

Democratic values

It was shocking and dismaying to see the partisan attack letter to the editor, "Dems elect despot," from Jason Kost, a Republican, printed in the Feb. 20 edition of *The Daily Astorian*.

First of all, John Kitzhaber was no despot. Secondly, the Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee has been a role model in the state for safeguarding democracy. Over the past decade, they have worked tirelessly and successfully to increase voter participation and to recruit and support candidates to run for office that represent the majority of residents in Clatsop County.

Political parties embody a set of values rather than actions of specific individuals. The Democratic Party represents the values of equality and fairness, which are embedded in the party platform (see www.dpo.org). The Democratic Party can be easily joined online, and the Clatsop County Democrats welcome anyone who shares these values, rather than the values of hatred, derision and contempt.

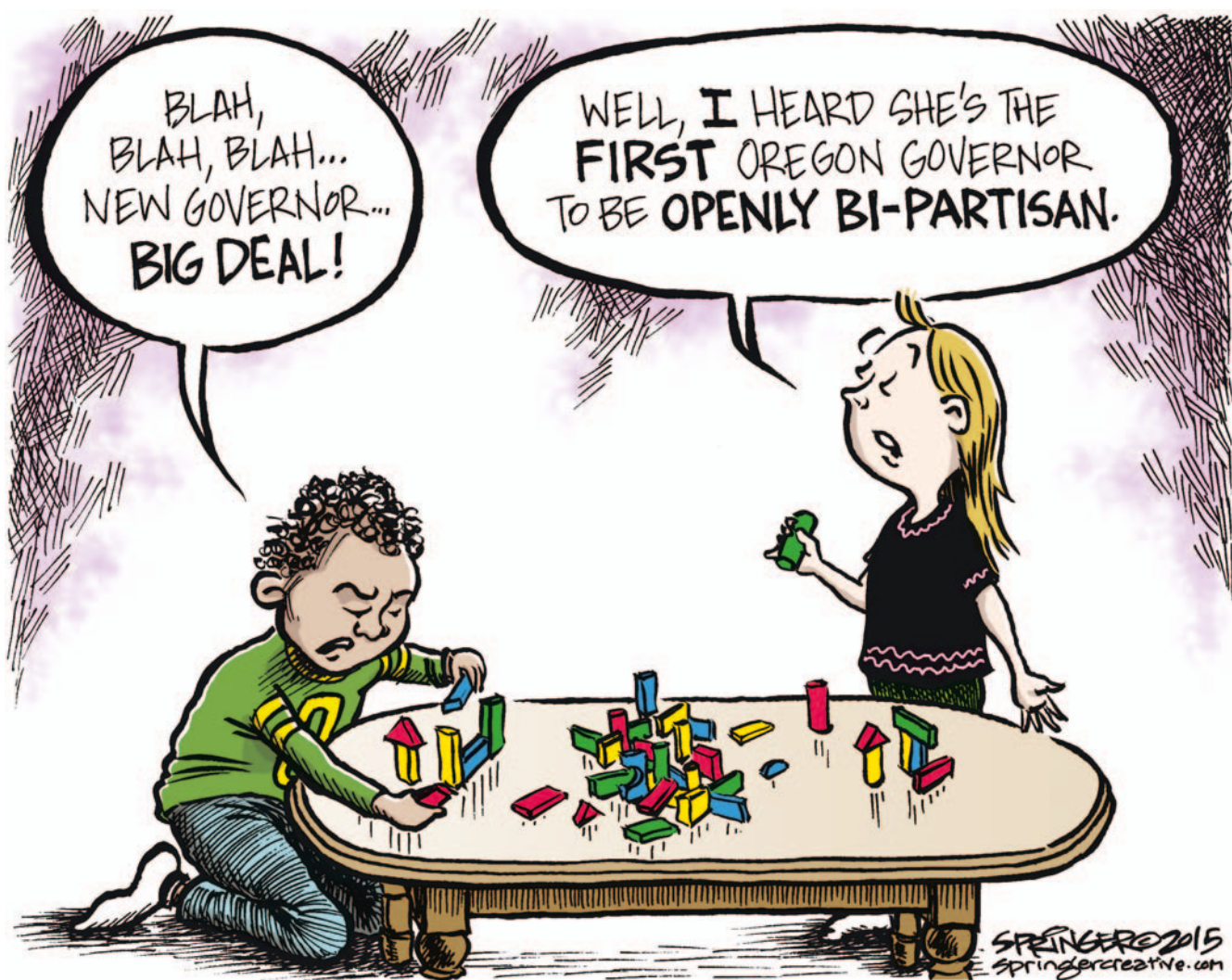
LARRY TAYLOR

Chairman, Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee
Astoria

Center capacity

Several questions have been asked of the Seaside Civic and Convention Center since the release of a financial feasibility study for the possible expansion of the center. In response to a couple of items that appeared in a story Feb. 16 in *The Daily Astorian* and Feb. 20 in the *Seaside Signal* ("Seaside businesses object to proposed sales tax"), we felt it was important to clarify accordingly.

Although the article stated that the center "can handle only 200 people," this is not 100 percent accurate, and there are actually many scenarios that impact total volumes much larger than that. A theater-style use of the Pacific and Necanicum rooms (main level rooms at the center) could hold up to 1,200 people. Those same



rooms, set with 80 rounds of 10 tables, could hold 800 for a plated dinner.

What's typical of one event may be unrealistic for another. Does a group require breakout sessions (where a large group splits into several smaller groups)? Perhaps a group will not be using the center for meals, choosing instead to only host its meetings and trade show functions inside the facility. A group of 500 could meet together in the large Pacific Room and then split into breakout sessions, in the smaller Necanicum, Seamist, Seaside, Riverview, Seahorse and Haystack rooms.

However, a group of 500 would not be able to assemble as one large body in multiple rooms (and thereby allow for an immediate transition from, say, a meeting space to a meal space).

