

# OPINION



# the Astorian

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## GUEST COLUMN

# Fire and melting ice

**F**ire and ice. It was as stunning as it was tragic. In Colorado, raging grass fires one week, followed by a blanket of snow. Over a thousand homes lost. A terrible tragedy, but so strange, too. In December, fire one day, ice the next.

Hardly a week goes by when we don't see at least one alarming headline about our unstable climate. The past seven years have been the seven hottest years on record. The hottest ocean temperatures ever recorded occurred last year.

There was the unprecedented deadly heat wave we suffered in the Pacific Northwest last summer, and the historic wildfires here in Oregon the previous summer. Kodiak, Alaska experienced a record-shattering daily high temperature in December, beating the old record by 20 degrees!

Melting permafrost is threatening the Trans-Alaska Pipeline. The ice shelf that holds back the mammoth Thwaites glacier in Antarctica is melting much faster than previously known, and could break up in the next five to 10 years. The hits just keep on coming.

It is long known and well accepted by the scientific community that the source of this instability is greenhouse gas pollution from the burning of fossil fuels. In response, nations, states, cities and corporate entities around the world are starting to take action to reduce fossil fuel emissions. Just last month, Oregon enacted the Climate Protection Program. The program hopes to reduce the burning of gasoline, diesel and natural gas in Oregon by 50% by 2035 and 90% by the year 2050.

The Astorian recently printed a guest column ("A threat to farm families" Jan. 1, 2022) by a Tillamook farmer, Karl Zweifel, representing the Tillamook County Farm Bureau, taking issue with the Climate Protection Program. Zweifel expressed concern that gas prices will rise enough to put farmers' livelihoods at risk. He claimed this plan was the work of urban politicians, who without concern, put the greatest burden on rural Oregonians, and that the Climate Protection Program was just a "feel-good" policy which "will have no impact on global climate change."



**ERIC HALPERIN**

**IF WE DON'T STOP PUMPING CARBON POLLUTION INTO THE SKY, A 10% INCREASE IN GAS PRICES WILL BE THE VERY LEAST OF OUR COSTS, AND OUR PROBLEMS.**

In fact, the Climate Protection Program was written with the input of an expansive rule-making advisory committee. It was composed of people from all over Oregon, rural and urban, from many industries and associations, but not limited to agriculture, timber, conservation districts, pulp and paper, trucking, fuel suppliers, energy suppliers, as well as someone from Zweifel's town, a representative from the Tillamook Creamery. Everybody had a seat at the table. In addition, Oregonians submitted over 7,600 public comments, with over 70% in favor of the program.

Regarding gas prices, an analysis commissioned by the state estimated that prices may increase from 3% to 7%. A different analysis, commissioned by industries opposed to the program, estimated that by 2035 gasoline could increase by 36 cents and diesel 39 cents. If we suppose \$3.50 as a current average price, that is a 10% to 11% increase in 13 years. As we know,



David Zalubowski/AP Photo

**A lone flame flickers as smoke roils from the remains of a home destroyed by a pair of wildfires this winter in Colorado.**

gas prices are influenced by many factors, mostly by global geopolitical and market forces. It is fair to argue that the costs of the program to local fuel suppliers in Oregon will have much less impact on the price of fuel than decisions made by OPEC.

The reality is, the Climate Protection Program will affect all Oregonians, no matter where they live. Everyone who uses fuels for transportation or for heating will have to switch to an alternative source. And the program is designed to put investments into creating those alternatives. Its Community Climate Investment program will help both rural and urban communities promote clean energy alternatives by funding projects, such as EV school buses, EV charging infrastructure, community-based wind, solar and small hydro facilities, efficient heat pumps to replace propane and gas furnaces, and which also provide air conditioning. An option for the diesel fuel used by farmers is to utilize renewable diesel from oil seed crops; crops which could be grown by Oregon farmers. This is but a short list of possible investments.

In response to the claim that the Cli-

mate Protection Program will have no impact on global climate change, well, all by itself, of course it won't. No one should expect one policy in one state to "fix" climate change. But every state must join in. Every nation, every state, every city, every business, every person must join in. In our country though, where the ethos of individualism runs strong, lots of people don't want to be told what to do. We have no option though, but to pull in the same direction together to solve this planetary crisis.

