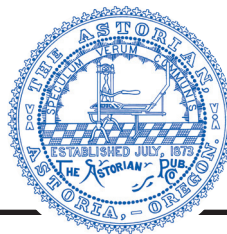


OPINION



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WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

Late senator was like a meteor

The fleeting shelf life of fame is nowhere better illustrated than in politics. A typical mayor or state legislator has no greater chance of being remembered beyond their term in office than does a homecoming queen from two towns over.

This is true even of lofty federal officials. It's a freakishly rare and obsessive person who can name the vice presidents of the 20th century, far less their state's past 20 U.S. senators. Political power and popularity are effervescent but go flat faster than cheap Champagne. For too many elected leaders, ill-gotten wealth is some consolation for being forgotten.



MATT WINTERS

being forgotten.

Nowadays, though, American politics — and particularly the U.S. Senate — are so broken that some of us are positively nostalgic for past generations of almost-anonymous politicians. Certainly, there were contemptible scoundrels like Joe McCarthy and Jim Crow apologists led by Strom Thurmond. But on the positive side, Northwest leaders like Oregon's Mark Hatfield, Washington's Warren Magnuson, Montana's Mike Mansfield and Wyoming's Gale McGee were warm and genuine men. Egotistical for sure, but they put public service first.

Their accomplishments remind us of how America became, at least for a time, the envy of the world. By reexamining what they achieved and how they did it, we may perhaps be inspired to elect a new crop of truly great U.S. senators from both parties.

As many have observed before, maybe it was their shared experience of the Great Depression and World War II that forged an ability to strongly advocate for opposing ideas, while retaining the ability to sometimes compromise on behalf of solutions that worked well for most citizens. Hardship gave rise to a kind of generosity within conflict. It was a time when the expression "ladies and gentlemen" came with an expectation that leaders and citizens alike embody the virtues required to actually be a lady or a gentleman.

A name to remember

Even for most Oregonians, the name Richard Neuberger is unlikely to immediately spring to mind as a member of the pantheon of noteworthy national lead-



Oregon Sen. Richard Neuberger, left, speaks with Adlai Stevenson, the Democratic candidate for president twice in the 1950s.

ers from the Pacific Northwest. He died in 1960, just before completing a first six-year term in office, and so never had a chance to acquire the seniority needed to score many political or appropriations victories.

However, as an eyewitness and inspired writer on the gargantuan upheavals of the years just before and after World War II, Neuberger has few equals. His 1933 reporting on Germany's slide into a venomous dictatorship opened many eyes to the growing potential for a planet-gripping conflict.

"One must see for himself before he can realize the horror and hopelessness of the situation," he wrote. "I write that statement advisedly, for three months ago I myself was not aware of the brutality and thoroughness with which the Nazis have abrogated the right of citizenship to the Jewish people. In fact, as I look in retrospect at the days before I visited the vast fortress that is Germany, I wonder how I ever could have so minimized in my mind the catastrophe which has overtaken the Jews in that country."

For years, Neuberger continued to be at the forefront of telling his contemporaries of approaching events. So while

he didn't achieve lasting greatness in the Senate, his intrepid adventures would certainly make for a compelling book. He is like a figure out of heroic fiction.

As it happens, a book on Neuberger is underway. In fact, Oregon newsman Steve Forrester, who observed him at close distance as a teenager in his parents' Pendleton home, is telling his story as part of a forthcoming book about "Eminent Oregonians" and later in a full-fledged biography.

In Forrester's telling, Neuberger's inspired body of writing and moral courage richly deserve to be remembered. In a Tuesday appearance at Columbia Forum, Forrester will tell what many months of research have revealed about this singularly fascinating figure.

"Looking at that life, some 60 years beyond his death, it appears Neuberger was a man who lived at such a pace and took such risks that he seemed to sense he would be dead by the age of 47," Forrester says. "His cosmic equivalent is a meteor — a brilliant light streaking through the night sky and suddenly gone. In fact, upon his election to the U.S. Senate, the York, Pennsylvania Gazette and Daily carried a cartoon of 'a comet

COLUMBIA FORUM

Newsman Steve Forrester will discuss Oregon Sen. Richard Neuberger at the Columbia Forum on Tuesday.

