

Unprofessional treatment

I am writing in response to the headline story in which the Clatsop County Commission chairman, Scott Lee, calls for the resignation of Commissioner Lianne Thompson (“Lee calls for Thompson’s resignation,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 26).

In all my 30-plus years of public service, never have I seen such unprofessional and inappropriate use of power in a locally elected board as that of the Clatsop County Commission for the past few years. I say this from a position of personal knowledge, having served as a Clatsop County commissioner in the late 1980s. I served with two other commissioners under the general law form of governance.

When I was on the board of commissioners, if we didn’t agree on something we were at least respectful of each other’s right to an opinion or stand on an issue. We did not play out our disagreements in the local newspaper by calling out each other’s transgressions. If a policy was breached, we discussed it like adults, and I do not remember any such public displays of disagreements or chastising one another.

I am baffled as to why, if the county does not intend any disciplinary action, there was a public chiding of Commissioner Thompson at a board meeting. Upon reading the article, it appeared to this reader that she was being criticized for just doing her job. It is incumbent upon commissioners to keep up with the demands of the job of making policy, something I have known Commissioner Thompson to have done since she came on to the county board.

She has been religious in attending conferences and summits that are of great importance to Clatsop County. Her attendance this past summer at Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) did not go unnoticed. And, this group is not a “mutual admiration society not relevant to county business.” I have represented Oregon on PNWER for many years, and many county commissioners attend our summits both in Oregon and in the 10 states and Canadian provinces which make up the membership.

Her longtime work in resilience and emergency preparedness has been an exemplary example of taking the lead on an issue and providing those of us at different levels of government the assurance that this urgent information is being delivered at the local level. Personally, I believe that Commissioner Thompson has done her job in a professional manner, and I am thankful that she has stepped up to serve Clatsop County in this important position.

I would think that if a commissioner travels on the county dime that there are policies and parameters in place that outline what is allowable, and what is not. I have also known Commissioner Thompson to pay her own way to meetings, conferences, etc.

But to use the forum of a public meeting to basically beat up on a commissioner for travel expenses that exceed other commissioners’ use of these funds is unprofessional, especially when there are no sanctions being considered.

The travel budget exists to reimburse expenses and the amount does not seem excessive for the time span described. It seems more like common bullying to me, something we are seeing more and more of these days in public forums.

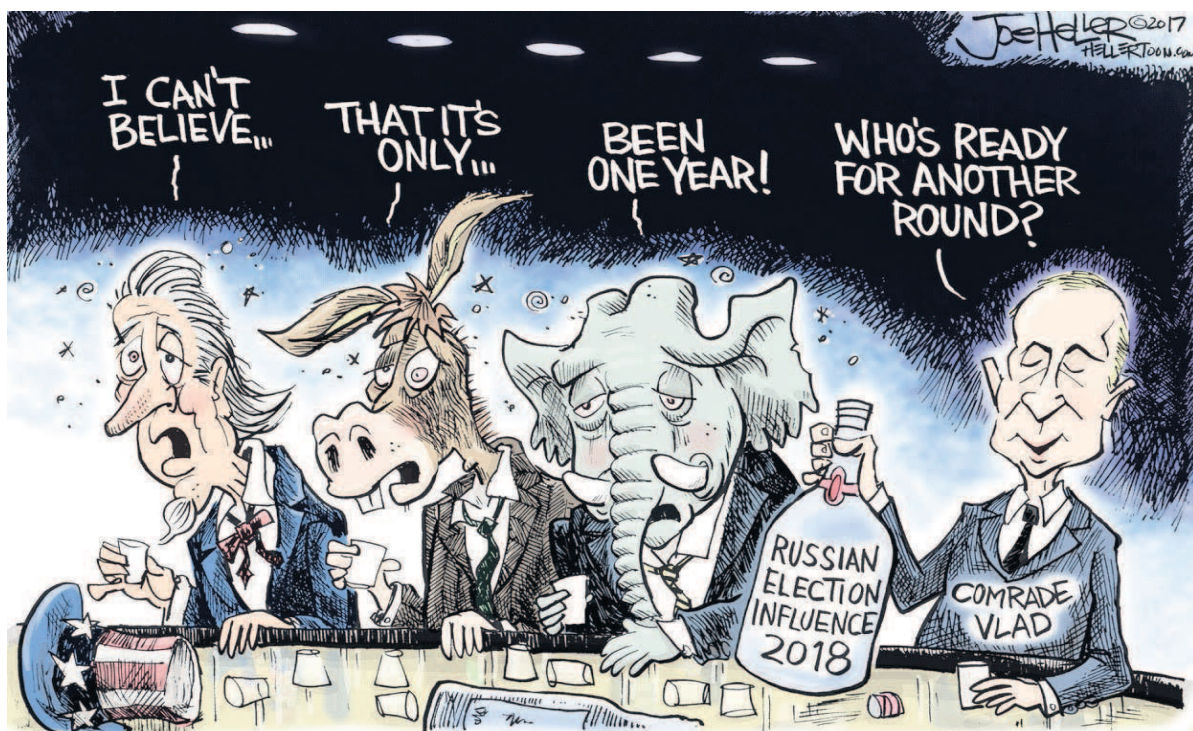
As to the confrontation issue, I would think that it, too, would be handled in an executive session rather than a public board meeting. One just has to wonder what really is going on here.