The bottom line is that there are numerous scenarios and caveats that affect the size ca-

pacities of a specific group. A complete list of room capacities and sizes can be found at seasideconvention.com

RUSS VANDENBERG

General manager, Seaside Civic and Convention Center

Under pressure

Five years ago, I was working a construction job on the jetty on the Washington side of the Columbia River. After three weeks, my boss told me I needed to take a fitness test to keep working for the company. I thought, no problem, seems I'm always hyper, with lots of energy.

Two minutes into the test, the instructor asked me if I felt all right. Did I need to sit down? Did I feel dizzy? I asked why. He said, "Your blood pressure is extremely high. You cannot take this test. You can't work for this company till you pass the test." To say I was shocked puts it mildly.

Back home, I got a doctor, and got blood pressure medicine. After about two weeks, I took the test, passed easily and went back to work. After around two months, the job ended, and the pills ran out about the same time. I don't recall anyone telling me to keep taking these blood pressure pills for the rest of my life, so I let them run out.

Recently, I almost passed out in my driveway and my bedroom, was dizzy and felt strange. It was bedtime, so I thought I just needed sleep. The next morning I told my daughter I was going to the hospital — something wasn't right with my body.

In Astoria, they told me I did not look right, and to please sit down. Shortly I was heading down the hallway in a wheelchair to the far end of the hospital. I asked, "What is going on with me? What are you doing?"

After my blood pressure test, they said, "You are in bad

shape. We have Life Flight coming for you. You could die without it." I told them God has me alive for a reason.

I was told after a short time I'd had blood on my brain, a stroke and my blood pressure was 240/149. I thank God I drove myself to Astoria when I did.

Please, everyone, get your blood pressure checked. If you take medicine for blood pressure, take it, and don't stop. I almost found out the hard way why they call high blood pressure the Silent Killer.

ROBERT REGISTER

Warrenton

Culling

Cormorants and other seabirds thrive on an island in the Columbia River created by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. In a battle over who gets to eat the most salmon, the corps has decided to cull (euphemism for kill/slaughter)

11,000 or so birds who dare to take fish from human mouths.

