

OUR VIEW

Keep our nonprofits in mind

Life in Clatsop County is enriched by a large number of nonprofit organizations. Their impacts range across a wide spectrum, including health and human welfare, the performing arts, history, historic preservation and youth athletics.

The coronavirus pandemic has been especially hard on nonprofits that rely on donor bases that have been diminished along with the economy. There is a misconception that a nonprofit doesn’t have to make a profit. Technically, that is true, but these organizations must have positive cash flows.

The Astorian’s Jan. 7 article about Jennifer Crockett’s decision to leave her position as executive director of the Liberty Theatre makes a point about survival during the pandemic.

As performing arts organizations became endangered, Crockett did two important things. She maintained the Liberty’s relevance by keeping the theater visible. And she engineered a new umbrella organization for assisting all county arts organizations.

“I feel strongly that I’ve gotten the theater to a place where it can be handed off,” Crockett said of her departure. “We’ve built community partnerships and we’ve made people really like the theater



The renovated concession stand at the Liberty Theatre.

Hailey Hoffman/The Astorian

again and I think the next person can take it to a higher level.”

Even the larger nonprofit organizations, such as the Columbia River Maritime Museum, have felt the decline in visitor attendance. Ditto for the Clatsop County Historical Society, the custodian of the Flavel House Museum and the very popular Oregon Film Museum.

In the middle of a crisis, it can be difficult to talk about the role of culture and the arts in our lives.

When business owners are struggling to stay open and people

have lost their jobs, the immediate priorities are ensuring that the most vulnerable among us do not lose their access to food, shelter, health care and social services.

But studies have shown that the arts have a multimillion-dollar annual economic impact to our county. Our region’s transformation over the past few decades into a popular visitor destination was influenced by a cultural rebirth.

The arts play a valuable part in preserving our mental health. Our theaters, museums and history centers are sources of civic pride.

Imagine what the North Coast would be without them.

Last spring, Congress wisely set aside \$75 million in the first coronavirus relief package for the National Endowment for the Arts. The \$900 billion stimulus package approved in December included \$15 billion to help sustain independent performance venues via the Save Our Stages Act. Dayna Frank, the owner of First Avenue, a Minneapolis club that played host to Prince and The Replacements, helped lead the grassroots drive for the federal money.

“We had everyone from Pit-bull to Lady Gaga to Dayna to the owner of the Fargo Theatre pitching in on this,” U.S. Sen. Amy Klobuchar, a Minnesota Democrat who co-authored the act with U.S. Sen. John Cornyn, a Texas Republican, told the Star Tribune. “It had to be a grassroots effort. There wasn’t enough time to have it be more formalized.”

We believe the federal and state governments should keep culture and the arts in mind in any future virus relief.

Just as we must support local, home-owned retail enterprises, our local nonprofits desperately need our financial assistance during this challenging period.

Consider them in the year ahead.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Ho-hum response

When I saw the landslide on U.S. Highway 30, I wondered about the impacts of the apparent clearcut on the hillside high above. I wondered whether the owner of the land might be liable for the expense of clearing up the landslide, assuming it was privately owned.

Now I read it was our state forest, and that those decisions were made by employees of the Oregon Department of Transportation and the Oregon Department of Forestry. I’m not one of those people who disrespects public employees, I had a career myself as one. But these guys have let themselves be brainwashed by the cultures of their respective agencies.

They consulted with a geotechnical specialist who told them that the slope above the highway should be a “leave area” with “trees left standing to keep the soil stable.” The newspaper article (The Astorian, Jan. 19) includes several soft shoe shuffles between agency staff enforcing their need to protect the roadway from falling trees.

But it sounds as though these employees decided among themselves to disregard that expert advice, and are now rationalizing their actions. I don’t know what it will take for forestry officials to use what they know about intact forest systems, and stop seeing the trees as “timber” and the understory as something to be eliminated.

But maybe they could start by admitting that they made a mistake. Rain happens here, and plants stabilize the soil.

JAN MITCHELL
Astoria

Landslides happen

Landslides happen. Got it. Foresters and road engineers agree on that, but the forest “industry” continues to deny that clear-cutting rain forests, and preempting downed trees by cutting them on slopes, obviously dramatically increases landslide risk and destruction of remaining anchors on hills, even though the evidence is right in our faces, every time.

