

Stop the bullying

A bully is defined as “a person that uses strength, power or influence to harm or intimidate others. A blustering, browbeating person who is habitually cruel to others.”

When does a bully really show his or her true nature? When they are stood up to.

When the recall petitions were completed by the required number of signatures from citizens in the Cannon Beach Rural Fire District, they were submitted to the county clerk’s office. Almost immediately, there were confrontations both in person and on social media seeking to intimidate people who signed the petitions.

I would like to apologize to those who were put on the spot. I was told that signatures would not be made public, and are confidential. However, individuals can request to view them. Obviously, those recalled requested them, and then made them public by browbeating people who were merely exercising their right to an opinion, and then had the gumption to express it in writing.

There were many citizens very upset by the actions of the board who didn’t sign because they were certain of verbal or financial retaliation. Even our budding charter school was threatened — if I didn’t stop the recall, they would withdraw financial pledges. Why? To hurt those who support it.

Even though I was admonished to cease the recall for the sake of the school, I wouldn’t, because it shouldn’t have to rely on the money of extortioners to succeed. Who on earth would punish children to keep a grasp on their power? Does this sound like ethical behavior on the part of elected officials?

There’s been a pattern of micro-management and hyper-criticism for years. Chief Mike Balzer was not the first subordinate or employee to endure relentless scrutiny. The recall is not about Balzer. But his treatment was a symptom that something was very wrong.

What makes Cannon Beach special? Nobody treats our firefighters, police, city workers, volunteers, citizens or children with anything but honor and respect. You mess with them? Be prepared for backlash. Let the voting take place. Let the people speak one way or the other, to end this once and for all.

SUSAN NEUWIRTH
Tolovana Park

Trump for president

The political punditry continues to profess dread surprise over the ascendancy of Donald Trump. Why should that be so? Of the six contenders now standing, only he has no association with an enterprise, the U.S. government, which is approved of by little more than 20 percent of its putative employers. Who, in his right mind, would promote to CEO an employee of an organization which dissatisfied more than three-quarters of those for which it works?

It is said that he is coarse. Chaucer and Shakespeare were coarse. America, never having had a monarchy or an aristocracy, has never aspired to refinement. And besides, the liberal press, Trump’s most obstreperous critics, did not squeal nearly so loudly when the current front-runner’s husband, the most notoriously iniquitous occupant of the White House, was exposed.

The government of this country has become a giant casino, the croupiers of which, euphemistically called “legislators,” and their legions of unelected bureaucrats, themselves so vast in number and power as to become a fourth branch of government, systematically mulct the citizenry — Thomas Paine’s “greedy hand of government” — out of trillions of dollars.

Then, after seizing a sizable

Astoria needs more long-term elder care

Astoria, my hometown that I adore, has a problem: A lack of long-term elder and hospice care.

You might think, “Oh, there are already so many care facilities in town. There is no need for more.” What people don’t understand is that these places are full, or at the very least they do not have open spots for people who require a higher level of care. That hadn’t occurred to me either until it affected our family directly.

When my brother, Craig Myers, was hit by a car in 2012, he was transferred from a Portland hospital to Clatsop Care to heal and receive therapy due to multiple injuries, including a traumatic brain injury. He didn’t require a higher level of skilled, long-term care, so admittance was not an issue.

Craig now has terminal cancer. Due to his heightened medical needs, including hospice care, and the fact that this will be a long-term requirement, there is no place for him in Astoria, his home for the last 61 years. The remainder of his life will be spent in St. Helens, and only because I was lucky enough to find a vacancy at a facility there.

I’ve been asked, “Well, did you check this place? Or what about that place?” Yes, I’ve checked them all. Repeatedly. To make things worse, because of the distance, our mother is unable to see him except for when I drive down from the Canadian border and bring her to him. It’s horrifying to lose a child. This will be her second child lost. And it’s happening out of her reach.

I know people in the healthcare industry and social services who have stated that, if they had the financial means to do so, they would open up another care center in Astoria because the shortage of space is no less than tragic. I’m writing this out of frustration and grief, but also as an alert to the people of my hometown who may not realize that this is a very real shortcoming.

As another Astoria native, pointed out: The community rallied together once to get an indoor pool built. Maybe we could do the same for a facility that would keep us, when we’re at our most vulnerable, closer to home to heal (or die).

LISA CURTIS
Blaine, Washington

portion for themselves “off the top,” redistribute the remainder to the “winners.” The press, in fact, routinely refers to those who benefit from legislation and government spending as “winners.” What is unspoken is where there are “winners,” there must be “losers.”

What, then, is there to wonder at that a man who has never been a politician, and who speaks unlike the ventriloquists’ dummies against whom he contends, may one day occupy the White House?

LOUIS SARGENT
Gearhart

My friend Sandy

My friend Sandra Lee Sarin, affectionately known as Sandy, was a special gift to all who knew her. I met Sandy 19 years ago at Clatsop Community College, and the friendship we shared was born almost that first day. I know that the primary reason was that I admired pictures of her beloved grandchildren Ricky, Brittanie and Mikayla. Years later she and Chuck welcomed two more precious grandchildren, Luke and Leo. Chuck was the love of Sandy’s life, and she told me he was also her very best friend.

