

Remarkable document

In response to a recent column by Don Haskell, “Climate change just another political controversy” (The Astorian, Feb. 1), I want to draw attention to a remarkable document on climate change and national security.

Sixty-four senior U.S. military and security leaders have endorsed “A Climate Security Plan for America” (bit.ly/2Um02Gh). It’s signed by more than 20 admirals and generals, including Rear Adm. David Titley, former oceanographer and navigator of the Navy, and Gen. Gordon Sullivan, former chief of staff of the Army.

This comprehensive report states that increases in extreme weather “can devastate essential energy, financial and agricultural centers that undergird U.S. and global economic viability and the well-being of our populations.”

It calls for initiatives to improve the resilience of our critical infrastructure, and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S. and globally in order to avoid “catastrophic security consequences.”

It’s important to look to independent organizations like the military when evaluating the threat posed by climate change. Because our armed services depend on scientific evidence to assess risk, they are less amenable to politicized science.

The U.S. military has expressed concern about climate change since the George W. Bush administration, and dozens of Defense Department documents on this issue can be accessed at climateandsecurity.org

Urgently reducing greenhouse gas emissions and funding adaptation should be top priorities for every politician who is concerned about national security and global stability.

TERRY HANSEN
Astoria

I object

Democrats make climate bill a priority for session” (The Astorian, Jan. 21) — bass ackwards priority.

I object to the substance of the subject story. Tax increase costs, and risks of potential job losses for people who work in business that cause greenhouse gases, weighed against a symbolic political gain in global warming.

I see politicians doing what is easy for their supermajority by raising taxes, instead of tackling problems with a more desperate need for solutions such as: My future Public Employees Retirement System funding, and making large improvements in creating truly low-cost housing and helping homeless populations.

If we can send people to the moon and create supercomputers, we can find solutions to difficult problems. I feel it is time for politicians in Salem to make the decision to move all new employees hired into positions in all government jobs that currently are part of the PERS pension program into a 401(k)-type program controlled by each employee, rather than the guaranteed income pensions currently offered.

Costs for true low-cost housing have large costs directly associated with regulations and laws at all levels of government that need to be addressed at federal, state, county and local levels simultaneously, with everyone making proportional sacrifices to achieve the greater good.

A true leader at any level of government should have the ambition and energy to create a program to link all government levels into a coordinated effort, where each government level makes proportional sacrifices to create true low-cost housing.

SCOTT WIDDICOMBE
Warrenton

Smoke

I thought it astute The Astorian put the Bay-Ocean article across from the guest column on Feb. 1 (“Bayocean: The lost resort town that Oregon forgot”). It’s basic human temerity to “fix” a bay. What we do has consequences.

The guest column is correct in the first line, but goes south from there (“Climate change just another political controversy,” The Astorian, Feb. 1). May I pose that we better hope climate change is caused by human activity. It means we might be able to repair our ways. Otherwise, what could be done?

A question to ask: How bad will it get? The column implies no one can trust science because it’s opinionated. True enough. I would add the same for politicians and columnists. So what can we do?

May I offer an analogy? Ask yourself, “What would I do if I smelled smoke in my house? Would I continue to watch ‘Jeopardy’ and ignore it, or would I get up off my duff and see what was wrong?”

Either the house is burning, or it is not. Ignoring it might not be the best idea. Might I add a smoke detector?

If a danger is imminent, imagined or observed, is it a good idea to do nothing but rant about the costs? What costs too much after your house is burned to the ground?

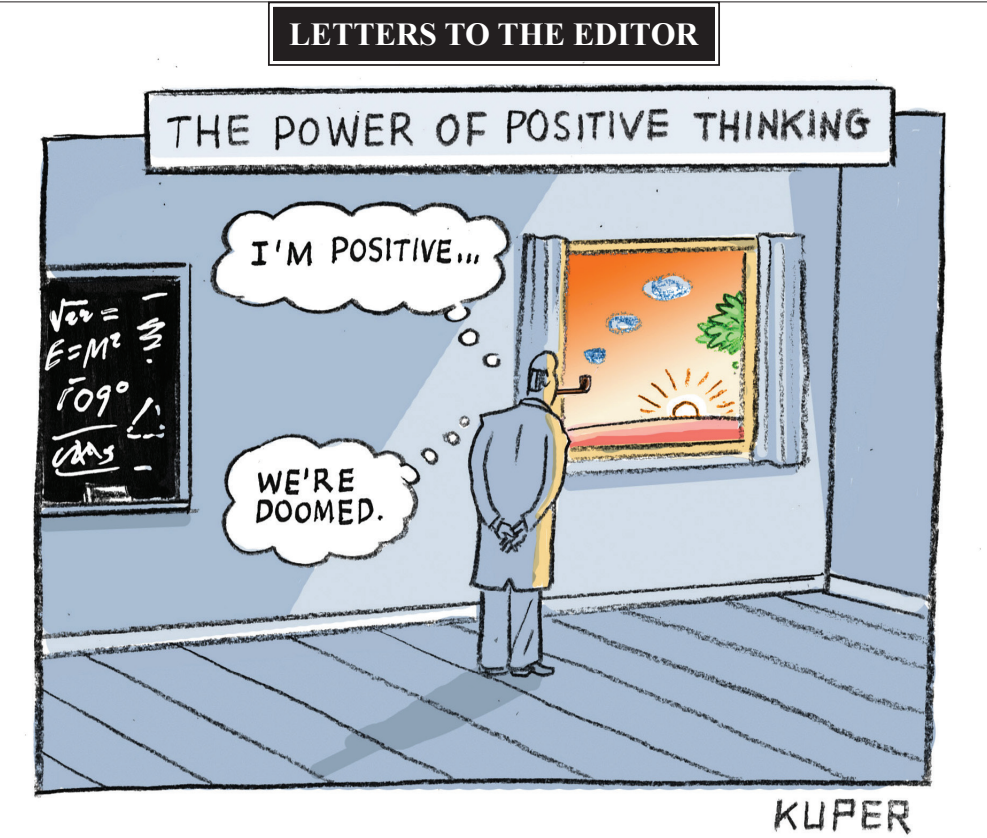
Is there any compliance in the fact we are the consumers of Chinese overproduction? Talk about moral perspective. Quit buying cheap insipid plastic stuff.