For more information and tickets, visit tinyurl.com/Forum-Neuberger

streaking through the sky labeled Sen. Neuberger Victory."

History-making in its own right, Neuberger's hard-won victory to the Senate in 1954 — becoming the first Oregon Democrat elected to that office in 40 years — tipped the balance of power, making Lyndon Johnson majority leader and setting the stage for the Civil Rights Act, Medicare and other advances of the 1960s.

Yukon coincidence

In a coincidence, Neuberger might have crossed paths with my dad, Elmer C. Winters. Researching a Father's Day column about Dad's work on the Alaska Highway and the CANOL oil pipeline project, Neuberger turns up as a lieutenant working as an aide to Gen. James O'Connor.

O'Connor was promoted in 1942 to lead efforts to link Alaska with the U.S. mainland as Japan threatened to cut off seaborne materiel routes in the Pacific. A captain in the Quartermaster Corps, Dad was grappling with supply shortages in the Yukon portion of the project as winter approached. In common with many who "fought the road," in the minus-60 degree nights he suffered frostbite that degraded his circulation for the rest of his life.

Neuberger wrote memos and reported from the scene for Army publications. With his usual verve, he wrote of a "Yukonized" summit conference: "I was awakened by a gentle padding on the lumber floor. ... General O'Connor, in his long underwear, with his fur cap on his head and his parka thrown round his shoulders, was tip-toeing to the door. He threw it open and in walked (Canadian) Generals Peakes and Ganong."

While it's only a wild guess that Dad and Neuberger may have played cards and shared a cigar in the Yukon, it's certain they did share a sincere belief in America and our ability to help navigate a positive course for the world. Our times call for the same kind of smart and hardy citizens willing to lead.

Matt Winters is the editor and publisher of the Chinook Observer.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

There was no crime

Ah. Yes. Yet another hilarious cartoon. And a bunch of misinformed letters to boot.

Just to clear the air from the stink of a partisan hissy fit: There was no crime. These people knew impeachment would fail in the Senate. It was the idea of a bunch of disgruntled Democrats seeking to gain some advantage in the next election. The Democrats' impeachment is a sad sham.

Think what you want about President Donald Trump. He is out there. He says what he thinks. He does what he says. He does not hide.

Advice to those who are so outraged: Get over it. Move on. Find a candidate to defeat him, if you can. Maybe the socialist. Free everything for everybody.

Like President Barack Obama once said, "put on your big boy pants." Don't whine, vote.

ROBERT LIDDYCOAT
Seaside

Stand for truth

Bless Sen. Mitt Romney for siding with his conscience, his family and his God.

I am a Democrat, and find I am very proud of this man who was willing to stand for the truth with dignity.

MARY TANGUAY WEBB
Astoria

Deeply disturbed

I am deeply disturbed that Channel 60, MSNBC, is missing in the TV Guide in our very own The Astorian newspaper. I went to the TV Guide to check scheduling and there is no Channel 60 listing.

Does this represent some kind of bias against this extremely good news channel?

MONICA TAYLOR
Astoria

Ironic

Find it quite ironic that I was a substitute teacher for a second grade class on the same day that the speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives, Nancy Pelosi, tore up the House's official copy of the president's State of the Union address.

Around 37 million Americans watched Pelosi act like a second grader as she potentially violated Title 18 U.S. Code § 2071 (concealment, removal or mutilation, generally). If I was substituting for the sergeant-at-arms, I would have sent her out to sit in the hall.

Or, at least applied the official punishment:

"Whoever, having the custody of any such record, proceeding, map, book, document, paper, or other thing, willfully and unlawfully conceals, removes, mutilates, obliterates, falsifies, or destroys the same, shall be fined under this title or imprisoned not more than three years, or both; and shall forfeit his office and be disqualified from holding any office under the United States."

MATT JANES
Astoria

Reasons to vote

Watching the State of the Union address was like watching the Oscars with an emcee, but all the "swag bags" were full of ... (use your imagination).

