

GUEST COLUMN

Developing a teamwork perspective

TUNNEL ECHOES
LIANNE THOMPSON



Did you ever play organized team sports? Play a game of pick-up basketball or softball? Play cards with a partner? It's fun to play; it's fun to win; it's even fun sometimes to lose.

Effort expended to reach a goal, a set of rules, other people sharing the experience: it's a source of human connection that can bring us physical, mental, and emotional stimulation that feels pretty darn good.

What makes it fun? Being active and engaged with other

people gets our physical juices going, but our hearts and minds need connection, too. That's part of what's so depressing and infuriating about COVID: we can't be together in the same way. Zoom is better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick, but it's a weak cuppa joe compared to the robust interactions we prefer.

Some of us prefer community volunteering as our form of team sport. We advocate for people or causes we believe in, with the idea that our time, effort, or money will make a difference in our neighborhood, our city, our county, our country, or our world.

Somebody once called out the rewards of volunteering as being accomplishment, affiliation, and acknowledgment. That means

doing good work with good people and feeling recognized for it.

What about politics? We're getting into the political season focused on the 2022 May primary and general elections. Politics will be more and more on almost everyone's mind, because we'll be flooded with paid advertising, letters to the editor, talk radio, TV debates, public forums, and on and on.

And then what? After the election, what's left? "Smokin' ash" in the phrase from an old song? Maybe. It depends on how we play the game of politics. Not to make light of it, but it can be talked about in that way to offer some possible relief.

We can do our politics as a kind of friendly competition to con-

sider different points of view in a way that maintains good relationships. We can actually like somebody with a different point of view or set of beliefs. We can actually enjoy learning something and maybe shift or broaden our perspective.

Or we can play our activism and politics as a form of warfare or blood sport. We can berate, intimidate, sneer, mock, try to annihilate anybody who's not quite up to snuff in matching our own set of beliefs.

Friendly competition warms my heart. The resulting biochemicals bring joy. Blood sport forms of political debate? That's like eating poison. Anger provides both fuel and armor. I don't have to care if somebody likes me or not. I'm

fueled by my antagonism to disconnect from them and look for people who believe as I do. Righteous indignation is more than a notion, but the emotional hangover from a fit of anger sits heavy in the belly for most of us.

Team sport, in politics or pickup games or community engagement, feels better in the long run. Better blood pressure, for one thing. Other health benefits accrue, too. Mostly, we're hard-wired to be pack animals. We're hard-wired to be cooperative.

The nourishing joy of living ethically, being our highest and best self? Can't beat it with a stick. Play nice. You'll be happier longer, I'm pretty sure.

Lianne Thompson is Clatsop County commissioner for District 5.

GUEST COLUMN

In emergency services, dollars spent can equate to lives saved

GUEST COLUMN
BILL GRAFFIUS



As a property owner in Gearhart, I wish to respond to Jack Zimmerman's guest column titled, "Residents will support a modest and sensible firehouse project" (The Astorian, Oct. 12).

I served as a volunteer firefighter in Arizona in the 1980s and 1990s and have experience as a training officer, captain and acting chief.

I also sold fire and rescue apparatus, tools, appliances and personal protective gear to Arizona municipalities, rural fire districts, industrial facilities and Native American reservations. I worked with fire chiefs and board members, gaining direct insight into governmental and business planning and budgeting processes and the demands of delivering safe, effective emergency services.

I may understand a little bit more about what it takes to provide fire and emergency medical service than the typical citizen.

I live and pay taxes here. No, I don't want to see my property taxes climb again because I am literally one of those seniors living on a fixed income. A tax increase for a \$13 million firehouse bond measure will be a hardship to me.

Zimmerman argues that the community does not "want, need or understand" the facility being proposed. He clearly doesn't want it. Fine. I also think it's clear he doesn't understand it or the needs it addresses.

I've read the FAQs on the city's website and in my informed opinion, Gearhart is only asking for what the fire department needs to competently fulfill their mission.

Zimmerman claims the facility would be "opulent," "expensive" and "massive."

There is nothing opulent nor massive about the proposal. That's pure hyperbole.

Expensive? Well, what isn't these days? But the economics of why everything costs so much is a different topic. Citizens need to keep in mind that costs will only go up with time. Delay costs money. And when it comes



R.J. Marx/The Astorian
Gearhart wants to replace the aging firehouse off Pacific Way.

to infrastructure, underbuilding costs far more in the long run than overbuilding.

A fire department needs to have the facilities and means to conduct training within their own department within their own service area. It's how you build teamwork and increase both classroom and hands-on training frequency. The fire department is only proposing to build enough office and classroom space to meet their current needs.

The training goal for volunteers to meet the standards of the firefighting profession seems to be a point of contention with Zimmerman.

That doesn't mean the fire department expects taxpayers to pay for all their personnel to go pro. It means that they want their members to be trained to the established standards of the fire service.

Zimmerman also opposes water rescue equipment and training, saying we have the U.S. Coast Guard for that.

The entire western border of the city is the Pacific Ocean with popular beaches that attract locals and visitors alike. Shoreline ocean water rescue is something that needs to be done immediately, before the victim is swept out to sea and before hypothermia can do its damage. Time is critical. A properly trained and equipped crew from the fire department can respond significantly faster than the Coast Guard and will make a lifesaving difference for many of these calls. Not to mention the Coast Guard could be tied up elsewhere and unable to immediately respond.

