

Puffing about nothing

The scenario being played to recall Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop, and the hilarious cast of characters who are staging it, prompts me to recall the popular TV show *Seinfeld*. A clever comedy with a consistent theme; each episode was about nothing.

This local sitcom amounts to be nothing more than some spiteful puffing about nothing. Vote no on the recall.

DOROTHY WELL
Former Gearhart City Council member
Gearhart

Abuse of master plan

The Port of Astoria commissioners are deaf to anything but their own, narrow vested interests. Unless they hear from more of us, they will continue their abuse of the balanced master plan, and some of their longest and most authentic tenants, who invested millions under it.

The most recent insult is the threatened closure of the boatyard. It is clear to most of us, and to state agencies, that Port commissioners are intent on using the need to clean up their own historic toxics to serve themselves. They blame the boatyard so they can eliminate it, and cover the area with yet more logs to ship to foreign users. The commissioners have insulted — and abandoned all pretense of supporting — Englund Marine and the Bornstein operations.

Had the voters understood that those who ran for the commission were in thrall to local lumber export interests, or to a singular focus on the needs of longshoremen, things might have been different now for the future of the Port. It has been hard to find solid local people to run for Port commissioner, as the forces for these two interests are so thoroughly enmeshed and direct staff priorities, as staff must do as they're told.

Particularly for those of us who live in Astoria, we support growth and development that recognizes and honors the historic fishing industry. This city welcomes appropriate and mixed industrial and commercial uses, and sees them to be of immense value. Yet the Port pursues the narrow and short-term self interest of a few.

What will it take to make any impression on this Port Commission? They've made the western end of the community's Riverwalk difficult to access and unpleasant, and seem to be doing everything to drive people away. Maybe that's so we won't see what is happening?

Take a walk, citizens of Clatsop County.

JAN MITCHELL
Astoria

Are you confused?

Are you confused? It's really simple. If you live in Gearhart, and love it like it is, you must vote to keep Mayor Diane Widdop in office. Let me tell you why.

Much more is at stake here than the mayor's office. Gearhart has a comprehensive plan, laws and elections; all of which are threatened. Unfortunately, Gearhart has some mean-spirited people, let's just call them the Barn Bullies, who, when it became clear they would not be allowed to operate outside the law, joined forces and chose to attack. They have resorted to lies, innuendos, legal threats and martyr behavior. I have attended a number of city meetings and seen these folks in action.

We are a very small town. Our elected officials, including Mayor Dianne Widdop, are unpaid volunteers. Mayor Widdop is both dedicated and intelligent. She believes strongly in keeping the Gearhart that we know and love, alive and well.

I am concerned about a climate where political correctness masks as a front for keeping politicians from having any opinions. By effectively gagging them, by censoring their every word and keeping them constantly on guard and

Frank and his magic tricks

Born April 13, 2009, the handsome black and tan bloodhound named Frank, passed quietly into the night March 1, 2015, in the arms of his best friend, George Gideon.

He spent the first weeks of his life with his folks in Warrenton, and it was there that he met the love of his life, George. With his droopy red tinged eyes, foot-long ears and size 12 paws, he was a superb example of doggy handsomeness. Frank and George went on long trips together, and Frank had five states under his collar by the time he was 3 years old. It was called to his attention at one point that only three states counted because he did love the occasional snooze and George felt one should actually be conscious for the state to count.

A lifelong carnivore was by no means a snob about food. His general philosophy was that if he could get it past his voluptuous jowls, it was worth the effort. The only time I ever saw him hesitate to eat something, his friend remembered, was when someone had given him a large eel. I watched him play with it for some time, but never saw him swallow the thing. I found it about three weeks later buried in the back of my van. Frank acted like he'd never seen it, but I think he was lying.

Though not formally educated, Frank was a very smart boy. He could find his water bowl unaided, figure out where the ball was (although, he could care less because he had no intention to run after it or carry it around in his mouth). He could sit on demand, wag his tail without thinking and drool on cue. When his registration



Submitted photo

George Gideon and his friend, Frank.

papers came from the American Kennel Club, they had sent along a pamphlet on bloodhounds and the first chapter was titled, "Welcome to the Wonderful World of Bloodhounds," you'll never have a clean house again.

Frank was very good at magic tricks, which he occasionally would demonstrate. By my count, three whole pies, a couple dozen steaks and a 5-pound meat loaf that had been cooling on the counter, had all disappeared. I don't remember them ever reappearing!

Putting all of these achievements aside, Frank's greatest quality was his ability to show me love. Pure and simple, basic and overwhelming love for his pals. That love was gratefully returned in kind.

Frank also had the uncanny ability to make me feel like Einstein, even though my IQ can hover around room temperature. At times, he could also make me feel like a superhero if I got my boots tied correctly the first time.

You see, Frank wasn't just a dog; he wasn't a pet or possession, a conversation piece or a burden. Frank was my friend. I've had some great (human) friends in my life, and they know who they are. Frank knew who I was, it was like he was put on this earth to make me happy, and he did a magnificent job.

