

Disturbing terminology

‘Round-up’ is a term used for bunnies, cows, animals not for people. I resent this dehumanizing terminology being used about people, our people.

I also find the term “faithless elector” to be an absurd construct to undermine the electors’ integrity. An elector’s oath is to the Constitution of the U.S. first and foremost, to one’s God and personal integrity and then, and only then, to one’s “party.”

Beware Americans. You have been duped once again by a Russian rigged social media discussion during the election campaigns, and by at least \$143-plus million of propaganda money from the alt-right political action committee money.

The present self-appointed spokesperson for the U.S. does not trust or consult with the U.S. FBI, CIA, Justice Department, Congress or the Constitution of the U.S. He wants a back-door, secret channel to consult Putin. The content of the messages, he doesn’t want the U.S. intelligence or government to know about. He has multiple personal monetary ties with Russia. Is he the spokesman for the U.S. or Russian interests?

MONICA TAYLOR
Astoria

Glancing blow

Matt Winters’ most recent column in the Coast River Business Journal didn’t quite hit the nail on the head, but he did deliver a glancing blow, warning that “too much housing dedicated only to seasonal use has a tendency of hollowing out communities.”

I don’t believe that was too harsh a criticism, but if we scratch a bit deeper, we can point to the runaway proliferation of short stay vacation rentals in every resort town, Astoria included, as a primary cause for the loss of affordable housing for the people who live and work here. And please, there is no off-season. Every municipality stages events all year long to hustle more and more visitors to this area.

Regulating vacation rentals ought to be seen as a cover for permitting commercial activities in a residential zone. There goes the neighborhood. Absentee owners are prone to see their property’s income potential, so for a nominal fee and with cursory inspections, a license to operate will be granted.

When lodging taxes are levied and revenues accepted, the municipality becomes complicit in this commerce, and its deleterious effect. This goose is laying golden eggs, so when I read of all the hand-wringing over the “housing crunch” my eyes roll. There is a hollowing out. It is the gulf between the haves and the have-nots, and why must bad things seem always to get worse?

GARY DURHEIM
Seaside

Post office woes

It was the day after Memorial Day, and I had to go to the post office to buy some stamps. I parked my car, got out, walked up the stairs and entered the post office. As I opened the door, I found that the line of customers extended from the counter to those very doors. When I gazed up the line, to see what the holdup was, I discovered that there was only one employee serving all the customers.

It took about a half hour to reach the counter, and when I did attain that hallowed position, I queried the poor, haggard individual who was helping postal patrons as to why this facility was so understaffed on such a heavy volume day. The counter person replied that she was not alone, there were several employees there; however, there was a lot to do in the back, so the rest of them were doing that.

So here is what I don’t understand: Why, when the worst market in the country can call another checker to help reduce the length of the line during peak periods, can the post office not tear an employee or two away from sorting mail long enough to assist patrons who need to use their services in a timely fashion?

Is this just another example of government agencies run amok? The post office moans about having to raise rates because the private companies, even though they charge more, are taking a larger and larger share of the business. Is it perhaps because companies like UPS and Federal Express actually have some empathy for their customers, and attempt to make their mailing experience as efficient as possible, whereas that is not the case at the post office? Perhaps someone should explain to the postmaster that the post office employees are not doing the customer a favor by helping them; it is the customer who is



Submitted Photo

Miss Oregon, Alexis Mather, left, and the 1957 Miss Oregon, Judith (Hansen) Gabrielson, met at a special gathering held May 29.

Two Miss Oregons meet

I am happy to announce that recently there was a wonderful meeting between the current Miss Oregon, Alexis Mather, and the 1957 Miss Oregon, Judith (Hansen) Gabrielson, both of whom graduated from Astoria High School: Alexis in 2013, and Jo in 1956.

After doing a lot of phone calls around the North Coast, and with help from some wonderful individuals who responded to my letter to the editor in The Daily Astorian, we were able to locate Jo in Hillsboro. She is 79 years young, and doing quite well in an assisted-living residence.

This special gathering occurred on Monday, May 29. Jo invited Alexis and myself to join her and a few of her friends and

family for a wonderful lunch and dessert. Those in attendance were Linda Walker Trenholm, Bev and Roger Collin, Chelsea Miller and me.

Alexis and Jo shared many stories, and took quite a few photos, during their time together. Judith brought out her large scrapbook from her reign. It was filled with amazing photos and memorabilia. Later during our stay, Alexis sang the song that she performed at the Miss America competition last September, an aria from Puccini’s “Turandot.”

