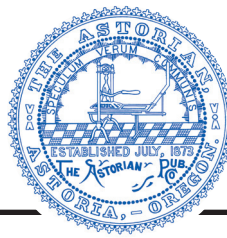


# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## OUR VIEW

# A voice for fairness

In an era of bare-knuckled politics, it is instructive to reflect on the career of William Ruckelshaus, the first administrator of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

He died in Seattle in late November at age 87, leaving behind an unblemished career as a voice for environmental reason.

Ruckelshaus was no stranger to pitched political battles. His career in President Richard Nixon's administration abruptly ended when Ruckelshaus resigned his job at the U.S. Department of Justice instead of firing the Watergate special prosecutor.

But after two turns as EPA administrator — as the agency's first chief under Nixon and again under President Ronald Reagan — Ruckelshaus probably knew more about how the EPA and statutes such as the Endangered Species Act work than anyone else.

In 2011, Capital Press interviewed Ruckelshaus about the EPA, the Endangered Species Act and issues related to the protection of species. Edited for space, here are some of his thoughts:

On the Endangered Species Act: If the law is working properly, the "how to" is an agreement by the people who will be impacted by the necessary changes. It doesn't work as well as it ought to, because a lot of time the government comes in and imposes habitat requirements that the manager of the land doesn't find completely reasonable.



William Ruckelshaus in his Seattle office in 2011.

On the Clean Air Act: After a couple of years of administering it, I knew it needed change. ... What has proven really hard is to get these laws changed, and the reason is, I think, the people who lobbied the laws through were primarily outside the government, and the government agencies that administered these laws and the staffs on committees remain in place for a long time — they get a vested interest in the law and they fight furiously against any changes.

The scope of the Endangered Species Act: (Congress) wrote the law broadly enough, and of course it's been interpreted broadly enough, it encompasses a lot more than they probably originally intended.

Changes needed in the Endan-

gered Species Act: If I'm a landowner and someone is running a highway through my land, I may not like it, but at least I'm being compensated for it. If I'm forced to put buffers alongside streams that run through my land in order to protect salmon, sometimes those buffers take a significant amount of my land, and I think they should be compensated for that ...

If that's a public good and it's being asserted against a private property owner, then why shouldn't the public pay for it the same way they do with a highway?

On environmental regulations: In the first place, some guy writing the regulation down in Olympia or in Salem, and not being on the actual land itself, can't possibly draft a regulation that makes sense

on every piece of land. So the landowner has the regulator from the government coming on their land, starting to tell him how to manage it. He's been managing for five generations and this guy's maybe six months out of school. Well, they're not going to be very pleased with what they're told to do. ...

(Let) the individual landowner have a lot more authority about what he should do to manage the land in such a way that it doesn't adversely impact the environment. And compensating them where there are significant costs involved.

On collaboration: If they'd see themselves as part of a family, they'd begin to make progress. But if they see themselves as adversaries, as enemies, then you don't make any progress. ... My experience of listening to farmers and environmentalists when they finally let their guard down, they are not nearly as far apart as they think they are. I've heard farmers say, "Well, if that's what you want us to do, that's not so hard." And here the environmentalists would say, "Well, I guess that's not really the problem, is it?" ... Once you see those interests come together, it really is remarkable.

These words, spoken from experience, offer wisdom to all sides of many issues, whether they involve the environment or other topics.

Maybe, just maybe, the world needs more voices for reason like William Ruckelshaus. We've seen plenty of the alternative.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Lies and tyranny

Some in the Republican Party seem to have read Hitler's playbook. Ivana Trump said President Donald Trump kept a book written by Hitler at his bedside. "If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed." — Adolf Hitler.

It seems Trump took this to heart, since he has been lying constantly about almost everything, and repeating the lies no matter how often they're discredited. Many Republican congressmen seem to be following suit, as they ruthlessly assist Trump in dismantling reality and the rule of law.

They are willfully choosing to reframe illegal behavior as OK, just because they want it to be OK. They are selling their souls to preserve their ability to power-monger for the most greedy and wealthy in our nation.

The Republican Party is being revealed for what it has become, an exclusive club for those who crave wealth, prestige and ruthless authoritarianism, while using the cloak of Christianity to appear humanistic and justified.

They rabidly accuse those who reveal their lies as being corrupt evil-doers, which they themselves actually are. Tyranny and terror can only flourish in a land where reality and morality are denied and twisted into weapons of persecution aimed at those who stand against them.

This is exactly what some Republicans are doing in the impeachment inquiry hearings (remember them?). Abraham Lincoln said, "A house divided against itself cannot stand."

Our country is being assailed from within by our own people, as Vladimir Putin smiles.

BRENTON KAHLE  
Astoria

### Best buy

Even though it borders on censorship and violation of the First Amendment, I somewhat agree with the letter referring to the complicity expressed in running stories of mass shootings, while allowing advertising of the weapons used in some of those instances ("Complicity," The Astorian, Dec. 5).

Therefore I totally agree that The Astorian should stop running stories of mass shootings. We get enough of that on tele-

vision news. But keep the ads. It's nice to know who's got the best buy on ammo.

WILLIAM BELL  
Astoria

### Vote Stefanik

Quite simply, Elise Stefanik for president, 2024.

KIM MINKOFF  
Astoria

### Winter

The days are getting colder, with rain and wind coming. The leaves from the beautifully colored trees are mostly on the ground by now. After a great summer and autumn, you know the weather will change soon, with days that are gloomy.

