

Washington Avenue woes

What is the Humboldt County Planning Dept. thinking?

In McKinleyville, there is a subdivision to be constructed, along with a BMX track and sports complex, all with ingress and egress from Washington Avenue.

In addition to these, until the extension of McKinleyville Avenue to School Road is completed, traffic from the Santos and Furtado subdivisions is utilizing Washington Avenue as access to U.S. Highway 101.

Even with this increased traffic volume, minimal improvements are proposed to Washington Avenue.

If in fact a traffic study was performed, how can the lack of improvements to Washington Avenue be justified or ignored?

At a minimum, Washington Avenue from School Road to Oakdale Drive should have two 20-foot traffic lanes with sidewalks on both sides, as is Washington Avenue from Oakdale Drive to McKinleyville Avenue.

**Scott R. Baker
McKinleyville**

❖ LETTERS

Smirking into fascism

There is an old joke that goes “How can you tell when a politician is lying? Their lips are moving.” There was a time in this country when you had a hard time picking out the liars, that is no longer true. Their lips are moving.

In my lifetime we have been treated to some of the best liars around, but not now. How fondly we remember Richard Nixon, Richard Haldeman, Henry Kissinger, Robert McNamara, Bush Senior (junior was a terrible liar) and Dick Cheney to name just a few.

These were people who could look the American public in the eye and lie convincingly. Now we have politicians that just move their lips. Everything that comes out of their mouths is a lie and those lies change from day to day, depending on how the wind blows. This is not relegated to the Republican Party.

I laughed when some Democratic senator stated the Manchin had lied to them. No, really!

I grew up in a big city. We were taught

how to navigate the world, protect ourselves and not get taken for a ride, literally. We were taught the subtleties of assessing people looking for danger. People whose smile does not reach their eyes, people who look elsewhere when talking to you, people who smirk... really, what is so funny?

Now you cannot turn on the television and not see all those traits. The people who read the news (Norah O'Donnell smiles all the time, no matter how dire the news, and the smile never reaches her eyes), politicians, health care providers, retail clerks, administrative office workers.

To be fair many of the last groups are young people, so used to dealing with people in a digital world they have trouble relating to the real thing. Maybe that is what is wrong with the young people in congress. At least six members of the Republican Caucus were instrumental in helping the terrorists who invaded the congressional buildings on January 6.

They think they will never be found out or punished. They are everywhere talking and talking (all lies) and they think no one is wise to them. At the very least they are all guilty of violations of their oaths of office. More likely they are guilty

of sedition and treason, both of which are punishable by long federal prison sentences or as their hero like to say “firing squad.”

Yes, the public is frustrated with the pace of the January 6 committee. Start putting these people in jail. So far, the longest sentence given out is 90 days because a woman brought her teen-aged son with her onto the grounds and into the building. There are members of the House of Representatives who continue to plot the overthrow of the government. Find them, censure them and remove them from Congress. You have arrested over 700. They should already be in jail so you can start on the “Big Fish.” Get these people gone. There is much more work to be done and no guarantee that the January 6th committee will survive the next election cycle.

It has been opined in some reputable news outlets, both foreign and domestic, that the United States will be a fascist dictatorship by 2030. Maybe I will be dead by then, but our children and children's children will never know what it means to live in a country for the people and by the people.

Thank you for listening,
**Jan Phelps
Arcata**

With bold planning, Arcata is poised to continue succeeding

50 years ago, I pulled up at the stoplight in Northtown at the end of G Street, the only light in Arcata, or at least it's the only one that I remember. It was a busy intersection full of students heading to the Humboldt State College campus. Over-size American automobiles and beat-up pickup trucks barreled by on the four-lane highway at 50 mph in both directions, some heading north towards McKinleyville, others south into Eureka, a town at the time of active fisheries, lumber mills, car lots and department stores (no mall yet) and the ever-present rumbling along down Broadway of gigantic log trucks, their impatient drivers slamming on their brakes at the multiple stoplights, the gritty city reeking constantly of sulphur from the paper mill across the bay.



❖ THE FUTURE OF ARCATA
Daniel Duncan
First of two parts

didn't have much savings — money at the commune was hard to come by and only needed for personal items — but that's another tale.

With a 28-year-old's cartilage, I was confident that I could make enough \$ as a carpenter to support my little family wherever we ended up. This was the era of the nomad hippie subculture that had sprung up during the back-to-the-land movement that was taking place throughout the U.S.

Mid-century Arcata

As for Arcata, it was at that time a combination mill town/college town, with lots of old settlement buildings from the former century, a place that looked like it could use a carpenter like myself. Having escaped as a teen from the sprawling megalopolis of San Diego, there was nothing I loved more than a small town with some old houses to work on, especially the fine buildings from California's early period.

Over the last 50 years, since that day at the intersection, I have watched Arcata recover from being a decaying lumber town with more mills in 1950 than any city in North America (each one with its own burner polluting the atmosphere with thick grit every day but Tuesday — the one day a person could hang out their laundry) with a Normal School to train teachers founded in 1913 having grown over the years into a liberal arts mecca as well as a fine college for science majors with a forestry bent. Many young people in the state were fleeing at the time to HSU because it was located way up the coast, too far away to matter much to the development-crazy hordes of California's urban centers in the south like the one I came from.