Morally, are we not obligated to pay our due? With the lives of future generations? Be a denier, like the guest columnist? In 50 years, what comment then?

SAM STEIDEL
Cannon Beach

Not political

Climate change is not political, it is a fact (“Climate change just another political



controversy,” The Astorian, Feb. 1).

How we decide to act on climate change makes it a political controversy. Do we go along as we have, extracting and polluting our way to profit for big oil/Wall Street tree farms?

Or, do we look past our own personal profits and consider how we are affecting the world we are leaving for future generations?

JOYCE HUNT
Seaside

Irresponsible

I found Don Haskell’s piece on climate change disturbing (“Climate change just another political controversy,” The Astorian, Feb. 1). He argues that the “controversy is whether human use of fossil fuels and other natural resources affects the earth’s normal weather cycles.”

Where is the controversy? Given a significant majority of climate scientists agree that average global temperature today is warmer than in preindustrial times, and that human activity is a significant contributing factor.

Haskell states: “Extreme suggestions aren’t acceptable to almost everybody. To claim we must stop using fossil fuels is like saying we must stop growing food. Or stop using airplanes, ships, cars, or lawnmowers. Or stop eating beef because cows produce methane gas.”

These are scare tactics meant to encourage people to feel threatened by climate activism. His piece is peppered with extreme examples, cherry-picked and outdated statistics. What is his goal? This sentiment is irresponsible. He should certainly know better.

For those of us living on the coast, we see the effect of climate change. The oyster growers know that carbon dioxide has increased ocean acidification by at least 30%. We don’t want to wait for a point of no return. We want to do what we can.

We all need to do our part to mitigate the damage. We don’t need to stop the world in order to do our part to bend the curve. The evidence is solid. Why dismiss it as a controversy?

JENNIFER NIGHTINGALE
Astoria

Shocked

When I opened the paper this Saturday, I was shocked to find half a page of thinly veiled climate change denial (“Climate change just another political controversy,” The Astorian, Feb. 1). In case you missed it, The Astorian guest column suggested that climate change is not a scientific phenomenon that we should be concerned about, but rather “a multibillion-dollar business” driven by the “warp(ed)” opinions of “climatologists who’re funded primarily with government money.”

To challenge the broadly accepted science linking human influence to our rapidly changing climate, the writer cites a “little-known petition” from 1997. Anyone Googling this document can quickly see the fallacies underlying it. The supposed experts who supported this petition more than 20 years ago needed only a bachelor’s degree in any scientific field to sign on, and just 0.1% of the signatories identified as climatologists.

If the writer is so keen on following money trails, he should note that the petition’s cover letter was written by the chairman of the George C. Marshall Institute, a conservative think tank funded by fossil fuel companies like ExxonMobil.

While I respect The Astorian’s decision to publish opinions from across the political spectrum, shoddily researched conspiracy theories should never take up space in a legitimate newspaper. The urge to write off climate change as “just another political controversy” is as convenient as it is dangerous.

The message of rhetoric like this is clear: Ignore all the warning signs, and leave an impending catastrophe for those of us in the younger generation.

ANDREW ZINGG
Astoria

Embarrassed

It’s the year 2020, and I’m surprised, disappointed and embarrassed to see The Astorian giving page space to the kind of misinformation being promulgated by Don Haskell in the guest column, “Climate change just another political controversy” (Feb. 1).

I thought that by now the U.S. had caught up to the rest of the world in acknowledging the reality of human-caused climate change. Haskell hangs much of his argument on the Global Warming Petition Project, which has been widely and easily debunked by numerous reputable news and science outlets.

