

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

# Retirement — in three steps

**'S**o how's retirement?" I've frequently gotten that question from friends and acquaintances over the past two years. There is an easy answer to that question (good) and a more nuanced response that I've dished out more than once — especially to guys.

My late father said to me that, "Retirement is the hardest thing I've done." He said that work had been his life since he was a teenager. While he had seen his own retirement approaching — scheduled for 1988 — he did not see a path beyond that, until my mother, with the assistance of Marian Palmberg Soderberg, set him up to mentor students at Warrenton Grade School.



**STEVE FORRESTER**

In Portland, he continued that by assisting immigrants who were studying for the citizenship test. I had hoped he would write a memoir of the long span he had seen in Oregon politics, but he had no ambition for that.

Having watched my own experience, which began some two years ago, I have identified three steps in retirement. Step one is getting more sleep. Step two is what I call "We could do that." In other words, we could play golf on a weekday. Or we could drive to Portland to see that movie that will never come to Astoria. Or take Amtrak to Tacoma to see that legendary automobile museum.

Step three is the big one. And that is the need to discover new purpose. In other words, a project.

I have been fortunate because writing



**Liisa Penner collects and archives documents at the Clatsop County Historical Society. There are several books waiting to be written in the materials of that archive.**

has been my profession. And of course, writing involves no heavy lifting. Retirement has allowed me to pursue a book concept that I had nurtured for some 30 years, but with no time to execute. Chet Orloff, the Portland historian, was my sounding board.

The theme of this prospective book was "Eminent Oregonians," modeled on Lytton Strachey's "Eminent Victorians." Chet heard me out on the idea in 1990. Upon leaving daily journalism in 2016, I renewed our conversation — this time for keeps.

Before I give you an update, let me share another element in the three-step retirement program. It comes from Frank

Gehry, the architect. In a recent issue of WSJ: the Wall Street Journal Magazine, Gehry, who is 90, describes his latest project, which is leading the reclamation or refashioning of the Los Angeles River. He tells the WSJ interviewer that it is unlike anything he's done. And that, Gehry said, prompts "a healthy insecurity."

He adds a useful credo: "The only reason you keep going is if you know there's something more to discover."

When I recruited four writers to help me create "Eminent Oregonians," I did it without the somewhat reckless buoyance of a 25-year-old, but with the healthy anxiety of a 70-year-old.

*MY LATE FATHER TOLD ME THAT, 'RETIREMENT IS THE HARDEST THING I'VE DONE.'*

Researching my chapter, on the late Oregon Sen. Richard Neuberger, has been totally engrossing. There is joy in hitting the jackpot in a box of musty correspondence from the 1950s. I recommend research as a pastime. I further recommend the archive of the Clatsop County Historical Society. There are several books waiting to be written in the materials of that archive. If history is your fascination, Astoria is a mother lode.

Women are no different than men in their need to develop a post-working career set of options. But men tend not to talk about it. For The Wall Street Journal, the humorist Dave Barry wrote an amusing column about turning 70. He noted that while women instantly share one other's problems, men do not. So Barry concluded that the reason the NFL, the NBA and the MLB were created was to give men something to talk about.

And that leads me to the later-in-life project I have not executed. As I approached retirement, I told my wife that I'd like to form a book group for men. We would read only one book — Tolstoy's "War and Peace." That would keep us going for years.

*Steve Forrester, the former editor and publisher of The Astorian, is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.*

## LETTERS

### Farm aid

I, like not a few others, am most curious about the money, some \$28 billion to date, President Donald Trump announced he will give to American farmers impacted by his trade tariffs on China.

Trump's compensation clearly appears to be an effort to shore up a wavering Republican farm belt voter base, which smacks of pure politics, at the same time flaunting flawless socialism, while socialism is being weaponized against Democratic politicians.

The question begs: Where are all those billions of dollars coming from? If they be American tax dollars, it's damned absurd, because those billions used to be paid by China to American farmers for American products.

RD SMITH  
Gearhart

### Affordable housing

For those of us who can return home to a warm, comfortable abode each evening, the growing housing problem seems remote ("New study examines Clatsop County's housing crunch," The Daily Astorian, April 11).

This article mentions that affordable housing can't be built "without some kind of public subsidy." The piece doesn't happen to mention homelessness, however Clatsop Community Action stated in 2017 that the county has "more than 1,000 homeless people at any given time."

