

OPINION

YOUR VOICE

The United States

Trump heads the most powerful government in the world and is arguably the most powerful man in the world.

The head of the DOJ, William Barr, is a personal Trump appointee and supervises approximately 9,500 attorneys. On Dec. 1, Barr stated that he, the US attorneys office, and the FBI, "to date, we have not seen fraud on a scale that would have effected a different outcome in the election." He has not contradicted that statement.

Trump heads the FBI, CIA, and US military. None of them have found any substantial proof of voter fraud.

There are approximately 700,000 police officers. They have not found any substantial proof of voter fraud.

The combined Republican Senate, Republican House, Republican governors and state attorney generals collectively have not found any substantial proof of voter fraud.

Trump, and his associates, have filed over 50 lawsuits claiming voter fraud. He won one of them (2 percent). Several of the judges were personally appointed by Trump. Many of the cases were dismissed for complete lack of evidence; no substantial voter fraud.

Approximately 74,000,000 people voted for Trump. They have not found any substantial proof of voter fraud.

Occam's razor states that the simplest answer is often the correct answer.

The options are:

1) The Democratic Party, the people who chose Hillary, are capable of outsmarting all of the above and leaving no credible trace, or:

2) Trump lost.

To my many Republican friends, I can feel your pain. I remember four years ago. Losing definitely hurts. But we are still the UNITED STATES of America and if we are to survive and ever reach our true potential, we need to put this election behind us. We are now in one of the roughest times for our country with millions and millions of people hurting physically, emotionally, financially, and spiritually. Instead of catering to our own ego, let us please work together for the common good. Compassion and empathy for others is what we need right now. May God truly bless America.

Rev. Clyde Sanda
The Dalles

World is watching

History is so easy to ignore or forget, but taken the time it is also the easiest way to learn from what we have done before, and why and how while avoiding repeating old mistakes.

In that regard, in the 2016 presidential election Hillary Clinton won by almost 3 million votes! But in the electoral college the vote was 306 to Trump and 232 to Clinton. So Clinton was the actual winner in the number of people who voted for her, yet she lost.

But the main observation is that when she lost the electoral college I did not see citizens roaring through the streets with guns and screaming, no people storming around shouting and waving signs and breaking a number of laws in the process. That is not to say that those who voted for her were not shocked, dumbfounded, upset, stunned. They knew that the electoral college had the final say even if they were against that process. So they accepted the legal decision of the count, deeply hurt and shocked, BUT no marching in the streets or denying the vote or demonstrations in the street saying the vote was stolen or wrong. As had been the case since the beginning of our republic they accepted the vote in typical American fashion.

So what is the difference? The only difference is the behavior of the two parties and their leaders. All of these demonstrators need to "man up" and grow up and behave like true Americans who respect the rules of democracy and behave like all the previous citizens in this democracy. Accept the vote. Take a deep breath, commit to backing the electors, and show the world that we are still a citizenry that is ruled

by law and the rule of the majority. Join in making this country what it can be. EVERY citizen is needed in that involvement of making us great and the responsible nation that the world needs. THE WORLD IS WATCHING.

Judith Nelson
Hood River

Lights on for COVID victims

With our country horribly divided, I'd like to encourage everyone to participate in the Jan. 19 COVID Memorial. The Presidential Inaugural Committee (PIC) will host a memorial to remember and honor the lives lost to COVID-19 in cities and towns across the country on Tuesday, Jan. 19 at 5:30 p.m. ET. A Washington, D.C., ceremony will feature a lighting around the Lincoln Memorial Reflecting Pool. It will be the first-ever lighting around the Reflecting Pool to memorialize American lives lost. PIC is inviting cities and towns around the country to join Washington, D.C., in illuminating buildings and ringing church bells at 5:30 p.m. ET in a national moment of unity and remembrance. Let those of us fortunate enough to live in the beautiful Columbia River Gorge share in this important ceremony of unity and remembrance. We can unite the country. We can do our part to encourage this important step forward toward affirming and embracing our democracy.

Michelle Rabin
Hood River

Fiber deficiency

As we move into a new year, we have to address the dismal state of communication infrastructure in the Gorge. Looking back on the fires in Oregon and California, many of the resulting fatalities can be ascribed to the inability of emergency services being unable to communicate with residents because of the lack of phone coverage. The same situation currently exists in many parts of both Oregon and Washington. While the telecoms are rolling out 5G service in densely populated areas, vast areas of our community have no cell signal whatsoever. It is not unusual to receive a text message, or even the notification of a voicemail, many hours after it was sent, which in the case of a rapidly spreading fire could prove devastating.

