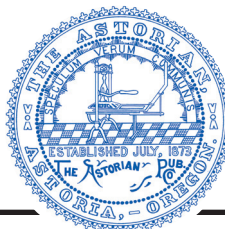


# OPINION

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# the Astorian

Founded in 1873

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Millions of Maris

Dear Mari,  
Watching your dance recital on Zoom the other night, I saw your joy as you performed the dances you'd been practicing for months.

You couldn't hear the applause of the other grandparents scattered around the country, and my impression is that you really didn't need to. The joy was coming from within you, along with the satisfaction of accomplishing something meaningful to yourself. You made standing on your toes while dancing in place look easy. As if.

I remember when you started ballet lessons 10 years ago. You loved being with the other students, wearing a leotard and ballet shoes and being in the mirrored dance studio.

You worked hard to learn the five basic ballet positions for the feet and then the eight positions for the body. And each year, it got easier and harder at the same time.

You mastered steps and positions that had been really difficult. Then it was on to the next level, with sequined costumes, partnering with other dancers and choreography to match the mood and tempo of the music.

You've shown me how much you want to learn ballet. You practice even when it isn't fun, when you're tired, when you can't figure out the steps. You go to lessons, now virtual, even when you'd rather play Minecraft with your brothers. You take the hours needed to prep a new pair of pointe shoes — what my generation called toe shoes. You know that if you don't do it right, you can't dance correctly, and even worse, you could injure yourself. I'm thrilled you've already learned

firsthand what many people discover only when they are much older: that the best, most important things in life offer choices and responsibility, with possibilities for joy and achievement. Because you care so much about dance, you're eager to give

it energy and attention so you can be your best and do your best — and make the dancing look easy.

It seems to me that ballet is like democracy. A dancer must master those essential basic positions for feet and the rest of the body. They are the foundation for doing everything else in ballet. If you can't do those basic positions, you can't do ballet.

Like ballet, democracy is stunningly magnificent when it goes well — when people make the choices and do the work that keep it thriving.

The first essential step is to be a voter. Every election, no exceptions.

Voting inspires more skills — like telling

elected representatives what you want, staying informed about the news, supporting issues and candidates you care about, writing letters to the editor, protesting, volunteering and even running for office.

Voting means you claim your stake in the outcome and you want your opinion heard. Voting means you know that your voice and your choice matter.

Dancers work with people they might not like but who share their passion for dance. They create a corps de ballet — dancers working together to create something beautiful, something that a dancer can't do alone.

That's the surprise of democracy, too. Millions of voters determine the character of a town or state or country. Sometimes the result is beautiful.



**MILLIONS OF VOTERS DETERMINE THE CHARACTER OF A TOWN OR STATE OR COUNTRY.**



Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

Laurie Caplan is the chairwoman of Indivisible North Coast Oregon.

Many of us thought democracy maintained itself. We were perilously wrong. We've learned that it's fragile and breakable, that it's easy to do it badly and that people get hurt when we are careless with it. In fact, democracy needs a whole lot of care from a whole lot of Americans to make it achieve what it's capable of doing.

We've seen what happens in America and other countries when people aren't allowed to speak freely, gather to protest, criticize the government, or vote.

We've grown complacent and allowed some elected leaders to skip the basics in our mistaken belief that democracy is inevitable and indestructible. Democracy lives only when most citizens commit to its survival.

If we want to have a democracy, we have to keep doing all the things required to keep it, starting with being an informed voter.

When we were together last year, you coached me as we practiced the five basic positions for the feet. I was rusty and not particularly graceful, but was thrilled that I remembered those positions from my childhood lessons.

It's that way with democracy, too. I love that I get to keep doing democracy, regardless of age or agility. I can still vote. I can still make my voice heard.

In just four years, you'll be old enough to be a voter. I'm glad you already pay attention to the news and follow issues that matter to you. I'm glad you think about what kind of community and country you want to live in. I look forward to watching you do democracy.

You were one dancer on the stage. Imagine millions of Maris giving American democracy the same energy and enthusiasm you gave to your dance recital.

Imagine every American voting. Imagine every American eagerly working to make democracy thrive. Oh my, what a magnificent sight that will be!

Love always,  
Grandma Laurie

Laurie Caplan, the chairwoman of Indivisible North Coast Oregon, lives in Astoria. This guest column is one of several being published by The Astorian in August to mark the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, which guaranteed women the right to vote.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Any good?

Our governor has recently increased the requirements for mask usage. I see lots of cute designer and serious-as-a-heart-attack surgeons' masks in use. We know from countless admonitions that this is "saving lives."

Now, are the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggestions and governor requirements doing any good?

Let's see how that works. Right now there is an increase of reported infections. There is a corresponding increase in the required use of masks. Using the CDC's methodology, one of two things is true: The masks cause the increase, or they are ineffective.

ROBERT LIDDYCOAT  
Seaside

### Delusion

Delusion is believing something that's false in spite of indisputable evidence to the contrary. President Donald Trump's incessant claim that we would have way fewer COVID-19 cases if we just didn't test so much is a perfect example, among many that he exhibits every day.

It's like saying you only have five fingers, if you just don't look at your other hand. Keep it in your pocket, maybe. Those cases — and fingers — exist, folks, whether or not we look at them.

And continuing to support him and his presidency is just as deluded. We're lucky to have survived it as well as we have, so far. Allowing it to continue is intolerable.

JOSEPH WEBB  
Astoria

### Please vote

Ann Richards, the former governor of Texas, once said, "It is not always good things happen when good people vote. But it is true that bad things happen when good people don't vote."

I wonder if the Founding Fathers thought of that when they set up the American experiment in democracy. I'll bet they did, since they came up with the concept of government by the people. One person — one vote.

If government is a reflection of what the majority of people want, and it's supposed to be, then all citizens voting is important to determine our government. Sounds good, but rarely happens.

Americans believe majority rules. Right? Considering the number of eligible voters who don't vote, or don't get to vote,



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## 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.

### Doing the right thing

As the COVID-19 pandemic continues in Clatsop County, the Public Health Department has actively partnered with employers to prevent and control the spread of the virus by implementing preventative best practices and working closely to address outbreaks.

It is through these private-public partnerships that we do our best work in responding to this unpredictable and highly contagious virus. We are committed to work in unison with our private sector partners to protect employees and the general public and simultaneously support the viability and operations of the businesses.

This private-public partnership has been particularly visible with local seafood processors. Our community has benefited by the collaborative and trans-

parent responses of Bornstein's and Da Yang. Both businesses supported the establishment of Public Health testing clinics for all employees and contact tracing for positive and presumptive cases.

The respective businesses worked diligently with Public Health every step of the way to ensure the health and safety of their employees and the broader community was the top priority.

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners and Public Health staff appreciate the quick and decisive steps these two seafood processors took to temporarily stop production, sanitize facilities, support employee testing, provide access to public health and safety information in a linguistically and culturally-appropriate manner and assist with contact tracing.

Clatsop County publicly recognizes Bornstein's and Da Yang for their commitment to public health and safety and willing cooperation with the Public Health Department. We sincerely hope we don't have any more outbreaks of COVID in these facilities; but, if we do, we know these two companies will do the right thing.

Thank you very much!

KATHLEEN SULLIVAN  
SARAH NEBEKER  
MARK KUJALA  
PAMELA WEV  
LIANNE THOMPSON  
Clatsop County Board of  
Commissioners  
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