

OPINION



the Astorian

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Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

People return to the Hammond Marina after a morning of fishing during Buoy 10 salmon season.

A starvation plan

Once again, recreational fishermen descended on the Columbia River in August for the Buoy 10 salmon season, hoping to hook into some of these iconic fish.

One only needed to take a drive across the Astoria Bridge to witness the chaos in what I would describe as “combat fishing.” Lots of boats jockeying for position and often fishing right next to each other. Tangled lines are common and there have even been some serious collisions between boats.

This fishery has changed dramatically over the years from a small local fishery into an aggressive regional fishery dominated by a nonlocal guide fleet. These professional sport fishermen are very effective at harvesting large numbers of salmon, and the percentage they catch grows larger every year. The speed and effectiveness of how quickly the allocated number of salmon are caught can lead to early closures or reduced bag limits.

In seeing the way this fishery is going, it pays to remember that not long ago we used to have a vibrant local commercial gillnet fishery that harvested these salmon as well.

Due to unfair policies started by Gov. John Kitzhaber and perpetuated by Gov. Kate Brown, our gillnet fleet is being starved to death and a big hole has been shot in our economy. Not because of lack of salmon, but because these governors have seen to it that the recreational fleet gets to harvest the majority of salmon. They have apparently bought into the idea that our commercial fishermen can survive in off-channel reservations, such as Youngs Bay, and that this can somehow make up for lost opportunity on the main stem of the Columbia.

It's a starvation plan and it means poverty for commercial fishermen trying to survive. It's a hit our economy cannot afford. The policy is not working, and can only be described as a complete failure.

Most Oregonians are not sport fishermen and would like to have access to a piece of this salmon through their favorite restaurant, grocery store or fish market. Commercial fishermen are the means by which most people have access to these salmon.

Tourists from all around the world that come to our town like to see a working waterfront and eat a piece of locally harvested, fresh seafood. This time of year it should be locally caught salmon on the menu, harvested by one of our own commercial fishermen. The current allocations giving the bulk of the available salmon harvested over to the recreational side, while pushing commercial fishermen aside, is completely unfair.



CARY JOHNSON

The gillnet fishermen that harvested these salmon live here in your local area, pay taxes here, maintain their homes, boats and equipment here and support our community year-round. These commercial fishermen are still here, but many of them are struggling to provide for their families in a way of life that has sustained them for generations. These commercial fishermen do not just simply provide a temporary bump in tourism and then head back to their homes, towing their boats and taking their dollars with them.

Don't get me wrong, I'm supportive of a vibrant and successful sport fishery, and salmon need all of us pulling for their success and recovery. Commercial fishermen are one of the strongest advocates for the success of salmon species, after all, their livelihoods depend on abundant salmon.

The harvest of these iconic fish just needs to be fair and equitable for all Oregonians. Our economy is much bigger than just tourism and recreation, and we need the jobs that commercial fishing provides to our community. With the right management, we can have both.

Cary Johnson is a gillnet fisherman.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wildlife deserves better

As a volunteer for the Wildlife Center of the North Coast, I had the privilege of helping their staff rehabilitate seven young white pelicans.

We were able to release three of these magnificent birds back into Youngs Bay last month. The remaining four birds will be released when they are healthy enough.

It was a heartwarming moment when they were released, their joy of being free in their natural element was evident. What's not so heartwarming is the reason the pelicans ended up at the wildlife center in the first place.

In the days following the Fourth of July, these juvenile birds were found in parking lots, on the Astoria Riverwalk and on city streets, lost and confused. The culprit? Astoria's massive fireworks show, of course. The noise and explosions so terrified the birds that they fled their flocks in a panic, trying to escape the mayhem.

I'm sorry people, but there is nothing good about fireworks. Ask any vet, animal shelter or pet owner and you will likely get an earful about the damage and disruption that fireworks cause.

Considering the trash and microplastics generated by fireworks that end up in our rivers and on our beaches, the hundreds of serious injuries that occur to people and children every year, the incalculable trauma to our wildlife and pets, there is only one option.

