

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Gun violence: Listen to the children

Sobbing voices raised again: When will we stop the bloodshed? America. Listen to the children. They are hurting. No wonder. They are burying their classmates. Rational adults turn on the news and see yet another school shooting. They call for action.

What happens? Caring people roil with anger and frustration as politicians send their condolences, then do nothing. Absurdly, one faction demands we need more guns — armed guards or teachers protecting our nation's places of learning from outside attack.

Is that really the America we want?

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America. Listen to the children. What are they saying? Their message is clear. They do not want to go to school in fear of their lives.

They want to learn. They want a future. They do not want their teachers packing pistols in the classroom. Instead, they want their teachers equipped with tools to help them learn.

These kids all have the same dream. It's about one day in late May or early June when they conclude their senior year. As they turn 18, they want to don their caps and gowns, then walk proudly into the gym to the sound of their high school band playing Elgar's "Pomp and Circumstance."

They want to shake their principal's hand as they receive their diploma, hug their teachers and set off into the adult world of college or work to the applause of their parents.

In Parkland, Florida, 14 teenagers will never see that day. Three adult staff died, too. After autopsy technicians weighed what remained of their shattered organs, their bullet-ripped bodies were placed in wooden boxes and buried in the Earth. They are not alone.

In Colorado, 15 died at Columbine. That was 19 years ago. For almost two decades these shootings have continued. At Sandy Hook in Connecticut, 20 tiny victims didn't even graduate from elementary school. They and six of their teachers were slaughtered two weeks before Christmas 2012.

That last should have been enough; incongruously, it was not.

Teenager Lyliah Skinner, who survived the South Florida massacre, speaks for an entire generation.

"This country needs stricter laws to help prevent other kids, like me and my classmates, from ever having to experience this," she said. "Words mean nothing. Actions do."

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America. Listen to the children. When is it going to be time to act? "A well-regulated Militia being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear Arms, shall not be infringed."

Although not part of the original U.S. Constitution, the Second Amendment was added in the Bill of Rights, along with some fundamental concepts like free assembly, free speech, and no unreasonable search and seizure. The interpretation of this Amendment, which was written with quill pens in an age of muskets, has somehow morphed into a free pass for

bad or deranged people to obtain high-tech weapons with massive firepower.

Student David Hogg said the shooting at his school in South Florida needs to be the tipping point.

"People in Congress, people in state legislatures, just lawmakers in general, need to stand up and not let these political divisions prevent them from saving children's lives," he said. "Cause this can happen and it will happen again if they just make false promises and don't take action. Because ideas without action remain ideas, and when that happens, children die."

We agree. Instead of just wringing our hands, change needs a catalyst. This is it. And resistant people who insist we do nothing to change today's unacceptable situation may find they regret not becoming involved when this new generation takes over.

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America. Listen to the children. The Florida students' message has spread coast to coast. Students from Astoria and Seaside schools were among thousands leaving their classrooms Wednesday. Their protest signs were succinct: "Enough is enough!"

It was a wonderful sight and principals Lynn Jackson and Jeff Roberts played their role in making it a positive learning experience while stressing school safety. Jackson gathered his students afterward to reflect on their exercising their First Amendment rights of peaceful assembly and free speech. At Seaside, student organizer Sequoia Shand said one common thread in school violence is the manner in which shooters were alienated. "We're taking the approach to focus on respect."

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America. Listen to the children.

Further mass demonstrations are planned this Saturday, March 24 (The March for Our Lives) and again April 20 (the anniversary of Columbine) to protest this unacceptable level of gun violence. These civil protests are led by children, supported by adults.

Photographs and video of these peaceful protests continue to fill newspapers, TV news bulletins and social media. They should send a clear signal to every politician watching that inaction will not be tolerated.

But marching isn't enough. There must be positive action in Congress. The number of young people eager to register to vote is encouraging — teens who are 17 can register now if they will be 18 on Nov. 6.

The 2018 midterm elections present an opportunity to replace anyone who refuses to tackle this continued blight on this nation. Every single one of the 435 seats in the U.S. House of Representatives is up for grabs. So are 34 seats in the U.S. Senate. So, too, are more than three dozen governors' seats, important because they provide a platform for states' support of federal efforts.

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America. Listen to the children. Listen to the voices of grieving survivors.

It is not enough to bandage their wounds.

Coast to coast, children demand that adults act.

Will we?

SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

The Times Theatre returns to Seaside

In 1940, you could catch "the big show" with the Browning Brothers Carnival on Columbia Street between Broadway and Second Avenue in Seaside, with live pony rides, "roll-o-plane," tilt-a-whirl and Ferris wheel. You could store your mat, fruits and vegetables at the Seaside Frozen Food Lockers at 729 Broadway in the Beacon Hotel.

Craft beer? Not back then, although you could "satisfy yourself" with a Blitz Weinhard and you could even tour the Portland brewery if you were so inclined. The Gearhart Golf Course opened three new holes — No. 2, No. 4, No. 8 — and you could play "all the golf you wish" after 5 p.m. for a mere 50 cents.

