

Pouting Democrats

It seems that we just cannot get away from politics, and there is so much about it that I do not understand. I don't get why the Democratic Party refuses to look within to solve the problems that caused their electoral failure, instead of attempting to find any external excuse for their political inadequacies.

I don't get why the "liberal party" adamantly refuses to acknowledge that any ideas or programs, not of their design, no matter how beneficial to the country and its citizens they are. Is this really "liberal"?

I also don't get why, when the current administration takes some action, that everybody, on both sides of the political spectrum is in favor of, it suddenly becomes wrong for this president to take that action for some inane reason. This, in my opinion this is pure, unadulterated obstructionism, and it just prevents the current government from accomplishing anything beneficial for the citizens of this country because the Democrats are pouting.

There is one more thing that my simple mind cannot grasp, and that is why the Democratic Party insists on carrying out this vendetta against this administration and, in the process, incites rioting, civil unrest and division amongst the peoples of this country. It is almost as if they cannot comprehend that they are turning the vast majority of reasonable Americans against them.

Speaking strictly for myself; I now, would rather vote for a Republican or Independent who is far less qualified for a particular position, than to support a Democrat who shares the divisive attitude of the current party leadership, and I don't believe that I am alone in feeling this way. This is sad, because I used to vote on what I felt was merit, regardless of party affiliation, but because of the actions of the Democratic Party leadership, those days are gone.

Are the leaders of this once great party so insulated from reality and actually listening to the needs of the country's citizens that they cannot see how ridiculous they are acting, and what it is doing to their political platform?

That's the question I have; I could be wrong.

