

Thanks, Astorian

For a mighty slim newspaper, *The Daily Astorian* is packed full of newsworthy news. Always something interesting, relevant, topical, cutting edge. Unbiased, reflecting conservative-liberal viewpoints, regardless, moron or enlightened.

Thank you to the editor/publisher, for a great small big time paper.

JEFFREY CAMPBELL
Astoria

Recall and lies

As a citizen and registered voter of Gearhart, I believe this recall attempt is nothing more than spending \$7,000 (plus) because of a friendship gone sour. All the Gables want is "pound of flesh" at taxpayer's expense for revenge. Either way, thousands of dollars are wasted.

Harold Gable read and submitted a letter at a council meeting stating the mayor demanded that a business owner remove a Kevin Lee Willett sign. The store owner was present at the meeting and stated that the mayor did not "demand."

Gable wants transparency? The recall group needs to stick to facts then and not make them up as they go. They say the mayor has a "personal bias." To what, I ask. This recall group are the ones with a personal bias against a strong mayor. If you really want honesty and trust, get the facts before you vote. This group isn't telling the whole story, but then again, in politics, do they ever?

By the way, the mayor knew nothing about the recording until after the fact. Nancy Pelosi was questioned about her knowledge of the Health Care Bill. She was asked if she had read and understood all that's in it. She responded, "Let's pass it and then we can work through it."

It's your vote, make it an informed one.

JEFF BOWMAN
Gearhart

Credibility problems

While not diminishing citizens' right to recall elected officials, I believe that the campaign to remove Gearhart's Mayor Diane Widdop suffers serious credibility problems.

Reasons for my low regard include: 1) petitioners' apparent disinterest in conciliating their dispute, prior to launching a divisive crusade; 2) their focus on highly disputable accusations, at the expense of relevant confirmed facts; 3) their senseless derogations of character, and warnings of political intimidation; and 4) their disinclination to give the mayor even a modicum of credit for her 20-year record of selfless work to preserve, enhance and protect our little city by the sea.

JOHN DUDLEY
Gearhart

Pettiness needs to stop

This letter is in support of our Gearhart Mayor Diane Widdop, and I would like to encourage the residents of Gearhart to vote no on recalling Widdop from office.

It should be noted that the Gable group of petitioners have lost their focus as to why they are recalling our mayor. What started out as a simple misunderstanding, turned into a gossip fest. Each time the story was told and repeated, it changed and changed, depending on who told the story and who was or was not listening. Listen up people, we're not in high school anymore.

All this pettiness and vindictive action against the mayor needs to stop.

Mayor Widdop has served this community for 20 years as a city councilor, volunteer and as mayor. Her accomplishments overrule any bad publicity and rumor mill this group has caused, not to mention the amount of dollars the city has accrued because of this mess to recall.

In closing, let's not forget who is at the root of all this trouble, and that is Shannon Smith, the barn owner, whom, I might add, has been very quiet during the whole proceeding of recalling Mayor Widdop. I personally would like to see an events center in Gearhart; I think it would benefit all the businesses in town and would be a great accomplishment.

However, the problem is with Shannon Smith. She is wrong, and if she wants to ren-

We are exporting our youth

I have watched with interest and concern the exporting of our youth. We keep rejecting industries that would provide jobs for our young people. They have to move to other parts of the country to put their educations to good use.

We have to be more than a nice place to retire. Most of our decisions about what we will let come into our county are made by groups that don't live here and just want this to stay a sand box for Portland and the Interstate-5 corridor. The same bunch of people show up in the county every time we have a chance to bring industry and jobs to

our area. They have no lasting interest in the county, and just want to keep it a nice place to spend a few weekends during the summer.

Tourist industries help our county, but most of the jobs do not supply family wage jobs for the workers. Liquefied natural gas (LNG) has become a dirty word without the truth being told about what it could do for our area. In the past, we have had many industries turned away because they don't fit in with our sandbox concepts.

I, for one, would like to see industries that would enable us to employ our youth and keep our most valu-

able natural resource working in this area. Can we really continue to export our young people year after year?

The two main industries that have kept us going over the years have been logging and fishing, and now it's a constant battle to keep both of these industries viable. When I first moved to the area in the early 1960s, all that was needed was a good work ethic, and you could go right to work. Now a good paying job is very hard to find.

How much longer can we afford to let outsiders rule our county?

ED MCNULTY
Astoria

ovate the historic barn into an events center, then it's simple, Shannon Smith needs to follow the laws, be accountable and bring the barn up to code, legally.

BRIER C. PORTER
Gearhart

Never fear

My reasoning for this letter to the editor is to add unknown information regarding the complaints against Mayor Widdop by those who petitioned her recall.

These complaints did not stop with the mayor, but went beyond to include myself, as the city's building official. One of the players attempted my replacement with a seven-page complaint letter to the Oregon State Building Codes Agency requesting that I be replaced immediately.

They stated that I was being unprofessional, along with other misleading statements, because I wouldn't compromise the health and welfare of the general public. But because I did what was right by following the rules, the complaint was to no avail.

