

## Remembering Miller

I was saddened when I read about Mike Miller's passing from his son's letter to the Open Forum on Aug. 18 ("Love and differences," The Daily Astorian). I got to know Mike Sr. during the 10 years I worked with the nonunion apprenticeship training committee through Clatsop Community College and the state of Oregon. Mike and I had spent hours fighting for the rights of small mom and pop trade shops at state meetings.

Mike was a major force in orchestrating the training of both plumbers and electricians in Clatsop and Tillamook counties. He put countless hours, at a fraction of what he received an hour working, teaching apprenticeship classes where he was tough but fair. For many years there was a 100 percent pass rate on the state test to become a licensed plumber because of Mike.

He also personally hired and did on-the-job training for apprentices, and often gave them jobs when they became journeymen. Literally hundreds of people got high paying jobs in the trades thanks to Mike's advocacy.

I saw Mike as fair, just and caring about people, regardless of who they were. He loved his family no matter what. I feel lucky to have known him, and send my sincere condolences to his family and extended family.

KITTY PAINO  
Astoria

## Is Doughboy next?

In view of the wide rash of tearing down and defacing historic statues representing the Confederacy, which stood for slavery and racism and a list of principles with which left wingers do not agree, Astoria conceivably might be targeted soon.

I'm referring to the beloved Doughboy statue, which represents a soldier of the "Great War," World War I. The president of the U.S. who took us into that war was Woodrow Wilson, a Virginian and a well-known and established racist.

Hence, Doughboy statue, if you "see" a mob of wild-eyed, torch-bearing Democrats bearing down on you — beware!

E. ROBERT NASSIKAS  
Astoria

## Connect with others

Offer a challenge to us all in these trying times: Do not turn inward with your fear, become more jaded and further deny human connections. I challenge us to create positive change every day in our lives, interactions, communities. If not us, who? If not now, when?

It's true, one person cannot solve the world's problems, but if we each just try to do our part in this web of humanity, every day, we can collectively lead society toward greatness. Lead by example, embody the change we wish to see.

Spiritual leaders, community leaders, political leaders, business leaders, teachers, parents, spouses, friends, neighbors: Guide those in our lives by showing what acceptance and compassion look like — even, and especially, toward those with differing opinions or who are suffering from hate.

We are all humans, with the same basic needs and desires. We all have joy and grief, and challenges that shape us. And we will not all agree, ever. But we can agree to love.

Let us remind those we know and meet, and especially those we lead, if we are so fortunate to be leaders, that the strongest actions are based in love.

Put down your phone, turn off your TV. Step out of your "usual." Go outside and connect. Connect with neighbors, with people in line around you, loved ones, strangers. Find the connection that exists between every being, and is so often ignored.

Now is the time, and we are the ones we have been waiting for.

ERIN M. MOORE  
Astoria

## Too little, too late

With a cabal of racists ensconced in the White House, and (news flash) the appearance across the nation of armed packs of neo-Nazi and flag-waving white supremacists, the appearance of this in our town — and in the event most symbolizing our community identity — warrants more from the town newspaper than editorial clucking, and more than an "Oh my!" from our local politicians and the Astoria Regatta committee.

"Please do not let our oversight reflect negatively on Astoria?" ("Astoria Regatta not the place for divisive symbol," The Daily Astorian, Aug. 15) Too late. Jay Pit-



man of the Sons of Beches justifies including the Confederate flag in their display because it is a "battle flag," and not a national flag, as if this obscure historical factoid is equivalent to what he and the whole rest of the country knows full well: that this flag is a symbol of unrepentant racism.

As for celebrating "all veterans," he might recall that most of the blood on the ground in our whole history has been all about racial superiority. Despite the nice editorializing, The Daily Astorian reportage seems to not question Pitman's claptrap, nor his assurances that the Sons aren't racist. And yet several people in Pitman's organization planned and carried an overtly racist demonstration, didn't they?

And, since they have put themselves in our faces, surely their white pride will prompt them to tell us their names, and explain to inquisitive journalists all about what they believe. Unless their identities are secret, like in the Klan. Or they are just poorly supervised juvenile delinquents.

We try to imagine, Daily Astorian, someone stepping up to that slow-moving pickup truck full of scowling faces and saying: "No, stop, you don't get to celebrate that perversion." And we wonder: Will the Sons be back to Regatta next year? And, will the tourists and parents with children be back? Or, will next year's tourists maybe be people we haven't seen before, packing heat and waving Confederate flags of their own?

I suppose, with Astoria's rich KKK history, local merchants could even promote a little, you know? T-shirts, coffee mugs with hard-to-notice decals ...

TOM BERDINE  
Astoria

## Support urban renewal

We are residents of south Seaside, living on Holladay Drive, and want to enthusiastically support urban renewal for many reasons. This is an area that has long been neglected and forgotten, particularly after the highway reconstruction had been defeated by a close vote 10 years ago.

