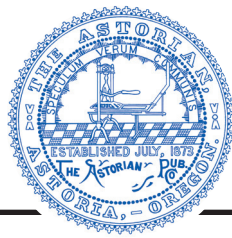


OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

President's attacks on citizens unacceptable

For President Donald Trump to tell any member of Congress to “go back” to the “places from which they came” is a violation of basic American norms.

In the first place, under our Constitution every elected member of Congress has just as much right to be in Washington, D.C. as any president. Presuming to suggest otherwise betrays a deep ignorance of the rights and responsibilities of governing.

The particular targets of Trump's contempt are women of color — women from racial backgrounds who rarely gained access to national political power in the decades of Trump's ascendancy to fame and riches. On the nights Trump spent nightclubbing with registered sex offender Jeffrey Epstein, Trump might have ordered more bath towels from such women but would have barely acknowledged their existence as human beings. The attitudes he displays toward them today reveal a continuing contempt for the ordinary working people he pretends to represent.

Beyond this toxic bias toward the “invisible” women and men who keep our nation functioning, Trump's statements are racist. For anyone to suggest otherwise is to deliberately ignore decades of racist tropes during which uppity black and brown people were told to shut up, go away, stand down, or else. The “or else” often contained an implicit threat of violence. “Go back” sometimes literally meant back to your country farmhouse, or back to the African regions from which ancestors were abducted and



AP Photo/J. Scott Applewhite

From left, Rep. Rashida Tlaib, D-Mich., Rep. Ilhan Omar, D-Minn., Rep. Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y., and Rep. Ayanna Pressley, D-Mass., respond to remarks by President Donald Trump after his call for the four Democratic congresswomen to go back to their “broken” countries. All are American citizens and three of the four were born in the U.S.

enslaved. More often, “go back” meant go back to being silent, invisible and powerless — don't bother us anymore with your grievances and calls for social justice.

Here at the mouth of the Columbia River, we live on the edge of the Pacific Rim. Archaeology and history tell us of an eon of Indian civilization here, followed in the 18th and 19th centuries by successive waves of trading and immigration by Europeans, Hawaiians, Iroquois, Africans and dozens of others. The later settlement era brought Finns and Swedes, English and Yugoslavians, to name but a few.

Many of these were no doubt told to “go back where you came from.” There were many among them who would be considered radical today. In Clatsop County, the 1932 bal-

lot that resulted in the election of Franklin Roosevelt included not just Democrats and Republicans, but also candidates from the Socialist Labor Party, the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. Local union halls and social clubs contained many Americans who the Donald Trumps of their time would have liked to kick out of the country.

Thank goodness, these troublemakers did not leave. Out of their hard work and melding of genes and cultures, we have the place that gives us such pride today — towns with rich history, loving families, great food and independent people.

Immigration is a notoriously touchy hot-button issue. There is room for civil discussions about how best to humanely and legally address the presence in the U.S.

of millions who did not come here through official channels. Very few Democrats, Republicans or independents believe in “open borders” or advocate a blanket amnesty for those who disregarded immigration laws. But we must not mix this thorny issue with the legitimacy of actual U.S. citizens.

To say, as Trump did, that criticizing U.S. policies and conditions — as his congressional critics do — is a disqualification for continued citizenship is both reprehensible and hypocritical. His own criticisms of this country and the previous occupants of the White House have often been far worse.

It is odious that some of his supporters joined in chanting “send her back” in an obvious reference to one or more of the four female members of Congress whom he has turned into convenient symbols. These poisonous attacks on political opponents carry a very real risk of placing them in physical danger, and threaten to sour our political discourse in ways that will be hard to heal.

To be an American means being part of a sometimes uncomfortably diverse whole, a concept embedded in our national motto “Out of many, one.” This motto extends far beyond its original allusion to the merging of our 13 original states. It now encompasses respecting our fellow citizens and carrying this great American experiment in democracy forward into the future despite our differences.

Language from the president that rips our national seams apart is utterly unacceptable.

LETTERS

Whom to trust?

