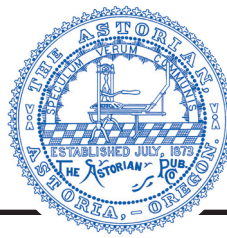


OPINION



the Astorian

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WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Inspiring each other

Oregonians are tired. Beat down. Ready for a break. Over the past two years, workers have been asked to take on more during the coronavirus pandemic. It's taken a toll. Many are burnt out or have left jobs. Keeping spirits up amid so much uncertainty is taxing.

It should come as no surprise then that optimism is in short supply for many Oregonians, according to a recent survey from the Oregon Values and Beliefs Center.

Of those surveyed, 53% said they are optimistic about this year, compared to about the same period in 2021 when 59% said they were somewhat or very optimistic.

Rural residents said they were less likely to believe the state is headed in the right direction.

The Oregon Values and Beliefs Center is an independent, nonpartisan group that has partnered with EO Media Group and Pamplin Media Group.

As the U.S. mourns the loss of nearly a million lives to COVID-19, it's clear things won't ever be the same.

But as we grieve these losses, we must find a path forward.

One way is to inspire each other. Losing local luminaries like Skip Hauke, who owned a grocery store in Astoria and went on to run the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, leaves a sizable gap in local memory and leadership.

I can remember times as a child going to Hauke's Sentry Market with my mother, always with an eye toward the store's doughnuts.

While it's important to mourn the loss of Hauke, we should also be inspired by the legacy he left behind.

His commitment, selflessness and good humor are what are most needed to help address some of the North Coast's most pressing issues.

And there is no shortage of issues: from child care to housing and homelessness to mental health — these shortcomings in our community will take sustained, creative solutions.

But there are also gaps in other areas, too. Our local nonprofits, festivals and community groups need help.

Volunteering was one of the many things Hauke was known for. Some of his most impactful work was done when no one was looking, like doing dishes at the Astoria Senior Center during his lunch breaks.

Part of what makes moving on after two years of the pandemic so difficult is the variety of ways people's lives have been impacted. The young and old have both endured losses.

Helping at a local school, animal shelter or visiting with elders at a care home are just some of the things people can do to strengthen the fabric of our community.



Jonathan Williams/The Astorian

There is much to be optimistic about on the North Coast this year with the return of many in-person events.

It's also no secret some of the activities from the early days of the pandemic don't carry the same joy.

No 1,000-word puzzle alone will take us out of this malaise.

Not seeing your friends and relatives for lengthy periods of time is hard.

I recently got to spend time with a friend who I hadn't seen for a while. We walked part of the Fort to Sea Trail on a bright, blue-sky day. It was refreshing after so much time apart. We enjoy sharing each other's company.

So do things that are invigorating. Inspiring. Call up a friend or relative. Check in on people.

The past two years have given those with the time ample opportunity to explore creative pursuits and learn new things — share them with someone.

It really is never too late to try something new. Take the Columbia River Symphony, for example. I grew up playing viola in the symphony when the member-

ship was around a dozen people. It's grown considerably since then. What I always enjoyed about it as a young musician was the camaraderie and chance to learn from the adults — some of which were also new to playing or had recently taken up their instruments again. It was inspiring.

It is this connection, of young and old, new and experienced, that will help us find solutions to today's issues and transcend the challenges of the pandemic.

So who inspires you? Give them a shout. You might be surprised how much it means to them.

As athletes, musicians and professionals of all trades know — it's not enough to just hope that something will improve or go right. It takes work. Hauke knew this.

There is much for us to be optimistic about this year if we only have the strength to lift one another up with compassion, kindness and decency.

Jonathan Williams is the associate editor of *The Astorian*.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Low road

Astoria takes a step closer to workforce housing at Heritage Square": A very disingenuous article published Feb. 24 in *The Astorian*.

The uproar was never about the need for housing. All agreed it was a priority. The uproar was always about where it was to be sited. The city has little money. They refused to consider land swaps, purchases or any other creative use of repurposed buildings. They exist in Astoria.

Instead, the City Council took the low road. They are giving away prime downtown real estate, and 10 years of city promises to make it a library, small-footprint housing and public use space. Previous city councils debated on how to do this.

The city's own website for the Garden of Surging Waves states that in February 2012: "Astoria City Council amended the city's comprehensive plan to include language regarding redevelopment of Heritage Square as a public urban park."

In the past few months, the priorities were changed to low-income subsidized housing. One block from the tourist-fueled downtown.

The three supporters of this development will not run for reelection. The two "nay" votes return. My prediction is that new council members and the new mayor will reverse this 3-2 vote. The developer has one year to make good on promises. The construction start is at least several years out. The fight goes on.

JAY ROSEN
Astoria

Crucial turning point

The city of Seaside is at a crucial turning point as we begin the process of hiring a new city manager. Mark Winstanley will be retiring soon, so the recruiting, vetting and interviewing needs to move quickly.

As a longtime city employee, recently retired, I have seen, and personally experienced, the inner workings of the city, and want to share my opinion.

While I am all for hiring from within,

in this case, it isn't our best option. The city deserves a capable leader who has the education, experience, a deep history of leadership and a proven track record who can hit the ground running. An individual who will honor our history, while having a vision for the future.

There are many issues needing to be addressed, ones that have no easy fix, and perhaps a fresh eye would be useful. We need to seek out the best candidate with a nationwide search.

My hope is that our City Council will not take the path of least resistance, and truly search out the very best candidate for our city. As citizens, we deserve it.

GRETCHEN DARNELL
Seaside

Time to boost

I enjoy watching the ships navigating up and down the mighty Columbia River. I've noticed on ships almost 1,000 feet in length how small the rudders that guide the ships are by comparison.

I thought of a passage in the Book of James that compares the helm that guides the rudder with the tongue. I also recalled a philosopher's words, "four things come not back: the spoken word, the sped arrow, the past life and the neglected opportunity."

My point is this: How we talk to ourselves, and to others, can either lift or lower our spirits. So before we speak, let us stop and ask ourselves, "Is what I'm about to say to myself, or others, going to lift, or lower, our self-esteem?"

If ever there was a time when all of us need a boost, it is now! So when you see the next ship, ask yourself, "Are my words uplifting, navigating me on the right course?" By the grace of God, may it be so.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton

What's wrong with this picture?

In 1967, my husband and I were living in Poland, where he was working for



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.

the U.S. State Department. We were there for a year. World War II had ended only two decades years before. Adventures lay before us.

Warsaw was a beautiful city, despite the scars of the war. The Poles were open-hearted and loved Americans. Positioned on a plain between Germany and Russia, they had been invaded many times over the years.

From time to time, a rumor of another invasion would surface and you could not find any bread. It was in the Polish psyche. As I write this, Poland has opened its bor-

ders to refugees coming out of Ukraine. Thank God.

Former President Donald Trump was on TV praising Russian President Vladimir Putin's "genius" in his strategy for Ukraine. Americans need to dig that film up if Trump returns in 2024. And play it and play it. The people of Kyiv, innocent men, women and children and pets are being murdered for where they live.

What's wrong with this picture?

MARY TANGUAY WEBB
Astoria