Finally, one has to wonder just who is going to step up and serve in these elected positions when this type of treatment is so prevalent. The relationships that Commissioner Thompson has built at all levels over the many years that she has worked in the public sector are priceless, and appreciated by those of us lucky enough to have worked with her.

DEBORAH BOONE
Oregon State Representative,
House District 32

Above and beyond

I feel compelled to voice my concern over what I see happening in our local government. I was disheartened to learn that Commissioner Scott Lee is calling for the resignation of his colleague, Commissioner Lianne Thompson (“Lee calls for Thompson’s resignation,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 26). As I understand it, Commissioner Thompson has not only lived up to the requirements of her position, but gone above and beyond. Is Lee intimidated by Thompson?



The Astorian reported that Lee’s call for resignation is based on two factors. First, that Commissioner Thompson placed her hands on another when expressing a point. Personally, I have not seen improper behaviors or gestures from her in any setting. Lianne is respectful and caring. Frankly this school yard charge is below the office of Commissioner Lee. Second, Lee cites the amount of reimbursement is higher than expected. I would expect higher expenses from one who is so active in their position. I know Lianne to be frugal and environmentally conscious.

Lianne Thompson lives, eats and breathes her role as District 5 Clatsop County Commissioner. If she isn’t at an event or meeting, then she’s on her way to, or just leaving, one. She’s been doing extensive travel, for the county, when required. When not so engaged, she’s most likely at a city or county event. If her expenses for reimbursement were higher than expected, it’s because she does more than is expected.

She is engaged with our community, and talks and listens to everyone. When she was elected as our commissioner, she gave up her position as the Cannon Beach Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) coordinator in order to better serve the county. She is still a CERT member, and continues to be active. She is also active on the Cannon Beach Medical Reserve Corps, as well as the Red Cross and CERT/Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) county ham radio net.

It is within those parameters that I have had the good fortune of working with Lianne. Along with emergency preparedness, Lianne understands our needs for sustainable forestry, affordable housing, schools, jobs and the business community. She does all this voluntarily.

For those reasons, I’m concerned that Commissioner Lee doesn’t recognize the value Lianne brings to Clatsop County. What the District 5 voters recognize in Lianne is her dedication, her background, education, her sincerity and her passion. I commend all who volunteer for their city or county.

I have never known Lianne to be anything but professional, gracious and kind. That she is willing to give so much of herself to our county, and our communities, makes her invaluable. District 5 is fortunate to have Commissioner Lianne Thompson. When she is up for re-election, I will vote for her again.

PAULA VETTER
CERT Coordinator, Cannon
Beach

Thompson seeks opportunities

As a commissioner, serving my first term in neighboring Columbia County, I have appreciated the time that Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson has taken to provide information and to include me in events and meetings that have an impact on my county, as well as hers.

The work Lianne does with the Association of Oregon Counties (AOC) is invaluable. As individual counties, we have limited influence on policy on the state and federal level. However, as a group we are a powerful voice in the Oregon Legislature and with our congressional delegation.

One of the efforts Lianne has worked on is researching opportunities for economic development for North Coast counties. She has been instrumental in convening a group to discuss the potential of involvement in the Cross-Laminated Timber (CLT) market. There are many possible opportunities for timber counties — such as Columbia and Clatsop — to be a part of this growing product area; whether it be in supplying the raw material, milling the lumber, manufacturing or pro-

viding the port access for export of CLT.

