

Act on climate change

Thank you for the excellent editorial "Climate change is real, Congress isn't" (*The Daily Astorian*, Feb. 24). The editor concludes that Congress is failing us. They're failing us because voters are allowing congressmen to do nothing. If more constituents work harder to communicate clearly with members of Congress, we would have national climate change legislation.

Congressmen like Greg Walden, R-Ore., 2nd District, recognize climate change is real and that we must "do everything we can to address this issue of global warming and climate change." Clearly it's time for residents of *The Daily Astorian's* district to team up with residents of Walden's district and promise to protect Walden's back as he decides to act on climate change. A market-based carbon tax rebated to the public would be his smartest choice.

JUDY WEISS
Brookline, Mass.

It's your Port

The Port of Astoria boat haul out/ repair yard seems to be destined to have the final killing stroke next month, despite protests from both recreational boaters, commercial fishermen and businessmen in the seafood industry.

Although the Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is cited as the driving force demanding closure until the problem of better filtration of traces of copper in the waste-water run off can be addressed, this is simply not true. Sources at DEQ say the port was advised of the need to better monitor and filter the storm water run off, although the boat yard was not specifically named as the source. In fact, DEQ was willing to grant grace periods out to 2016, with the understanding of the need to keep the boatyard operational.

The Port commission chose to ignore that allowance, completely scuttle the plan of expansion for the yard, and allow log storage on part of the boat yard footprint. They then allowed Astoria Fiber to not only expand the storage footprint, they granted the move of the debarker operation from Lewis and Clark to the boat yard. Astoria Fiber in an interview last August said that wasn't enough, they needed the whole 20 acres. Suddenly the boat yard was a villain. Twenty blacktopped paved acres, the only boatyard in Oregon with such an asset. It was taxpayer dollars that went, either directly or indirectly into designing, permitting, and implementing that yard. It's your yard, it's your port, not the Port commission's.

Whether you are a boater, a fisherman, a seafood process worker, or just someone who enjoyed the Riverwalk and watching the boats being worked on, you should be outraged. Your trust in the elected officials has been grossly violated.

All up and down the coast, ports are expanding, improving, growing, and our port — which should be the jewel of the West Coast — is falling apart, due in large part to mismanagement and narrow viewed catering to a single entity, instead of serving for the betterment of all.

It's been years since the seafood industry, or for that matter the general boating public, has had any representation on the commission. It's way past time the people of Clatsop County took the Port commission to task — It's your Port.

DAVE DENSMORE
Astoria

White elephant

During her two years as mayor, Dianne Widdop has shown no leadership in working toward solving the problems plaguing Gearhart's white elephant — the water treatment plant.

The city still owes \$7.645 million of the nearly \$11 million original cost. Refinancing being touted now will save homeowners approximately \$17 per \$200,000 of home value.

Gearhart's water smells

My trail of surprises

It's a clear, cold morning as I head out on my morning jaunt. I notice there is frost on the roofs of the houses. I enter the Warrenton waterfront trail at Seventh Place and Main Avenue.

As I turn to head north on the trail, my first surprise of the day: Two huge bull elk and six elk siblings a short distance to my north. They just stand there and give me a curious stare. As I move closer, first the siblings, and then the bull elk

saunter off into the brush.

As I approach where Alder Creek flows into the Columbia, I hear my first woodpecker of the season, pecking at a tree. A short distance further up the trail I spot a regal eagle at the top of a tree, eyeing baby buffleheads swimming below in the pond.

As pass over the alder tide gate, I see a fishing trawler returning from the ocean with its catch, and another crab boat heading to the ocean in search of

crab. As I near the top of the trail at 13th Street, I see one of my favorite birds, the red winged blackbird, busy singing a melodious sown of their own.

On my return south on the trail, I was treated to a marvelous view of the sun rising, the Astoria Bridge, the Column and Saddle Mountain. I thought to myself: This surely is God's country and my trail of surprises.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton

funny, tastes funny. In a cost saving measure, a circulation pump insufficient for the project was purchased and installed. My family will not drink Gearhart's water, or use it for cooking.

Another cost-saving measure at the onset of this project was to not hire our own certified water treatment manager. As a result, we are working under the license and certification of Warrenton, costing us additional unnecessary money, and still leaving us with water that smells and tastes funny.

Because we do not have our own permits in place, Gearhart is still required, at certain times of the year, to continue to purchase water from Warrenton, costing us even more unnecessary money.

There is however, around \$1 million in the white elephant's slush fund. The city has not communicated to residents how much of this money will be needed to fix the existing problems, and when an attempt to fix them will begin.

Will the city actually use this slush fund money to help pay to fix these problems? Will it cost more than what's there? Will we need another general obligation bond to pay for these problems, putting the city even further in debt? Mayor Widdop has kept all of this information from the city's residents. It's not to be talked about.

Mayor Widdop has said many times that this water treatment plant, costing us millions of dollars and not functioning properly, is "economic development" for Gearhart. Economic development is new funds coming in from a new source, not collecting more funds from city residents.

