day for celebrations, best summed up by buoyant Warrenton Mayor Henry Balensifer.

"The marina has historically been the lifeblood of the Hammond heritage district, and I believe with a vision, investment and a streamlined development process, we can revitalize this area to its former glory and more," he said.

The basin is a key landmark with a storied history. It was designed way back in the 1940s, then transferred to the Army Corps in 1954 to help with that agency's crucial maintenance of the mouth of the Columbia River. The old city of Hammond managed it for decades, with Warrenton taking over in 1991.

Congress approved a transfer of ownership a short while ago, but the i's needed to be dotted, the t's

crossed. The trust between officials involved in this careful process was very evident.

While all this was happening, a city task force offered four accompanying recommendations:

- expand campgrounds nearby
- improve Seafarers Park
- build a public fishing pier
- create more event space.

Those will go hand in hand with waterfront enhancements.

It is worth mentioning the other pleasing element. That is a commitment, voiced by Balensifer at the ceremonial handover, that the design of new developments at the pier will fit in with surrounding historical architecture.

That's a cause we have long championed — and frankly one where some communities have fallen short on past projects.

For Sweet, it will be a day-to-day challenge to move things forward now the city has responsibility for maintaining the channel, dredging the marina and repairing the docks.

Her expanded workload on behalf of the community is proof that perseverance pays off. And it is one more sign that Warrenton is charting a positive course for a brighter future.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Encouraged

I attended the movie "From Paris to Pittsburgh" on Sept. 22 at the Columbian Theater in Astoria. It is a 2018 documentary film about climate change that explores how Americans from the heartland to coastal communities, rural communities and cities are responding to the climate crisis with real solutions, creating thousands of jobs along the way.

The purpose of the afternoon was not to convince climate deniers that human-caused climate change is real, but to inspire those who do not need convincing to action.

Thank you, Clatsop County Commissioners Kathleen Sullivan and Lianne Thompson for attending. Thompson encouraged citizens to participate in the Clatsop County Comprehensive Plan process as one way to strategize how we can reduce our carbon footprint on a local level.

And, thanks to Indivisible North Coast Oregon for putting on this event. I came away more encouraged and hopeful than I've felt in a long time.

JULIA HESSE
Astoria

Furniture and cows

I'm still reading the U.S. Constitution, and still haven't found any loopholes, but I've come to the conclusion that the Founding Fathers were excellent furniture makers, specializing in three-legged stools — like for milking cows.

For a stool to work properly, it requires three legs of equal length. If one leg is longer, the stool tips over, and you can't milk the cows. If any legs are shorter, the stool crashes — poor cows. Little is absolute any more, but physics law is. America is a nation of laws, right?

In the kindergarten sandbox, I learned the founders built the "awesomest" stool ever. The executive, judicial and legislative legs — all equal.

Early on, many immigrants (your/my ancestors), tired of dictator, despot, king or tyrant rule, came here. The idea of three equal branches of government checking each other was refreshing.

People wanting their leg of the stool to be the longest is, unfortunately, an age-old recurring theme called greed. Forget the cows.

One of the beautiful characteristics of democracy is each leg has the authority, and obligation, to keep all the legs equal. This results in contented cows.

If one leg goes rogue, who is more at fault? The rogue, or the two who failed to keep the stool level? Huh? Democracy only works if people care enough to make it work. Wouldn't you agree? I do.

Dang, those founders sure could build stools, and you can bet the farm that if the big stool falls, there will be a lot of con-



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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 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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fused cows.

CARL DOMINEY
Astoria

Support our nurses

I attended the town hall hosted by the nurses of Columbia Memorial Hospital. They want and deserve a fair contract. They want to work with the CEO Erik Thorsen, and not be shut out. I heard their voices.

I also saw posted displays showing the nurses' names, and how much income they have lost. They're asking for, and deserve,

consistent scheduling and economic stability. The board of trustees need to step in and get the CEO back on track to sit down with our nurses, and work to reach a fair contract.

The board members are Constance Waisanen, Nancy McAllister, Mike Autio, Bill Landwehr, Doug Kaup, Heather Seppa, Dr. Kevin Baxter, Dave Nygaard, Dr. Robert Holland, Jean Danforth, Dr. James Heilman and Mark Smith. I know some of the trustees are local business people with employees. I am sure they know how to bargain with their employees in good faith.

Please help our nurses. I support our

local nurses.

A. "DIANE" FINUCANE
Warrenton

Moscow Mitch

Concerning U.S. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell: When only one person elected by only one part of only one state acts as exclusive gatekeeper for all congressional legislative activity, we are no longer a representative democracy.

DONNA LEE ROLLINS
Astoria