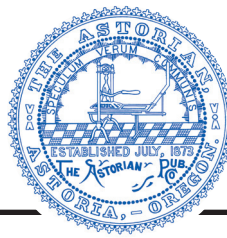


OPINION



the Astorian

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Founded in 1873

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PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

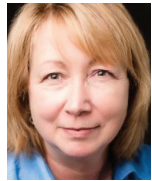
Navigating in uncharted waters

We're in a completely unprecedented time of sudden local business closures, event cancellations and widespread layoffs.

Even meeting the challenges of 9/11 and the Great Recession could not prepare us for the upheaval of the coronavirus pandemic. The Astorian, like everyone else, is navigating in uncharted waters, unsure of the future ahead but setting sails to journey on.

When the COVID-19 restrictions started last month, we set our priorities to determine our course:

- Keep our employees healthy.
- Keep our community informed.
- Take care of our customers.
- Keep our newspaper in business.



KARI BORGEN

Keep our employees healthy

Foremost, to accomplish anything else, our employees have to stay healthy. The front door is locked so that visitor traffic is controlled. Most reporters, sales and design staff are working from home. Work areas are disinfected every morning and after lunch, and again by the cleaning service after hours. Anyone not working from home has been supplied a face mask. The first item on the daily check-in with managers is a status check on employees and their families.

Keep our community informed

Our employees do the work that fulfills our mission statement: to be the local media leader, producing credible news that earns our communities' trust. Report and distribute local news and information because a well-informed public keeps our communities strong.

The stories and images of this historic time in Astoria are being told, not through government press releases, but by trained journalists. Reporters are working, remotely, to sort through tips, track down interviews, ask questions, check facts.

Our news-sharing agreements mean that you are likely to see Astorian stories on Portland television and statewide news. We reaffirmed our local news partnership with Coast Community Radio for cooperative distribution. Fortunately, we've made investments in digital platforms to reach a broad audience quickly through our website, apps and social



On Sept. 25, 1970, Astorian publisher Morgan Coe looks at the last issue printed on the Goss Tubular Press.

media.

We continue to deliver news in print, too. Press and distribution center employees and delivery contractors all work to be sure that the newspaper is manufactured and packaged for our postal service partners who keep delivering the newspaper to you, despite their own additional load of online-ordered deliveries. Astoria School District bus drivers deliver the newspaper with school breakfasts and lunches to families who might not otherwise see the news.

Take care of our customers

The Astorian's customers are our sub-

scribers and advertisers. Our promotions have shifted to reach print customers who haven't yet activated their digital access with the message to take advantage of the digital benefits of their subscription, which includes 24-7 news delivered via web and app.

Many of our advertising customers have lost their entire revenue streams. Those who have stayed open need to get that message to the public — to keep the dollars coming in. Every edition since March 23 has included a full page of "open for business" listings provided free to local businesses which are open and offering services.

The Astorian buys lunch on "take-out Tuesday" for the employees working in the building. We do that to support local restaurants. Our sales team is reaching out to advertisers to brainstorm marketing ideas. We've offered "Buy one, get one free" print ads — to extend local business advertising dollars during the crisis. Our advertisers are taking advantage of the surge in website viewing to reach a news-hungry digital audience. All local businesses are in the same boat, and working together to stay afloat.

Keep our newspaper in business

Two-thirds of our operating revenue comes from advertising. Closed businesses and canceled events have seriously impacted April advertising, down over 40% to last year. Our coronavirus news coverage is available to all website viewers in the interest of public health and safety, but we've doubled down on the message that it's important to subscribe to support our continued news operations. We've been grateful to receive a handful of donations from supporters, including a donor who purchased two online subscriptions for strangers — a double win.

We are looking into an unpredictable post-coronavirus economy, so we acted quickly to cut expenses. Four open jobs have not been filled, and four more employees were laid off, two each at The Astorian and at our sister newspaper in Long Beach, Washington, the Chinook Observer. We've reduced newsprint as well — for example, Coast Weekend is now 16 pages instead of 24, since there's no event calendar, no previews of performing arts and music events.

EO Media Group, The Astorian's owner, received a Payroll Protection Program loan to cover payroll for remaining employees for the next two months. We have applied for grants to help mitigate some of the revenue losses. These grants and loans provide a bridge to the other side of the COVID-19 restrictions. We are making plans now that will improve our business for the future.

As we chart our course for what lies beyond the pandemic, we will emerge a different organization, in many ways with a stronger sense of purpose and newly-found skills and efficiencies. Crisis creates an urgent focus on what's important — and makes us let go of what is not.

