

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Deadly animals, big and small

The fatal mauling of a Seattle bicyclist in western Washington serves as a reminder that nature is wild and poses unavoidable threats to human beings when we venture into it — or when nature ventures to us.

The friends riding the trails near Snoqualmie did everything right when they spotted the cougar — got off their bikes, made loud noises and scared it off — and yet the man who survived said the animal returned to attack.

It was an unusual death — just the second attributed to a cougar in the state in the last 94 years — but its rarity makes it no less tragic.

But as terrifying an ordeal as it was for those men, and for others who come face-to-face with predators on their home turf, it's worth remembering that large mammals pose a relatively small threat to humans.

Dogs are the most deadly, according to the World Health Organization, which estimates about 25,000 human deaths a year by canine attack. The vast majority of those are from rabid dogs, though about 30 people die in the U.S. each year from non-rabid dog attacks. That is about the same number of people who have been killed by a cougar in the U.S.



Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife

A cougar in the wild.

in the last century.

Mosquitoes are the deadliest beast in the world, accounting for 725,000 annual human deaths, the majority from the spread of malaria. In the U.S., bees,

wasps and hornets are the top killers, according to the Centers for Disease Control, killing 58. Cows (20) are the second deadliest, while spiders (7) and venomous snakes and lizards (6) keep

just a high enough body count to give us the willies. Sharks, alligators and bears each kill about one American per year.

We're the top of the food chain in the forests of Oregon. Almost without fail, bears, wolves and cougars sprint in the opposite direction whenever they hear or smell a human. Very rarely do they attack, and when they do it's often because they are ill or injured.

Yet as the West's wild spaces become filled in with human habitation, collisions between its apex predators will become more common. We must know how to protect ourselves — with bear spray, with respect and space for wild animals, with knowledge about best practices. For large predators, act big and be loud. Don't run. Play dead if an animal makes physical contact. But if it appears to be trying to kill, then punch at its face, eyes and nose.

But the point we try to make in this editorial is that you are much more likely to be attacked and killed by the neighbor's dog, or that tick you can't see, than an apex predator in the mountains. Be careful, but don't let fear stop you from experiencing wildness. Odds are that another person in the region won't be killed by a cougar for many decades.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Other causes more worthy of Column lighting

Well, it's gay pride time of year again. What a wonderful time for those who choose to participate. I see our beloved City Council had decided to light up the Astor Column to celebrate. How proud they must be, lighting up the largest phallic symbol in the state of Oregon on behalf of peoples' sexual preference.

They've made a point of saying they only light it up twice a year, once for breast cancer awareness and once for gay pride. I can understand the breast cancer issue, we need to find a cure, just like we need to cure other things, like colon cancer. What, no brown lights?

Making people's sexual preference a civic honor seems silly to me. I don't understand. This year alone, 37 law enforcement officers have died. I didn't see any blue lights up on the hill. More students have died this year already than have died in combat. Why no lights for them?

And what about our veterans or the fire department? A month or so ago it was National Nurse Week. Why no lights? What about our Coast Guard men and women? They quite literally risk their lives every day. Why no lights?

What about our teachers? Maybe if they had some lights, our graduation rate wouldn't be so bad.

Sexual preference? Really? C'mon guys.

DAVE BERGQUIST
Gearhart

Need flashing light below Crest Motel

After reading the article May 25 regarding accidents on U.S. Highway 30 ("Accidents on U.S. Highway 30 more prevalent near eastern Astoria" The Daily Astorian), I still do not understand why a flashing caution light is not at the curve below the Crest Motel.

I live in Alderbrook, and think the turn there is very dangerous, and traffic moves fast at this location. Just last week a deer dashed in front of my car at the 45 mph area, and a pickup truck behind me was going fast when I put on my brakes. The deer then dashed across the road in front of the truck, and fortunately was missed and a serious accident was avoided.

