

OPINION



the Astorian

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Founded in 1873

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PUBLISHER'S NOTEBOOK

Print hub a hidden asset

Fish processors and wood products come to mind when thinking of manufacturing in Clatsop County. There's also the one-of-a-kind airport tugs, grinders and forage bag manufacturers with historic roots here. And the most current cannery — beer.

But there's also a manufacturing plant at 949 Exchange St., often unnoticed, but given away by the rollup doors tucked discreetly behind the office space at the toe of the hill. There is a four-tower printing press inside, capable of running over 20,000 copies an hour. That press runs for a full shift, five days a week printing 15 different newspaper titles, plus assorted monthly and quarterly publications.



KARI BORGEN

That manufacturing plant, The Astorian, is a print hub for the region.

The Astorian is one of the few press facilities left in the Northwest. During the past two years, presses have been shuttered at over 40 newspaper printing plants nationwide, including plants in Longview, Centralia, Portland, Eugene, Bend, Pendleton, Coos Bay, Yakima and Seattle as centralizing printing operations makes more sense than supporting costly equipment and underutilized production shifts.

The Goss-Tensor hybrid press at The Astorian was upgraded in 2010, and again in 2019. It is big enough to print full color on every page of 12-page sections, with a maximum section size of 16 pages, but not so big as to be an overinvestment of equipment that requires a lot of personnel to run it.

Most importantly, The Astorian has the good fortune to have experienced production professionals — the key to the success of the manufacturing operation.

Press supervisor Jim Stanovich has been with The Astorian for over 40 years and knows this press inside and out. Pressman Mark Cope came to Astoria two years ago from Quad Graphics in Portland when that plant closed, bringing with him nearly 40 years of experience.



Colin Murphey/The Astorian

Color improved in The Astorian after a significant upgrade to the press equipment.

Their skills are more art than science, and becoming rare as many print operations can no longer find experienced press operators. We are fortunate to have them.

The accompanying distribution and packaging center assembles the printed sections and preprinted inserts into completed products. Mail preparation for 11 of those 15 newspapers happens as the sections come off of the production line. An inline labeling machine converts information supplied from each newspaper subscriber database into ink jet labels printed on each newspaper. Every paper is sorted into postal route order and into mail tubs for delivery to post offices as far away as Crescent City, California.

Production director John Bruijn is known for his attention to detail and quality control. His teams work to manufacture an excellent quality product for our customers — whether our regional newspaper partners or Astorian subscribers. Corporate systems director and mechanical whiz Carl Earl is part of the go-to team to keep the equipment tuned and running — hydraulics, electronics, mechanics — and keep operations humming.

LOOKING FOR WORK?

We are always looking for production team members. If you would like to join us, or know of someone who would, please let me know at kborgen@dailyastorian.com

The fishing and forestry manufacturing in the region helps our operation by keeping local parts and supply retailers in business in our market. Those retailers keep us stocked with the belts, parts, hoses and fasteners we need for repairs. We still buy our newsprint locally from Norpac in Longview, Washington, delivered to us by TP Freight's Astoria terminal.

Delivery contractor Bob Wilkie and his team log an incredible number of miles every week to and from post offices, retail locations and racks and our newspaper partners in other towns. He is the final leg of the relay, and despite obstacles, always makes the finish line.

That said, every day is a challenge

on the production line. Like fish processing, we're packaging fresh product for delivery — newspapers have an expiration date. Tuesday's paper has to be delivered on Tuesday. All of the 15 newspapers we manufacture require on-time delivery, every day, every time. There is no "delayed shipment" option.

Yet, the fast pace is rewarding work — all of the efforts from writers, editors, advertising and design come together in production where preparation for delivery finishes the job. There are 15 communities served by the newspapers printed at The Astorian, and we take our responsibility to them seriously. We are proud, grateful and humbled that we are still able to serve each one.