DAVID GRAVES
Astoria

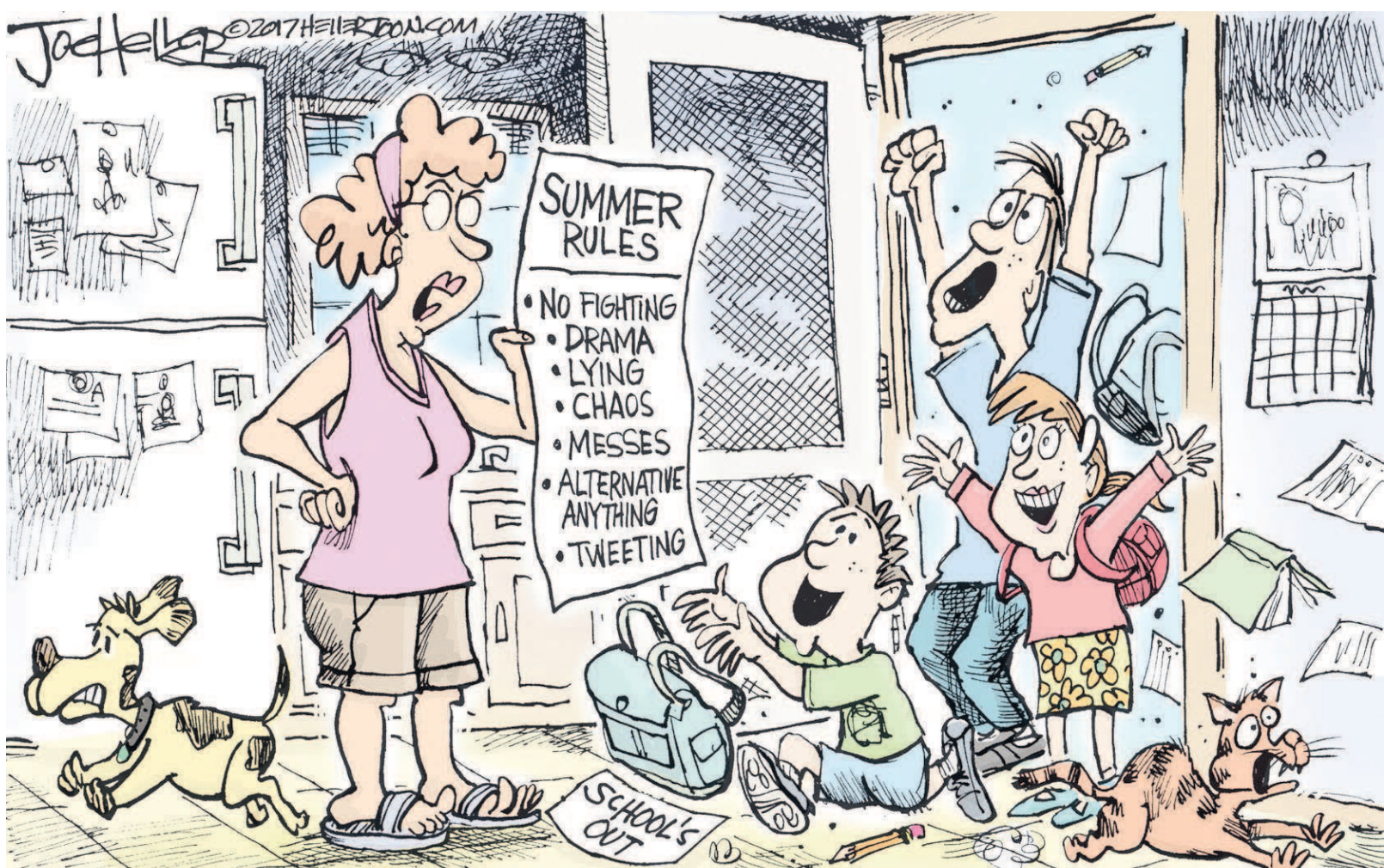
Issues over innuendo

Democracy is alive and well in Clatsop County. Thanks to Clatsop County voters who did their homework and turned in their ballots, we will have two new commissioners for the Port of Astoria beginning in July. Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne both ran clean campaigns focused on issues, and made commitments to work cooperatively with fellow commissioners.

Spence brings fiscal knowledge from serving on the Port Budget Committee for two years, and experience as a city and county administrator. Rohne served our county for two terms as a county commissioner, and cares deeply about county-wide issues and the future of our communities.

Incumbent Jim Campbell retained his seat on the Port of Astoria Commission. Campbell stayed focused on the issues and the Port's long-term strength, in contrast to his opponent who seemed bent on disruption and accusations. Fewer people voted for Campbell's opponent than any of the six candidates who ran for the Port.

Congratulations to Clatsop



"HOLD IT RIGHT THERE! YOU'RE NOT TURNING OUR HOUSE INTO THE WHITE HOUSE IN THE NEXT 100 DAYS!"

County voters, who chose cooperation over mud slinging, and issues over innuendo.

CHERYL JOHNSON
Astoria

Don't be fooled

In the article about short-term rentals, "Short-term rental rules under fire" (May 16) The Daily Astorian published the following quote: "This is a huge win. What we've said solidly from Day One is that the current regime at City Hall is very solidly against vacation rentals. The city was trying to completely manipulate the language. The judge agreed with us, that they were 99 percent wrong."

I question whether that quote is accurate. This is how the system works. An initiative petition to put an initiative on the ballot is presented to city hall. The city attorney then prepares a summary of the petition. That summary is then placed on the ballot if the initiative is put to a vote. If someone objects to the summary as written by the city attorney, they can request that the summary be reviewed by a superior court judge. The judge then reviews the summary and makes changes to the summary, if necessary.

That is what happened in this particular case. The summary prepared by the city attorney consisted of 10 one-sentence statements. The judge made very minor, immaterial changes to the statements prepared by the city attorney. The changes consisted of removing two commas, changing the words "to be spent on the" to "dedicated to" and combining two statements into one, and added the new statement "require compliance with Gearhart city ordinances that apply generally to all residential dwelling units."

I do not believe that these minor, immaterial changes constitute a 99 percent change of the summary presented by the city attorney, nor do I believe that the city was trying to completely manipulate the language. I believe it is probably the other way around. But that is up to

the residents of Gearhart to decide.

Don't be fooled — become educated.

TERRY D. GRAFF
Gearhart

Road work timing

Tuesday, May 23, was a beautiful sunny day with a cruise ship in port which, of course, means lots of foot traffic. We are also looking forward to Memorial Day this upcoming weekend, which means lots of traffic.