Kari Borgen is publisher of The Astorian.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Listen up

I have been reading some of my backup toilet paper supply, and came across such intense backlash about any letter that gives patriotic support to our president. In this time of a world pandemic, the cream of the leadership will rise to the top.

Pictures of Old Glory flying from the back of pickup trucks and people carrying signs, mostly saying "Liberate," takes me back. I wonder what that 60-something white guy is really like, so I imagine being 9 years old again, growing up in my little neighborhood in Missouri.

I might have really gone for that "Live Free or Die" thing back then. We called each other "Bubba." We were a flag-flying bunch, living in a world extending about a mile wide, all the way to the tracks.

I grew up whiter than Wonder bread. I took a 23andMe DNA test and found out that I'm so white, I'm Neanderthal. I don't think you can get any whiter than that. So when I see this parade in Salem with trucks and flags and guns, I get it. If you don't think the Confederate flag is the coolest, then you just haven't listened to "Sweet Home Alabama" loud enough.

Listen up. If you feel like you want to liberate Oregon by going to a protest these days, just don't bring the kids to a human petri dish. When you finish with your back-slapping, hand-shaking and flag-flying, go home and let the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention know how you're doing 14 days later.

Live free or die?

JOHN GINDER
Astoria

Show you care

When I go out to take a walk for exercise here in Astoria, I have wonderful fresh air to breathe, and there are so few people outside that I have no problem with social distancing ... but I will always wear a mask.

Not because I am afraid of getting COVID-19, and not because I am afraid of giving someone COVID-19. I wear a mask to show my support of all essential work-

ers, first responders, fire, police and medical personnel who are, daily, risking their lives to keep me safe and well.

Show you care ... wear a mask.

LARRY ALLEN
Astoria

Let us remember

At about 3:30 a.m. on April 14, I was suddenly awakened by a loud crash and my dog barking in alarm. Then there was a bright flash and a loud boom. No lights; groping for a flashlight; fishing around for shoes; reassuring the pooch.

Finally, I stumbled outside 15 to 20 minutes later to find the volunteers from the Lewis and Clark Fire Department already on-site, setting up flares, safety cones and lighting, carefully pulling down wires aside to clear a lane for traffic. There had been a noninjury truck accident and the driver had instantly notified emergency services and Pacific Power.

Efficient, smooth, professional, focused. These are the people who care about our safety, make things work and keep them working when unanticipated events happen. Let us remember, as well, to keep them in mind and prayer when we gratefully express appreciation for our health care community, other first responders and our military folks across our nation.

And, incidentally, before noon the pole was replaced and power expertly restored.

MAURIE HENDRICKSON
Astoria

Gratitude

During this time of challenge and fear, it has become important to me to be grateful for all the good things in my life.

I would like to express my thanks for the way public governance in Oregon moved quickly to stem the tide of COVID-19 by shutting down places that would spread the virus, and insisting on social isolation.

It's a common-sense strategy that has kept down Oregon's numbers, as opposed



to other states that waited longer. Thanks go to Gov. Kate Brown for acting quickly and responsibly.

Thanks also go to the Clatsop County commissioners and the Clatsop County Public Health Department for all they are doing to keep COVID-19 from overwhelming us. Having our hospitals and care centers ready for a worst-case scenario will save many lives, including those brave professionals in the health care field.

I would like to give a shoutout to my daughter, who works in a skilled nursing facility, to many of her friends who are nurses and certified nursing assistants, and to all essential workers laboring on our behalf.

Many thanks also go out to my wife, family and community of friends and neighbors for their commitment to practicing social isolation and offering support and assistance to one another.

I am also grateful to KMUN radio for reliable information and music.

Kudos to the Astoria Co-op for safely dispersing food.

Thanks be to the beautiful April weather, and the opportunity to garden and be outside.

NED HEAVENRICH
Brownsmead

We can do this

I want to commend The Astorian for the two pieces in the April 21 edition by Tim Trainor (Climate Changed: Making climate change understandable) and Patrick Webb (Writer's Notebook: Climate series was landmark journalism) that provide background and announce the upcoming series on climate change.

As a citizen representative on one of our county advisory councils, I know the importance of factual, credible information to help form opinion and guide policy. Now, more than ever, we need to move away from the polarizing standoffs of opposing views, and move toward reasonable dialogue and collective solutions.

Now is the time to give this new source a chance to provide information that can spark meaningful conversation and inspire action. But, the next steps are ours. It's time to engage with our neighbors and elected officials to find solutions that protect the environment as well as provide economic opportunity.

We need to remember that we humans are, by nature, resilient, inventive, cooperative and compassionate. We can do this.

REBECCA READ
Seaside