Concurrently, the availability of internet connections are sporadic at best. While some locations have fiber connections, other areas are relegated to dial-up or DSL, at dismal speeds, with frequent drop-outs, or no connection whatsoever. It is inexcusable to have children huddled outside downtown businesses trying to complete their homework, while teachers are unable to upload lessons. The recent COVID stimulus bill provides substantial subsidies to low income families to help pay for internet connections; however, these subsidies are useless if there is no connection available.

This situation needs to be corrected. Rural residents deserve the same access to communication as city dwellers. I urge anyone experiencing such difficulties to contact their local, state and federal representatives to make sure that the many infrastructure grants are accountably utilized to provide decent communication capability so that we can live safely, prosperously, and our children can flourish into the new year.

Juris Sarins
White Salmon

Trump's sedition

Donald Trump has gone a step too far. He has incited a violent insurrection against our government of the people, by the people, and for the people. He has asserted his claim to dictatorship by discounting the results of a free and fair presidential election, and his loyal followers back his claim to dictatorship.

I used to wish that Donald Trump would just go away, perhaps fleeing to a foreign country in an attempt to escape his legal problems after leaving office.

Now, following his acts of



Lindsay Hebenstreit exercises her two dogs, Gene Wilder Jerome McNabb and Grizzly, at Hood River Port Marina on New Year's Eve. "They are the loves of my life. I always enjoy that they bring such a playful and wild show for onlookers," said Hebenstreit, who lives near Husum. "They have brought me so much comfort and understanding during these challenging days. The Gorge community of animal lovers and all the beautiful parks, landscapes, has been embracing to this dog fam." She said "Wilder" (a Border-McNabb mix), age 2, her "wanderer artist dog" and Grizzly (Border-Australian), age 1, "my jockey-mama's boy dog," have nearly-identical markings and are likely brothers twice removed of the same mother. Hebenstreit will be taking the dogs to a facility near Washougal, where dog owners and herding dogs learn how to work together.

Kirby Neumann-Rea photo

sedition against our nation, I believe his only deserved fate is imprisonment.

Richard Iverson
Hood River

'It could be anybody'

I just read about the Raskin family (Congressman Jamie Raskin), how they lost their son to suicide on New Year's, how he was "a radiant light in a broken world."

My family had a son like that. A brother, who like their son had family and a large network of friends. And I write because when my brother completed suicide, a close acquaintance I'll just call Angela lashed out, calling my family sick and dysfunctional.

Angela could be anybody, anybody who does not get the severity of depression or mental illness or just how hard it is to be human, as Tommy Raskin notes.

There are families I know in the Gorge who hide the fact that their child completed suicide from shame or guilt or the stigma the Angelas of the world heap on it, I can't say. They aren't alone.

Suicide is the leading cause of death in Oregon for ages 10 through 24, and veterans under 45. In Washington, it's 11 percent higher than the national average. It's ranked as the eighth leading cause of death. We are in the top 10 in an area where we have failed.

The Raskin's won't "get over" their son's suicide; my family didn't. Suicide even, suddenly, becomes a possibility. To lose someone close to you changes your world and how you walk in it. Forever. So watch your words. Better yet, watch your heart. And if you are hurting, there are resources. Please, dear God, for all of us, call, text, reach out:

SpeakingOfSuicide.com/resources; 800-273-8255; text HOME to 741741; en español: 888-628-9454

Jackie McManus
Lyle

Gratitude for support

As we start a new year full of hope and promise, I want to express my gratitude for the support that Washington Gorge Action Programs (WAGAP) has received from our local communities during this past year. Individuals, businesses and organizations have continuously stepped forward any time there was a need, such as rebuilding the COVID-19 Relief Fund. When we set our Giving Tuesday goal to raise \$50,000 in the month of December, we were pleasantly surprised to reach that goal two full weeks ahead of schedule.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, we've been providing

support through our COVID-19 Relief Fund for families and individuals in Klickitat and Skamania Counties who've lost income due to the economic impacts. We've helped with rent/mortgage payments, utilities, car payments, medical bills, etc. This has all been made possible by the generosity of our Gorge communities.

Our communities care. I want to extend my sincere appreciation to you all for everything that you do to help your neighbors. I am humbled to lead an organization that our communities both trust and depend on. Here's to brighter days in 2021.

Leslie Naramore,
executive director
Washington Gorge
Action Programs

Remember Bentz vote

Our newly elected Oregon congressman Republican Cliff Bentz voted on Jan. 6 to object to certification of validated electoral college ballots which reflected duly certified popular votes. He and his 120 House colleagues decided on this futile action, presumably hoping we will remember their symbolic pro-Trump move when they're up for re-election.