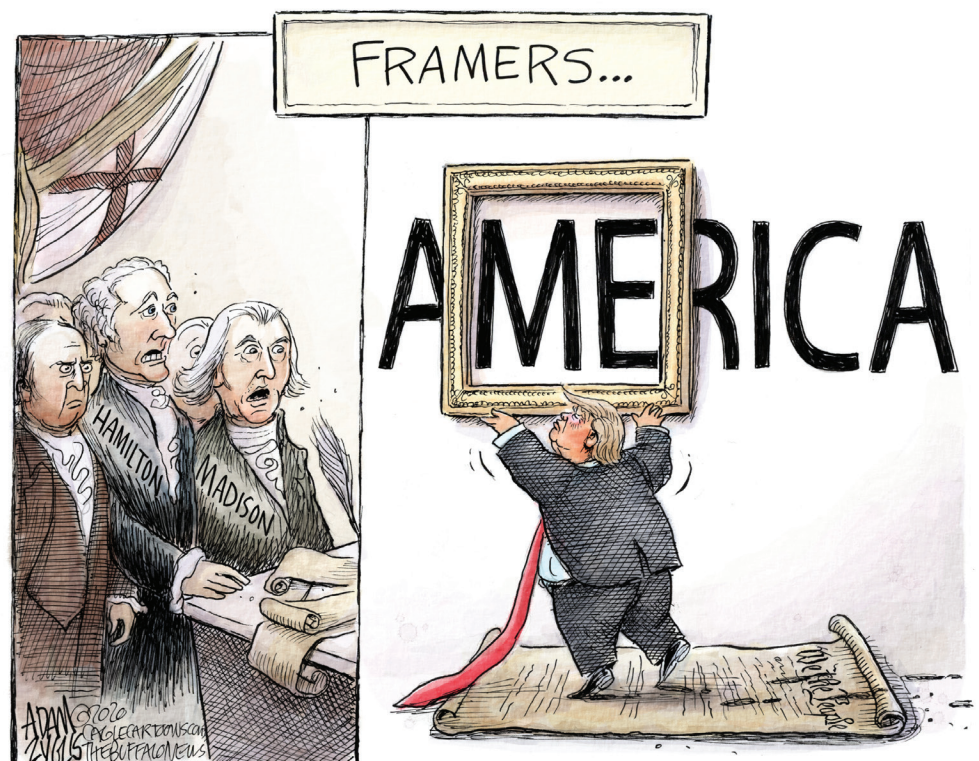
More reasons to vote.

JO LUMPKIN-BROWN
Astoria

Finally ashamed

After more years than I'd care to admit, I am finally ashamed to be a citizen of the U.S.

To accept the fact that this nation's so-called "leaders" — or too many of them — legislators in the highest level of government, have disgraced themselves for the past three years by trying to bring down a



duly-elected president, Donald J. Trump, boggles my mind.

To be specific, the Democrats, who still resent that he defeated their sanctified, anointed queen, continue to make fools of themselves by throwing every conceivable charge — most of them fraudulent — "against the wall," and hoping something sticks.

About a half-dozen years ago, talk radio titan Rush Limbaugh said that the disgraced Democrats were "beginning to implode." I thought he was exaggerating, but it looks as if he was right, as they try to govern the country like a bunch of disgruntled high school kids.

E. ROBERT NASSIKAS
Astoria

#TimberUnity's candidate

Like #TimberUnity that endorses her for county commissioner, Courtney Bangs' recent letter ("Wake-up call," The Astorian, Jan. 25) relies on hyperbole and misinformation to bolster her position on the cap-and-trade bill. Likewise, she does

not offer any positive approach to mitigating climate change, never mentioning it on her website.

Somehow she concludes that forcing major CO2 polluting industries to pay for their sins, and an increase in gasoline prices, will result in a loss of jobs and tax revenue to support local public services. But under the new version of the bill, fuel price increases in western Oregon don't begin until 2025, three years after the bill goes into effect.

Bangs' concerns about job loss are more likely to be the result of #TimberUnity hero Donald Trump's disastrous trade policy with China, which has dried up log exports from the USA. Most prior timber job loss resulted from automation, a trend that will surely continue into the future.

Bangs also fails to acknowledge that much of the revenue generated by cap and trade will flow to the benefit of counties like ours that are being directly affected by climate change in the form of ocean acidification and warming, coastal erosion and potential wildfire.

ROGER DORBAND
Astoria