Involvement in the AOC has opened many doors for me. The counsel and discussion that take place in the various committee meetings and conferences, along with the networking opportunities have assisted me in providing effective leadership in Columbia County.

Lianne takes an active role in AOC committees and discussions and provides a strong voice for Clatsop County. Participation on the state and national level offers an opportunity to exchange ideas and find successful solutions to the challenges that local government faces on a daily basis. Thank you, Commissioner Thompson, for your active role in this process.

MARGARET C. MAGRUDER
Clatskanie

Resiliency advocate

It is my pleasure to write this letter of support for Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson. I know Thompson through her work to support preparedness efforts along the North Coast. She was instrumental in voicing the need and supporting the development of Community Response Emergency Team (CERT) programs in Clatsop County, including our local high schools.

Commissioner Thompson attends numerous community meetings to stay in touch and lend support to important coastal issues. She was an active committee member of Seaside School District’s successful bond campaign to relocate its schools out of the tsunami inundation zone. She also volunteers with the American Red Cross, emergency ham radio, and the medical reserve corps.

Lianne Thompson strives to strengthen the safety and resilience of those in Clatsop County, and I strongly support her in that effort.

DOUG DOUGHERTY
Gearhart

Two ways of thinking

First we have the Clatsop County commissioners. They are having a problem with one commissioner spending about \$20,000 in almost three years (“Lee calls for Thompson’s resignation,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 26). No breaking of any rules or laws, some commissioners just don’t like it. So the solution is to make new rules.

Next we have the Port of Astoria commissioners. The Port executive director is responsible for lying and making a shady business deal without running it through a meeting. The Port lost a resulting \$4 million lawsuit, and their solution was to give him a raise and a three-year extension (“Port of Astoria executive director gets three-year contract extension,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 18).

ED PENUUEL
Warrenton

Sincere advocate

I am writing in support of Clatsop County Commissioner Lianne Thompson, with whom I’ve worked on issues related to the threat posed by the Cascadia Subduction Zone earthquake/tsunami event. I know Lianne is a dedicated public servant who is working to make Clatsop County residents’ lives better, and protect them against the worst effects of the subduction zone event.

I’m not familiar with the politics of your area, so it’s hard for me to understand how an elected representative can be attacked for acting out of a motivation to serve, rather than out of self-interest (“Lee calls for Thompson’s resignation,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 26).

What I can tell you is that in all my interactions with Lianne, I have found her to be a sincere advocate for her constituents, and a positive force for earthquake resilience in the entire state of Oregon through

her work at the Association of Oregon Counties. Oregon needs many more public servants like her.

STEVE ROBINSON
Eugene

Voice for the coast

In response to the allegations against Commissioner Lianne Thompson (“Lee calls for Thompson’s resignation,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 26), I urge the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners to consider the dedication and commitment that Commissioner Thompson has been making to her district, the county and the state in the capacity she serves in her elected position, but also as the co-chairwoman of the Public Safety Subcommittee on Resilience, with the Oregon Association of Counties.

During my second term (2015-2017) as chairman of the Oregon Seismic Safety Policy Commission (OSSPAC), Commissioner Thompson was a steadfast voice for resilience planning for coastal communities, and very active in many of the organizational meetings I attended on tsunami safety and the Oregon Resilience Plan.

In March, she moderated a panel on community resilience in the tsunami zone at the 2017 National Meeting of the Earthquake Engineering Research Institute in Portland, and demonstrated strong leadership in promoting community disaster planning at the 2017 Oregon Emergency Management Association Conference in Eugene in late September.

Her ability to attend these types of events and bring her direct representation as an elected public official adds tremendous value to the coastal perspectives on the challenges around risk and resilience. I hope you can appreciate her level of service and commitment in working outside of the box, and usual comfort zones, in order to make change to the status quo.

JAY WILSON
Portland

Ducks in a row

The other day, on my morning jaunt on the Warrenton Waterfront Trail, the sound of gun shots from duck hunters prompted a memory of many years ago.

I was duck hunting with a friend. It was dark as we approached the lake. He cautioned me to get down and crawl toward the lake, and not to shoot until the ducks started to fly. But he apparently got anxious and started shooting, and guess what? No ducks. But he shot up all the decoys.