Zimmerman apparently thinks of Gearhart as a small village, not a city, and he believes the fire department's call volume is low enough that we can simply call

on Medix or Seaside or the Coast Guard if something happens.

I live just off Pacific Way. I hear how often this department goes out and it is plenty busy. Mutual aid is great, but it is not meant to be the first response. More importantly, Gearhart is a growing city and the fire department needs to grow with it.

Keeping infrastructure up to date is expensive. Failing to keep your infrastructure up to date is deadly, as is failing to plan adequately to accommodate growth. In emergency services, dollars spent or not spent can literally equate to lives saved or not saved.

In closing, look at the expensive school campus sitting high out of the tsunami inundation zone in Seaside. Before it was even completed it was already inadequate to the current needs of the school district. I hope Gearhart doesn't make that same mistake out of some misbegotten effort to maintain a false austerity.

In the long run, that would be far, far more costly in both money and possible lives lost than what the city has modestly proposed.

Bill Graffius has lived in Gearhart since 1998.

BRIEFS



Tina Payel, women hotelier of the year, and Masudur Khan of Seaside Lodging LLC, at the Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association Chair's Getaway.

ORLA hosts 'Getaway' on North Coast

The Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association Chair's Getaway gathered hospitality industry leadership and supporters from throughout the state early this month.

The getaway included an overnight stay at SaltLine Hotel in Seaside, plus reception and chef's gourmet dinner at McMenamins Gearhart Hotel.

During the event both current and past chairs exchanged ideas and goals to further develop and expand the association's initiatives.

Oregon Restaurant & Lodging Association is the leading business association for the foodservice and lodging industry in Oregon. A nonprofit trade organization, the association advocates for over 10,000 food-service locations and more than 2,000 lodging establishments in Oregon.

Human services advisory grants available

The Clatsop County Human Services Advisory Council will distribute grants to local social and human

services agencies that assist people in need. The purpose of this funding is to provide an investment in community programs that target those most in need.

This year there is \$30,000 total available in funding. Grant requests no greater than \$5,000 will be eligible for funding; preference is given to programs that provide services to all county residents and serve the largest need.

Eligibility requirements can be found at the county's website. Applications must be submitted via email to humanservices@co.clatsop.or.us no later than 5 p.m. on Jan. 28.

Seaside students collect food for families

Seaside High School ASB is hosting a food drive to help feed local families in conjunction with the South County Food Bank.

Beginning Saturday, Nov. 20, Seaside High School ASB members will be accepting non-perishable food donations. Drive-through times are Saturday, 9 to 10 a.m. and 5 to 6 p.m.

Seaside High ASB members will be on the highway side of the old Seaside High School, in front of the gym, waiting to collect contributions. Pull up to the collection site where an ASB member will collect the donations and as a thank you, donors will receive a Seaside sticker. Proper social distancing protocols will be in place. Wear a mask and limit contact. The students will also be collecting donations; make checks payable to Seaside ASB.

Job Corps service project addresses homelessness

Tongue Point Job Corps Center is embarking on

a new service project to reduce homelessness in the community by collecting coats, blankets, socks, hats and food for Filling Empty Bellies.

This is the last of four service projects that Tongue Point is spearheading this year in celebration of Management & Training Corporation's 40th anniversary.

Community members wishing to support this effort may contact Amanda Lamb at 503-338-4954 or Adam Darrington at 503-338-5058.

Gearhart shares the warmth

Real estate brokers throughout Oregon and southwest Washington are gearing up for Windermere Real Estate's annual Share the Warmth campaign. Through Friday, Dec. 17, Windermere brokers will be collecting winter necessities for community members in need.

In the Gearhart area, the donations will benefit the First Baptist Church, Warrenton; Lutheran Community Services NW's Hope House; and the Astoria Rescue Mission. The organizations are specifically asking for coats, blankets, sweaters, sweatshirts, hats and gloves.

Those who want to help can stop by participating Windermere offices to drop off donations. The Windermere office in Gearhart — located at 588 Pacific Way — is open daily from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Seaside KOA Resort wins award at convention

Kampgrounds of America, the world's largest family of family-friendly, open-to-the-public campgrounds, announced that the Astoria/Warrenton/Seaside KOA Resort Campground earned the 2022 KOA President's Award. This award was presented Tuesday at KOA's annual convention in Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The KOA President's Award is presented to those campgrounds meeting exceptional quality standards and who receive high customer service scores from their camping guests. KOA surveys hundreds of thousands of campers each year regarding their KOA camping experience.

KOA is celebrating its 59th anniversary in 2021. To find out more about this KOA, any of the other 525 KOAs in the U.S. or Canada, visit www.KOA.com.



Lance Wagner

The 2019 Parade of Lights.

Parade and tree-lighting in Seaside

Seaside Signal

Join the Seaside Chamber of Commerce for the annual Parade of Lights and Community Tree Lighting, sponsored by Pacific Power, on Friday, Nov. 26, at 7 p.m. The downtown parade strolls by with festive lights, costumes and displays! After the parade, listen in as we announce the winners of the parade categories: mayor's choice, best walking group, best commercial motorized vehicle, best noncommercial motorized vehicle and best walking/motorized combination.

The Community Tree lighting follows at 8 p.m.

Lewis & Clark Timberlands acknowledges Native American Heritage Month by recognizing the local tribes in our area including:

Clatsop — Kathlamet — Tillamook
Willapa — Lower Chinook — Wahkiakum



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