Alexis’ singing had special meaning for Jo; she also sang opera for her talent at the 1957 Miss America pageant. Soon after, Jo brought forth her Miss America semi-finalist trophy. It was

very impressive!

It was a memorable day for everyone involved. To get these two amazing and beautiful ladies together was very special. I would like to thank everyone involved who made this meeting possible. It was a day to remember. We are proud of both Alexis and Jo for being such amazing Miss Oregons.

There is a distinct possibility that Jo will be joining the festivities on July 1 in Seaside, for this year’s Miss Oregon pageant. It would be great to see many family, friends and supporters at the event, as Alexis bids farewell to a wonderful reign as this year’s Miss Oregon.

DAN FOSS
Instructor, Astoria High School

actually protecting the postal employee’s job, and helping them by using this service.

I could be wrong.
DAVID GRAVES
Astoria

Hardball

My son is in third grade. He signed up to play baseball with Seaside Kids Inc. this year. He did T-ball with Seaside Kids for two years. This was supposed to be his first time playing real baseball.

On April 27 we took him to what we thought was a baseball game, but when he went to play his coaches told him he was not on the team anymore because he was not skilled enough, and they only wanted skilled baseball players on the team he was assigned to. They did this in front of his teammates, and humiliated him in public, and made him feel like a failure.

My son, who used to love to play baseball, now does not want to have anything to do with baseball ever again. It has broken my heart to have to tell my child that he is not a failure as a person, and that what happened to him was not his fault.

My son did his best at practices, and never gave up. The coaches gave up on him because he apparently did not play like a professional baseball player. I thought sports was supposed to be a fun experience for kids to learn how to play a game, and to learn about teamwork, and develop a love of the sport. I was sadly mistaken.

It breaks my heart that my husband and I never got to go see him play games, and cheer him on. It hurts that my son feels like he does not deserve to be on any team at Seaside Kids Inc. unless he is a perfect player, who never makes mistakes.

KINDWYN HOGE
Seaside

Storms of life

Several years ago I was on a voyage from Portland to Busan, Korea, on a Liberty Ship. It was during the Korean War. As we entered Busan Harbor, a terrific typhoon was having its final blast. We were attempting to anchor.

The captain gave the command to “drop the port anchor.” You could hear the clanging on the anchor chain as it rolled down through the hawse pipe. Then, what a shock — because of the remaining strong wind, the anchor chain parted. Frantically, the captain shouted out, “drop the starboard anchor,” and to our relief, it held.

Each day, each one of us face

challenges, trials and decisions. We need to find chains that don’t break, and anchors that hold, to keep our human crafts safe and secure when the storms of life blow.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton

‘Rescuing’ cats?

I agree that for Kathryn St. Claire to have served time in jail would prove ineffective (“Woman who hoarded cats in car pleads guilty to neglect,” The Daily Astorian, June 1); however, probation succeeds only if the offender is responsible for adhering to the terms and conditions recommended by the court.

I would not be shocked if I were to read that, yet again, this woman has accumulated another hundred or so cats. History has demonstrated that people on probation oftentimes skip town and commit similar crimes elsewhere.

Perhaps a more appropriate sentence for this offender would be for her to witness the euthanizing of so many cats she said she was “rescuing.”

JAN ROBERTS
Astoria

New revenue

There are only five weeks left for members of the Oregon Legislature to demonstrate their commitment to our public education system. As a member of the Clatsop Community College Board of Directors, I am counting on them to resolve Oregon’s \$1.4 billion budget deficit by passing new revenue legislation.

Without such bold leadership from our elected officials, the deficit could raise college tuition rates across the state, and push higher education further out of reach for our current and prospective students. Our legislators must choose between passing a new revenue package and holding corporations accountable, or continuing the status quo, which unfairly balances our state budget on the backs of students, families and local businesses.

For me, the choice is an easy one. Since Oregon has one of the lowest corporate tax rates in the nation, our legislators have a responsibility to make sure large corporations pay their fair share. Oregon is booming, and we cannot afford cuts to education that put our bright future at risk.

With our current budget, students at our community colleges are genuinely concerned about the cost of their academic futures, and whether they will need to put their

education on hold. Oregonians value education and our state’s budget should reflect that. It is now up to our legislators, like state Sen. Betsy Johnson, to take decisive action and adequately invest in our schools and colleges.

TESSA JAMES SCHELLER
Warrenton

Farm to School

We are writing to express our strong support for HB 2038, the Farm to School Bill, which would maintain funding, in the form of grants administered by Oregon Department of Education, to reimburse school districts for their purchases of Oregon-grown and Oregon-processed foods and for food-based, agriculture-based or garden-based educational activities.