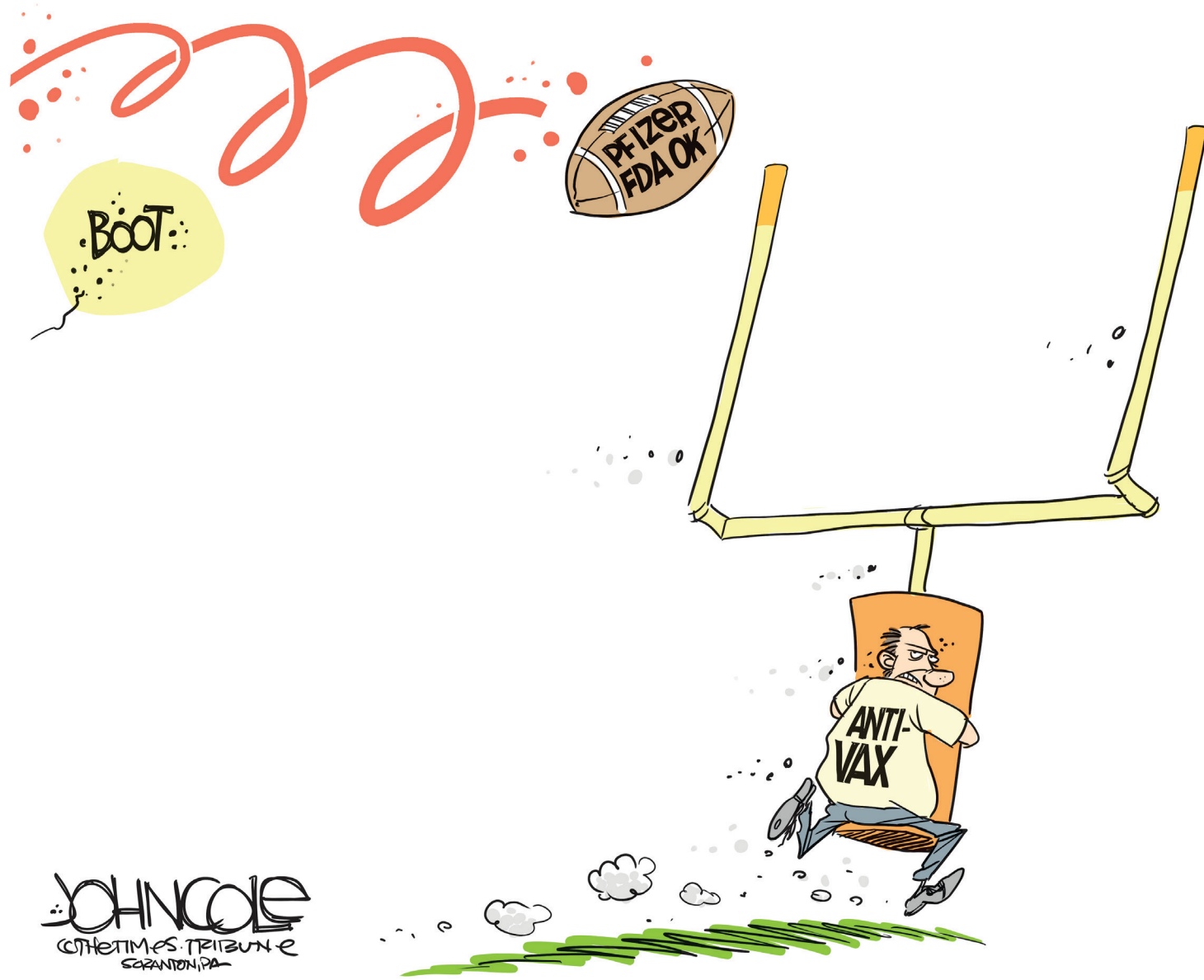
Fireworks need to be banned, especially mega-shows as Astoria puts on. Step up Astoria, our community and wildlife deserve better.

MICHAEL TIERNEY
Astoria

Striving

As a construction contractor, both civilian and military, I have been blessed with the opportunity to have spoken with a large variety of people — rich and poor, motivated and lazy, and both those who love life and those who seem to hate everything.

Even the nice people who are actually talking about themselves have the same outspoken concern: Younger Americans have a deeply rooted belief they are personally owed something. Now we know every generation says this about the newer one, but this time it's true. The outcome of when all participants



JOHN COLE
THE TIMES TRIBUNE
SCRANTON, PA

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

get the same reward for just showing up has come back to bite us. Evolution has proven the necessity for humans to have something to strive for.

When we are rewarded without expectations of improving, we don't learn what

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.

sacrifice really is, or self-respect or empathy for others. The truth of the matter is all humans, including Americans, are only given two things: Life and a name, if you are lucky. Everything else is from others. After losing so many friends and fam-

ily last year, now is the perfect time to reevaluate our priorities. Let us all slow down our lives just a bit.

TROY J. HASKELL
Astoria

Why the wait?

Did I miss something? I recently read that firefighters and other Astoria city personnel are required to get the COVID-19 vaccination by the end of September or mid-October.

With public service departments meeting with citizens face to face every day, why the wait? Why not require vaccinations within one week? It seems to me these vital services would welcome becoming safer themselves in order to better assist the public.

LEE JETTE
Astoria