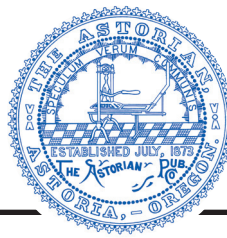


OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

DERRICK DePLEDGE
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Harvey made preservation an Astoria value

Edward Harvey was the godfather of historic preservation in Astoria.

In 1940, Harvey became director of the new Oregon State University Seafood Laboratory in Astoria. Some 20 years later, he became a historic preservation enthusiast, and Astoria was his proving ground.

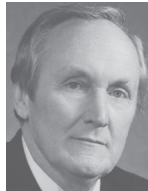


STEVE FORRESTER

In the 1960s, Harvey took it upon himself to mark Astoria homes that were deemed to be historic — by dint of their architecture and the history of their occupants. I became aware of Dr. Harvey through my mother, who was amused at this academic's chutzpah in making dedicatory speeches in front of Astoria's homes and presenting their owners with medallions.

Historic preservation entered the American consciousness in 1975, when Jacqueline Kennedy launched her campaign to save Grand Central Station. Portland gained its first iconic preservation cause in 1969 when Lannie Hurst led a campaign to save a carpenter Gothic Presbyterian church that would be known as The Old Church.

To Astoria's great benefit, historic preservation has become one of the town's values. Tangible awareness of preservation's importance in our economic and civic life appears annually in the Astoria City Council's presentation of the Dr. Edward Harvey Awards.



Edward Harvey

This year's honorees are an eye-opening reminder of how much labor and investment goes into restoring a historic residence or commercial building.

The award to Marcus and Michelle Liotta for restoring the Mary & Nellie Flavel Building at Ninth and Commercial streets could have been titled the Can-You-Believe-It award. For decades the two Flavel buildings — flanking Commercial Street between Ninth and Tenth — have been a curse on Astoria's downtown.

The Liottas have put \$1 million into this preservation. Their success at filling the building with tenants makes the economic point about historic preserva-



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

The First Presbyterian Church in Astoria won the Dr. Edward Harvey Historic Preservation Award for institutional buildings.

tion. The same thing occurred when the Liberty Theatre building was purchased — with the city's financial support —

in 2000. Rising from its status as a dead zone, the building once again gained tenants.

Residential restorations are a special labor of love, and none more so than what Curt and Rosemary Johnson have accomplished with their 1880 Italianate home on 15th Street. For those of us who informally track the progress of restoration projects, the couple's labors became epic, beginning in 1992. The exterior painting took six years. It involved burning off layers of paint, oiling the wood and painting.

While some loans were involved, the Johnsons' financed their work "pay-check to paycheck," Rosemary said.

When I asked Rosemary if she would do it again, she answered: "I think I'd be more cautious on what I purchased. We anticipated a lot of work. But when we got into the house and started tearing things apart, we found there was a lot of more work than we had imagined. It's taken up 28 years of our lives. It did not take over our lives. We had fun with our lives."

Every old Astoria church is a preservation challenge. The First Presbyterian Church's renewal has been a high visibility, heartening victory. It won the Civic Institutions category.

State Sen. Betsy Johnson has said that the rebirth of Astoria's downtown was sparked by restoration of the Liberty Theatre. That was followed by other restorations such as the Hotel Elliott, the Fisher Brothers Building, the Judge Guy Boyington Building and many others. The amount of residential restoration and renewal has also been considerable.

As the Liberty Theatre opened, the spirit of historic preservation crossed the Columbia River to Chinook, where Eileen Wirkkala led a group that restored the Chinook School and gymnasium.

While preservation is a boost to the local economy, it also carries an emotional value, which Jacqueline Kennedy captured in her appeal to save Grand Central Station. Wrote Kennedy: "Is it not cruel to let our city die by degrees, stripped of all her proud monuments, until there will be nothing left of all her history and beauty to inspire our children. If they are not inspired by the past of our city, where will they find the strength to fight for her future?"

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Freedom

It's sad to see how our quest for freedom has been bastardized into the most laughable argument that's ever been played out in our country. Likened to sawing off the tree limb you're sitting on, some of our citizens are turning a lifesaving strategy — wearing masks and keeping social distance — into a ridiculous fight for freedom. Seriously?

These people are making an untenable stance, encouraged by our foolish and un-American president. They are actually proving our democratic lifestyle is not capable of working. Extreme authoritarian states like China, North Korea and Russia are run by regimes which have the ability to make people do what they want, or else. We have been trying to show the world you can live cooperatively despite differences, and not have to resort to such brutish tactics.

Unfortunately, the so-called freedom fighters in our populace are showing just how incapable they are of living in a true democracy. They clearly can't see the danger of the pandemic, nor heed the advice of experts, while recklessly demanding they assert their personal right to put their lives and everyone else's in danger just to make a foolish point.

This is the most arrogant, selfish and immature stance any of the American people have made in my personal memory. Are stop signs a personal affront to one's freedom if you don't want to stop? What complete and total nonsense. The dictators of the world are laughing and rejoicing in our failure to endure and compromise.

BRENTON KAHLE
Astoria

Well done, Astoria

Thank you from the bottom of my heart, Robert Dorn, the local businesses and the city of Astoria, for the surprise Independence Day fireworks display. It brought tears of joy and a heart full of pride and gratitude for the beautiful city and great country in which we live.

I love this country. My heart breaks for it right now, but I know that we the people

will do the right thing to restore its grandeur, protect its beautiful land and people and resolve its past and present failings. That process will be messy and uncomfortable, but we will do it.

We are Americans. We will find a way to come together and love one another. I wish you peace and love and happiness as we celebrate the 244th birthday of the United States of America. Well done, Astoria, and happy birthday, America.

KAREN LEINENKUGEL
Astoria

The question

Since "bigot conversion therapy" is not a thing, it seems the question to be answered in November is this: Are we going to be a racist society, or an openly racist society?

DONNA LEE ROLLINS
Astoria

Independence

Aren't we just the exquisite example of the best nation ever? Don't we show the rest of the world how tremendous the best of the best who come to our shores are? Whether it is manufacturing, small business, bloated government, supposed equality for all, or even our unending compassion?

It seems like lately we are not grounded in those beliefs. I say bull ... our history is ripe with unprecedented firsts. Heights unreached before, examples of previously unforeseen grace and humanity, but first and foremost complete global leadership.

Why, do you ask, has our form of democracy thrived while so many have failed? All right, time's up.

It is because it is our belief that every single person in our country is exceptional in their own and special way. We have been given the gift from our bril-

liant Founding Fathers of a Constitution that allows for differences, and at the same time unity. Why are we so divisive, when we together can be so unified?

Every single person or group on the face of this planet can provide a grievance on how they or theirs were "offended." Is that grievance legitimate? Of course. But then so is everyone else's.

How about this: I understand your history. Please try to understand mine. Now ... let's move forward.

KEVIN SWANSON
Warrenton

Thank you

Just a quick thank you to Astoria, and those behind the Fourth of July fireworks. It was great for the community!

JOHN LANSING
Hammond