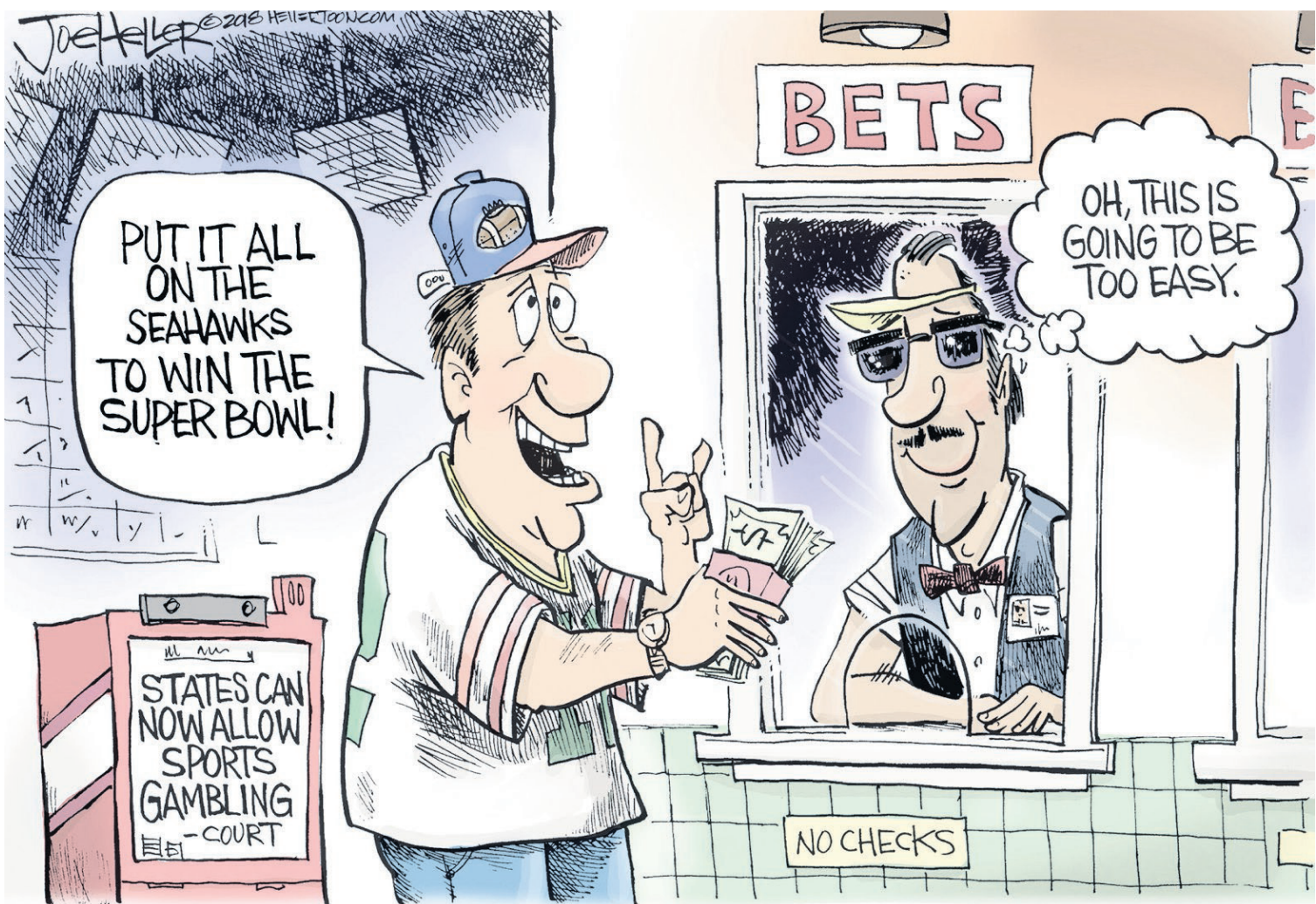
Will it take another fatality to make this a safer place?

TONI KNIER
Astoria

Thank you for children's hospital fundraising

I am writing today to express our sincere gratitude to our local community from your local Rite Aid in Seaside. With your help, we were able to raise an astounding \$11,000 for Doernbecher Children's Hospital. We thank you all.

LINDA L. BROWN
Seaside



LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar, and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the

writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed.

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STEVE HAWKS
Warrenton

Nonprofit seeks benefactor with a building

You may or may not have heard of the Astoria Alano Club, or seen an Alano Club business sign. If you have, you probably wonder what it is.

In brief, the Astoria Alano Club is a 501(c)(3) that provides social support for people recovering from addictions, including maintaining meeting space for support groups (currently 19 meetings per week), clean and sober social events, a social area, and other forms of support for people in recovery from addictions.

The Alano Club is often the first stop for new people in recovery, so, we are a very important service to our community. To be able to maintain and maximize the services we provide and ensure longevity of the Alano Club, we have a need for a ground-level building (which will also meet a disabled access need). In short, we seek a benefactor who has a build-

ing of approximately 3,000 square feet you would like to donate to a very worthy cause.

Whether you are a devout giver as a moral obligation, an investor looking for tax breaks, a giver as family tradition, or a person who gives just because it is the right thing to do, we need your help. If you own a building you'd like to donate, contact me at 503-861-2383 and please leave a message. If you would like to financially support the Alano Club you may send a check to the Astoria Alano Club, P.O. Box 1199, Astoria, OR 97103.

President Trump's policies are actually working

National politics today confirms the oldie: "history repeats itself." President Harry Truman was re-elected in

1948. But media folks predicted New York's Gov. Thomas Dewey would win in a landslide. They called Truman a nincompoop.

I remember news accounts showing a jubilant President Truman holding the front page of an (embarrassingly) early edition of the Chicago Tribune with a huge headline shouting "Dewey defeats Truman." Today, such a headline would be "fake news."

The hullabaloo today about Russia being a bogey-man in the last election reminds me of the uproar of the McCarthy era during the 1950s, when politicians looked under bushes for communists in America.

In the early 1970s Democrats disapproved of President Nixon, who resigned to escape impeachment. Nixon broke laws covering up crimes by campaign workers.

In 1998, Republicans impeached President Clinton because he broke perjury and obstruction of justice laws. Clinton, of course, is famous for lying about sex with Monica Lewinsky, a White House employee 30 years younger than Hillary.

Whatever President Donald Trump's past sex life may be, he couldn't hold a candle to past presidents Kennedy's and Clinton's extramarital escapades. Yet all presidential sex scandals pale to utter insignificance when compared to today's sex scandals involving Harvey Weinstein and Hollywood celebrities.

I can't remember any president who has upset the apple carts of established career politicians in Washington, D.C., like President Trump has. His blockbuster policies are actually working, and he's keeping his campaign promises.

It's those things about President Trump that are new for the history books.

DON HASKELL
Astoria