Why on earth would the street department tear up the roads at this time? Doesn't anyone in City Hall have any practical thoughts? Furthermore, if they must do it, why not at night — say midnight to 6 a.m.?

EDIE FAYLOR
Warrenton

Insurance pays bills

I agree, our current health insurance system is not perfect, some folks receive free insurance and free health care, while others pay more for health insurance than they do for their home, and then have thousands of dollars in annual health bills. Some of our community members get to make a second house payment for the privilege of paying their medical bills.

I have been blessed with excellent health, I have few health expenses, but have continued to pay for health insurance. By doing this, I am contributing to the fund that is being used by those who do have medical expenses. I enjoy having the privilege of making this personal choice and am hopeful this will continue.

Do we need to change the way healthcare is funded, or are other changes needed?

Two of the ways healthcare expenses are funded is through health insurance premiums and through taxes. I will always vote yes for a personal choice in paying for medical expenses. I will gladly continue to pay for health insurance, and hopefully will continue to fund those

with medical expenses.

On the other side, I will always vote no for increased taxes to pay for medical expenses. Our community has shown, over and over again, that when someone is in need, help is provided. Do we really need to be forced to help others?

LINDA DUGAN
Astoria

Support for ordinance

As a Gearhart homeowner of 45 years, I am concerned that former Gearhart Mayor Dianne Widdop's recent letter to the editor, "Warning on rental changes" (The Daily Astorian, May 19), misrepresents everything the Gearhart Vacation Rental Ordinance Initiative offers.

Below is how the Gearhart Citizens for Fair and Reasonable Government describe what is included in the ordinance initiative:

1. The city will provide notice of all vacation rentals within 200 feet of existing residences.
2. All rentals must have a person available by telephone 24 hours a day to handle any neighbor complaints.
3. All rentals must pass a rigorous safety inspection.
4. Vacation rentals shall be limited to only two adults per bedroom, plus three additional adults (children are not included in the limitation).
5. A vacation rental will pay \$600 a year to assist with police and fire services.
6. Vacation rentals shall comply with all city ordinances regarding noise, residential appearance, garbage, septic and parking.
7. When a vacation rental is sold, it can continue to be a vacation rental as long as it abides by these existing rules and regulations.

This description reassures me that the information former Gearhart Mayor Widdop's letter contains is not accurate.

In addition to the taxes of 7 percent homeowners of vacation rentals now currently pay the city on rental income, the same homeowners will

pay \$600 annually to the city to help with police and fire protection, a benefit to the entire community.

At least 82 rental applications have been filed so far, which represents \$49,200 that the city will collect every year to support these important public services. I encourage Gearhart voters to embrace the Gearhart Vacation Rental Ordinance Initiative.

PAGE KNUDSEN COWLES
Gearhart

Longshoremen care

Now that the election is over, I would like to clarify a few things, seeing as how my name is banded about in the paper.

Yes, I did support a slate of Pat O'Grady, Stephen Fulton and Dick Hellberg for the Port Commission. They lost; so be it. I don't know Dirk Rohne, but I know Jim Campbell and Frank Spence. They are fine gentlemen, and I'm very confident that I will have a great working relationship with them.

The candidates I supported ran on a platform of transparency, communication, protection and best use of public monies and a visionary expansion plan for the Port. None of this was detailed in the newspaper. It doesn't sell papers like good old-fashioned personality conflict and controversy. Consequently, the message was never heard. So be it.

Also, there were several snide remarks and innuendos about the service of longshoremen on the Port Commission. They have served, with distinction on the commission since its virtual inception. Commissioner Bill Hunsinger had dedicated over 10 years and an untold number of hours of his retirement to the betterment of the Port and the community. Two of the finest commissioners to ever serve were longshoremen; that being Roy Niemi and Albert Rissman.

Let there be no mistake, longshoremen care about the success and prosperity of the Port and the community as much as anyone.

CHRIS CONNAWAY
Astoria

The Republican hypocrisy Hall of Fame

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Services

We certainly don't want leading Republicans to tumble into hypocrisy, so let's refresh their memories.



