

# 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

## GUEST COLUMN

# Child abuse and neglect is preventable

**W**ith children across Oregon in school full time for the first time in more than 18 months, they are spending significant portions of their days with teachers and other education professionals.

Educators, who are mandatory reporters of child abuse and neglect, have a unique opportunity to get to know the children and families they see daily. They are there to share and experience a child's victories, strengths and challenges as they learn, grow and interact with friends at school.



**REBECCA JONES GASTON**

As mandatory reporters, when educators have a reason to believe a child is experiencing abuse or neglect, they

are required by law to report that concern to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline by calling 1-855-503-SAFE (7233).

But what should an educator, or other caring adult, do when they see a child and family who is in need or crisis, but do not believe that a child is being abused or neglected?

Our data tells us that many people turn to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline when they want to help but are not sure how.

This year, approximately 53,000 — nearly half — of the calls to the hotline were not reports of suspected abuse or neglect. These are calls from educators and other members of our community who recognize that a child and their family might need assistance because they are struggling with hunger, housing instability, job loss, mental or physical health issues or other stressful situations.

Often these calls come to us because the callers are not sure where to turn for support.

There are many different resources and supports available in our communities to help children and families meet their needs. Sometimes, the best way to support child and family well-being and safety is to help them get plugged-in to the resources they need:

### Local supports in your community:

- Dial 211, or text your zip code to 898-211 to get connected to local food,



Salem Reporter

### The state has resources to help prevent child abuse and neglect.

housing, child care and other supports.

- Clatsop Community Action: 503-325-1400
- Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare: 503-325-5722

### Mental and behavioral health supports:

- Youthline: Call 1-877-968-8491, text teen2teen to 839863, chat at www.oregonyouthline.org
- LinesForLife.org/get-help-now/
- Lines for Life Suicide Lifeline: Call 1-800-273-8255 (24/7) or text 273TALK to 839863 (Monday through Friday, 2 to 6 p.m.)
- Oregon Behavioral Health Support Line: Call 1-800-923-4357 (24/7)
- Military Helpline: Call 1-888-457-4838 (24/7) or text MIL1 to 839863 (Monday through Friday, 2 to 6 p.m.)

Resources to help educators provide mental health and social support for children and families are available at [https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Mental\\_Health\\_Students\\_Families.aspx](https://www.oregon.gov/ode/educator-resources/standards/Pages/Mental_Health_Students_Families.aspx).

### Food support:

- Find a food local pantry by visiting [foodfinder.oregonfoodbank.org](http://foodfinder.oregonfoodbank.org).

### Government programs and support:

- Learn about government programs and community resources for older adults and people with disabilities by contacting the Aging and Disability Resource Connection of Oregon at 1-855-673-2372 or [www.adrcforegon.org](http://www.adrcforegon.org).
- Apply for government food, cash, child care assistance and the Oregon

Health Plan online at [ONE.Oregon.gov](http://ONE.Oregon.gov) or by calling 1-800-699-9075.

Of course, when an educator or other caring adult suspects a child is experiencing abuse or neglect that person should, and may be required by law, to report that concern to the Oregon Child Abuse Hotline.

We all want children and families in Oregon to be healthy, safe and happy. Child abuse and neglect is preventable when communities come together to support children and families, and there are many organizations, nonprofits and people who can help support families and prevent a family's crisis from becoming a child's safety issue.

*Rebecca Jones Gaston is the director of the child welfare division of the Oregon Department of Human Services.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### On-call system for vets

**I**sn't there a way that the veterinarians' offices in this county could establish an on-call system for after-hours and on weekends? Surely there are enough veterinarians available to take turns, so that there would be some type of emergency care available when needed.

We lost our 9-year-old Newfoundland-Bernese mix in September to bloat. The symptoms started late at night. We called our vet's office, got the number to call at Medix, but no vets were on call that night. After making many phone calls, we made the difficult decision to attempt the trip to DoveLewis clinic in Portland. She died 5 minutes from the clinic.

She did have other medical issues, and she may not have made it through surgery, and it was probably best that she did not have to go through the surgery, but what if it was a younger, healthy dog? Or, if a dog got hit by a car, or some other emergency?

Don't we have enough people in this county, let alone the many visitors that come here with their pets, to justify having a vet on call?

I hope the veterinarians' offices will address this important issue.