Elimination of this funding would be unacceptable. This valuable program encourages healthy eating and connects students with where their food comes from and how it is grown, not to mention the support it provides to Oregon’s farms and food businesses.

During the 2016-17 school year, Food Roots provided 565 students across three school districts with over 310 hours of hands-on nutrition, gardening and agriculture education. This was made possible due to support received by the Department of Education’s Farm to School grant. This is in addition to events like schoolwide Tasting Tables, farmer visits to classrooms, field trips to local farms and after school and summer programming. Without support from this grant, these students would not have had access to this programming.

LAUREN SORG
Executive director, Food Roots
Tillamook

Ignoring South County

In February 2016, the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners dissolved the southwest coastal region’s long-standing Citizens Advisory Committee. This was done without notice to affected citizens, or an opportunity to be heard. That decision was appealed to the Land Use Board of Appeals, which found errors in the county’s process.

In September 2016, after hundreds of area residents and property owners voiced their support for continuing the committee in some form, the Board of Commissioners again voted for dissolution. Again the decision was appealed, and again errors were found in the county’s process.

Now for a third time, the board has refused to meet and negotiate

with its southwest coastal citizens, and again has dissolved the committee (“County dissolves Arch Cape design panel,” The Daily Astorian, May 25). So far, the county has spent many thousands of dollars defending appeals — which they lost — from county residents who simply want to be heard. This is neither prudent fiscal management, nor good governance.

The board could easily start negotiations with southwest coastal citizens about the role of the committee, and listen to residents’ concerns about having a means of participating in decisions affecting their region. But the county continues to refuse all overtures.

Southwest coastal residents want to know what is happening in their region, and they want their government in Astoria to hear what they have to say. Why is the county ignoring their pleas?

RICHARD and CATHERINE
DONOFRIO
Arch Cape

Subsidize

In response to “City water customers could help pay for parks,” The Daily Astorian, June 6:

Wow! Only \$3 more per month on our teensie ’lil water bill. Why doesn’t the city of Astoria just sell the excess parks? Lots of folks in the area don’t buy city water, and will get a free ride on seniors and those on a fixed income. Maybe the actual park users should pay for the use.

Second comment: Garbage pickup of yard debris, glass, etc., should be paid by the actual users. As seniors, living on a small lot, we don’t generate more than our single can’s worth. We’re not too willing to subsidize the big debris producers. It was fine before taking excess over the hill.

DICK DARBY
Astoria

OK to be smart

Many Americans eagerly hurl the word “expert” as a nasty epithet. To disagree is to disrespect. To correct another is an insult. And to refuse to acknowledge all views as worthy of consideration, no matter how fantastic or inane they are, is to be closed-minded.

We Americans face a big problem. Some people think they’re bright when in fact they’re not very bright at all. Case in point: Trump’s ascendancy in 2016 was undeniably one of the loudest trumpets sounding the impending death of expertise. Rather than being shamed by his displays of willful, persistence ignorance, Trump exulted in it.

Unable to string together a coherent sentence or come up with a clear thought, Trump connected with a particular kind of voter who believes that “knowing” about subjects like global warming is just so much pointy-headed claptrap. Those voters not only didn’t care that Trump was ignorant or wrong. They likely were unable to recognize his ignorance or errors.

So, not surprisingly, Trump’s strongest support in 2016 was concentrated among people with low levels of education. “I love the poorly educated,” Trump exulted after winning the Feb. 24 Nevada caucuses, and that love was clearly reciprocated.

You’d think that Trump’s attack on expertise and his obsession with destroying the meaning of meaning could not work. After all, we Americans are clear-eyed, sensible people, right? Surely, clear-eyed Americans see his rhetoric for what it is — a verbal three-card Monte game.

I’m not so sure about that. But I do value experts who understand that average citizens are rarely on an equal intellectual footing with diplomats and doctors. And I side with experts who repudiate the ridiculous notion that all voices, even the most ludicrous, should be taken with equal seriousness.

Let’s side with the experts. It’s OK to be smart. I’m a proud radical factualist. And the only bumper sticker I proudly display reads: “In Reason We Trust.”

ROBERT BRAKE
Ocean Park, Washington

Legally armed

After reading about and watching continuous TV news coverage of the atrocity that occurred last week at the Portland TriMet stop, I tried to imagine what could have been done for things to turn out differently. I finally decided that there probably would have been a completely different outcome if one of those good Samaritans had a concealed-carry permit, and was legally armed.

By the way, the story made People Magazine.

WILLIAM BELL
Astoria