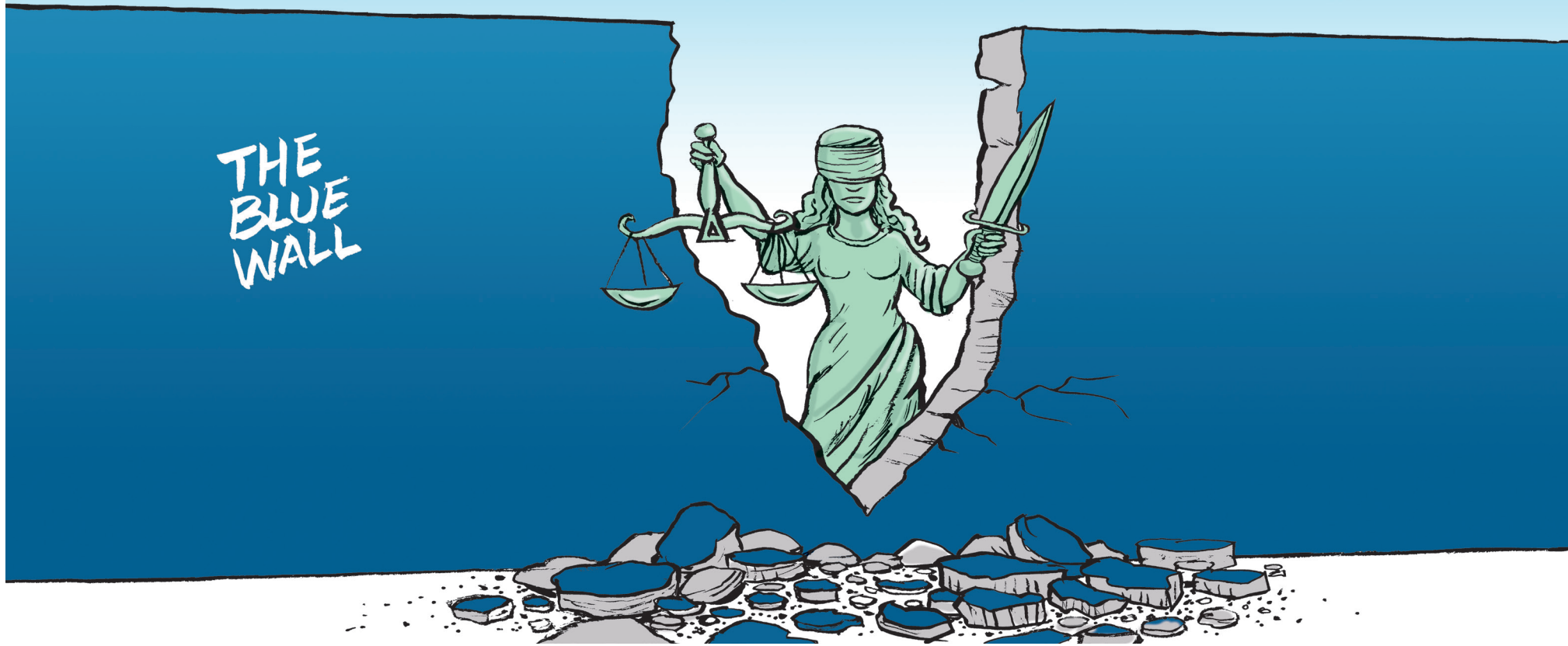
We are always looking for production team members. If you would like to join us, or know of someone who would, please let me know at kborgen@dailyastorian.com.

For more information about our press upgrades and to watch video of the press running, look for special features on this article at dailyastorian.com

Kari Borgen is publisher of The Astorian.

PLATE caglecartoons.com

THE BLUE WALL



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Heartening

Kudos to Seaside's Community Wellness Center, aka Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District, where there is, indeed, something for everybody.

COVID-19 compliant, the board, administration and staff have created a safe environment, inclusive of activities covering the lifespan.

Silver and fit benefits, youth sports and playgrounds and a skate park are all available. It is heartening to see a community invested in public health.

PATTI and TOM SMITH
Gearhart

Glad to see

I was pleased to read in "State backs subsidy for bus route between Astoria and Portland" (The Astorian, April 15) that the

state of Oregon has decided to reinvest in bus links between Portland and Astoria.

I live in the Seattle area, and was excited to make a trip to Astoria, having been vaccinated against COVID-19. A large part of my decision to visit Astoria was that I could get here without a car. My

trip from Portland to Astoria on the bus was enjoyable, safe and punctual.

I'm glad to see the state and local governments investing in the success of this public transportation option, even after a rough year. I have so enjoyed my visit to this city and look forward to returning (via

bus and train) again in the future.

TUCKER CHOLVIN
Snohomish, Washington

Winning

You grow up playing board games with the neighborhood kids once a week. Being the youngest, you don't win very often — if at all — and that's OK. You learn a valuable life lesson: You don't always win.

You get older, and begin winning more games, until one year, you begin winning every game. This doesn't sit well with your "friends" who announce that they are going to change the rules of the game.

It isn't "fair" that you are winning by following the same rules they used. This is somehow different.

RICHARD DILLON
Warrenton

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 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 should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.