The biggest winners from President Donald Trump's 2017 tax law were non-Hispanic white households in the top 1 percent. And now Trump's fiscal year 2020 budget proposal would cut the U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) by an astounding \$9.6 billion, or 18 percent below the already underfunded 2019 enacted levels. Homeless assistance programs would be cut \$34 million less than the 2019 levels.

Congress must now decide what parts of the fiscal year 2020 budget proposal to reject or amend. We can call or email our members of Congress and tell them to support low-income housing.

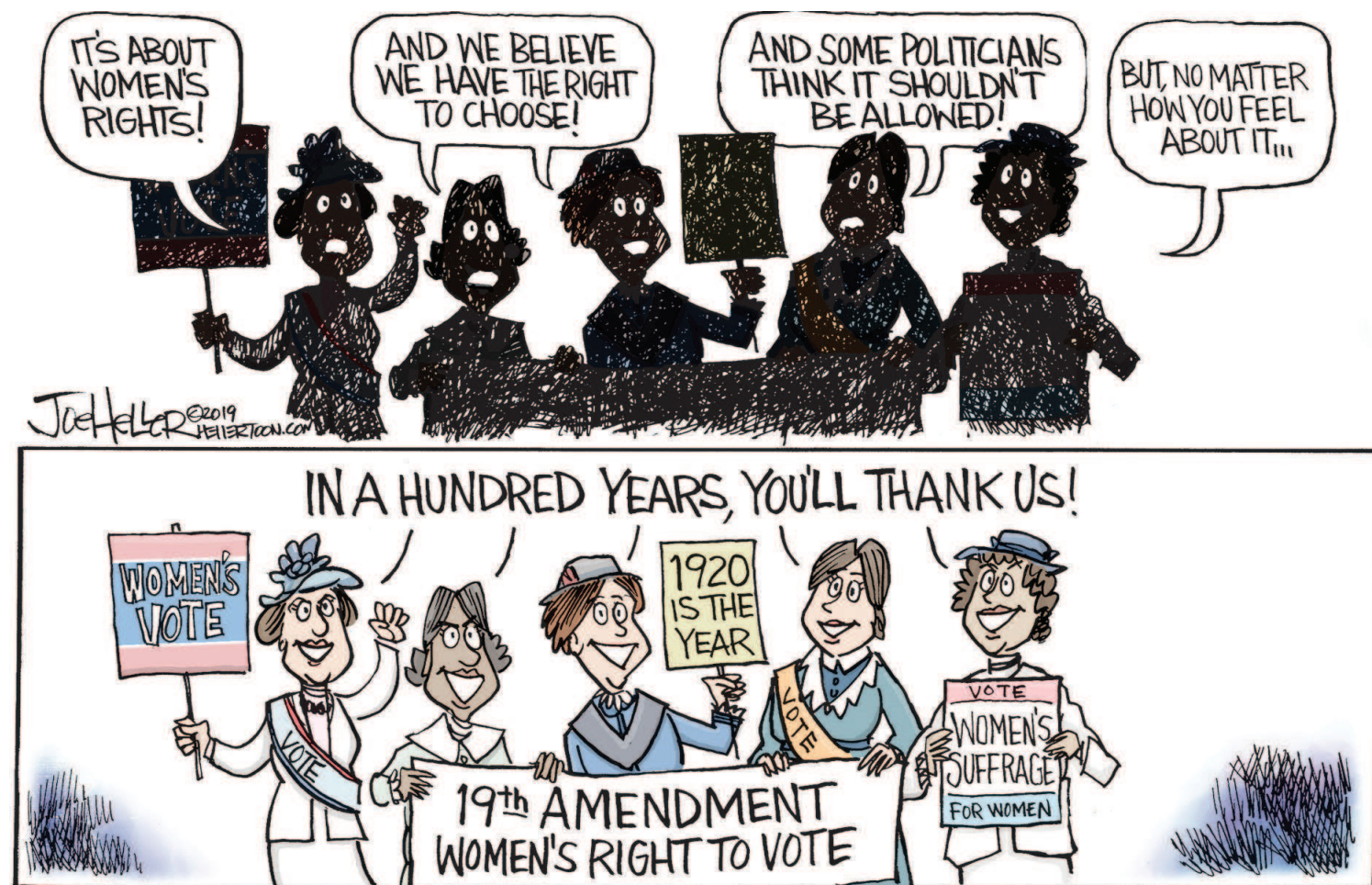
DONNA SCHINDLER MUNRO  
Bremerton, Washington

### Unrecognizable GOP

In response to U.S. Rep. Greg Walden's request for donations to the GOP:

Until such time as President Donald Trump is out of office, and the Republican Party begins to support the values and beliefs this country was founded on, I will not be donating any funds, or supporting in any way, any Republican candidate.

