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We need patience, flexibility and support

“Don’t let what you cannot do interfere with what you can do.”

— John Wooden,
former UCLA basketball coach

This quote resonates with me as we begin an unprecedented school year, one we never could have possibly imagined, and one that continues to raise a lot of valid questions and concerns. As we enter this year, I want to focus on what is possible during a very uncertain time.

In the last two weeks, we have received both new guidelines from the Oregon Department of Education on masking and cohort requirements (the number of people we can have in an area of the school building at one time), as well as health metrics from the state around positive coronavirus case rates and the number of cases.

It was clear from evaluating these guidelines and metrics that it was not prudent to try to bring students and staff back into buildings at this time.

The safest route is to start our school year remotely.

Our staff, administrators and board members are deeply concerned with how these choices are going to affect our students and their families. We are concerned about connectivity — both from a technology and emotional standpoint. We are concerned about the families that require child care so parents can work. We are also concerned about the health and safety of the staff, students



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Benton and Clara Moore worked on schoolwork from the trampoline in their backyard in Astoria during the spring.

and families in our district.

And, we are working to address all of those concerns in an ever-changing environment. Our community’s safety and the guidelines laid out by the Department of Education led to our decision.

What you should know:

- Over 50 members of our staff, when surveyed, stated they were considered at risk or live in the same household as someone who is at risk.

- Over 12% of parents, when surveyed, stated they were not going to send their kids back to school until they felt it was safe to do so. Over 33% of parents were unsure based on health

and safety if they were going to send their kids back to school.

- Remote learning is not our choice by preference. It is our choice because of the findings of our task force that determined that all students would have to participate in remote learning on some level because of the social distancing and cohort requirements outlined by the state and the lack of sufficient space within our school buildings and adequate staffing to achieve those requirements.

- Parent and staff feedback from the end of the last school year showed us that we need to make significant improvements to the remote learning

that was offered in the spring.

When we introduced remote learning in the spring, it was not the ideal situation. Teachers had to take their in-person lesson plans and translate them into remote plans with no time for planning, technology training or preparation.

We hope that by starting remotely and announcing it in advance of the school year, we can provide teachers and families adequate time to prepare, which they did not have this spring. This will help us to continue to promote the health and safety of our staff and students, as well as their families, amid this ongoing pandemic.

We want kids back in school buildings, as we know that this is the best model for learning for kids. We also know that we need to do it in a manner that puts the safety of our school community first.

What I ask from each of you is patience, flexibility and support.

We plan to reassess the situation in early October to determine if it is safe to start slowly phasing some students back to in-person instruction — and we will be continually evaluating and discussing with our families, staff and community throughout this process.

We will return to in-person instruction. But we must work together now to make that a reality through doing everything we can to keep ourselves and others healthy and to drive down transmission rates.

Join me in keeping our children and community safe.

Grace Laman is the chairwoman of the Astoria School District Board of Directors.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Where are you?

Where are you, Seaside City Councilor Seth Morrisey? Do you have any more thoughts or concerns since you last issued the statement below?

“One thing that needs to be made clear, none of these problems have been caused by COVID-19. These problems have been caused by government’s response to COVID-19 and I’m concerned that the cure has now become far worse than the disease.”

That was the last I heard from you on the topic of the global pandemic, that is in fact a real thing, with seven new cases recorded over the weekend. Do you still refer to wearing a face covering as “forced masking?”

Not a single solution was offered in your lengthy statement from about a month ago, and I don’t think you have offered anything since.

Do you have any creative ways that we could potentially add more outdoor seating to the various businesses that have been affected? Any ideas on ways that we, as a community, can help our local schools prepare for the school year and make sure the most vulnerable students and teachers are supported?

Any good ideas on how to make sure that government money is flowing to our local businesses? Any thoughts on job training to help put people to work, maybe as contact tracers?

Help our community please; you offered complaints and now it is time to lead.