Change isn't easy. Sure, we'd all like it to go back to 1960 again, when a gallon of gas cost 25 cents and nobody had even heard about carbon pollution. But we are headed to the future, not to the past.

Zweifel thinks the future is grim because gas prices might go up 10% by the year 2035. I think the future is grim because if we don't stop pumping carbon pollution into the sky, a 10% increase in gas prices will be the very least of our costs, and our problems. Fire and ice. Fire and melting ice.

*Eric Halperin is a retired optometrist who lives in Gearhart.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Imperfect world

**T**his is a pity the world is not just how we want it to be. One Bari Weiss proclaims that she is "done with COVID," on "Real Time with Bill Maher."

She said she "... sprayed the Pringles cans ... stripped my clothes off because I thought COVID would be on my clothes ... we all did it."

Poor thing! Such almighty inconveniences shade absolutely the unstinting attention healthcare heroes have paid COVID-19 patients, beginning even well before there was hope for a vaccine.

Weiss has every right to think she's "done with COVID," but alas, COVID might not be done with her.

Newt Gingrich labels the House Jan. 6 committee a "lynch mob ... running over the law ... pursuing innocent people." By "people," Gingrich means chums of the former president who might have been party to the day's events.

In fact, congressional committees may legally summon witnesses and charge those disregarding the summons with contempt. Of course, appearing and testifying publicly would preempt further "pursuit" or prosecution. (Why is it so hard to tell the truth with the public witnessing?)

But the eye of Newt is jaundiced, indeed: vengeance-bent, in playground bully fashion, Gingrich threatens the committee's members with comeuppance prosecution for seeking the truth of what happened that day.

To be "done" when one doesn't get one's way or, in tantrum-mode, to spew furious insults and silly threats, are hallmarks of puerility. Coming of age is measured, after, all by coming to terms with this imperfect world, its truths, realities and inconveniences, and by abandoning the childish and the inane.

BRIAN LAVELLE  
Astoria

## WINNER!\*



### Go fly a kite

**T**he recent editorial cartoon, "Biden Charlie Brown" (The Astorian, Jan. 29), showing President Joe Biden as Charlie Brown losing kites in a tree, barely scratches the surface of failures created by the current administration.

From day one, Biden has failed to produce any policy beneficial to the nation's citizens, and it's apparent the next three years will be more of the same.

And, with his plummeting approval rating, it's apparent Americans have caught onto the fact this president doesn't know what he's doing.

His ill-conceived Afghanistan pullout has cost American military personnel lives and left military materiel in known terrorists' possession.

His party's overaggressive attempt

to change election laws has made voters even more skeptical of our voting system's integrity.

His refusal to enforce current immigration regulations has allowed over 2 million unvetted people to roam all over the country without the ability to monitor where they go and what they do.

His "Build Better" proposal was supposed to not cost the taxpayers a dime, but was really a giveaway scam costing trillions.

His economic plan has inflation soaring, resulting in higher energy and food prices for every citizen with little hope of an acceptable "normal."

Finally, his inability to handle the

COVID-19 pandemic has left all Americans wondering each day as to when the nightmare will end.

Those Americans who have kept track of Biden's failures are left with nothing to say but: "Hey Joe, go fly a kite."

MATT JANES  
Jeffers Garden

### Concerned

**I**am concerned for the proposed developments for the city block on Duane and Exchange streets.

There is no doubt that low-cost housing

is needed for Astoria. My concern is the plan calls for units with very inadequate parking. Not only are there development parking problems, but there are ongoing downtown Astoria core parking shortages.

The Astoria Sunday Market, American Legion, Astoria Senior Center, Liberty Theatre, and even City Hall, will be negatively affected by the proposed plan.

Mental health services provided at the west end Bond Street address should stay there. Except for utilizing the "hole" in our commercial area, residential housing needs to be in residential areas.

BOB WESTERBERG  
Astoria

\* Scientists say 2021 had the hottest ocean temperatures in our history. This was the sixth consecutive year that record has been broken.