Back in the 1970s, I retired from the military and went to work for the post office. A few years later, my brother retired from the military and moved to Oregon. We started talking about taxes, and how Oregon was not taxing retired state employees, but was taxing everybody else.

My brother said, “They can't do that, can they?” I said, “They're our elected officials, and surely we can trust them.” Boy was I dumb.

In the late 1990s, a case went to the U.S. Supreme Court involving 17 states that were doing the same thing as Oregon; two of the states were Virginia and Michigan. The end result was all of the states were told to reimburse us and stop the practice.

Our governor, John Kitzhaber, stated that if it was all paid back, it would bankrupt the state. A formula computed in the back room allowed the state to pull another one out of the hat. I personally received approximately \$23,000.

We spent our time in the service to stop this country from being overrun by aggressors, and little did we realize that they are here, and we can't go to the Supreme Court because the Public Employees Retirement System debt is legal.

And just as it was 50 years ago, all of the politicians knew, or should have known, about it. So just where do you place your trust? Arizona, maybe?

BOB COOK
Seaside

'Animal Farm'

When it comes to the arguments between the left and those on the right, I believe most have lost sight of, or simply ignore, the origins of their political and philosophical backgrounds.

Those on the left are tied to mankind as their focus, and accept a lot of the ideas stemming from the movement we define as humanism. Mankind's thoughts and ideas become paramount, and thus someone or some group must become the world's answer to all our problems.

Our traditional philosophical roots begin with the Judeo-Christian ideals, primarily. For instance, our founders understood that power corrupts because mankind is flawed, so they split the powers of the federal government up into three



branches.

Shared power became our normal way of doing things. But when some believe that they are smarter than the rest of us, and try to seize positions of power illegitimately, they are merely confirming what our founders knew to be true.

George Orwell gave us a great example of this in his book “Animal Farm.” The animals on the farm felt that they were being mistreated, and rose up in anger to seize the means of production. The result was that the pigs gained ultimate control and the rest of the livestock were enslaved by their oppressive rule.

All their efforts then went to supply the leader's wants and wishes. Unless all the chickens and ducks willingly complied to their orders, they threatened to unleash the dogs on them. America, the left is not your answer.

CARL YATES
Seaside

Go Goonies!

Thank you for publishing Erick Bengel's article on my screenplay, “Golden Ventures” (“Writer believes his Astoria tale inspired ‘Goonies’.”

The Astorian, July 19). If it has actually contributed anything to Astoria, I feel privileged.

As Erick said, I have since retired from adventuring except for occasional recreational mining excursions, and have taken up writing again, recently self-publishing a novel, “The Gold Gang,” with Amazon.

Turned it into a script, and am now working on a couple of other projects, including another pre-teen saga called “Horses,” which also has youthful derring-do and offbeat crooks to keep them hopping.

Astoria was my second summer home in the mid-1980s, running six-day offshore trips up to the San Juan Islands and back, and I have fond memories still of the town and residents. Go Goonies!

GEORGE CLARK
Gold Beach

Great performance

Bravo to the Peninsula Association of Performing Artists (PAPA). Such a great performance of “Mary Poppins” — now showing until July 28 at the Fort Columbia Theater outside of Chinook, Washington.

It was my very first visit to the theater, and it was money well spent. Very well done. From the least to the greatest, again I say, “Bravo!”

SHEILA FORTE
Astoria

Safe driving

I have recently returned from a drive on U.S. Highway 26 between Portland and Seaside, and two things confuse me.

First, I don't understand why people refuse to turn on their headlights, despite a number of signs advising their use for safety. Do they think that because they can see all right, it's not necessary? Perhaps they don't realize that the purpose is not to see, but to be seen. Visibility of oncoming traffic is much enhanced when the oncoming vehicle has headlights on.

Secondly, I don't understand the refusal to use turn signals when changing lanes. Using turn signals gives other drivers the impression that you know what you are doing, and that what you are doing is on purpose, rather than wandering between lanes while distracted.

BOB FLETCHER
Seaside