Not only do we have just about the trashiest entrance to the city possible, but it is an extremely unsafe area to live in. Each day I witness walkers attempting to cross U.S. Highway 101 to shop, risking life and limb to do so, as the only crosswalks occur at Broadway and Avenue U.

If "the big one" occurs and we should need to seek higher ground because of an impending tsunami, there are no bridges that would survive the earthquake. Now we have the opportunity to build new bridges and make our residents safer and secure.

Many businesses have deserted this area. Motels have become low-income housing. Houses have become run down and neglected, or even left in ruin. Roads are not in good repair and sidewalks, if present, date back to the 1950s.

We were proud to support the building of our schools in an area that would be safe for our students, and provide an area to support our community in case of an emergency. But our students, as well as the rest of our residents, need to be able to get there. This may impact some of our citizens in a way they may not like and sometimes, unfortunately, that does occur with a developing area.

So, Seaside City Council members, we urge and encourage you to support urban renewal and make our city safer, more livable and an impetus for change. This improvement will help us all in ways we cannot yet determine. We can see

where no action on improving the highway 10 years ago has left us with a decaying road system, decaying businesses and decaying style of life. Don't let this continue.

CAROL and DON  
BRENEMAN  
Seaside

## Make Oregon great again

Let's talk about who really wants to throw granny off the cliff. Thank our father in heaven this legislative session is over.

One bill we were able to stop was a bill giving the government the ability to starve patients to death who suffered from Alzheimer's, dementia or several other types of life-ending medical conditions. This bill passed the Senate, but we were able to stop it in the House of Representatives.

What do you think would happen to you, if you did that to a dog? That's right, you would be arrested and then taken to jail. The Democrats in Salem were behind this. Kate Brown was waiting to sign this bill into law, all in the name of kindness and compassion. Wow, if that's what they call kindness, I want nothing to do with that.

Something to ponder is: They want to kill unborn babies in the name of a woman's right, then kill some of our elderly people, to boot. So the next question is, what group will they target next? Could it be you, or me? It could be any one of us.

Are you ready to get involved and stop this madness? Come join us before it's too late. Remember what Hitler did? He targeted groups of people to kill. Others said, "It doesn't affect me, so I'll just stand by and watch." When it did happen to them, they said, "Why won't anybody help me?"

Don't be that person. Get involved today before it's too late, before you're the next person they target. Let's make the state of Oregon great once again.

JIM HOFFMAN  
Clatsop County Republicans  
Gearhart

## Reconciling differences

With reference to The Daily Astorian editorial of Aug. 17, "We must always reject the toxic lies of racism and bigotry," I came to so-familiar words in the last paragraph: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal ..."

My first reaction was, as usual, emphatically, "Oh yes," but then, the next usual thought: How many more centuries of time and quantities of verbiage must we endure blathering about the meanings of the words "men" (in this context, of course) and "equal"? And while the talk goes on forever, force prevails, nature has its unbridled, often cruel way, and people suffer. I haven't noticed it getting better lately.

Of course we could, after all this time, at least consider another suggestion. Like the Human Relativity Theory Paradox, which is that it is truly only in differences that all people are equal, and that only in reconciling differences between people is the practice and proving of living equality possible.

When can we start? Reconciling differences sounds good to me.

VALERIE LINDHOUT  
Astoria

## Trump's compulsive lies

Compulsive: A strong irrational impulse to carry out an act. Liar: One who lies or who tells lies. President Donald J. Trump is a compulsive liar.

I have been listening to and reading about U.S. presidents since

the mid-1950s, and I suspect that all, at one time or another, told a whopper. Who can forget Richard Nixon's "I'm not a crook"? Bill Clinton's "who is Monica Lewinsky"? George W. Bush's "mission accomplished"?

Trump seems to have the need to lie when most people know that he is not telling the truth: "There were more people at my inauguration than president Obama's"; "Mexico will pay for the wall"; "I'll throw Hillary in jail"; "I'll repeal the Affordable Care Act my first day in office"; "I'll replace it with my fantastic plan, that will cover everyone and cost less"; "I'll bring American jobs back home, except my daughter, and I'll still have our merchandise manufactured in China." Afghanistan anyone?

His rant at the Boy Scout jamboree not only was totally inappropriate, but then he had to tweet a number of lies after the event. "I got a standing ovation from the start, and it lasted for minutes after I left." "Boy Scout headquarters called and told me that it was the greatest speech ever given at this event." BSA have no records of any phone call to either the White House or to Trump after the event, and the recording of the event gives the lie to the "standing ovation."

I truly am sad that I cannot believe anything that the current president of the U.S. says.