And one more addition came to the city with the "gala opening" of B.J. Callahan's "beautiful new Times Theatre" at Broadway and Columbia on June 29. The theater debuted with Vivien Leigh's "Waterloo Bridge," billed as her "first film since 'Gone With the Wind,'" co-starring with Robert Taylor and directed by Mervyn LeRoy.

The theater was one of three — along with the National at 318 Broadway and the Strand at South Columbia and Broadway — founded by Callahan in Seaside. Seaside's "pioneer movie mogul," Callahan was born in 1863 and lived 87 years that spanned stage, silent films, talkies and two world wars. He ran a Seaside theater called "The Critic" in 1909. The Strand screened its first silent film in 1916. After a remodel in 1925, replete with a \$15,000 pipe organ and seating for 360 people, the first talking films arrived in 1929. Callahan is probably the only theater owner in history to have instituted a "pay as you please" policy for patrons — an experiment quickly ended by the Northwest Film Board of Trade, which ordered a fixed admission charge. In 1922, that charge was 35 cents for adults and a dime for kids.

The Times Theatre was his crowning achievement.

The Times Theatre is "unusually



Tom Horning

Interior of the original Times Theatre in Seaside.

attractive," wrote the Signal in 1940, "built in the modern style of architecture. The interior is finished in bands of two shades of tan on the walls, with bands of green and rose on the ceiling. Indirect lighting effects will add to the beauty of the interior."

For sound and projection, "there will be no finer theater in the United States." In 1948 filmgoers could watch "I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now" and "The Perils of Pauline." In 1952 Lana Turner starred in "The Merry Widow" while Gregory Peck and Susan Hayward starred in "David and Bathsheba."

Five decades

In 1956, Gregory and Pat Kershul purchased the Sunset Drive-In from Harold Wright and Avery Combs. The drive-in was located on a 12-acre property north of Gearhart junction, now largely residential. The drive-in closed its doors in 1989.

Kershul, who died in 2016, was not a movie buff, his son Bill Kershul recalled. "He hardly watched any movies. Pretty strange to think of. He was a very outdoors type, hunting, fishing, golfing. But he was also an extrovert. I think that's what made him so successful at the theater."

The Kershuls bought the Times Theatre from the Callahan family in 1959.

For decades, the theater was the place where parents could drop off their kids

and feel safe that their kids were going to be safe. "If they were screwing around, he'd kind of discipline them — and in those days people were happy with that."

Kershul, who worked in the theaters from 1960 to 1976, remembers "The Sound of Music" as one of the theater's most popular films. When "The Poseidon Adventure" opened in 1972, there were lines around the block, he said. "That one was heavily advertised on TV and I remember the lines down the street past Bjorklund's Furniture. It surprised everybody with the turnout."

The Kershuls operated the Times Theatre until its lease to Don McMurdie of the McMurdie Theatre Company in 1979, Kershul said. "My dad just got tired with dealing with all the punks and the kids on the corner, trying to run the movie. Getting older, we want to do something else. The property became more valuable than the business."

Seaside's Robin Knoll was a projectionist and manager at the Times Theatre in the 1980s. He remembers a crowd of more than 400 for a double-feature of "Crocodile Dundee" and "Top Gun."

"It was a place people depended on to be able to have some entertainment," Knoll said. "It lasted many, many years. At the end of the end of the '80s, attendance was dropping a little, but, it was still fairly steady. People needed entertainment and they didn't want to drive all the way to Astoria."

Showings stopped when McMurdie

decided not to renew the theater lease in 1989 and Kershul sold the building. "Batman" had a long run that summer before "Parenthood" finally unspooled as the theater's last show on Oct. 12, 1989.

A new start

Marla Olstedt, marketing director of TD&M Enterprises, told members of the Seaside Chamber of Commerce in February of plans to expand Finn's with outdoor seating. Looming even larger on the event horizon is the anticipated summer reopening of the Times Theatre as a movie theater and brew pub under the helm of Seaside Brewing co-founder Vince Berg. TD&M is the downtown entity behind Finn's, Funland, Fultano's, Fultano's Pizza, Gearhart Bowl, Phillips Candy and Twisted Fish Steakhouse.

The theater will show second-run movies and special events like the Super Bowl and March Madness.

"A lot of people tell us the last movie they saw there, so we're thinking a list of those a walk down memory lane," Olstedt said.

Beer will be brewed in-house, and served to guests in theater-style chairs and 10 to 12 four-top tables. The former Tom & Larry's Candy will serve as the kitchen area. Seating capacity is estimated at 350.

"The chairs will be more of a recliner type theater-style chair, than your basic movie theater uncomfortable who-gets-which-armrest what-do-we-do-here chair," Olstedt said. "Everybody has an armrest."

Owners hope for a summer premiere, although opening could be later in the year.

"Don't hold me to it," Olstedt said. "My dad passed in the summer of 2016," Bill Kershul said. "Not quite two years ago. It would have given him quite a thrill to see somebody do something with that place."

"I'm going to be down there as soon as it opens, because I want to check it out," Knoll said.

R.J. Marx is The Daily Astorian's South County reporter and editor of the Seaside Signal and Cannon Beach Gazette.