

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# No time to slow down on salmon recovery

The Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission lost an irreplaceable leader in August when our chairperson, Lorraine Loomis, walked on.

Lorraine's contributions to protecting treaty rights can't be overstated. Before she was elected chairperson, she served as a commissioner for more than 40 years, many of those sitting beside Billy Frank Jr. as vice chair.

When Billy passed in 2014, Lorraine carried on the work. And when COVID-19 closed down our offices, that didn't slow her down. She moved her computer into her sewing room, and when you didn't think she could put in any more hours, she did just that.

She also served as vice chair of the Fraser River Panel of the Pacific Salmon Commission, vice chair of the board of directors for the Skagit River System Cooperative and co-chair of the Billy Frank Jr. Salmon Coalition.

It's hard to imagine how we are going to fill her shoes, but I truly believe that Lorraine wouldn't want us to miss a step. We must continue fighting for our treaty-protected resources.

That means keeping focused on our priorities, including:

- **Billy Frank Jr. Salmon Coalition.** After the inaugural Billy Frank Jr. Pacific Salmon Summit in March 2018, we formed the coalition to restore cooperation among tribal, federal, state and local policy leaders, sport and commercial fishermen, conservation groups, scientists, business owners and others involved in recovering our natural resources. The coalition is committed to restoring and protecting salmon habitat, enhancing salmon hatchery production and better managing seal and sea lion populations.

- **Habitat recovery in fisheries management planning.** Lorraine recognized that we can't manage fisheries in isolation. We must also consider habitat recovery at the same time. An important part of her legacy is that she and Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife director Kelly Susewind created a co-managers' habitat work plan for the North of Falcon process. Wherever salmon fisheries are constrained by weak stocks, we must improve the habitat. We began this work in 2020,



Lorraine Loomis with Billy Frank Jr. at his 83rd birthday party in 2014.

Debbie Preston

with a pilot project in the Stillaguamish watershed.

- **Protecting and restoring riparian habitat.** Last year, we released a short video explaining why we need to protect and restore riparian habitat for salmon. Streamside trees and vegetation provide shade, filter harmful runoff and slow erosion. Our need for quality riparian habitat is increasing as climate change leads to higher water temperatures and lower flows every year. At the 2019 Centennial Accord meeting, Gov. Jay Inslee connected his concerns about climate change to salmon habitat recovery and directed state agencies to develop a uniform, science-based management approach. We created a joint tribal-state riparian habitat initiative to achieve that goal.

- **Defining net ecological gain.** We know that urban development leads to environmental problems such as air and water pollution and habitat loss. But our land use regulations allow developers to build now and attempt to fix hab-

itat later, with no acknowledgement of cumulative effects. This makes it impossible to achieve a net gain of habitat, which is what we need to recover declining salmon runs. Recently, state legislators funded a study that aims to define net ecological gain, which is a necessary first step to fix our broken ecosystem.

- **Understanding marine survival.** Tribes have collaborated with Long Live the Kings on the Salish Sea Marine Survival Project to learn more about what happens to juvenile salmon after they migrate to sea. Last summer, the project reported that two of the main reasons for poor salmon survival are that there are too many predators and not enough prey. Tribal natural resources departments are continuing important research about marine survival, while also working to restore estuary habitat and protect water quality.

- **Impacts of recreation on treaty resources.** We have watched with alarm

as increased recreational activities on public lands have degraded our treaty-protected resources. We saw this escalate during the coronavirus pandemic when tribal fishermen were displaced by sport fishermen and recreational boaters, beaches and forests were littered with human waste and drug paraphernalia and the biodiversity of trails and forests was threatened by human overuse. Tribes are working with state and federal agencies to ensure that meaningful government-to-government engagement involves tribes in recreation policy, planning, funding, assessment and project implementation.

Now is not the time to slow down. The best way we can honor both Billy and Lorraine is to stay the course, because we have more work to do to recover salmon and protect our treaty rights.

Shawn Yanity is the vice chairman of the Northwest Indian Fisheries Commission and chairman of the Stillaguamish Tribe.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### I wonder

In his letter "Convince people," (The Astorian, Sept. 9) Robert Liddycoat demands proof that measures to combat the pandemic have had "any effect" on the COVID-19 infection rates and he goes on to claim there is "no statistical evidence" that it has.

Actually, there is plenty of authoritative, peer-reviewed scientific evidence and it's ridiculously easy to find from reputable sources. He simply has decided not to look because it doesn't fit his narrative.

All that aside, mandates are not forcing anyone to get vaccinated or mask up. It's just the government addressing a public safety need because some people are so lacking in respect and compassion for others that they are unwilling to comply with even the simplest of preventative measures to stop this deadly pandemic.

Mandates are simply serving notice that you cannot force others to serve you at their peril. Freedom does not grant you that choice.

If you don't like it, you are perfectly free to stay home. Have food delivered. Watch TV. Stream movies. Start a work-from-home business. Home-school the kids. Don't want to vaccinate? Fine! Stay home! The rest of us will be safe from you and the economy can get moving again.

I wonder, does Liddycoat accept any government rules such as speed limits, traffic signals, zoning laws, firing a weapon in city limits, etc. Or, does he view all these how he views vaccine and mask mandates, as fascist impositions on his right to either carelessly or willfully endanger others?