Yes, let's indeed be sure to remember it. Those representatives (and six Republican Senators) proceeded in this course just hours after violent armed mobs stormed the U.S. Capitol — in protest of a free and fair election and in support of a clearly deranged president who tweeted that they were "very special" and that he loves them.

The crowd in the streets included the Vice-Chair of Oregon Young Republicans, who was arrested.

After his vote, Rep. Bentz criticized the mob actions. Perhaps he somehow fails to realize that pledging his own protest action was part of the gasoline that fueled that fire.

Our previous Congressman, Greg Walden, expressed sympathy and understanding of the armed illegal occupiers of The Malheur Wildlife Refuge, an action that returns to mind when one sees footage of yesterday's mob members sitting in Congressional offices and breaking windows of federal buildings.

To my knowledge, Rep. Walden never publicly stood up to the Trump administration despite having said prior to the 2016 election that Trump was unfit for the office.

The GOP of Mark Hatfield, Vic Atiyeh, Tom McCall is sadly bankrupt. It has been broken by the Tea Party, white supremacists, religious and social zealots, would-be secessionists, QAnon and other conspiracy theorists, self-styled confederates and anarchists — and elected officials too cowed, impressed, or

threatened by a celebrity narcissist to effectively oppose him and rightfully represent the interests of their constituents.

Change has begun to arrive in this year's elections. Let it continue, and not become a pendulum swing. And again, in two years let us be sure to remember Congressman Bentz's vote yesterday.

Tina Castañares
Odell

Be proud, America

Why are so many politicians and talking heads wailing over how embarrassing yesterday's siege is? "What must the rest of world be thinking about us?"

While authorities were clearly unprepared, the way they finally dealt with the situation was reserved and appropriate in our democracy. Imagine how it would have been handled in actual "banana republics." Authorities (armies) would have simply opened fire on the mob, killing hundreds of people. Be proud of the fact that, in America, it is natural to respond the way our authorities did. Maybe the rest of the world will think so as well.

Russ Hurlburt
Parkdale

Bentz's misstep

Rep. Cliff Bentz, you should be ashamed of the part you played in the violent coup attempt at the Capitol. You sowed distrust over the election results in the weeks beforehand, and afterwards, you continued your affront to democracy by voting to object to Pennsylvania's presidential electors. Do you feel proud of your first week in office? We your constituents do not. We deserve better. We demand better.

When the smoke (literally) had cleared the day after the insurrection, you condemned the violence to inquiring reporters. But you were indeed a part of it. In mid-December you joined Republican colleagues in asking for a congressional investigation into unspecified "election irregularities." The Trump campaign filed and either lost or had dismissed 62 out of 63 lawsuits because it could produce no evidence for any of its accusations of "election irregularities." Still you echoed Trump's charges, spreading misinformation and undermining confidence in the election results at home and nationally.

You explained you objected because you believe Pennsylvania's decision to extend the deadline for return of absentee ballots violated the Constitution. And this in spite of the fact that the 10,000 ballots in question, postmarked by Election Day but received afterward, were not even included in PA's vote count. You also cited as a factor "the

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CONTACT US
The Dalles
541-296-2141

Hood River / White Salmon
541-386-1234
ColumbiaGorgeNews.COM

Publisher
Chelsea Marr
chelseam@gorgeneews.com

Editorial:

Kirby Neumann-Rea, Editor
Mark Gibson, Editor
Trisha Walker, Reporter
Jacob Bertram, Reporter
Walker Sacon, Reporter
Oregon News Tips/Press Releases
Washington News Tips/Press Releases

Billing/Office:
Lisa Ann Kawachi

Kirbyn@gorgeneews.com
MarkG@gorgeneews.com
Trishaw@gorgeneews.com
JacobB@gorgeneews.com
WalkerS@gorgeneews.com
ORnews@gorgeneews.com
WAnews@gorgeneews.com

billing@gorgeneews.com
LisaK@gorgeneews.com

Mailing Addresses:

PO Box 1910, The Dalles, OR 97058
PO Box 390, Hood River, OR 97031
PO Box 218, White Salmon, WA 98672

Advertising:

Niki Piacente, Digital Ad Director
Kim Horton, Sales

Legals:
Oregon:
Washington:

Subscriptions:
Shania McClravy, Supervisor

Obituaries:

Classifieds:

sales@gorgeneews.com
NikiP@gorgeneews.com
KimH@gorgeneews.com

ORlegals@gorgeneews.com
WAlegals@gorgeneews.com

Subscribe@gorgeneews.com
ShaniaM@gorgeneews.com

obits@gorgeneews.com

classifieds@gorgeneews.com