Patriots like Mitch McConnell and Paul Ryan have eloquently warned of the importance of ferreting out the truth and holding politicians accountable, including for leaking classified information. Thank God for their insistence on truth-seeking!

As McConnell warned, for example: "The president did not value the sacred oath. He was interested in saving his hide, not truth and justice. I submit to my colleagues that if we have no truth and we have no justice, then we have no nation of laws. No public official, no president, no man or no woman is important enough to sacrifice the founding principles of our legal system."

Such passion for justice and accountability (expressed in 1999,

during the impeachment trial of Bill Clinton) inspires us all. And at this historic moment when timid or myopic politicians balk at congressional oversight and resist an independent commission to investigate President Donald Trump and possible collusion with the Kremlin, it behooves us to cherish the wisdom of such honest souls.

They're busy, but no problem! I've helpfully dug out their brilliant insights:

"Extreme carelessness with classified material ... is still totally disqualifying."

— Donald Trump, July 11, 2016

"It's simple: Individuals who are 'extremely careless' w/ classified info should be denied further access to it."

— House Speaker Paul Ryan, tweet, July 7, 2016

"The security clearance of any officer or employee of the federal government who has exercised extreme carelessness in the handling of classified information shall be revoked."

— Senate Bill 3135, co-sponsored last year (to shame Hillary Clin-

ton) by 16 Republican senators: Cory Gardner, John Cornyn, Shelley Moore Capito, Tim Scott, James Risch, Pat Roberts, Dean Heller, Kelly Ayotte, John Barrasso, David Perdue, Johnny Isakson, Thom Tillis, John Thune, David Vitter, Mike Rounds and James Inhofe

"Those who mishandled classified info have had their sec clearances revoked, lost their jobs, faced fines, & even been sent to prison."

— Reince Priebus, tweet, July 6, 2016

"What do I say to the tens of thousands of people that live and work in my district who work for the federal government, including more than 47,000 Marines? What do I say (to them) when saying something that isn't true and handling classified information in an extremely careless way has no criminal ramifications?"

— Rep. Darrell Issa, July 12, 2016

"In my opinion, quite frankly, it's treason."

— Rep. Michael McCaul, Nov. 3, 2016, on Hillary Clinton's use of a private email server

"Presidents are not ordinary

citizens. They are extraordinary, in that they are vested with so much more authority and power than the rest of us. We have a right; indeed, we have an obligation, to hold them strictly accountable to the rule of law. ... It is self-evident to us all, I hope, that we cannot overlook, dismiss or diminish the obstruction of justice by the very person we charge with taking care that the laws are faithfully executed."

— Sen. John McCain, Feb. 12, 1999, in voting to convict President Clinton in his impeachment trial

"By his words and deeds, he had done great harm to the notions of honesty and integrity that form the underpinnings of this great republic. ... If we do not sustain the moral and legal foundation on which our system of government and our prosperity is based, both will surely and steadily diminish."

— Gov. Sam Brownback of Kansas, Feb. 12, 1999, as a senator

"The true tragedy in this case is the collapse of the president's moral authority. ... There was no better reason than that for the res-

ignation of this president."

— Sen. Charles Grassley, Feb. 12, 1999

"Our freedom is assured by the rule of law. ... Even the most powerful among us must be subject to those laws. Tampering with the truth-seeking functions of the law undermines our justice system and the foundations on which our freedoms lie."

— Sen. Mike Crapo, Feb. 12, 1999

Such Ciceros! At a time when so many Americans have a narrow, partisan vision, I am grateful that we are blessed with patriots of such vision.

In all seriousness, let's adhere to the spirit of Attorney General Jeff Sessions, who as a senator during the 1999 Clinton trial declared:

"The chief law officer of the land, whose oath of office calls on him to preserve, protect and defend the Constitution, crossed the line and failed to defend and protect the law and, in fact, attacked the law. ... Under our Constitution, such acts are high crimes, and equal justice requires that he forfeit his office. ... It is crucial to our system of justice that we demand the truth."