I do not recognize the shape of a party I have belonged to for years. I am totally flummoxed at the Republican senators



and representatives who have failed to support the rule of law and hold Trump accountable.

Is he a convicted criminal? Not yet. Should the American people be informed of the facts? Yes. Should be Trump held accountable? Yes. We deserve to know the truth. Whether it be good or bad for Trump, it is still the truth.

Please do not hesitate to contact me for financial support after Mr. Walden has publicly gone on record at the minimum supporting testimony from Robert Mueller, Don McGahn and anyone the Ways and Means or Judiciary committees subpoena under their constitutional requirement of oversight.

Mr. Walden's, and Trump's, assertion that we focus totally on some arguable benefit of the Trump presidency may have some value, but I will not support any politician who will not stand up for the values and beliefs of our heritage.

I spent three years in the Marine Corps (1964-1967), and I will not be a participant of the destruction of our democracy, and those beliefs and values.

The ball is now in Mr. Walden's court.  
PAUL DUEBER  
Cannon Beach

### No war with Iran

I am opposed to any war with Iran. A year ago, President Donald Trump pulled the U.S. from the nuclear agreement that took 10 years to build. Just because he could. Like a spoiled child with a toy.

There have been no real new threats from Iran. Remember our mistakes in

Iraq? A holocaust. Trump has taken jealous delight in demolishing much of the good created during Obama's presidency.

This war escalation must stop. John Bolton and Mike Pompeo came to the White House as hawks, and that attitude is what brought them there, and what keeps them there. Conflict.

We don't need to start another war in the Middle East. Iran has its own problems, and doesn't need one, either. We do need an educated diplomacy from the State Department. And with Pompeo, that's not happening. That education and understanding is what builds alliances, trust and a future for all children.

The cost of just sending gigantic warships and armaments to the Persian Gulf must have been a pretty penny. Enough to feed the children who are starving in this country.

Iranian people are not so different than we are. They want a house and a car and a chicken in the pot on Sunday. The Iranian culture is thousands of years old. Strangely enough, in general, Iranians like Americans. Go figure.

We must learn to live in a world with differences. Nothing is served by another war in the Middle East. If this war happens, will Don Jr. and Eric Trump be going? I hope so.

MARY TANGUAY WEBB  
Astoria

### No champion of women

In response to "Lysistrata" revisited" (The Astorian, May 23): Read the history of the play "Lysistrata," and you'll

see that Aristophanes is no champion of women, but instead a classic misogynist.

As a literary method, he uses the Athenian/Spartan war to show how mediocre men kill off their gender/kin/sons in continued wars, while juxtaposed with women stopping it by holding off the act of sex as a peace weapon.

Aristophanes hated the "war machine," and used this play to speak his political sentiments loudly. He used women as a foil for the weakness/brutality of men. Although a classic for over 2,000 years, this play continues to be misinterpreted wildly.

In "Lysistrata," he portrays Spartans and Athenian women as enemies, uniting to become political allies. They do this by holding a successful sex strike, sequestering themselves off in a tower. (Remember, no women held any political power during this time.)

Unfortunately, though seemingly contemporary, this was not a feminist stragem; instead, it was seen by Aristophanes as a way to diminish the current political powers of men by showing that even lowly forces (albeit women), could hold dominance, sway politics and humiliate them.

This 2,700-year-old literature doesn't give credence to women as equals. During that era, women were unable to hold any political office, let alone simple leadership. Today, we still do not have equal rights.

Misinterpretation shows ongoing injustice to women's intelligence. It is a comical fiction showing women successfully stopping the killing in wars, and men feeling slighted by not being as able.

MICHELLE BRIGHT  
Astoria