

LETTERS

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address this issue, specifically to provide a deterrent. The estimated value of the tree was \$26,845. ORS 108.810 lawfully allows the city to demand three times the estimated value of the tree, legal fees, and reforestation costs.

What did the city manager do? He had a 50 percent-off sale on an irreplaceable heritage tree. This is a slap on the wrist for a citizen and a tree company that ignored the law and the city denial to remove.

This sets a dangerous precedent just as Sisters is about to have a 250-home development built on the west end of town. I know some City Council members expressed frustration on how this was handled and plan to tighten up the city regulations.

The laws needed to create a strong deterrent are already in place! They were not enforced in any meaningful way. Fifty percent of the value of an irreplaceable tree is hardly a deterrent.

Tragically, Oregonians have lost thousands of trees to recent fire including in the Opal Creek old growth forest. I strongly recommend that everyone read the Pulitzer Prize winning book "The Overstory" by Richard Powers and "Braiding Sweetgrass" by Robin Wall Kimmerer to get a sense of the contribution of these magnificent trees to all creatures and to our rapidly-changing environment.

Kathleen Kennedy



To the Editor:

I am always touched by the stories people share in *The Nugget* of the many kindnesses that happen in our community. Recently one happened to me and it is too precious not to share. I stopped at Ray's to get a bag of groceries. The check-out person rang up about half the bag when I reached into my pocket and realized my credit card was in another jacket at home and I didn't have enough cash on me to cover it.

I was so embarrassed but the check-out person was lovely and handled it so well. I asked him to just hold everything in the bag for me and told him I would be back in 10 minutes. I returned quickly and waited in the same line. When it was my turn I reminded him I was there to pay for the bag he so nicely set aside for me. He said, "You aren't going to believe this but two firefighters who were in line behind you paid for your bag of groceries."

Their gesture so deeply touched both of us that it

brought tears to our eyes. That sweet selfless act on top of what the firefighters already do just warmed our hearts. They had told the check-out person that someone had done that for them recently and they wanted to pay it forward.

A nice woman leaving the store in front of me overheard part of the story and, when I shared the rest with her, she told me it just made her day. I know it certainly made mine. I am writing to formally thank those firefighters, whoever they are. Not only do they put themselves in harm's way for our safety but they do it with such heart on so many levels. This story is about so much more than the experience I have just shared. It is a story about kindness, generosity, integrity, gratitude, joy, appreciation and forfeited faith in humanity. I look forward to finding the opportune time to keep the "pay-it-forward" chain going in honor of all the amazing firefighters and in honor of our community.

Lynne Keller



To the Editor:

In the future, individuals will be asked to account for their whereabouts during 2020. Similar to the attack on the twin towers on 9/11, we will tell our children and grandchildren about living through the coronavirus pandemic.

During the past few years, I have not wanted to be part of the problem but, rather, part of the solution. So I treaded lightly around speaking of politics. I thought that being informed about domestic and international affairs was sufficient.

At this point, though, I cannot remain on the sidelines. It is too risky. I must speak out at least to feel like I did something during this unprecedented time. It has gotten that bad.

With the contentious 2020 election directly ahead, conflict intensifies with President Trump suggesting that he will not step down from office, even if his Democratic opponent Joe Biden wins the election.

Thursday, Trump went so far as to say that the voting ballots should be disposed of. He said "get rid of the ballots" because this election is a "scam," a "hoax" devised by the Democrats, insisting that we won't need a transfer of power but rather there will be a continuation of power. Really? This is a dangerous abuse of power that we have never seen the likes of in our democracy.

This week Republican Senate leader Mitch McConnell, among other Senate Republicans, in an

unusual bipartisan move, assured that the U.S. Constitution will be upheld. The Constitution preciously ensures a peaceful transfer of power upon election results, regardless of the winner.

Continuously, Trump behaves more like a dictator than a democratic leader. Over the past few years, Trump has actively disrespected democratic norms in a covert attempt to dismantle the foundation carefully constructed by our Founding Fathers.

His past statements imply that Trump will do whatever it takes to win this election, even accepting and encouraging foreign interference to increase his odds of winning.

Many Republicans have endorsed Biden because of Trump's divisive words, so often impulsively revealed on Twitter, along with his destructive and outright cruel actions.

Most recently, a long-standing Republican, Cindy McCain, endorsed Joe Biden, encouraging us to put our country above our political party. She said in a tweet, "There is only one candidate in this race who stands up for our values as a nation and that's Joe Biden." She went on to say that even though she does not agree with Joe Biden on all issues, "He is a good man. He will lead us with dignity. He will be a commander and chief that the finest force in history of the world can depend upon."

We are in for a scary, tumultuous rollercoaster ride to the finish line. The citizens and immigrants of America must fight for peace and restoration of order in a time of history characterized by chaos and division. Our democracy depends upon it.

Sarah Pond



To the Editor:

Why here, why us? We are already one of the cleanest countries in the world and by promoting what Democrats want to do, more regulations, higher taxes will only drive manufacturing out of our country once more to places that don't come close to our standards.

So, by limiting your attention to the USA and not thinking out of the box, it will not only hurt us but produce more pollution worldwide.

Trump could actually do it through trade restrictions and with his business expertise. Require them to meet our standards first and when the playing field becomes level we can all concentrate on further steps. Weakening us first and not acting through strength would only be futile.

Byron Blake

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