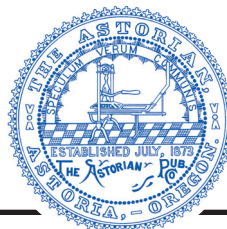


OPINION



the Astorian

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Deeply troubled

Homelessness is a consequence, not a cause. Over the last several years I have been deeply troubled by actions and comments from many citizens on a host of issues, including the homeless population.

In 1948, the U.S. signed an agreement with the United Nations indicating housing as a right under Resolution 217 A. The U.S. has not lived up to their agreement.

There are many reasons people become homeless: Mental health, drug abuse, criminal history, divorce, low income, high debt, monopolies and market manipulation (these are the causes), and we have done a really poor job addressing them.

Finland has a policy called "Housing First," and since initiating it, they have reduced the numbers of their homeless population substantially. It's based on getting people into a stable housing situation, then addressing the cause; it appears to work.

Before someone should be recalled based on a decision to provide a homeless area, you might want to know, it's illegal to criminalize homelessness.

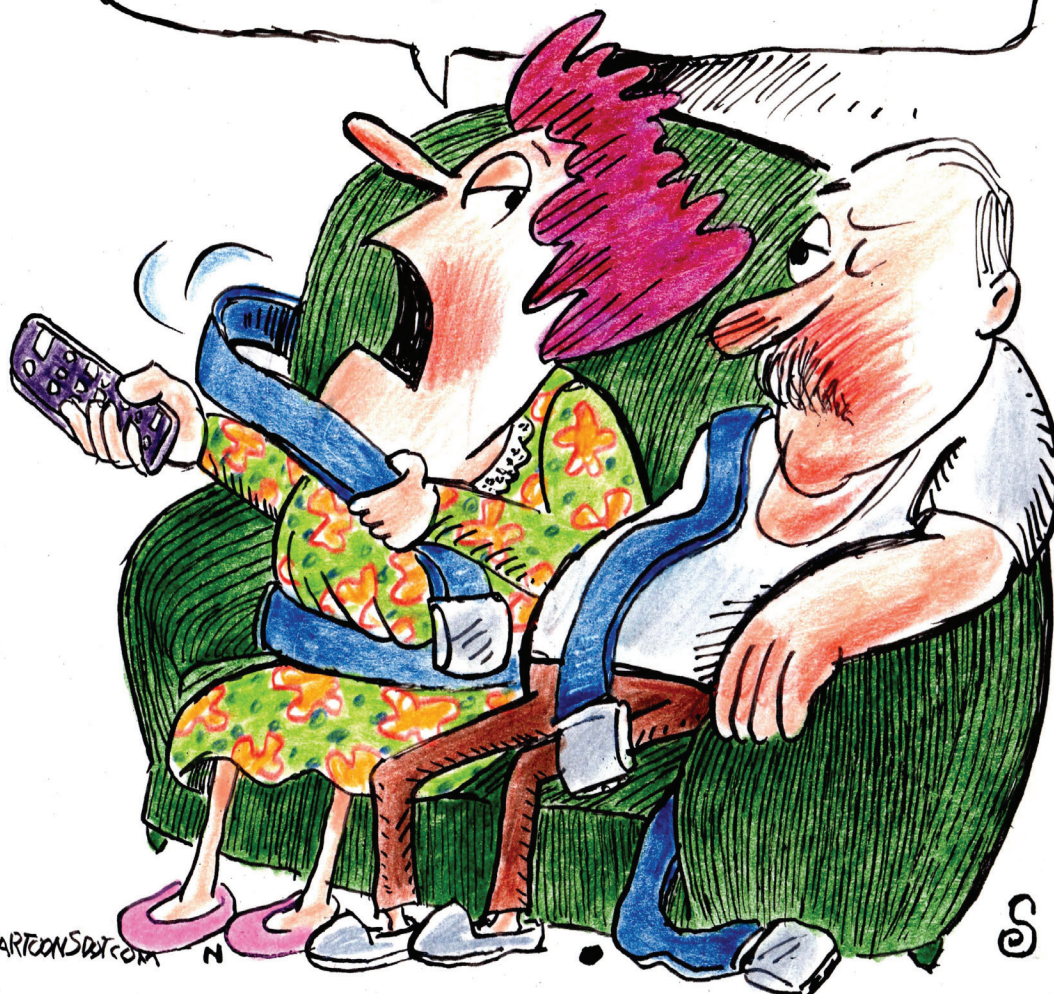
In a federal court ruling, criminally punishing homeless people for sleeping on the street when they have nowhere else to go is inhumane. It was found to violate the Eighth Amendment.

The U.N. 1948 resolution and the federal court ruling are requiring cities across the nation to find solutions for the problem by providing houses, and camps, during certain hours, times and locations.

TROY PROUTY
McMinnville



BETTER BUCKLE UP—
I'M TURNING ON THE NEWS!



Fix your roads

To hear about this new waterfront project ("Astoria adopts waterfront master plan," May 5). The roads through Astoria are completely a joke. Your roads are falling apart, especially entering and leaving the Astoria Bridge. Fix your roads first.

THOMAS KRUEGER
Ocean Park, Washington

streets would be an ideal location for this.

This location is currently occupied by the old Safeway lot and a small parking lot. This location was also being planned to be used by putting in affordable housing, but in the future the parking garage would be more useful to tourists, and local business people, than housing.

NICOLAI OGIER
Astoria

Our money that the people of the state pay for the roads should be shown to go for something to better the roads, not sitting somewhere collecting dust.

RYAN DICK
Astoria

ing down from places like Portland to try and get by here.