ALEX CARNEY
Seaside

Polite inquiry

To my polite inquiry, an owner of a local small business told me he had a mask. It was right there laying on the check-out counter. I do not want to return even though I am a customer of 30-some years.

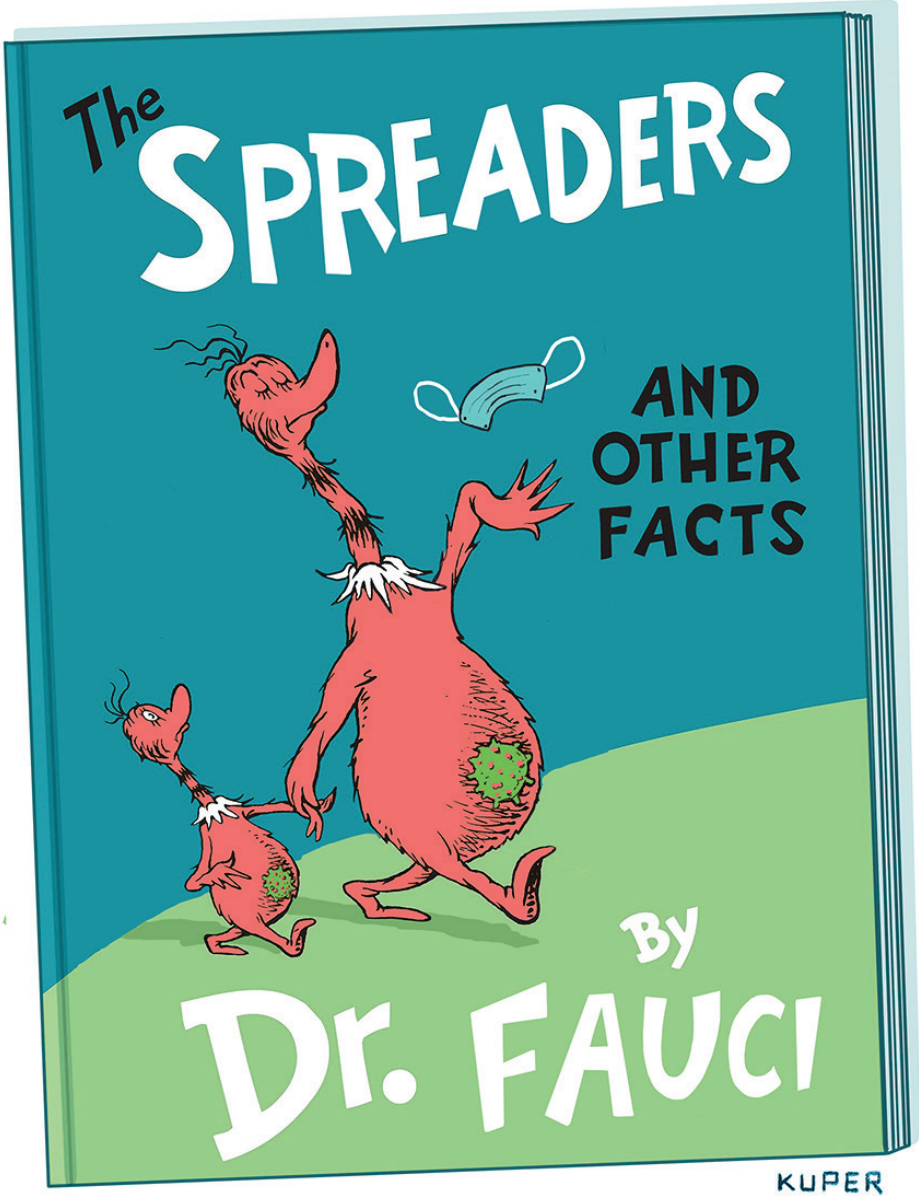
I have had similar experiences in three other small, local businesses, and I have barely been out shopping. Also, a mask down over just your mouth will not do. Dear store owners: This is not good customer service.