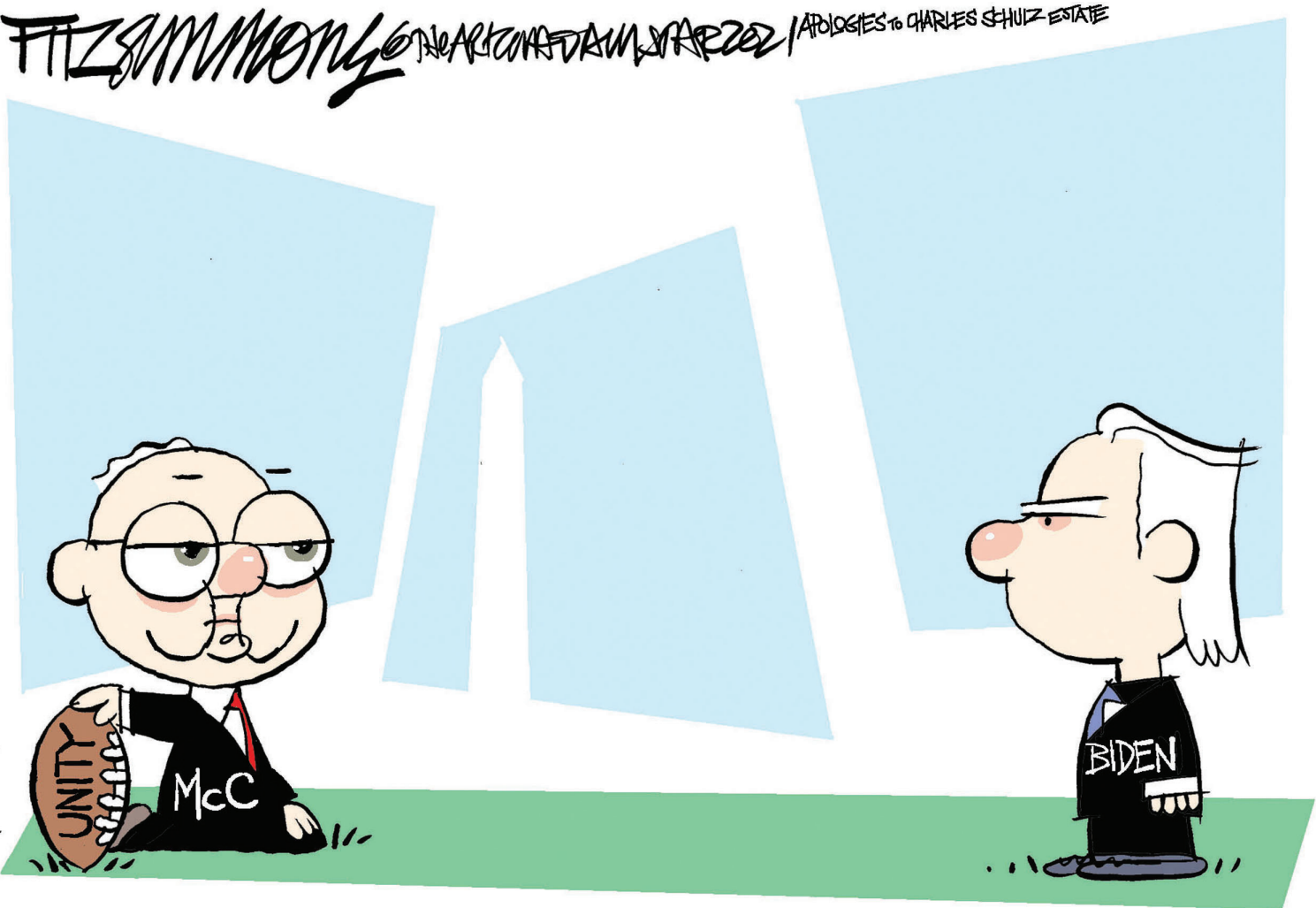
But that’s how capitalism (the U.S. system of government) works. The professionals say something enough times, do their “due diligence,” and people believe it, or just stop listening, even though somewhere in their heads they know it’s all a lie. The science is obvious. But you need to follow the money.

SUE SKINNER
Astoria

America or bust

I have tried to let it go, and be quiet about this, but it hurts too much.

Many of the local “Trumpies” know who I am, and what I have been disabled trying to stand for. All who traveled to the U.S.



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 should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

document has just occurred when the portion regarding state legislature control of elections for the presidency was resisted by the eventual winning faction. I’m sure many books will be written about Election 2020.

In 1988, a good question for my students would have been: “In what way can the Constitution most adversely be subverted?” If some inspired student answered something like, “If you used a pandemic to sidestep the Constitution’s obvious boundaries, you could rig an election,” I would have given the student A+.

MATT JANES
Jeffers Gardens

Unpleasant

I’m sure that more than a few readers of The Astorian are disappointed and frustrated by your refusal to allow personal comments on your website.

For many years, this has been a source for commentary and opinion from readers of all political and social points of view. It’s just another effort by the editors of The Astorian to make this publication as unpleasant as possible.

The abundance of advertising and pop-ups is incredibly annoying. Please place the value of your readership at, or above, the same level of your advertisers.

ROBERT POTTER
Astoria

Capitol on Jan. 6 are accomplices in the deaths of at least five people.

All of you white privileged/spoiled people committed treason against the U.S. All of these people should at least be stripped of their citizenship for their actions against the Constitution that thousands of Americans have died protecting.

I know most of our grandparents rolled over in their graves with disgust. We have sacrificed nothing compared to what they overcame to give us the land of the free.

TROY HASKELL
Astoria

Assault

In the fall of 1988, I was finishing up my teacher certification in social studies as a

student teacher of two classes of world cultures, and two classes of political studies, at Sam Barlow High School.

I spent 10 weeks of intensive study over these subjects, to instruct juniors and seniors about subjects necessary to get them into college. In retrospect, I find that I’ve since forgotten more about these subjects than the average American knows.

Over the decades, I have definitely kept up on events occurring outside the nation, but I have mostly followed the goings on in the political world. I guess it was because I spent nearly three months dissecting the Constitution of the U.S., to the point I was able to instruct students at the high school level. It’s actually simple; the original U.S. Constitution has only 4,400 words. It’s not that hard to figure out.

Obviously, the greatest assault on this