Haskell states that “anyone who wants to nitpick this petition can ... criticize it for one reason or another.” A quick Google search will reveal the reasons: invalid methodology, signatories not experts in the field and deliberately misleading, to name a few.

Haskell goes on to say, “anybody can easily find an opinion on climate change to support whatever their political beliefs happen to be ...” — but opinions are not facts. The fact is that over 97% of climate scientists worldwide agree that climate-warming trends over the last century are due to human activities. And they are not being “paid handsomely for their opinions.” They’re publishing facts in peer-reviewed journals.

As for his “it’s China’s fault not ours” argument, China is indeed the biggest emitter, but we far outpace them on per-capita emissions.

Climate change is real, not a political controversy, and we need to take responsibility for it. You are entitled to your own opinion, Haskell, but not your own facts.

CARLA COLE
Astoria

Unity

When politicians say they’re for unity for those who work in natural resources, are they really looking out for those workers’ futures?

Can a forest worker or a fisherman really look their children in the eye and say climate change is a hoax? That climate change won’t put their jobs at risk? That it won’t put

needed here. There are big businesses out there who’d rather you go back to sleep.

BRENTON KAHLER
Astoria

Climate extremism?

Don Haskell’s opinions on climate change are supported primarily by the Global Warming Petition Project, whose credo was written in 1998 (“Climate change just another political controversy,” The Astorian, Feb. 1).

By the petition’s standard, if you have a bachelor of science degree you, too, can sign the petition and become an instant expert on climate change. Give me a break.

The evidence accumulated over the past 20 years is indisputable. New data coming in yearly demonstrates that greenhouse gases produced by human activity has accelerated climate change far beyond the rate it has occurred naturally in the past.

Haskell would have us believe that alarmed scientists and countries worldwide who are convinced of the human factor in climate change are on the government money take.

Then, after suggesting that the human contribution to climate change is negligible, Haskell contradicts himself by saying we should go after China for “the environmental havoc” their pollution is causing. I guess when we pollute it doesn’t matter much, but when China pollutes, it does.

But doesn’t the Republicans’ idiot commander-in-chief say that climate change is a hoax started by China? Please, Haskell, my head is spinning.

So why did The Astorian place Haskell’s piece where the paper’s editorials normally appear, even though his opinions have little credibility? The reason is that he expresses the editors’ opinion on Oregon cap and trade, which he calls “extremism.”

That is consistent with the timber industry’s wishes, which apparently Haskell, The Astorian and Sen. Betsy Johnson have all pledged fealty to.

ROGER DORBAND
Astoria

Not helpful

#TimberUnity has not been helpful in recognizing the needs of other working people in Oregon.

I was out tending crab traps yesterday, and the catch is not good. The state is dumping millions of tons of Columbia River sediment on crab beds to keep the channel open, and with the dams and rising ocean temperatures, salmon are being forced to extinction — says Joel Kawahara, salmon fisherman, in The Astorian (“Fishermen and farmers need solutions,” Jan. 4).

While we argue about “greatest permanent value,” more Oregon forests are beetle kill and summer tinder. So why would we want cap and trade? Because we need to adapt if we want to survive, and to have companies that survive, then we need new trades.

Jobs like truck driving are being automated, and we can’t blame that on Salem. An acre that used to take a 10-man crew to clearcut now is done with two guys and a harvester. Cap and trade brings new jobs, and more of them. Look at wind.

The money behind #TimberUnity does not have your good at heart.

Until we can start working together to solve the interlocking problems of environment and social restructuring with a new, yes, green economy, we will all be just collateral damage by shortsightedness.

KAL LAMBERT
Hammond

Position unsupportable

In the recent opinion article, “Climate change just another political controversy” (The Astorian, Feb. 1), Don Haskell claims that there is no convincing evidence that humans are the dominant cause of global warming by citing the results of a Global Warming Petition that is over 20 years old. Why didn’t he cite that fact?

He dismisses recent statements by over 11,000 scientists who expressed the opposite position by stating that they are being paid handsomely for their opinion. It is hard to respond to such a cynical position, given all the benefits society has reaped by advances in science.

He advises us to take on China, instead of “blaming America for the world’s weather.” Recent published reports cite China has emerged as the new leader of global climate change mitigation. They have vigorous policies that have already reduced carbon emissions. They are also a leader in solar and wind technology.

Such misinformation should not be published as an opinion piece, when Haskell is clearly not an authority on this topic.

CAROLYN EADY
Astoria

Baseless claims

As for the recent opinion piece implying that climate change is an open issue, “Climate change just another political controversy” (The Astorian, Feb. 1), Pew Research found last year that Americans’ political affiliation has a far greater affect on their opinions about climate change than their knowledge of science (pewrsr.ch/36SqnhV). That’s simply sad.

Perhaps The Astorian can help by publishing more articles by scientists, and fewer by amateurs. Especially those making baseless claims that government-funded studies are as biased as industry-funded studies.

ED VERDURMEN
Gearhart