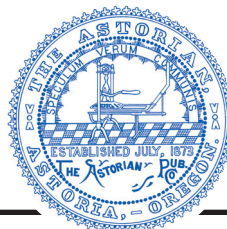


OPINION



the Astorian

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WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Astoria had its share of armed standoffs

In a year of racial strife in the wake of George Floyd's murder, many Americans would be surprised at the concept of an academic police officer.

One of them died recently. He was an agent of change within policing. Harvey Schlossberg was known as a father of modern police psychology. His wealth of insights, though desperately needed, seem to be forgotten.



STEVE FORRESTER

Ron Louie, Astoria's police chief from 1987 to 1992, was a student and disciple of Schlossberg. Now an instructor at Portland State University, Louie authored the 2008 book "Tactical Communication in Crisis Incidents."

Louie's fundamental accomplishment in Astoria was to professionalize the city's police department. He also was forced to use what he learned from Schlossberg. Shortly after Louie became chief in 1988, an armed man barricaded himself into a north side home. Louie came to that encounter well prepared. He had been one of a select group of 20 police officers who were trained by Schlossberg at a former military base in San Francisco Bay. They conducted exercises in hostage negotiations.

In 1991, a man barricaded himself inside a trailer on Port of Astoria property and fired some 40 rounds of ammunition at Louie and one of his officers. "I got the call at 1 a.m.," Louie said. "We could hear his bullets hit in the leaves around us. We evacuated people on the hill above. Also fishermen. Sheriff John Raichl put a sniper up on the bridge. When the sun came up, I was able to talk him out."

Two more incidents followed, including Louie's negotiating with Greenpeace demonstrators who sought to block the progress of the battleship New Jersey as it sailed underneath the Astoria Bridge.

Louie's training and consultation with Schlossberg were life-changing.



'Dog Day Afternoon,' a movie inspired by a Brooklyn bank robbery in the 1970s, dramatized the need for better hostage negotiating.

Schlossberg's obituary in The New York Times describes just how starkly different he was in 1950s policing. Stefan Forbes, who directed a documentary about Schlossberg, told the Times: "It's important to remember what an outsider Harvey was in the NYPD. In a top-down, paramilitary, predominantly Irish police culture of command and control, in walked an iconoclastic Jewish intellectual pacifist, a beat cop with a Ph.D. in psychology."

Schlossberg pioneered developing psychological testing for police recruits.

To be accepted into Schlossberg's San Francisco training session, Louie had to pass eight hours of psychological testing at Stanford University. "They were looking for emotional intelligence," Louie said. "Not verbosity. You should only talk 20% of the time with a hostage taker." They were also looking for an ability to accept criticism. "Hostage takers are jerks," Louie said. "They were looking for the kind of cop with a thick skin."

"Our class of 20 officers from

throughout the Western U.S. were there for six days," remembered Louie. "All of us were Vietnam vets and college graduates. Schlossberg was a fascinating character and at the time still worked for NYPD. He spent the entire training cycle with one-on-one sessions, then class, then running scenarios. The training days were 10 hours long and at an intense pace."

Following that, Louie did an internship with San Francisco's crisis intervention unit.

"When I moved up to negotiating with subjects, I would talk to Harvey about calls, and on two calls, I got him on the phone in New York to advise on the call. He loved doing that with his students. He would say, 'Damn, this stuff really works.'"

Louie left Astoria for the Hillsboro Police Department, where he established Oregon's first cybercrime unit.

When my questioning turned to contemporary policing in America and especially in Portland, Louie was not optimistic.



Ron Louie is a former Astoria police chief.

"Only part of American policing is trained in diffusing crisis," he said. "The rest of it is what you see. Cops acting like jerks. We are still selecting the wrong people to be cops. Once we hire them, we're not training them. We do a very poor job of training police in America in how to deal with crisis intervention."

He added: "American policing is in a lot of trouble. We don't have consistent training and we don't hire the right people. Every time you see a mistake, it's a cop acting like an idiot."