It was a bit hard in the recession like a lot of us were: lost some property, stock, file for bankruptcy, no retirement in this lifetime, but through it all, I like to think I handled it well — it's one of life's little tsunamis that you either give up or you survive. This is something that did matter. I mean, who else is going to look at me like I'm a genius or a superhero. You were my hero, Frankie. It was my great fortune to know you and to love you, and you will live in my heart and in my memories forever. Adios, my friend.

In lieu of milk bones, Frank would want you to take some time each day to give a gentle pat or a loving hug to your friend, and maybe, occasionally leave the room while a meatloaf is cooling.

A special thanks to Dr. Hasse at Safe Haven Vet Hospital and her staff for their kindness and help at the worst of times. And thank you to Laroy and Katie Smith for their love and support.

GEORGE GIDEON
Seaside

walking on eggshells, the only thing left is a figurehead. And, of course, then money steps in and runs the show. We seem to be taking a cue from the national playbook.

Unfortunately, *The Daily Astorian* chose to fan the flames by giving front page headline coverage to the innuendos and petty accusations, long before bothering to give Mayor Widdop a decent article. Soon enough, people were so confused, that we now have to have a divisive and expensive recall election. I guess creating the circus sells papers?

If Mayor Widdop is recalled, it will not stop there. Other wonderful Gearhart city officials have resigned because of this very type of intimidation. It's time for us to stand with our mayor and say: No. No more bullying. No special favors. No recall. Please vote no.

CAROL LUCAS
Gearhart

Reflections and going forward

I have been coming to Gearhart with my family to visit my stepmother, Eleonore Latourette since the early 1970s. We've had our own home in Little Beach since the mid-1980s, so I feel I have inherited the long-standing Gearhart mindset that I love: Unwind and enjoy the quiet lifestyle of the beach.

After attending Gearhart City Council meetings for the past year, I have pieced together the bigger picture. In summary, this wonderful lifestyle is being taken away under the administration of Mayor Diane Widdop. We really need a new mayor.

In 20 years of city government, the last two as mayor, Mayor Widdop has learned very little about city council and how it functions. She has no understanding of, or the importance of, following Robert's Rules of Order, making many in the audience wonder: "Was that done correctly?"; "Is this going to be legal?"; "What are they doing up there?" Gearhart's city attorney offers little, if any, guidance to help sort out the chaos.

There is a repeated voting pattern consisting of the same individuals in a 3-2 decision each time. It's as if the decisions were made ahead of time, in what's called in the corporate world a "daisy chain." All perfectly legal, but it doesn't pass the smell test. It has become clear that we have a major blockade in service to the citizens of Gearhart. Residents' comments are not respected as valuable during City Council meetings, or at coffee with the mayor.

Mayor Widdop has her own hidden agenda: New, and/or pending ordinances; burning permits for residential fire pits, short-term rentals, mandatory garbage, a new pending recreational vehicle parking ordinance. All unnecessary. All of these are a "solution" where there is no problem.

The "Restore Trust" movement to recall Mayor Widdop has been based on full facts and integrity supported by Oregon's secretary of state. These values are not going away in the last few days of this recall election, and need to be re-established with the

election of a new mayor in Gearhart.

You can read more at RestoreTrustGearhart.com. We spoke to residents for three full months. Most want a successful recall — we're called the "Silent Majority."

Please join all of us and vote yes to recall Mayor Dianne Widdop.

HAROLD T. GABLE,
DMD
Gearhart

Insulting behavior

No one can deny that Astoria has been blessed with great abundance — scenery, activities, good

people, etc. However, abundance is not always beneficial.

For example, we seem to have an unending pool of incompetent, self-serving, uncooperative political hacks ready to run for a position on our Port of Astoria Commission. Once there, it appears that whatever expertise they might have had immediately disappears, leaving the voters to question why they ran.

This is not a new phenomenon. It has been going on for years.

For some obscure reason, our commissioners cannot seem to recognize

a good money-making deal when they see one; for example, existing business expansion. And yet they cling with a death grip to money losers like the Astoria Riverwalk Inn.

Beyond the incompetence of the commission is the issue of trust. The commission said it wanted a strong maritime service — including a boat lift — and on the strength of this plan, it sweet-talked England Marine and Columbia Pacific Marine Repair into moving nearer to the boatyard.

Moving these businesses could not have been convenient, nor inexpensive, and the commissioners should have been grateful to have solidified their plan for the maritime hub, but that has not been the case. Like small children with shiny toys, the commission was distracted by the offer of more money from another source: logging companies.

Lord knows, I'm not against the Port making money. In fact, that would be an unexpected and unprecedented experience for local taxpayers, but I don't believe it must be "logs or nothing." I believe that diversity is the proper direction, and keeping promises is key to having good operations.

If the Port of Ilwaco, Wash., can have a successful boatyard, there is no reason that Astoria cannot have one, too.

Our new Port manager has not had an opportunity to show his capacity for leadership, but he is not off to a very good start when he practices a "smoke and mirrors" and a misdirection campaign to unilaterally remove our boat lift and yard. He will not last long by insulting us with the belief that we are too stupid to understand what he and the commissioners are up to.

"The DEQ made me do it" is not an acceptable answer.

KEN CHAPMAN
Astoria



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