While there are places like Clatsop Community Action, this might not be enough for people. I constantly see people pushing carts full of cans they found on the side of the street into places, like Safeway, that have bottle returns just so they can get enough money for their dinner.

With rising prices of not only gas, but anything else in this world, it is even hard on people who used to live comfortably. The minimum wage has never been enough to pay for things, and if prices keep going up, we might all become homeless.

I hope by writing this I may bring awareness not only to the homeless population in Clatsop County, but also to the future of our county.

RACHEL BALL
Astoria

Unfortunate

As anyone travels through our small towns, it is not hard to miss the amount of litter pasted across the sides of the roads. Broken parts and trash are thrown and flown out of vehicles right into our towns that are marked for their beauty. We are close to the ocean and river, where most litter will end up.

Only ever so often can a nice person, part of our community, be spotted with a bag and reach extender in hand helping maintain the cleanliness of our environment. It is unfortunate that a person has to be cleaning up after others, as if they are children.

If everyone simply kept their trash until they find a trash bin, and kept their litter out of the beds of their vehicles to prevent it from possibly flying out, then our litter issue would already be almost solved.

So the next time you walk down the sidewalk, and you come across a small candy wrapper, go ahead and pick it up. That simple action can create a habit for yourself to help our community.

SIERRA BROWN
Astoria

Stop littering

We need to take care of our environment.

It doesn't matter if you're walking on the side of the road, in town, or in the woods, you find trash everywhere. On multiple accounts, I have seen people driving down the road and just throwing garbage out their windows.

Plastic, food wrappers, cigarettes, bottles, cans and even clothes, are all in ditches or on the side of the road. Not only does it deface our beautiful town, but animals end up either eating the garbage or getting stuck in it, which usually ends up killing most of them.

We need to stop littering and defacing our town, and start cleaning up after ourselves.

SARA WERNER
Astoria

Dangerous

Our roads, and how dangerous they are, have been a topic for many years. With all of the potholes and bumps that form on the roads over time, the danger of the roads increases with no sign of improvement.

But how are the roads still so bad when the people of the state pay taxes to have them cared for? Crashes have been on the rise. Deaths from crashes are at their highest in three decades.

Potholes, bumps and cracks are almost impossible to avoid on any road in the world, but the frequency of these holes and bumps are way too dangerous to procrastinate on. There are many areas that haven't even been attempted at trying to fix, as far as I have seen.

For example, U.S. Highway 30, all kinds of bumps and potholes in a bunch of different places along that road. I have personally seen many times people swerving out of the way of these holes on Highway 30 and putting people on the other side of the road, and me, in danger.

Moral failing

There are an estimated half million unsheltered people in the U.S., 60,000 of them veterans.

I have housed and helped many homeless people over the years. Each had legitimate reasons for ending up that way. In addition to job or financial loss, health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder, mental illness, learning disabilities and trauma can make it difficult to hold a job or adhere to societal norms.

Many of the unsheltered we see today live with one or more of these issues. Living homeless, with no resources or coping skills, also often leads to addiction, making getting off the streets even more complicated. It's a vicious cycle of frustration and despair.

Expecting people to simply "choose" not to be addicted, or to "pull themselves up by their bootstraps" is not a realistic approach. Being homeless is not a moral failing. What is a moral failing is to see these people, and not see deeply damaged and suffering human beings.

It is a moral failing to worry more about shopping carts than people. It is a moral failing to stalk the homeless, putting their pictures on the internet, and threaten them with violence and call them vile names. This behavior saddens and frightens me more than any real or perceived threats from the homeless population.

History has shown what this can lead to. Our fellow human beings deserve better. There are no simple solutions, but whatever we do, it must be based on compassion, not fear or disgust.

RITA SMITH
Hammond

Awareness

I want to draw the attention of the concerned authorities to homeless people in Clatsop County.

If you walk around any part of Clatsop County, you are sure to see tents set up, people on corners with signs, and people pushing carts around. It seems that as the years go by, there are more people com-

Great addition

Growing up as a basketball player in the Northwest, I know how difficult and frustrating rain can be. I feel as if a covered basketball hoop in Clatsop County would be a great addition to the community.

I have played many pickup games in Astoria, but all of them have been on dry, sunny days that are hard to come across. I think a covered basketball hoop would give kids an opportunity to go outside and be active, while protected from the elements.

Kids need an outlet, and something to do, otherwise they could resort to things like drugs or alcohol. I think covered basketball hoops would be a good addition to the community, and lead the way to lots of pickup basketball, and maybe even some rain-free public events.

LOGAN MORRILL
Astoria

Ideal location

Have you ever tried to find a parking place on a Saturday in downtown Astoria? On a recent weekend, it took me over 10 minutes to find a parking spot.

I believe that it would help people and local businesses if parking was more accessible. One way to do this is to build a parking garage downtown. The lot off of Duane Street between 11th and 12th

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.

Small thing

When driving past the bridge that enters Washington, driving on W. Marine Drive in the left lane, have you ever felt a rumble of waves? Well, I'm sure you have, or you tried to get around that horrible feeling. Something needs to happen to get rid of those horrible potholes that are all lined in that one spot.

It might not seem like a big, or even an important problem, happening right now in Astoria, but it's a problem that could eventually get worse if we leave it alone. Potholes can be dangerous over time to your car, or even people around you.

They can cause hoses and lines to puncture, leading to fluid leakage. If the holes are big enough, your vehicle could bottom up, you could lose control of your steering and hit someone, and you could get damage to your car's undercarriage. These could all be serious problems. These potholes need to be noticed and fixed before they get worse.

Potholes are also a problem for how Astoria looks. They are a small thing that affects the look of Astoria, but all the small things you clean up can make a big impact.

MADDISON VanGUNDY
Astoria