Gearhart residents are tired of erratic water bills. Our water meters need to be read on a monthly basis, with no guesswork. Actual readings.

Why are the new water meters not being installed in a more timely manner? There's that \$1 million slush fund, remember? Oh, they may need that money to feed the white elephant. We need a mayor who understands the major issues in our city needing attention now, not later.

Please vote yes to recall Mayor Dianne Widdop.

BONNIE GRAEFF
Gearhart

Just for the record

It is unfortunate that I got involved in a political controversy that should have already abated.

Upon my starting a business in Gearhart, Dianne Widdop introduced herself, and offered assistance in my venture. We had lunch, and I found her to be a nice woman and a good source of information.

When I gave permission to Kevin Willett to put up a sign promoting his pursuit for a position on the City Council, I did not envision such turmoil. I was doing so at his bequest. As a recent acquaintance, I found no issue in being friendly, and allowed a sign to promote his candidacy in front of my business. If John Duncan had asked me, I would have done the same.

I was not aware of the history between people in the community, or the politics that I had become intertwined with. There is no need to rehash the scenario that ensued. Widdop was obviously disturbed by my gesture, and has since apologized to me for her

words and actions regarding the matter, and I accepted her apology.

If there are those in Gearhart who find it necessary to want to recall Dianne Widdop as mayor for other reasons than just my scenario, that is another issue. I do not wish to be the example or reference for her misuse of powers.

The circumstances that brought my situation to the forefront should not be one that propagated her forfeiture of being mayor. I would not like anyone to use what transpired between Dianne Widdop and I as an advantage in removing her from office.

LINDA GOLDFARB
Gearhart

Mean-spirited noise

As a resident of Gearhart, I am very saddened by the recall and the mean-spirited noise from a small group. Gearhart is a wonderful place, with a real spirit of community. Neighbors help and support each other, and care about their town. No one exemplifies these best qualities of Gearhart more than our mayor, Dianne Widdop. She has served us well with competent leadership and cares deeply about her community service.

I regret the tarnish this recall has put on our community and urge a no vote so we can

move on, and focus on the legitimate business of Gearhart.

VIANNE PATTERSON
Gearhart

Moby Dick

When the new mayor of Astoria was recently inaugurated, the first thing she did was to congratulate the loser in a bid to bring the city together.

In the last mayoral election for the city of Gearhart, I lost by a mere handful of votes to Dianne Widdop. She never partook in such pleasantries, and thus set the tone for her regime. In fact, her personal animosity was evident when she stated in a City Council meeting that she disdained a council member because the council member had endorsed me.

Now the city is split, with council members openly rebuking her, and the chambers filled with disgruntled citizens.

Widdop set off into her administration with an avalanche of ordinances, as if she envisioned the city of Gearhart as Dog Patch in a Lil' Abner cartoon. We were inundated with the following: an abandoned car ordinance, a burning ordinance, a light ordinance, a noise ordinance, a fence ordinance, a Christmas light ordinance, a vacation home ordinance and a proposed recreational vehicle ordinance.

When I ran against her,

none of these items were on the table. Widdop did not bring up any of these concerns for debate before the election. She had no mandate.

We were told that the ordinances were necessary because of complaints, yet information regarding the complaints, nor the amount of complaints, was ever given. How do we know if the complaints came from neighbors, the city or the mayor, herself?

A big issue has been the barn. In actions reminiscent of the monomaniacal Capt. Ahab chasing Moby Dick, Widdop is obsessed with this issue. There is plenty of fault to go around, however, the mayor's personal clashes and failure to settle this issue indicate her inability as a fair and balanced mayor.

As Ishmael said, "Ahab's quenchless feud seemed mine." At present, the city is on a Nantucket sleigh ride, hooked onto Moby Dick/the barn with Land Use Board of Appeals (LUBA) cases, potential lawsuits, ill will and increasing costs to the city.

Out-of-town vacation homeowners are looked upon as cash cows to be taxed and regulated, yet their voices are dismissed out of hand; another case of Widdop alienating people of the city.

Furthermore, perhaps if Widdop had put her time and efforts into seeking water rights with the same enthusiasm shown as harpooning Moby Dick, we would be better off, and our home values would have been protected.

Please vote to recall Dianne Widdop.

BOB SHORTMAN
Gearhart

Messed up

I have been going to the Gearhart City Council and Planning Commission for around eight years now, and have seen the ups and downs of city government, but the recall of the mayor has been the most messed up than I have seen.

I do hope that when the Gearhart voters make their vote, that this will end both sides of the bickering, half lies, lies, half truths, truths

and rumors, that has left me so disillusioned with city government and the people backing the recall. All I ask is to let the voters of Gearhart end it.

THOMAS D. THIES
Gearhart

Innuendo, lies, fear

Those campaigning for the recall of Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop have resorted to innuendo, lies and fear, mixed in with a lot of sweet talk. Retaliation for signing the petition? Free speech rights being violated? Come on.

I have heard the allegations. They have been answered to my satisfaction by Mayor Widdop ("The Gearhart recall decision," *The Daily Astorian*, March 3). And yet this little group continues to ignore facts and simply repeat their allegations. They sound like a broken record.