CHUCK MEYER  
Astoria

## Jumping on bandwagon

The article, "Astoria Regatta Not the place for divisive symbol" (The Daily Astorian, Aug. 15), referring to the Confederate flag, seemed to be yet another frantic leap on a recently minted bandwagon. Wouldn't it be more worthy to tackle the deep troubles afflicting black communities? Of course, that sort of work is very hard, and something liberals can't seem to bring themselves to tackle.

HUBERT SMITH  
Jacksonville, Oregon

## We are better than this

I love my community. When met with challenges, we seek to become better. This is demonstrated in a myriad ways: the mayor declaring Astoria as a city of inclusivity; the creation of the Garden of Surg-ing Waves, and the gathering of folks in the garden after the Orlando massacre; the continued support for military troops; the sheltering of homeless people by the Methodist Church; and the support for labor unions and our fishing industry.

I live in Astoria for these reasons, and more. I moved here from Florida in 2007, and before that I lived in California. Moving to Florida was a culture shock, because I experienced and witnessed overt bigotry in ways that I hadn't before. On a daily basis, Confederate flags waved from trucks, houses, and were emblazoned on bumper stickers and hats. This flag was a constant reminder that racism, and all forms of bigotry, were alive and even celebrated.

As a lesbian mom of a mixed-race child, the moment I saw the Confederate flag on the back of the truck in my beloved Astoria Regatta parade, I was put on notice. I know exactly what that flag represents for people like me, my partner and our daughter. I know firsthand the hatred espoused from peoples' mouths and their fists.

We live in this part of the country because we are unwilling to raise our daughter in a place that tells her she is wrong because of her skin color or her parents' sexual orientation. And though Oregon and Astoria have histories of being home to

white supremacists, we are a people always seeking to become better. And I am proud of that.

I was discouraged, and frankly scared, when I saw that flag in our parade. But the reaction of community members has given me faith that we will continue to move toward a more perfect city, county, state and union.

I invite all Oregonians to view anti-racism and all anti-bigotry work as their work. It isn't simply enough to disagree quietly. This type of flagrant racism must be met with a resounding outcry. As Audre Lorde said, "Your silence will not protect you."

MINDY STOKES  
Astoria

## Speed zone

We are very lucky to have such a great team of officers in our city of Astoria, along with our county officers and state officers.

I know each department is very busy, but my wife and I have lived in Astoria for 11 years on 15th Street, between Jerome Avenue and the Column turn off, and I am asking someone to have an officer sit on a side street — like Lexington Avenue — that goes to the Clatsop Community College side.

If you need money to pay for the parks, you would get it in one day handing out speeding tickets. The amount of speed folks go in the area between Jerome to the top of 15th is bad, real bad, all day, and most of the night. Please, Mayor LaMear, could you do something? This is one of the main routes for kids when they walk to school, for tourists when they get off the cruise ships and for people and families walking with children and pets. It has gotten so bad.

VAL LEFFEL  
Astoria

## Pushing back racism

I was thrilled to see 40,000 protesters show up for the "free speech rally" sponsored by the white nationalists on Saturday. The group's small showing of under 200 quickly left, and the good people of Boston walked the streets of their city with pride.

I had hope for the first time that this may all turn out well. Our country is a good country, an open country and a welcoming country. Forty thousand folks cannot be wrong.

It gives us all hope that we can push back on these absurd racists. We just need to show up, and keep America great.

MARY TANGUAY WEBB  
Astoria

## What is the real issue?

This is in response to a letter, "Quick stamp of approval" (The Daily Astorian, Aug. 11). The issue is the relocation of Shooting Stars day care to a Port of Astoria property. The letter is in opposition to the school moving.

The location is in the Port-Uniontown Overlay area. Current uses include the Port of Astoria offices, a marine industrial area, a marina, a hotel and the Riverwalk (see City of Astoria Comprehensive Plan CP.030 — CP.1050, http://bit.ly/2xaBwZK). The planning commission has approved the location, the Port has approved the location.

The city's comprehensive plan includes industrial uses, visitor services, open spaces, trails, redevelopment of former industrial sites and underutilized lots (such as the one being contested) for this area; and looks to "stimulate development interest by establishing complementary land uses" (CP.038).

Through their approval, the Astoria Planning Commission has deemed the school a complementary land use, in an area that is not strictly industrial. Now one person who has no legal, financial or ownership rights to the property in question is contesting the location because the area is zoned industrial.

As stated above, multiple hotels, businesses and the Astoria Riverwalk are already safely operating and present near where the school would be. A tall fence provides outside security for the children. Shooting Stars provides a safe and positive child care and preschool facility, which is something our community desperately needs, and has already invested financially in the building.

The most distressing part about the letter is that it spends more time insulting the newly elected Port commissioners than it does discussing why the school shouldn't move there. The Port is losing revenue by having a vacant building.

Perhaps it is time to withdraw personal politics from the commission? If the school really is an issue, focus on that instead of using them as a pawn.

APRIL SILVA  
Astoria