

OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

DERRICK DePLEDGE
Editor

SHANNON ARLINT
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

Blessed are the peacemakers

In crafting his plan for the removal of the dams on the lower Snake River, U.S. Rep. Mike Simpson, R-Idaho, has managed to forge consensus between farm, shipping and environmental interests on his idea. They all hate it.

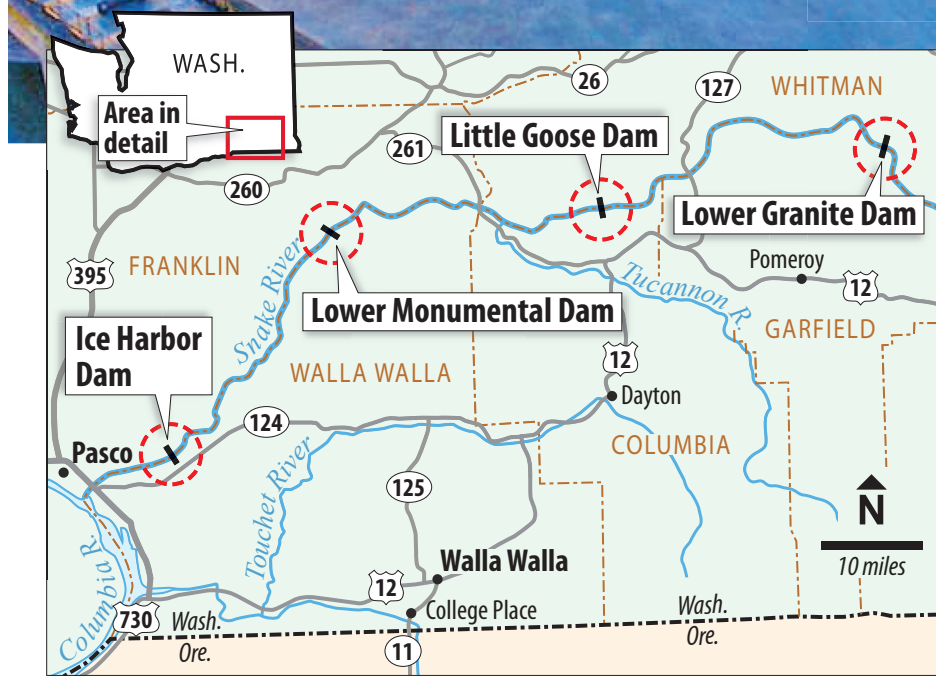
Blessed are the peacemakers. They may be children of God, but often find surprisingly little support at home.

Simpson did not propose actual legislation, but in February released a \$33.5 billion concept for salmon recovery, which includes removing the Lower Granite, Little Goose, Lower Monumental and Ice Harbor dams in 2030 and 2031.

It is a bold plan, a potential grand compromise that seeks to address the competing needs of those who want the dams removed and those who depend on the status quo for their livelihoods, electrical energy, transportation and irrigation.

In short, Simpson's plan would:

- Require that the electrical power generated by the dams be replaced, and that the new infrastructure would be operational before the dams are breached.
- Provide money for river restoration, the development of transportation infrastructure to replace barge traffic, economic development for communities impacted by the breaching, watershed projects and irrigation infrastructure.
- Require that all other dams in the Columbia Basin that generate more than 5 megawatts of electricity be granted an automatic 35-year license extension.
- Prohibit for 35 years any litigation related to anadromous fish within the Columbia River system under the Endangered Species Act, National Environmental Policy Act or the Clean Water Act, and stay any ongoing litigation.



U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
The Ice Harbor Dam on the lower Snake River holds back Lake Sacajawea, the source of irrigation water for 47,000 acres of farmland.

A group of 17 environmental organizations says Simpson's plan would speed up salmon extinction and harm human health, calling it "untenable."

In releasing the plan, Simpson said he didn't draft legislation because an ambitious concept such as he proposed needs to involve all the stakeholders and the states impacted.

We don't think the plan as proposed ever had a chance, but Simpson should be given credit for starting a conversation. Does anyone want to talk? Are his ideas a starting point that might develop into a more acceptable set of trade-offs?

We know what everyone doesn't want and what they won't accept, but what do they want and what will they accept?

As we said, an ambitious compromise, but one that none of the major stakeholders will accept.

Despite promises that their concerns will be addressed, farmers and ranchers worry about whether they will get the water they need, or will be able to ship product. Electric utilities worry they won't have a reliable source of power and barge interests worry about their jobs disappearing.

Environmental interests love the idea of breaching the dams, but leaving the others unchallenged for 35 years is crazy talk. And filing lawsuits is their raison d'etre. Outlawing salmon-related lawsuits beyond the middle of the century would allow for all kinds of political chicanery, particularly the next time an anti-environment president is maneuvered into the White House.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vaccine success

My wife and I recently received our second Moderna vaccine, which has given us great relief and really marks an important event in our lives and lifetime. We are grateful for all the hard work at the federal, state and county levels that made this possible.

Recent news heralded a record in daily vaccines, having reached a 4 million total in a single day, which is truly remarkable, considering the complexity involved in producing vaccines, organizing clinics and enrolling people for receiving their shots. Kudos to all who are helping to make this happen.

Nearly all of the population in the U.S. has been vaccinated against many different diseases over our lifetimes. Polio, diphtheria, measles, mumps, tetanus, smallpox and tuberculosis are some that come to mind that have helped us stay alive and healthy.

