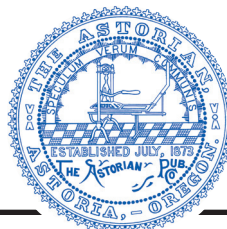


OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

DERRICK DePLEDGE
Editor

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

SAMANTHA STINNETT
Circulation Manager

SARAH SILVER
Advertising Sales Manager

WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

New media are filling Oregon news deserts

George Custer is a new player in the struggle to keep Oregon news deserts from happening.

Following closure of the Dead Mountain Echo, an Oakridge newspaper of some 50 years standing, a group led by veteran newsman Doug Bates started the Highway 58 Herald, an online newspaper. A former U.S. Marine Corps captain and a businessman, Custer is working on the newspaper's business side, and he has filled in as an interim editor.



STEVE FORRESTER

Custer and I met at the City Club of Eugene's July 8 discussion of the topic, "Can local newspapers survive?" In response to that question, I had the

easier task, because I could speak about our media company and its survival.

The Highway 58 Herald endeavor is much like the Ashland News, which is powered by retired journalists and business people such as Paul Steinle, who resides in Ashland, as well as on the Long Beach Peninsula. Steinle is a retired executive of King Broadcasting of Seattle.

These two startups and another in Yachats are emblematic of the drive to fill community news voids.

EO Media Group, the parent company of The Astorian, closed its books on June 30, at the end of the fiscal year. I am pleased to report that it was a financially healthy year. During that cycle, our newspapers gained subscribers, to both our print and digital editions.

Talent is the key to our company's financial health. Talent in the newsrooms of our 15 newspapers, talent among our designers and advertising sales staffs, talent in our one printing site in Astoria and in our call center.

News content is what drives readers to our print and digital editions.

In one of our highest profile news initiatives, The Bulletin in Bend is in the midst of a yearlong series that profiles homeless persons in Deschutes County.



George Custer is the interim editor of Highway 58 Herald.

DURING THE FISCAL YEAR, EO MEDIA GROUP LAUNCHED THE FUND FOR OREGON RURAL JOURNALISM (FORJ). THIS NONPROFIT VENTURE IS SEEKING PHILANTHROPIC MONEY THAT IS DEDICATED TO HELPING NEWSROOMS THRIVE. FORJ AIMS TO HELP RURAL NEWSROOMS AROUND OREGON BUILD SUSTAINABLE OPERATIONS.

Prior to the U.S. Supreme Court decision on Roe v. Wade, Katie Frankowicz of KMUN and Nicole Bales of The Astorian took an extensive look at the lack of access to abortion in rural areas of Oregon like the North Coast. The East Oregonian covered a 170-car crash on Interstate 84 in late February that

stretched nearly 2 miles long. Nearly 20 patients were taken to area hospitals and stranded motorists were taken to the Pendleton Convention Center, which served as a reunification hub for people involved in the crash.

In the years ahead, our company's path and the paths of new Oregon news

outlets such as in Ashland and Oakridge may intersect. During the fiscal year, EO Media Group launched the Fund for Oregon Rural Journalism (FORJ). This nonprofit venture is seeking philanthropic money that is dedicated to helping newsrooms thrive. FORJ aims to help rural newsrooms around Oregon build sustainable operations. Also we hope to build collaborations with other rural newspapers in shared news initiatives on topics such as water, housing and climate change.

What I like about FORJ is that it is a countervailing force against the national narrative that news deserts must be our future. What America and Oregon need is a new generation of news entrepreneurs. In other words, young people who are equipped with reporting, editing and business skills to start community news organizations. These young talents can emerge from our journalism schools. Our company leaders have had that conversation with the leaders of the University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication.

Journalism schools at the University of West Virginia and University of Kentucky are focusing on how to develop new generations of entrepreneurial journalists. Our conversations with UO are heartening.

By telling you that we've had a good fiscal year, I do not mean to disguise the challenges we've confronted and will confront. The newspaper business has never been easy for papers our size in communities such as we represent.

If you've read "Grit and Ink," the history of our company and family, you know that from the late 19th century into the 21st century, impediments such as the Great Depression, a massive fire in Astoria, pandemics — as well as shifts in the advertising industry — have come our way regularly.

The key to rural and regional newspapers' survival is resilience and innovation. And that is where you'll find EO Media Group in the year ahead.

Steve Forrester, the former editor and publisher of The Astorian, is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

A testament

Mark Winstanley concluded 37 years of service to the city of Seaside at the end of June, and more than 20 years as the city manager. In fact, Mark became the city manager the year that I graduated from high school, a fact I've reminded him of a few times in our conversations over the years.

It's incredibly difficult serving in a role like Mark has for that span of time and, frankly, it's unprecedented. It's a testament to Mark's flexibility, communication and leadership that he's been able to hold that role for so long, working with numerous elected officials, leading a dynamic and growing city and responding to significant changes that have occurred over that time.

If you've ever been around Mark, you know that he truly cares about the city and the people of Seaside. I recall many experiences of walking with him to a meeting, or walking behind him, and seeing him pick up every piece of litter he saw.

Mark has offered me support numerous times, going back to when I was first hired by the Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District in 2015. He's been there as a resource for me to ask him questions, and I know he's provided the same mentorship to many of his staff and other folks in our community.

The city will miss him greatly and, while they're in good hands, I wish Mark the best in his future plans for travel, family, Oregon State University athletics and, hopefully, some much-deserved relaxation.

