

neglected derelicts who can fit all their possessions in a paper bag, for they shall inherit nothing in this world or the next. God bless Eugene, the city that can't and won't. There is a river of misery running through the center of Eugene.

Leo Sulentic
Eugene

He Hasn't Changed

Former Republican conservatives — the party stands for one-man rule now (like Russia, China and North Korea). They got a fast-talking salesman from New York City with a self-confidence problem to replace their conservative principles.

They're hoping you'll still vote for him

out of habit even though they stand for something else new.

Good luck.

Bruce Barney
Eugene

Invaded by Hate

On August 10, I woke up excited about going to my first Pride Festival in Eugene. It was a beautiful day, thousands of people were joyfully celebrating.

However, starting around 3:30 pm or 4 pm, a group of approximately eight to 10 large burly men in their 30s to 40s began to appear. They carried signs with insulting messages and photos of dismembered fetuses. Several of us volunteers stayed

close to them, dancing, singing and hiding their hateful signs with our Pride flags.

At first attendees passing by ignored them. But within 30 minutes, perhaps tired of getting no reaction, one of them took his crew to stand in front of a booth where HIV testing and counseling was in progress. His harsh amplified voice and insulting words began to trigger outrage among many attendees who started shouting back angrily. The situation became increasingly volatile and we were afraid violence was about to break out.

Even though park rules forbid amplification and most of these bullies had no wristband authorizing their presence on festival grounds, the Eugene police officers

standing around simply watched, refusing the organizers' pleas to intervene. The men thankfully left after another hour without physical violence erupting, yet we have all seen how people committed to hate have committed or provoked violence at public events with tragic consequences. Shame on the EPD for not taking action. They allowed this beautiful festival to be invaded by hate.

Frances Spector
Eugene

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Local & Vocal Viewpoint by Zach Klonoski

Join Together

The upcoming presidential election needs impactful action

With the 2024 election just 75 days away as I write this there is a renewed sense of determination similar to "hope and change" vibes summoned by Barack Obama's 2008 campaign. President Joe Biden — who achieved more in office than anyone could have dreamed — kept yet another campaign promise by passing the torch and demonstrating selfless leadership that America can believe in.

It is refreshing to see a politician listen to their constituents and follow the will of the people rather than serving their own ego. Biden's decision to step aside for a new generation speaks volumes about his character and commitment to our democracy. It is a leadership lesson Americans will recount to their kids and grandkids.

Vice President Kamala Harris has also risen to the occasion and demonstrates leadership, resilience and unwavering commitment to justice as is required to galvanize Americans to re-engage and defeat the dangerous MAGA offensive.

Many of us have felt the weight of politics in recent years, with some (including me) expressing a need to step back for the sake of their well-being. Self-care is important, but we cannot afford to disengage entirely.

There is a difference between retreating into apathy and cynicism versus strategically choosing how to participate politically while protecting personal well-being. Apathy and cynicism are the fertile ground in which authoritarianism takes root; collective action is the force that pulls that weed from the civic soil, leaving a communal flowering blooming in its place.

And it doesn't hurt that the Kamala Harris/Tim Walz ticket has leaned into a message centered on hope and the joy of campaigning for a better future.

In 2020, 81 million Americans stood together in what Biden described as "a battle for the soul of our nation." Today, the stakes are even higher. A former president, now convicted of 34 felony counts, adjudicated a sexual abuser, and facing dozens more felony counts, is again seeking the nation's highest office.

This same man shattered our nation's proud tradition of the peaceful transfer of power, putting our democracy



ZACH KLONOSKI AND
HIS SON, QUENTIN, AGE 5

in jeopardy. The significance of this election cannot be overstated.

While constant political engagement can be exhausting, we should not retreat into complacency. Instead, finding a balance between self-care and civic duty, ensuring that we contribute to preserving our democracy, is the way to go.

As citizens, it is our responsibility to make a meaningful impact in this election. We don't need to let politics dominate our lives, but we should commit to strategic, impactful action. Whether it's donating to a campaign, supporting efforts in key battleground states, or simply talking to friends and family about the stakes of this elec-

tion, every action counts when elections are this close. The 2024 election will no doubt again come down to several thousand votes in the battleground states.

In 2019, I lost a younger brother to suicide and subsequently was diagnosed with clinical depression and anxiety. I felt hopeless in the wake of my brother's loss, yet as I watched President Donald Trump's deadly mismanagement of the COVID pandemic, I could not remain idle with so much at stake.

I found an opportunity to work as a field organizer in Wisconsin and spent the final 75 days reaching out to Wisconsin voters, making the case for new national leadership. I was among tens of thousands of Americans who could not stand by and allow an unfit fraudster to remain in the White House. We grabbed an oar and started rowing — and together we won.

Little did I know, being a part of that movement of Americans who found meaning in engaging in the democratic process was exactly what I needed to pull out of the throws of depression and hopelessness I experienced after losing my brother. The best medicine for apathy and cynicism is social connection with civic purpose. That's the lesson I learned in 2020.

This election is our chance to define the course of history, to rise against the threat of 21st-century authoritarianism, and to ensure that democracy prevails. By taking measured, thoughtful action, we honor both our responsibility to ourselves and our duty to the greater good.

In 2020, Biden secured victory by a margin of only 44,000 votes across three key swing states (Wisconsin, Arizona and Georgia). Now, we must again rally to consign the dangerous MAGA movement to the dustbin of history where it belongs along with its hooded and jackbooted progenitors.

As we approach the 2024 election, let us join *together* with a sense of purpose and hope. Let us dedicate time, resources and energy to making a difference, no matter how small it may seem. When the electorate is this polarized and elections are so close, every action matters. History will judge us by the choices we make in this moment, and together we can ensure that democracy not only survives but thrives; and in the process, you may find that your efforts revitalize your own sense of purpose and well-being.

By taking care of our nation together, we lift up ourselves as individuals as well. Let's get to work.

Zach Klonoski lives in Eugene where he practices nonprofit law. He plans to travel to the battleground state of Wisconsin for the final two weeks of the campaign with an organization called Seed the Vote to knock on doors with a group of close friends he made during the 2020 election cycle.