I, too, always liked this kind of weather. I call it barroom weather, since I would rather be in a bar than outside. Even the days can be almost dark, and with the winter-time change and shorter days, night

comes quickly.

It seems to me that you need to be a little rugged to live here. The coastal chill can overwhelm, and my bones hurt more — but I also feel lucky to live by the sea.

I have said this before, but I think it's a good time to reflect on the past year and decide what I would like for the coming one. I will not only try to embrace the rain and chill, but also the days ahead.

With the holiday season approaching, this is a time of joy for most, but not all. If I try, maybe I can help with the joy. Maybe just Mr. Rogers' kindness is a start.

Winter will bring crisp sunny days to a halt as evening approaches. The sun will turn crimson, and become even more beautiful as it reflects on the ocean — enjoy the winter.

NORM HOOGE  
Astoria

### Hard being an outsider

It's hard being an outsider in Astoria. I moved here four years ago, and have

struggled to figure this community out.

I've applied for many jobs locally, only to end up working in Warrenton for big box stores, and I'm 63, with a master's degree. I was able to teach part time at Clatsop Community College occasionally, but I have applied for 20 more permanent jobs there with no luck.

I have gotten involved with the community. I became a master gardener through Oregon State University, a great program. I volunteered at the Columbia River Maritime Museum, and worked occasionally on the lightship Columbia.

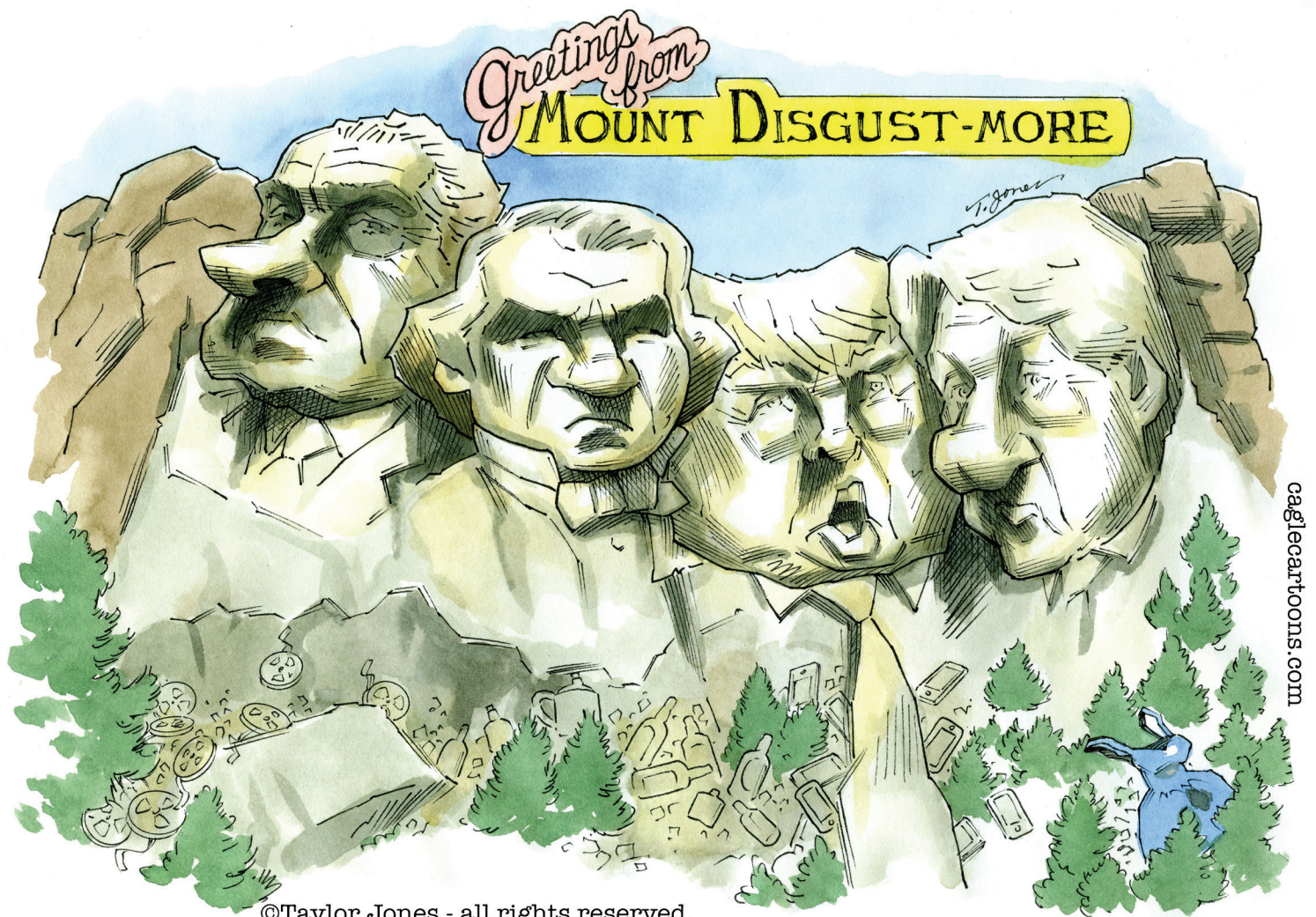
I volunteer at the Wildlife Center of the North Coast. They are great people. And I recently joined the North Coast Chorale.

I also volunteered at Coast Community Radio.

Making friends? The locals would ask which high school I went to, and when I said I didn't, they turned away. My friends have become other newcomers here.

I'm wondering if I belong here. Why is Astoria this way?

KYLENE QUINN  
Astoria



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