My point is this: Oftentimes we preempt our Lord in life matters. We try to force things to happen on our time, and not on his. “Why haven’t I found the right job?” or the “right mate?” “Will I ever get over this medical problem?” “Will my teenager ever straighten out?”

Have faith. When the ducks are in a row, the Master Hunter will bring it to pass.

JIM BERNARD
Warrenton

Morons everywhere?

Lately, a passel of Long Beach (Washington) Peninsula pals, and numerous other wise guys, have told me that America’s a nation of idiots. What if they’re right? Maybe we are a nation of imbeciles, afflicted with some mild to severe intellectual disabilities.

After all, Rex Tillerson, President Donald Trump’s Secretary of State, recently called No. 45 a moron. And let’s not forget Trump’s clown-car of cabinet appointees, and some Democrats who deserve special wall space in the Hall of Morons.

So I’m asking myself, if there are pockets of individuals out there with a hunger for sentences that don’t contain the word “suck,” maybe they’re demographically insignificant. Do we really know

anything anymore?

Somebody must still know something. Somebody knows why the caged bird sings. Somebody saw what you did. Somebody knows who you are. Somebody must know what makes things tick. Somebody knows what boys like. Somebody knows what girls want. Somebody must still know the difference between Shinola and a hole in the ground. At least one person must know why Clint Eastwood’s partners always die, or who Milli Vanilli really was.

Somebody knows who was really telling the truth. Anita Hill? Clarence Thomas? Somebody really knows who killed the Kennedys and Martin Luther King. There must be thousands who know the secrets of the pyramids and the origins of life. Someone surely knows where Elvis is, and Coke’s secret ingredient. Someone knows what happened to the Lindbergh baby and Amelia Earhart.

Somewhere on our information highway, answers can be had. But I’m not really worried about the dumbing down of America, only how it affects me, personally.

After all, I’m supposed to be a really smart guy or a wise guy. I don’t know much, but I know this much: I know which one you’ll choose.

ROBERT BRAKE
Ocean Park, Washington

Support for manager

I am not writing this letter to criticize anyone. Only to give my experience with the food bank and their volunteer manager, Karla Gann. I was very surprised with the firing of Karla after five years of volunteer service (“South County Food Bank shake-up leads to temporary closure,” The Daily Astorian, Oct. 23).

My family and I have donated many food items, and lately, clothes also. We were always pleased with the appearance of the interior of the building, and also with the well organized way they handled things. Karla was always there, even on her days off, and if we had a donation and she wasn’t there, all we had to do was call her at home and she would be right down to receive our donation.

Also, what a blessing to be able to give out clothes, warm gloves, hats, etc. Most of my friends say Goodwill’s prices are too high on their things. I would rather give to the food bank so that those who can’t afford other places would not have to go without.

I am sorry this happened, and wish something could have been worked out so that the community would still benefit from her management.

NADINE BRIEN
Seaside

Parents do their best

As a mom of three younger kids, I feel like I need to respond to the letter “Bad parenting” (The Daily Astorian, Oct. 20). While I can sense the frustration of not relating to or approving of parents’ choices, I think it’s always helpful to compassionately consider their possible circumstances before jumping to judgment.

There actually aren’t any nearby pumpkin patches for families to visit, and the mother was likely wanting to capture this fun season and share it with friends and family. Perhaps the parent couldn’t afford a pumpkin and felt that this was the best that they could do.

Likewise, one of the things I love about Astoria is the #AstoriaRocks phenomenon. I appreciate how it gets families outdoors to explore, look for the unexpected, all while sharing and appreciating art. Perhaps the father wasn’t trying to “intimidate” but he was confused, thinking the writer’s rocks were up for grabs, like hundreds around town.

Over the years, I’ve experienced shameful looks from strangers myself, thankfully balanced with many thoughtful compliments. Yet, I know from experience that getting a disapproving look when in middle of a parenting challenge is the last thing that could actually help a parent.

Sadly, abuse and neglect do happen, and I would ask that next time you witness “bad parenting,” that instead of playing the part of a bystander, we all act with compassion and use the situation as a teachable moment, take the chance to learn more about the situation, and offer whatever assistance we can.

Parenting is a demanding job, and I believe that even so-called bad parents are just doing their best. And yes, with some parenting education and community support, we probably could all do better.

DARCY ROSE CRONIN
Astoria