Asked about Portland's riots, Louie said: "We have a lack of containment and prosecution. We're not prosecuting the regulars. Whenever you have a hardcore group, you're in trouble. They are modern-day anarchists. They are not Black Lives Matter protesters. They hitch a ride on Black Lives Matter. Their only interest is trashing."

He adds that, "Black Lives Matter tells you their goals. Anarchists won't tell you. They need to be isolated and prosecuted."

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A spit in the face

After recent actions in Congress, way too many of those elected officials proved a few things.

First and foremost is that we need mandatory service of some form, such as an 18-month program that is connected to graduating from high school and a way to earn an American citizenship. A place where every individual is taught the basics of self-defense, personal finance and the more difficult self-respect.

We, as a society, are responsible for having our own citizens not knowing who or why the faces on our currency are on our currency. As an American, that embarrasses me.

Another thing our Congress proved, again, is the fact that this young country, "in order to form a more perfect union," needs term limits. Humans have proved over and over we need limits. We need deadlines. A time limit to get things done.

Why are almost all elected seats of any office not having time limits? If absolute power corrupts absolutely, why don't we hold our elected officials to that ideology?

But what gives me knots in my belly and a lump in my throat is the slave-owner mentality of those same elected officials. As a veteran who has stood against tyranny his whole life, those officials spit in my face. They are making a mockery of what thousands, no millions have died for, or spent their lives trying to uphold: the Pledge of Allegiance.

TROY J. HASKELL
Astoria

A place of exclusion

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners is reviewing the short-term rental ordinance, and opponents are asking for elimination of, or significant restrictions of, vacation rentals.

I'm deeply concerned that the proposed restrictions come from a place of exclusion, prioritizing those who can afford to own property along the Oregon Coast, or can afford a weeklong stay.

Did the visionary Gov. Oswald West want just 5% of Oregon's population to have the exclusive use of beaches, or did he want to keep beaches accessible to all, not just the privileged few?

As a county taxpayer, short-term rental owner and community member, I request the commissioners deeply consider policies that nourish a culture of excluding people just because they don't have the ability to live here full time, or afford a weeklong stay.

In a county that is 90% white, please consider how that impacts access for all Oregonians, and the unintended consequences that will result.

Potential issues with vacation rentals like noise, garbage, fires on beaches, parking, water use and conservation are all things that we, as a community, can fix — but let's not use those as a reason to exclude others and limit access.

My hope is that we can all come together as a community, open our hearts and see the responsibility of the privilege we have as property owners and work together — keeping in mind both our smaller neighborhood communities and access for our greater community of Oregonians.

AMBER GEIGER MORGAN
Falcon Cove

A bigger problem

Regarding all the Gearhart city councilors' enthusiasm for a new fire station on Highlands Lane, have you thought through the traffic safety aspect?

Currently there is the Blue Heron, Teal

Road, Surf Pines, The Reserve at Gearhart and The Highlands developments, not to mention Highlands Golf Course and the Del Rey Beach public access.

Now there is the proposed development of 30 acres on Highlands Lane. If this goes into the Gearhart urban growth boundary, there is the potential for another 120 houses (four per acre).

If you conceivably take away 10 acres for a fire station and park, that is still 80 houses with possibly two cars per house — that is an additional 160 vehicles trying to get out onto U.S. Highway 101.

Now you add a fire station, with fire trucks trying to get out during an emergency. Will there be a signal light at Highway 101 and Highlands Lane to deal with this? Not just a signal light that fire trucks can control?

You're creating a bigger problem for everyone living off of Highlands Lane. Have any Gearhart City Council members ever tried getting out onto Highway 101 from Highlands Lane, especially in the summer? It is already an unsafe nightmare.

I understand Highway 101 is a state



F. BARNES.
CagleCartoons.com

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.

highway, but if Gearhart wants this land to become part of the Gearhart urban growth boundary, then Gearhart needs to make sure it is a safe plan.

SHARON DAVIS-ROBINSON
Gearhart