Another player made a statement that there was a certain amount of fear for Mayor Widdop, and those within City Hall. In my 40 years in this profession, 30 in Clatsop County, I can say this for the city of Gearhart: The entire city staff, Mayor Widdop included, have made this one of the most people-friendly cities I have ever worked for.

I, along with Mayor Widdop, are for what's right. I promise you, those who follow the rules for the best of this community should never fear retaliation from this city.

JIM BRIEN
Seaside

Raise the gas tax

Republicans support a raise on the gas tax because the tax burden is paid by drivers and consumers of goods. Democrats support the gas tax because it raises revenue from fossil fuels.

Economists should support the gas tax because of the fiscal multiplier. In theory, a dollar invested by the government in infrastructure projects create up to \$1.70 in increased Gross Domestic Product (GDP) during a period of low labor force participation. This was documented by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in December 2012, when they published a white paper that marked a reversal in the support of austerity policy by most of the European Union (<http://tinyurl.com/imf12eu>).

The spending would be an experiment that tests the economic policy of Keynesian stimulus. In fact, it is the removal of income specifically from the middle and lower class, and reinvested into lower and middle class jobs, using some of the windfall from the drop in gas prices.

If Keynesian policy advocates like the White House and Elizabeth Warren are sincere in their beliefs, they will raise the gas taxes and reinvest this revenue into infrastructure and other hiring just to demonstrate the validity of their stated ideals.

I would pay a nickel more per gallon to test this theory.

ROGER LINDSLEY
Astoria

Reaching city goals

While walking with Moses (the daddy Basset) through the Surging Waves monument, I was puzzled by the paving stones engraved with donors' names, and the silver plaque glass pieces inscribed with the names of \$500

to \$50,000 contributors. Is it really necessary to have contributors' names proclaimed in perpetuity in order to induce them to give up a few of their excess dollars?

As it considers its goals for fiscal year 2015-2016, the Astoria City Council will have to determine how to recognize contributors providing millions for library renovation, the structure for the Safeway pit, a new ladder fire truck and a permanent facility sheltering the homeless.

In a recent campaign, a candidate praised Astoria as the greatest city in the world. Working together to donate time and money for the above-mentioned projects might move us closer to the truth of that statement. Perhaps that accomplishment in and by itself would be sufficient recognition of our contributions.

GEORGE MCCARTIN
Astoria

It's about trust

The recall of Gearhart's Mayor Dianne Widdop is about the loss of trust in her judgment and ability to govern our community. It is the experience of many that during the two years Dianne Widdop has been Gearhart's mayor, they have been singled out, cited, fined, regulated or unreasonably denied use of their property. She does not refute the reasons for her recall, but constructs a list of accomplishment as reflective of her positive contributions.

In another instance, she sent her husband to see a homeowner to request he come to City Hall to talk to the mayor about the recreational vehicle (RV) parked at his home. Wouldn't a letter from the city requesting a meeting have a more appropriate approach? Widdop prides herself in this hard, direct confrontational style without thought to the impact of her words, actions and style on other. She directly inserts herself into situations and establishes an antagonistic interaction from the start.

The second and even more troubling revelation reveals a darker side to how this mayor conducts city business when out of the public eye.

October 2014, a string of personal emails was forwarded to the mayor and city manager. The subject of the email was private discussions between homeowners who had attended a city meeting about short-term rentals. This email was not addressed to the city, nor had it been sent by any of the authors to the city. Mayor Widdop choose to forward this to selected city members and one City Council candidate. Nothing could be more divisive. By communicating with only some council members, and only one of three council candidates, she divided the city government into groups of "favored," "in the know," and those excluded. This divided, not unified our community. This is not transparency.

Worst of all, these out-of-sight communications helped to create an environment in which someone thought it acceptable to send an anonymous Christmas card with the greeting "Changes are a coming" to one homeowner who spoke at the city meeting on short-term rentals. Was the forwarding of this email the catalyst for the card sender? This is not the Gearhart I know or want.

I have lost confidence in Mayor Widdop's judgment, leadership and ability to be impartial and fair. Please join me in voting yes for her recall.

PATRICIA ROBERTS
Gearhart

Split apart

Dianne Widdop's detractors have finally garnered enough signatures for a vote to unseat the elected mayor of Gearhart. The chief recall petitioner, and the shadow figure(s) he represents, have never made their motivations clear, since their rhetoric relies not on fact, but on innuendo. We're not to know, for example, the nature of Dianne Widdop's alleged "retaliation" against the petitioners, or what powers she could possibly use to cause such injury.

Mayor Widdop herself is no stranger to carrying petitions door-to-door in Gearhart. Just a few years back, she used the referendum process to make the City Council reverse its annexation of so-called "gated communities," which had been

outlawed in our zoning ordinance. That action was typical of her courageous stands over the past 20 years in support of the Gearhart Comprehensive Plan and its implementing ordinances.

A generation ago, when we first set our signatures to the comprehensive plan, we understood it to be the city's covenant with the community, and the basis of all its laws, from land use to public safety. More than a vague statement of "collective standards and values," it's a very specific document, reaffirmed by the people's representatives over the past four decades, that defines the semi-rural, low-density residential character of Gearhart.