Elk, who used to roam this area in the thousands and now number in the dozens, search for some place out of reach of slaughterers (aka hunters), finding refuge in Gearhart. Unfortunately, herds of idle people who drive little carts on perfectly manicured paths and grass in search of their balls do not want to share their green space with native animals. They want to cull them.

Is it possible that we can solve the problems we created in an intelligent and humane way without resorting to violence and bloodshed as usual?

MARGARET HINES
Warrenton

Light at the library

I am certainly in favor of a newer, updated Astoria Library. It would be great if it fit the ambiance of our historic town. There is nothing so important to the nucleus of a community as a library — for research, reading, some soundproof listening and viewing rooms, community meeting rooms and the equal education of humanity.

It seems a simple matter to keep the look of the shell of the Waldorf with modern insides, but I have always disliked the design of our current library building. It is gray in color, dirty-looking to me, with little light, not a beautiful building to look at, and just because it might be a historic period, it is not the look we are famous for — Victorians.

Seaside did a fantastic job raising monies and creating a whole new structure, so it can be done. We don't want to get rid of the Waldorf image, so I am not advocating that we start new like Seaside, but that we raise private and public funds for whatever is decided for our community.

Frankly, I vote for lots of light internally, a corridor that runs vertically through all floors, out of our famous weather, and air conditioning to make it more inviting in summers as they heat up.

SALI DIAMOND
Astoria

Know the facts about mayor's recall

I am writing this letter to eliminate confusion and highlight the truth regarding the effort to remove Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop from office.

As some of you may know, a petition was circulated door to door in Gearhart, asking for signatures to recall our mayor. The reasoning to remove Dianne was she violated a Gearhart business owner's right to freedom of speech. Note: 108 people signed the petition and it is public record at the office of the Gearhart city manager.

Dianne has served Gearhart for almost 20 years as a city councilor and mayor. She has worked all these years to keep Gearhart a great place for all of us to live and she does this without pay. She is being accused of violating a business owner's freedom of speech. But did she really do that? It is our responsibility as voters to ferret out the truth before casting our ballots.

Gearhart business owners in the past have not put out campaign signs. The sentiment has been that business owners do not want to politicize their business. A new business owner, however, did put up a sign for candidate Kevin Willet. Willet is not the issue here.

Dianne used to work in that store. Dianne reached out to the owner with advice as she was opening her new store earlier in spring 2014. Dianne thought of her as a friend. On Oct. 17, Dianne talked to this friend about the campaign sign in front of her store. Dianne, per transcripts on record with the city, stated that she told the business owner "...it's a bad idea to put out campaign signs at shops in Gearhart, and that none of the merchants put out signs, as it is a no-win situation."

The business owner said Craig Weston, her landlord, had said the same thing, but she could put up a sign if she wanted to. Dianne stated (per transcripts) she never told the business owner she had to take down the sign. The business owner did leave the sign for Willet. On Nov. 5, at a City Council meeting, the new business owner confirmed that Dianne never told her to take the sign down. This can be fact-checked by Gearhart City Council meeting minutes.

At some point after Dianne talked to the business owner, the owner apparently talked to a few Gearhart residents and business owners about the conversation. These people included Joy Sigler, a past city councilor, and shop owner in Gearhart, and about seven other people. It is these eight people who asked for the recall petition.

The struggle to remove the mayor has cost us all money, time and energy. This has been going on for five months, a period of time where the people we all elected could have been getting other things done.

We are now being asked to deal with their claim of a freedom of speech violation by a mayor who has worked hard for us for almost 20 years. Suggesting that someone take down a sign as a matter of business protocol, but not saying they had to, does not mean legally or logically that a person's freedom of speech was taken away. But in this case, unless we all understand and react to the truth, it could unfairly affect all the good that Dianne Widdop's long public legacy has been about and send the message that the voters of Gearhart can easily be deceived.

WILSON MARK
Gearhart



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