According to Oregon Health Authority guidance issued July 24:

“A business and a person responsible for indoor and outdoor spaces open to the public are required to:

- Require employees, contractors, volunteers, customers and visitors to wear a mask, face shield, or face covering, except as follows:

- Employees, contractors and volunteers: Masks, face coverings or face shields are not required when at or in a location where the employee, contractor or volunteer does not have a job that requires interacting with the public and at least six (6) feet of distance can be maintained between other people.
- Masks, face shields or face coverings are not required while eating or drinking.



- Customers and visitors: Masks, face shields or face coverings are not required when at a business or in an indoor or outdoor space open to the public and engaged in an activity that makes wearing a mask, face shield or face covering not feasible, such as when swimming.
- Provide masks, face shields, or face coverings for employees.”

CAROL LUCAS
Gearhart

Unwarranted

Regarding the letter to the editor from Jeff Bryant complaining about protesters, and that “terror and destruction is happening in Portland”:

As a person “who splits time between the Oregon Coast and Portland,” has he actually gone into downtown Portland? My wife and I went there last week in connection with a visit to the Oregon Health & Science University medical facilities. We visited ground zero, the federal courthouse, and saw nothing that warranted the federal military-style response.

We ate in a downtown restaurant. We parked within 10 blocks of the federal building. We visited the Keller Fountain Park, ironically, unveiled in 1970 in what The Oregonian described as the “edgy days following a violent clash between Portland police and anti-war protesters.” We chatted

with numerous kind souls, a mix of progressives, Democrats, Independents and Republicans.

Bryant complains that there is “graffiti sprayed everywhere.” I’ve seen more graffiti on the rolling stock of railroad in America than I saw in downtown Portland, and am not sure why Bryant is now more concerned about graffiti than how the federal government was usurping states’ rights and bludgeoning First Amendment rights.

On top of which, the feds were tear-gassing moms. Bryant would do well to consider other opinions — CNN, MSNBC, The Astorian — and add that to what he is apparently consuming solely from the right and Fox News.

It falls on the citizens of America to support First Amendment rights to peacefully assemble, to ensure a free press and to petition the government for redress of grievances.

TOM and SIV BARNUM
Astoria

Imagine that

I welcome the possibility that the Lewis and Clark Mainline right of way be utilized as a Warrenton big-box bypass. The residents of Melville are rightly upset about the threat to their idyllic rural life. For you history buffs and other newcomers, Melville was the name of the commu-

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand, and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters in poor taste will not be printed. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or 1555 North Roosevelt in Seaside, or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

nity near the former Crown Zellerbach dry sort.

I am baffled why GreenWood Resources hasn’t developed a toll road elsewhere on their land that bypasses Seaside entirely. Now that would pay for itself before the paint striping had dried. In happier times, there was a road sign which directed the disoriented uphill toward Melville, near the big church on the north end of Wahanna Road.

The fly in the ointment is, was and shall forever be at the Melville Interchange, where Lewis and Clark Road, Wahanna Road and U.S. Highway 101 collide. Big rigs such as lowboys and loaded log trucks can’t access southbound 101 there, and thus run south on Wahanna to get over the 12th Avenue bridge to 101.

In closing, hats off to Warrenton Fiber for their visionary land acquisitions. They acquired the forest on Airport Hill, and converted it to a cattle pasture, and lo, now the site of future housing development and future home of Warrenton schools. Now that’s what I call a working forest.

And more on point, we find they had wisely purchased the CZ dry sort the county is shopping for a new public works site. Imagine that.

GARY DURHEIM
Seaside

Just the base-icks

Why are President Donald Trump supporters so “comfortable” with his constant lying and corruption and vindictiveness?

Is it because they identify with him? Is it because that’s how they conduct their lives?

DONNA LEE ROLLINS
Astoria