

# SCRATCHPAD

## Back to the Future, Astoria edition

Get creative with fiction writing

By **ALYSSA EVANS**  
COAST WEEKEND EDITOR



Earlier this month, we asked readers to send in short pieces of fiction to start a weekly fiction writing contest. Throughout the summer, we'll feature local writers who send in responses to prompts published in this column.

Hammond resident Chantal Knudson's entry will start things off. To contribute to the story, send in a response to the following prompt. Please keep responses no longer than 250 words. Send your work to [evans@dailyastorian.com](mailto:evans@dailyastorian.com).

[evans@dailyastorian.com](mailto:evans@dailyastorian.com).

Coast Weekend readers will be able to respond to future prompts, in turn creating a fictional story, separated by short chapters.

"My goal is for other Astorians to use their 21st century intellects to share Astoria's history in the genre of historical fiction as they respond to my prompt," Knudson said. Below is her prompt.

### 'Back to the Astorian Future: 1811 to 2020'

The year 2020 in Astoria changed how humans interact with others physically and socially. But is it so new?

Time to climb in and program our time machines (a tricked out Tesla car is my choice) for March 22, 1811. Join me as we imagine our Tesla hurtling itself at 88 miles per hour towards the end of the 14th Street

pier. Instantaneously, the pier where Capt. Fritz Elfving ferried people from Astoria to Megler, Washington is gone. The Tesla screeches to a halt bogged down by the sand and grass.

I am at the wheel. You are seated in the passenger seat. Hanging on the rearview mirror are two masks. You reach over to grab one, but I stop your hand.

"Look outside! What do you see?" I ask. "Do you think we have to wear our masks now?"

Instead of answering me, you grab it and

exit the time machine. I follow.

You turn to me and say skeptically, "Are you saying we traveled back to 1811? Is this a dream or a lit (Gen Z slang for enjoyable or exciting) '80s movie?"

We see a wood hulled ship with three masts struggling to cut through the churning water. That must be the Tonquin! The American ship sent by John Jacob Astor to start a fur trading post in Astoria. Just then, we see 20 Clatsop and Chinook tribal canoes speed towards the ship.

"Hmmm. I wonder if we can help."



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## our coast weekend

ON THE COVER

Travelers can access the Gearhart Beach at the western end of Pacific Way.  
PHOTO BY  
KATHERINE LACAZE



### STAFF AND CONTRIBUTORS

#### COAST WEEKEND EDITOR

ALYSSA EVANS

#### CALENDAR COORDINATOR

BREE ELLIOTT

#### CONTRIBUTORS

RON BALDWIN

MORGAN GRINDY

KATHERINE LACAZE

BARBARA LLOYD MCMICHAEL

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Phone: 503.325.3211 Ext. 217 or 800.781.3211

Fax: 503.325.6573

E-mail: [editor@coastweekend.com](mailto:editor@coastweekend.com)

Address: P.O. Box 210 • 949 Exchange St. Astoria, OR 97103