Downtown Arcata in those early days — early for me and my genera-

tion — was a rip-roaring place. The Plaza had more bars per square foot than any other retail business. There was the Brizard department store in Jacoby's Storehouse, a drugstore on the corner of Ninth and H, a muffler shop on Eighth and G, and an ice cream shop (Varsity) on the east side that used real ice cream for its milk shakes. Plaza Shoe Shop was still located on the Plaza; Northtown Books was situated in Northtown. Don's Donut Bar had its storefront right next to the Jambalaya Club, and was operated by a guy named Don Kolshinski, a bespectacled, kindly gent.



Don Kolshinski at Don's Donut Bar. UNION FILE PHOTO

When the clubs closed around the Plaza at 2 a.m., the inebriated millworkers, hippies, students and their ilk spilled from the Plaza bars and dropped into the donut shop's brightly lit storefront for yet another sugar rush at the fag-end of night. Don eventually retired from the donut-making business and bought himself a hot dog wagon, which he wheeled to the Plaza each day to offer up his superb working man's basic hot dog all day every day for a buck-fifty each until the fog came in at evening time. Then, the ever-patient Don single-handedly and laboriously wheeled his heavy one-man cart back off the Plaza to some off-site garage to prepare it for the next day's business and returned to his mother's home where he lived.

Arcata's evolution

Arcata has become today one of the finest small towns in America, whose down-

town has mostly managed to escape the worst of 20th century modernism with a few clever directives from its hip City Council, such as the following: 1) no stoplights (Caltrans installed the ones on Samoa Boulevard); 2) no fast food franchises; 3) no 6-lane freeway cutting through its heart and killing its soul; 4) instead of a pug-ugly sewage treatment plant rising up beside the bay, a marshland created at a former dump site and evacuated mill for natural filtration that serves the same function and provides nature paths for the town's residents as well as a sanctuary for wildlife; 5) no subdivision of the beautiful bottomland to the west, but open space left perpetually to dairy farmers to populate their fertile river-bottom pastures with dark cattle and a sprinkling of white egrets; 6) to the east, a city park consisting of a second-growth forest to cover the bottom of Fickle Hill that will never be cleared; 7) a Mad River to the north to be its natural boundary; 8) an Arcata Bay to the south that has nothing on it but a few leftover wood pilings and an abundance of shorebirds, secure in the knowledge that nary a cruise ship will ever attempt a landing lest it get stuck in the mud up to its portholes and wish it had kept on going up the coast to some big city like Seattle that cared about such types of visitors.

The town of Arcata grew up in a period of social upheaval in the 20th century's second half. It grew in fits and starts and it wasn't easy. When Caltrans, for example, tried to push through a six-lane freeway right down the heart of the city that few wanted, it took a new City Council to vote it down. This council was created due to a fortunate confluence of the national voting age law being lowered to the age of 18 and the presence of a fellow at Humboldt State named Wes Chesbro, who happened to be ASB president at the time.



COMING SOON Open Door's Arcata Community Health Center, planned for 2023 opening. VIA OPEN DOOR

Chesbro migrated over to the city government and got himself elected to the council to make sure the youth, the students, the hippies, the in-migrants from all parts of California, got their say along with the loggers and developers about the direction of Arcata's growth. Yes, and the first thing that was NOT going to happen, along with NO stoplights and NO fast food franchises downtown, was to allow a divide between the university side of the city and the downtown side.

This post-lumber mill town Arcata was going to be One community, was the feeling of the populace: half educational institution run by the state, half a town of free citizens run by a civil government, neither one dominating the other, both committed to the same purpose, to further a better, smarter North Coast, sharing resources and responsibilities to make that happen.

Smart Arcata

And that is exactly what is happening right now and in a big way for both the town and Humboldt State University. It's a new world out there with smartphone-carrying denizens of every type, age and economic category, including the homeless. There are no hidden agendas anymore. You can find a website for just about everything you thought you wanted to know, and Google will find the rest too even if you misspell your question.

By now, most everybody has learned that Humboldt

State is getting 5,500 new students as it turns into a Polytechnic by 2028. Google is bringing into Arcata a fiber optic cable from Singapore to service local customers (i.e., the expanded university) as well as those beyond. It seems that almost every group of citizenry is being addressed in the effort to remedy the acute housing shortage: seniors with the Plaza Point complex across from the Co-op; the Sorrel Place Project one block over for low-income residents of all ages; housing for the chronic homeless is underway in Valley West, a conversion of two hotels named Project Homekey; the Yuroks are getting their Commons at the end of 30th Street, a beautiful development by Pacific Builders. That company is also constructing the Open Door Complex at the intersection of Foster and Sunset avenues at the roundabout — a delightful, contemporary building of glass and stone that will impress the visitors coming in from the north as an expression of Arcata's deference to the new, where and when it's appropriate. And the City of Arcata is turning 1680 Samoa Blvd. into a legal parking facility for the homeless...

End of part 1. Next week: Craftsman Mall housing, homes old and new, making the most of a small world.

Daniel Duncan ran Small World Construction in Arcata from 1986 through 2007.

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