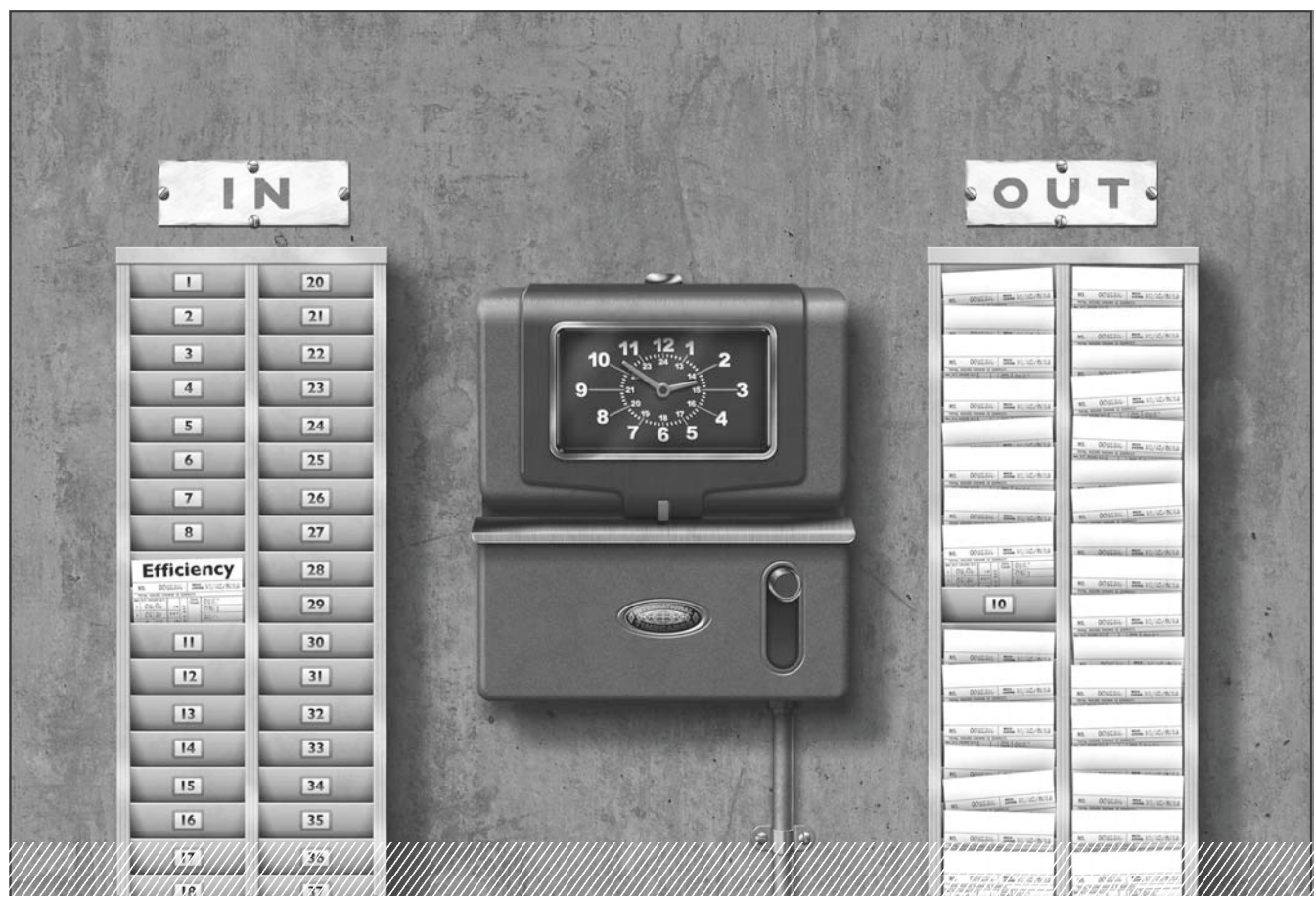
The plan lists specific goals and guidelines for the preservation of Gearhart's unique environment and quality of life, and restricts commercial activity to the needs of the resident population. Widdop's allegiance to that plan has been the hallmark of her political career. This is, and must be, the basis of our trust in her leadership: We know she will

support the comprehensive plan, no matter how loudly or (in the present case) abusively the special interests may protest.

Gearhart must not be forced to abandon that trust. We must not allow the community to be poisoned and bullied by a mini-faction's unfounded rumors and allegations. We urge all citizens, and especially those who were hoodwinked into signing the recall petition, to vote no on the recall.

As for that minifaction's spokesman on the city council, we trust that, when the dust has settled, he will remember the voices of his better angels who had urged him to resign from the council ("Jesse asks Gearhart mayor to bow out," *The Daily Astorian*, Jan. 8). He chose instead to ask for Widdop's resignation, ironically alleging that it was Mayor Widdop, and not in fact his own partisans, who were "splitting the community apart" — and are now burdening the city with the nearly \$6,000 cost of a recall election.

BILL BERG
KENT SMITH
Gearhart



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