I urge everyone to get behind the COVID-19 vaccine program and get the shot in the arm that will protect everyone from this nasty virus that has killed more than half a million people in our country.

Please join in the battle to defeat this common enemy that is attacking people all over the world. The vaccines are safe and effective in protecting us from getting seriously ill or dying. Let's work together to rid ourselves of the virus and get us back to a world without masks and social distancing. Can't wait to hug my grandkids!

NED HEAVENRICH
Brownsmead

Friendly and efficient

We got our first vaccines at the Clatsop County Fairgrounds on April 1. The site was very well arranged, with everything running smoothly and quickly.

Our thanks to everyone who made this possible, especially the many volunteers. Everyone we dealt with was very friendly and efficient.

MICHAEL TARACHOW
MERCIE DOSTALE
Hammond

Voter suppression

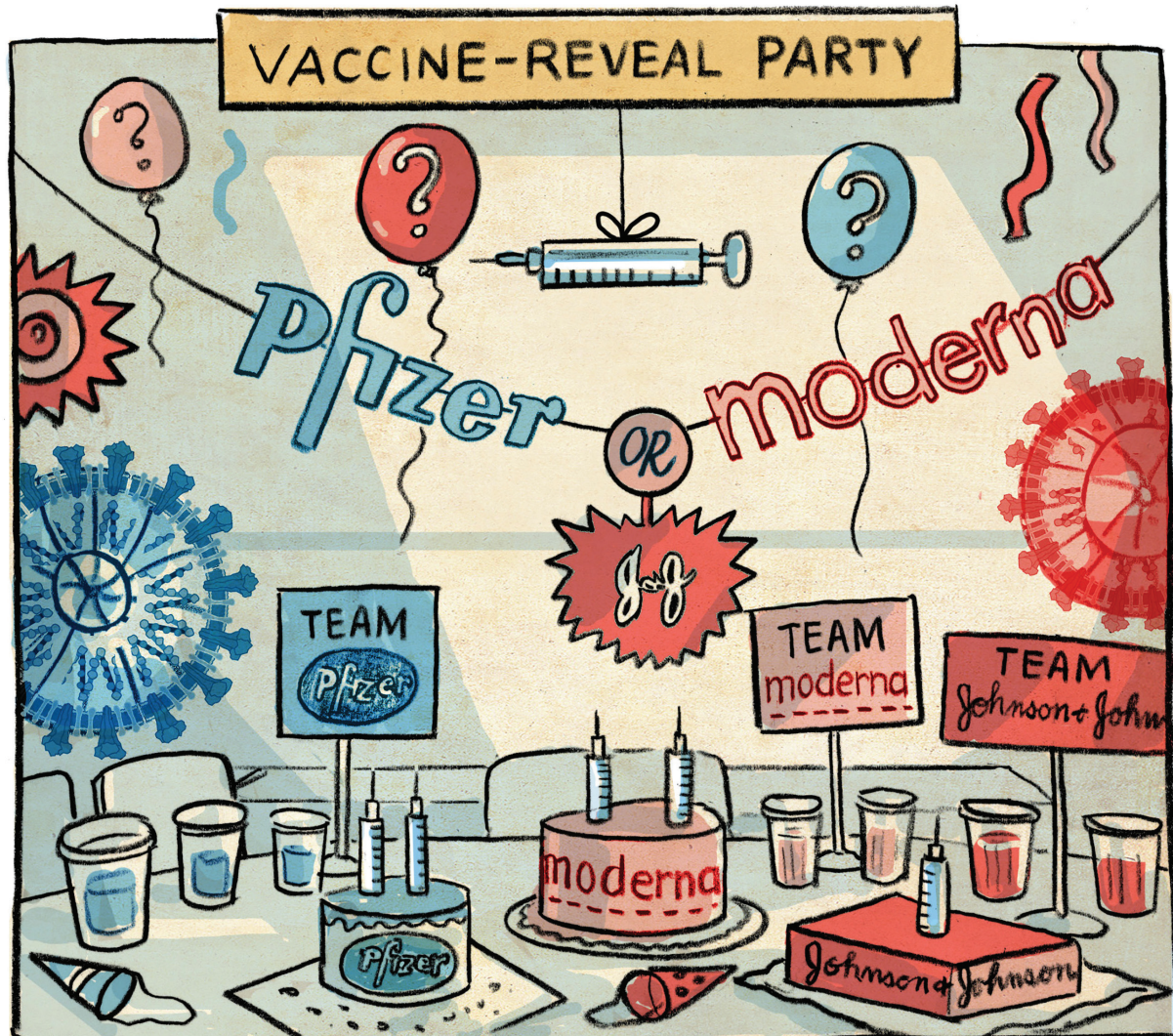
I'm just an old man, but I see that our president of these United States called the Georgia voting bill "sick" and "Jim Crow on steroids."

Let me be as kind as I can here: He lied. His own home state has harsher laws. Still, and once again, media and corporations blindly jumped to obey. Did they actually read the law? Unlikely.

The real reason he brought the weight of the executive branch down on Georgia is political power. The Georgia law requires voter ID. Not allowing illegals to vote is against Biden's law. For contrast, try getting on a plane without enhanced ID.

If the words coming out of our president's mouth were the truth, I suspect it would be something like: "Come one, come all. Vote early, vote often, vote for me. I will give you things. I will punish those who would follow the racist ID voting laws."

ROBERT LIDDYCOAT
Seaside



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.