Who was my friend Sandy? She was a devoted wife, mother, mother-in-law, grandmother, sister and friend. Her family was the center of her world. She loved each of them with all her heart. She was so proud of her sons Mike and Eric, and embraced her daughters-in-law Laura and Bea with love. The Sandy I knew was strong, loyal, stubborn, funny, opinionated, spirited and loving. If you needed someone to lean on she was there.

There are many beautiful things in our lives — flowers and trees, birds and roses, stars and sunsets and rainbows and books — but only one Sandra Lee Sarin in our whole wide world. Thank you, Sandy, for your unforgettable treasured forever friendship over these many years.

NANCY ALLSUP
Warrenton

Fluoride examples

I don’t understand why there should be a debate regarding adding fluoride to the water in this state. There are counties in Oregon where the water is fluoridated, and counties where it is not.

The question is: Has the population in the areas where the water has been fluoridated benefited in any way? Are their dental checkups better than the population in the non-fluoridated areas, for example? Or have they benefited or not benefited in other ways?

These are measurable standards readily available. There should be no debate, just some simple research. I’m sure many of us would be interested in the results.

TESS CHEDSEY
Warrenton

Stop LNG

A note to Gov. Kate Brown: Many people have contacted you regarding the pro-

posed liquefied natural gas (LNG) plant that would be built in our back yard. The area they want to build on is nothing but a dividing dike between the Skipanon River and Youngs Bay inlet.

As a teenager I used to duck hunt in the area. The only way to get there was to wade out there with hip boots. Through the years, the Army Corps of Engineers have filled it with dredge spoils from our beautiful Columbia River.

Warrenton is a historic town. I was born here, and spent most of my life here, except for 2 1/2 years in Corpus Christi, Texas.

Please respond to the people’s requests to stop this thing before a disaster occurs. There are many businesses right next door, less than one-eighth of a mile from the site. Also, there’s a grade school with hundreds of kids nearby.

No more fishing, no more sawmill next door, no more canneries to process fish — the loss of thousands of jobs for about 25 to operate the plant. Those approximately 1,000 jobs to build the plant will be gone after 4-5 years. Then what?

We the people do not benefit from this, only the greedy and money-hungry city com-

missioners are looking down a one-way path.

You can stop this nightmare if you want to. Or do you want to live with yourself if a disaster occurs?

JIM CULP
Warrenton

Vote ‘no’ on recall

The firing of Mike Balzer as Cannon Beach fire chief has been in the local news. A fair review of publicly available information (board minutes and Mike’s performance evaluation) reveals that Mike brought this dismissal upon himself.

The fire board appointed Mike to chief almost three years ago, after receiving a petition signed by all Cannon Beach firefighters in support of promoting Mike from within (instead of doing an external search). Mike was well known in the community as an excellent firefighter and a great guy; everyone assumed that Mike could successfully grow into the role as the fire district’s executive director. Any gaps in his experience would be filled in with training courses and help from other fire chiefs.

It was soon apparent that Mike was not interested in improving his performance in

the administrative and communications areas so essential to the role of fire chief. As the board tried to work with Mike to get him up to speed, his resistance to training courses, help from fellow chiefs, board guidance, and even help from his officers only increased.

After 2 1/2 years of working with Mike, a board majority voted to terminate his employment and start the search for a replacement. His dismissal occurred several months after a negative performance review conducted by the board, a review that included input by five evaluators from other agencies in Clatsop County. In spite of the review’s explicit directions for corrective action, Mike made no subsequent effort to change his behavior.

The board could have said that since they liked Mike as a person, they would cover for his poor performance for the remaining time on his contract. But to ignore their fiduciary responsibility and reward incompetence would have been a clear case of cronyism, which always hurts an organization by causing good people to leave, and by jeopardizing financial support from taxpayers and donors.

I encourage voters to consider the issues carefully and

support competence and professionalism by boards and agency heads in the conduct of the public’s business. Please mark no on all three recall questions.

JIM HARRIS
Cannon Beach

WINGS event good

The Seaside and Astoria American Association of University Women held its 14th annual Women Interested in Going to School 2016 Conference Feb. 6, in collaboration with Clatsop Community College. WINGS has enjoyed community support from the media, individuals and the business community since the beginning, and we want to say a big thank you.

Sixty-six women experienced a potentially life-changing day. We couldn’t have done it without the support of the writers and editors at *The Daily Astorian*, *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette*. In particular we saw a big bump in registration following the Jan. 28 story by Edward Stratton, “Outreach helps give Latinas wings.”

We collected donations from 126 donors. Forty-one women attended the full-day session, and 25 women participated in the new half-day Latina session. We expect this initiative to continue to grow.

Local women can now see a path to a brighter future for themselves and their families and financial incentives to get started. Thank you so much for the continued support for WINGS.

PAT LEHMAN
Co-chairwoman, WINGS
AAUW Seaside
BOBBI BRICE
Co-chairwoman, WINGS
AAUW of Astoria

‘No’ on recall

I support the current board of Cannon Beach Rural Fire Protection District. I do not support the recall effort.

ELEANOR (ELLIE)
NELSON
Tolovana Park

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