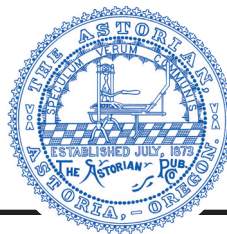


OPINION



the Astorian

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Honoring our Vietnam veterans

The 2021 session started with the hope that the state Legislature would honor our Vietnam veterans by passing a bill to establish a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol grounds.

State Senate Bill 319 was introduced by the Senate Committee on Veterans and Emergency Preparedness. This bill dedicates a portion of Capitol State Park to a Vietnam War Memorial to be funded and constructed by a qualified nonprofit corporation.



STEVE BATES

SB 319, in its last paragraph, declares an emergency. Its preamble states over 180,000 Oregonians served during the Vietnam War, of which about 100,000 are alive today. The average age of these veterans is 70 and older. Oregon is losing up to eight Vietnam Veterans per day. This is based upon data from the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs.

SB 319 states, "It is imperative to memorialize the service and sacrifice of all who served during the tumultuous decades of the Vietnam War." This should be done before our Vietnam veterans are gone.

The Senate passed SB 319 with a 29-0 vote in March. On Tuesday, the House of Representatives passed the bill with a 58-0 vote. It now awaits the governor's signature.

In 2017, the Vietnam War Memorial Fund was founded as a 501 (c)(3) nonprofit corporation, with the sole mission of funding and constructing a Vietnam War Memorial on the Oregon State Capitol grounds. For a year and a half, its steering committee met regularly and developed a design for the proposed memorial. The design was adopted in July 2019.

During 2020, the design was reviewed and approved by the Oregon Capitol Planning Commission and the Salem Historic Landmarks Commission. The design was also approved by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission in February. Subsequently, the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department and the Vietnam



A rendering of a proposed Vietnam War Memorial in Salem.

AS WE APPROACH THE FOURTH OF JULY HOLIDAY, REMEMBER TO HONOR ALL OF OUR VETERANS. FREEDOM IS NOT FREE! IN PARTICULAR, YOU CAN HONOR OUR VIETNAM VETERANS WITH A CONTRIBUTION TO THE VIETNAM WAR MEMORIAL PROJECT.

War Memorial Fund have entered into a memorandum of understanding that outlines each entity's responsibilities going forward.

The approved design includes interpretive panels which will detail historic events and facts of the Vietnam War. This information will be developed later in the

process by the steering committee. The steering committee will consist of veterans, local and national historians, interpreters, local and state public officials and people representing Oregon's Vietnamese and Southeast Asian communities.

This project has met all local and state requirements, with over a dozen public

hearings or forums. As a result, the Legislature voted to honor our Vietnam veterans by passing SB 319 and setting aside space for a Vietnam War Memorial on the Capitol grounds.

With the governor's signature, the major permissions will be in place to construct a memorial. While there are state and local requirements to be met, the greatest challenge remaining is raising the \$3 million needed to complete the project.

As we approach the Fourth of July holiday, remember to honor all of our veterans. Freedom is not free! In particular, you can honor our Vietnam veterans with a contribution to the Vietnam War Memorial project.

Steve Bates, who lives in Boring, is a life member of the Associates of Vietnam Veterans of America.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't do it

I am writing this letter in response to the recent article in The Astorian (June 19) regarding allowing electric scooters in Astoria.

Having lived and worked in two cities that allow scooters, all I can say is: Don't do it. If you do, you can expect scooters on sidewalks, running stop signs and ignoring traffic laws. You will have head injuries and broken arms and legs.

People walking along the Astoria Riverwalk will feel like they are under attack when they walk along the river. Scooters will be left on sidewalks, streets and doorways. As for tourists using them, they would be better served just walking around Astoria and enjoying its charms.

Some cities that have allowed scooters halted their programs to reevaluate their use. Again, it's a really dumb idea.

TERRY GRAFF
Gearhart

Bad idea

Regarding the Astoria City Council's reconsideration of electric scooter rentals in the downtown area:

Why would any sane community want these children's vehicles buzzing around our overcrowded streets? And where will they park their mini-Harleys? In the already diminishing vehicle spaces?

This is a bad idea. Simply put, it's a lobbying effort by a struggling startup firm to dupe a well-known tourist destination in order to make a quick buck for no benefit to our city. Please deny this contract.

ROBERT POTTER
Astoria

Losing side of history

Over the past few years, I've noticed that Clatsop County has decided to look more inward, and be less inclusive regarding the LGBTQ community.

When I read about the Knappa Parents Organization expressing their concerns about an LGBTQ curriculum in their schools, and wanting their children to be "treated as individuals," I have to laugh.

What Knappa Parents Organization would prefer is for LGBTQ people to remain in the closet by denying teachers to teach history, sex education and gen-



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

der issues pertaining to LGBTQ people and their communities. It's not shocking to me that such an organization would decide to tackle this issue during Pride Month.

I would also assume that such an organization probably rails about "cancel culture" every chance they get. Funny, they're actively participating in cancel culture by

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.

denying that their children, and everyone else's children, be taught sex education that may actually pertain to their lives.

I have news for these parents: You're on the losing side of history.

The existence of trans, gay, lesbian, bisexual and gender nonconforming people is a threat to their worldview, therefore, the

only way to stop an honest discussion about LGBTQ people and gender issues is to ban any type of curriculum of such a topic in our schools, which is why an opt out for their kids simply isn't acceptable to them regarding evidence-based sex education.

Sounds a lot like "cancel culture for thee, but not for me."

RICKY BENNETT
Astoria

Bad enough

It's bad enough cruise ships will be once again dumping tourists into town, vaccinated or not, but must we provide them with electric scooters to further aggravate our traffic problems?

I'm surprised such a stupid idea is being seriously considered.

OK, I'm not surprised.

JOHN F. CROWLEY
Astoria