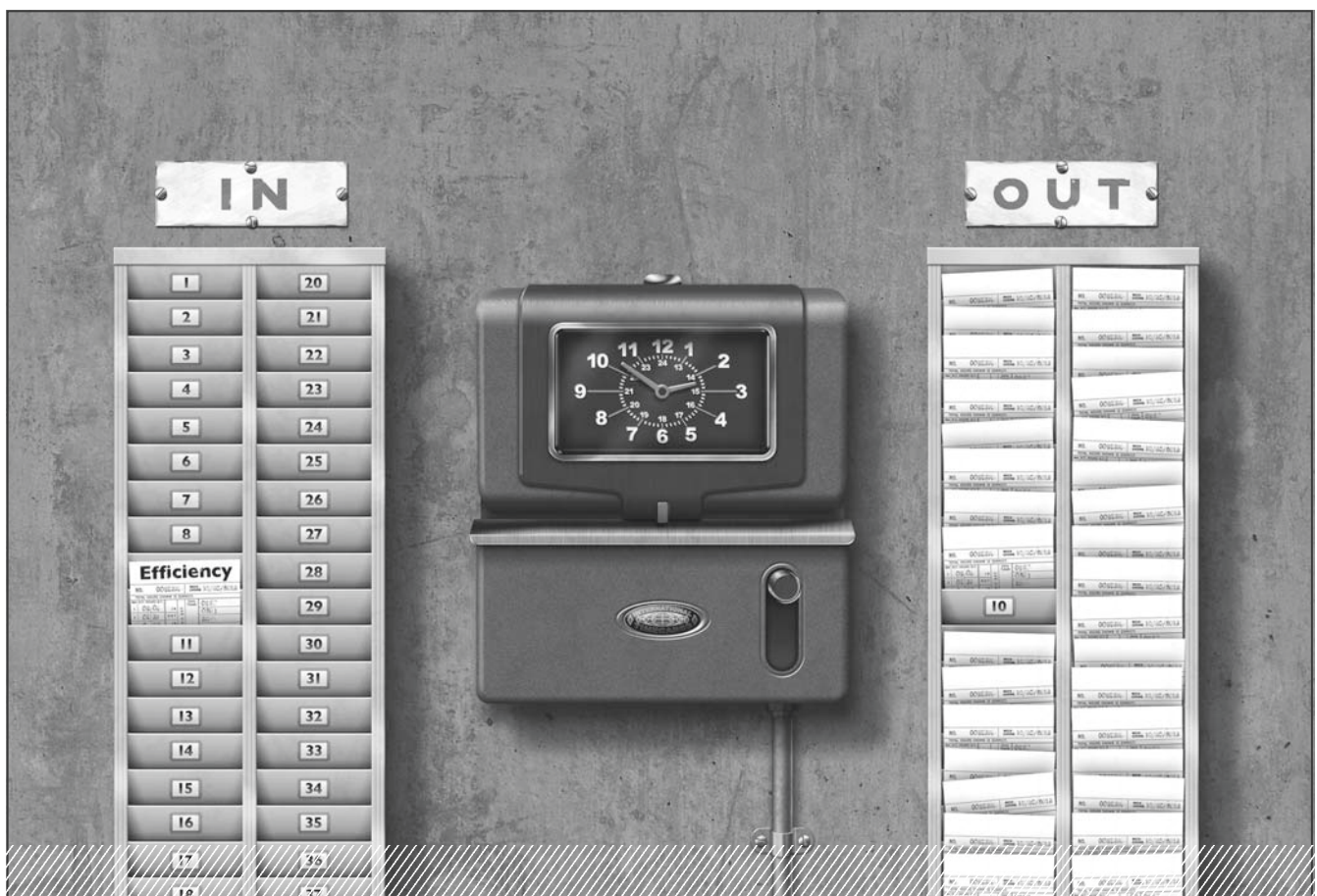
It appears to me that this group studied at the "Sarah Palin school of political activism." Just make up your own facts and couch them in sugary, cute phrases. Mix with a big dose of patriotic rhetoric citing the Constitution, free speech, diversity, honesty and kindness. And there you have it: the campaign to recall Mayor Widdop.

If anyone is being pushy with the recall efforts, it is the group seeking to oust Mayor Widdop. In the space of a 24-hour period, the doorbell rang three times at my full-time Gearhart residence.

The third time a petitioner rang the bell, (it was one of the same women who rang our doorbell earlier), she was somewhat rude and pushy when I pointed out that we had already stated we were not interested in signing the petition. I asked that our name and address be taken off of their list of houses to canvass. I got the "big stink eye" at my request.

One last thought: Who is going to pay for this recall election that will cost around \$7,000? Not Clatsop County. The costs will be passed on to Gearhart taxpayers. Perhaps the recall group could cover that bill. In their vendetta to oust the mayor, they are the ones creating a divisive community. Restore trust? I don't think so.

RANDY WILTGEN
Gearhart



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