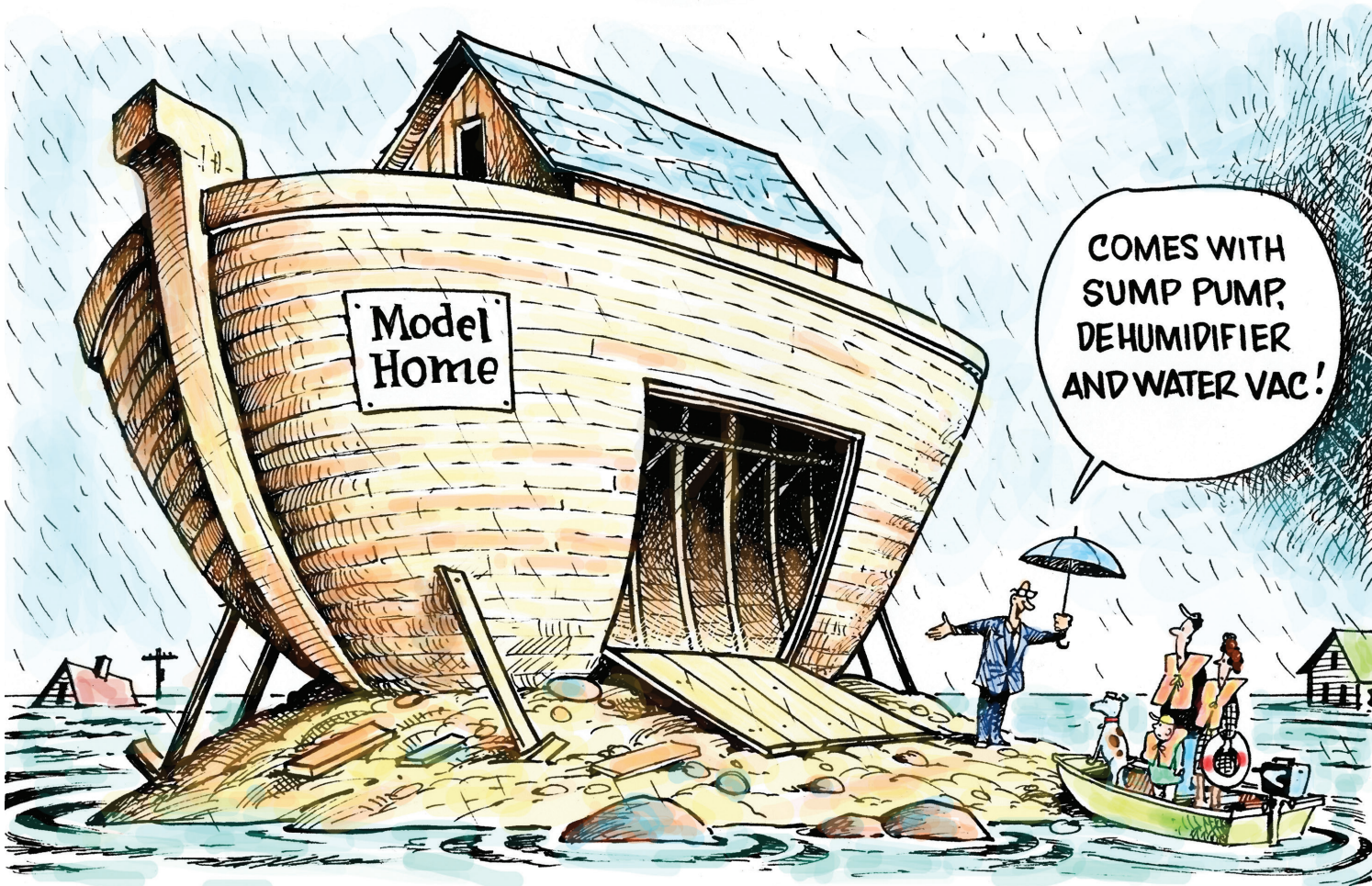
BILL GRAFFIUS  
Gearhart

### Take care of your neighbors

The Christian poet and cleric John Donne wrote an often-quoted poem in which he reminds us that "no man (or woman) is an island entire of itself." Rather, we are a part of a community.

It follows that needlessly to cause another's suffering or death is wrong. Spe-

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cifically, now, to refuse to wear a mask or to be vaccinated is wrong.

Religion has taught for a long time that the goal is not the exercise of individual freedom, but compliance with a command as set forth in both the Old and the New Testament: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

Please, take care of your neighbors.

ROBERT and KERSTIN ADAMS  
Astoria

### Careful what you wish for

For those workers hoping not to have to pay union dues, be careful what you

wish for. And beware of those who support you in that hope ("The injustice of forced union dues," The Astorian, Sept. 7).

The National Right to Work Committee has been on an anti-union crusade since its inception. And since its beginning and on into today, it has been well funded by the Koch brothers, a family dedicated to removing any and all obstacles to unfettered business profits. Such obstacles include healthy unions and state laws protecting worker rights to unionize.

The author of the guest column, Mark Mix, is president of the National Right to Work Committee. As such, he failed to mention that the National Institute for Labor Relations Research, which provided

such a negative labor analysis, is a "subordinate" arm of his own organization.

For more than a hundred years, labor unions have fought for workers' rights. Through the strength of organized union workers and legislative lobbying, union workers can take for granted such benefits as the 40-hour work week, minimum wage baselines, paid holidays, union representation in worker-management disputes and so on.

Going against the financial power of business takes money. And that money comes from dues. So, please, keep those dues coming.

JULIE SNYDER  
Astoria