SKYLER ARCHIBALD
Executive director, Sunset Empire Park and Recreation District

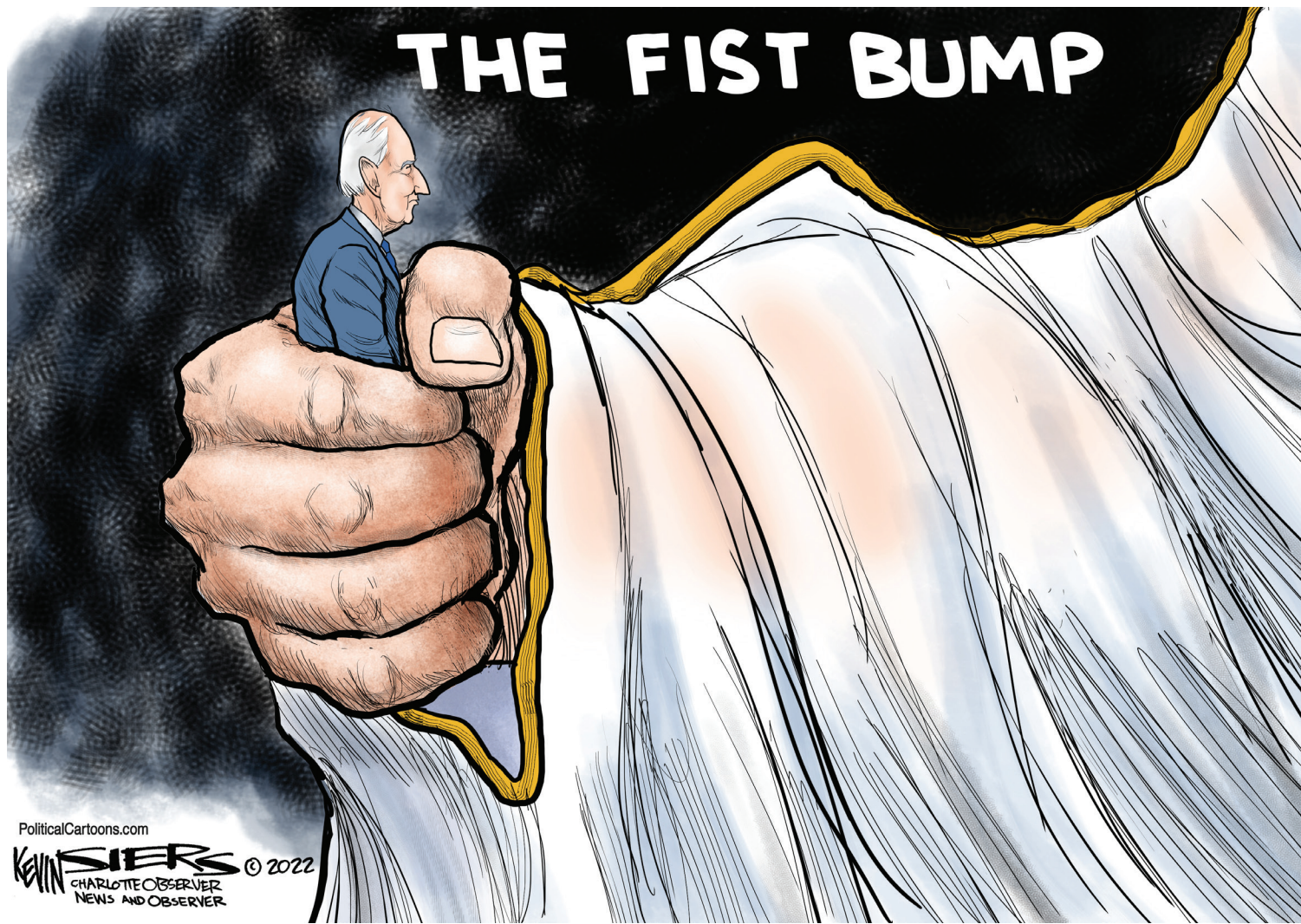
Worth repeating

Two tweets worth repeating and retweeting:

Dan Rather tweeted: "All those saying the 'vote, vote, vote' message is old and tired undermine the power of the ballot box. Elections are fulcrums that pivot the course of history. There's abundant evidence of this simple fact. Is voting enough? No. Is it a potent tool for change? Absolutely."

David Axelrod tweeted: "The best and most effective way to respond to blatant, calculated efforts to discourage voting is to vote in record numbers."

Yes and yes to Dan and David. Make plans to vote. Go to co.clatsop.or.us/clerk/



PoliticalCartoons.com
KEVIN SIERS
CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
NEWS AND OBSERVER
© 2022

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.

page/voter-registration-information, there are many sources of information.

LARRY ALLEN
Astoria

Of bees and fish

Iwas disappointed, but not surprised, by The Astorian's sophomoric editorial (July 7) parsing the language of Cali-

fornia's 3rd District Court of Appeals ruling that allows bumblebees to be listed as fish under the California Endangered Species Act.

The Astorian missed an opportunity to underscore the dangerous extinction of species taking place and chose, instead, to play a game of "gotcha" about wording in an editorial that should have appeared on the In One Ear page. Sadly, the editorial's conclusion that "bees and other insects

could conceivably need protection," speaks volumes about their ignorance and indifference to the pollinator crisis at hand.

The inclusion of bumblebees is linked to the word "invertebrate." The intentionality of the judges acknowledges the crisis of pollinators that are dying in massive numbers. The ruling recognized that there isn't time to wait for legislatures to reword the Endangered Species Act if a worse crisis is to be avoided. Without bumblebees, and other bee pollinators, fruit and vegetables will no longer be available for consumption. When that happens, the days before human extinction are numbered.

The Astorian would have better served its readership by interviewing the founder of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, which petitioned to have bumblebees listed. That founder is our local butterfly man, nationally acclaimed naturalist and author, Robert Michael Pyle, of Grays River, Washington. He would have cut through the hubbub over terminology and gotten to the core of the issue.

ROGER DORBAND
Astoria