TERRI LEHMAN  
Astoria

### Protective protocols

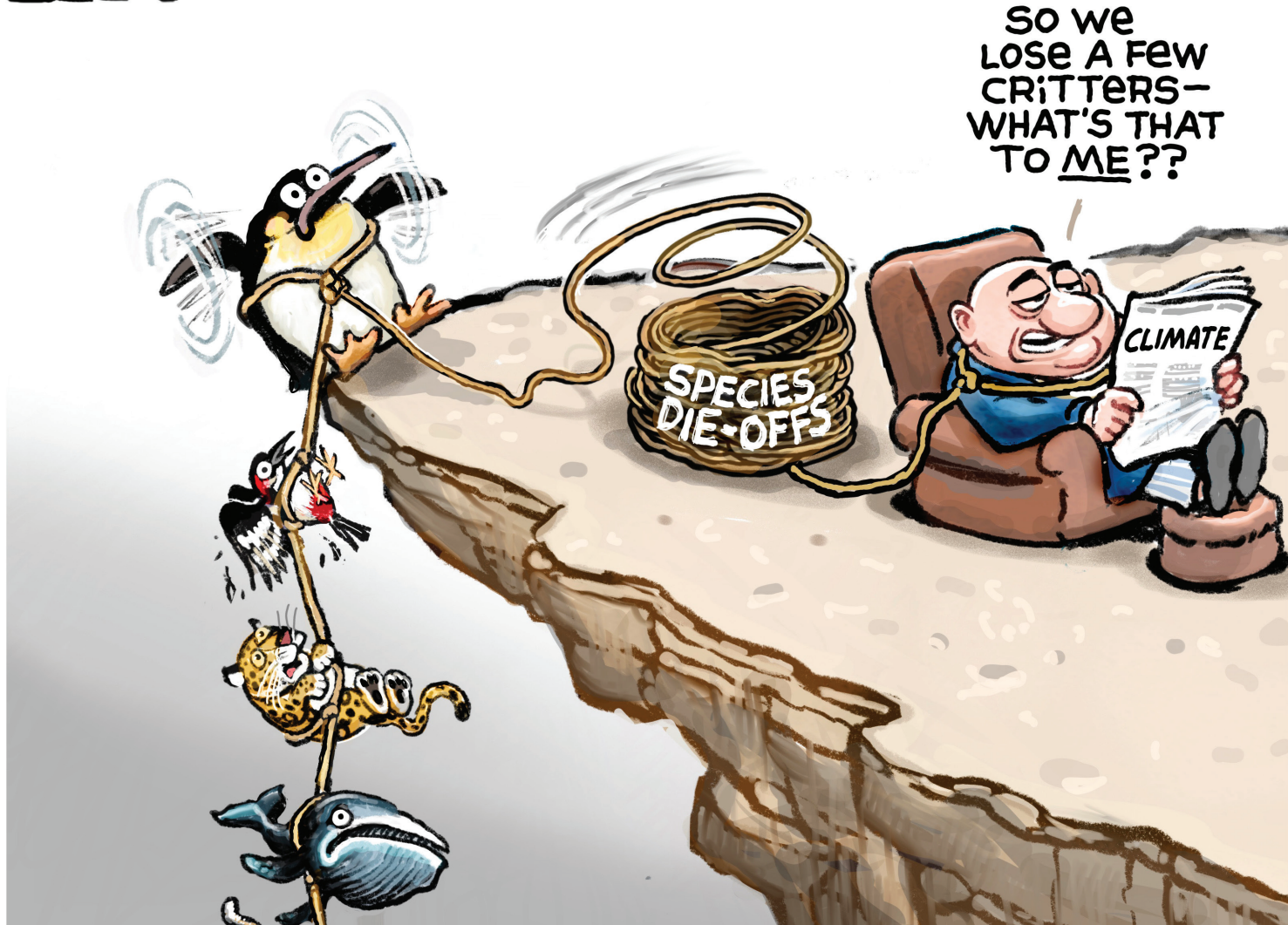
**T**o the people of Warrenton: When I learned about the vaccination issue arising with our firefighters, I went to the fire station to discuss this problem with our chief, Brian Alsbury.

I expressed my concerns about the possibility of one of our responding personnel to be the source of COVID-19 contact on a medical response call. Chief Alsbury presented me with a side of this issue that I had not thought of before.

Before entering any medical call, the responders outfit with N95 masks, goggles, a protective gown or suit and protective gloves, the reason being that the responder has no idea of what possible diseases the person they are trying to help may have. This side of things had not occurred to me.

On returning to our fire station, a process is performed to thoroughly sanitize the vehicle, and any and all equipment that

STAR TRIBUNE  
S&K



## 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](mailto:editor@dailyastorian.com), online at [bit.ly/astorianletters](http://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.

may have been, or was, used on that call. Also, any and all surfaces of possible contact are wiped down with sanitizing wipes. This set of protective protocols for our

responders' protection also works very well to protect the person who has called for help. Chief Alsbury assures me that department protective protocols makes it

nearly impossible for a responder to transmit any disease the responder might have.

In the Warrenton Fire Department, I see a well-trained group of volunteers doing things the right way.

RICK NEWTON  
Warrenton City Commission

### One side

**I** have been subscribing to The Astorian newspaper for over 40 years. As of this date, I am canceling my subscription.

I am appalled with the narrow views of The Astorian and the one-sided reporting of the stories surrounding the pandemic. The letters to the editor are also only reflecting one side of the COVID issue.

PAMELA TILLSON  
Astoria