

OPINION

THESE TIMES

Inking eyes: The final frontier

Of all the items you wouldn't want in your eye, it seems a needle would be near the top of the list for most people.

Most people. Not all people.

Last week, a Senate committee in Olympia advanced a bill that would prohibit injecting ink, with a needle, into the outer layer of the white part of your eye, called the sclera. The ink spreads through the sclera, turning the white part into any color the customer fancies. Black seems to be a popular choice. So are bright blue and purple.

This is real. It even has a technical name: "scleral tattooing."

The bill originated in the House of Representatives, where it passed 94-4. It moved to the Senate, where it didn't raise a wake in sailing through the Health & Long Term Care Committee. As of Monday, this legislation is on track to become law, creating a civil penalty for anyone who sticks a needle in someone's eye with intent to tattoo.

The law would take effect 90 days after it's signed by the governor, so you best hurry if altering your sclera is on your to-do list.

Scleral tattooing has been around for more than a decade, but you can't find firm numbers on how many people do the work or how many people have had it done. It's an unregulated act of ghoulishness, so data tends to be spotty.

The primary sponsor of the bill is Rep. Steve Tharinger of Sequim. Testifying in front of the Senate committee last week, he said, "Although there hasn't been problems with this in Washington, there were problems in Canada and other countries. This bill gets us in front of any tendency for folks to take the risk to their eyesight by performing this procedure."

Some of those problems in

Canada and other countries include loss of vision. Go figure.

Ever since tattooing and piercing became conventional expressions of edginess in the

1990s, and as ever more people surrendered the tenderest parts of their bodies to the ink and stud, I've wondered where it would all end. The uvula? A spike clean through the head? A tattoo on the pancreas?

How about intentional bruising? You could go into a studio for a session of punches and two days later have some delightfully colored bruises on your body. That would be edgy.

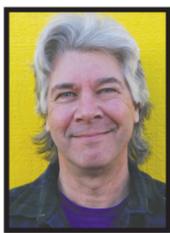
But I never considered the eyeball, and it seems a frontier has been breached here, much as President Kennedy and NASA pushed us beyond Earth's orbit into the frontier of deep space in the 1960s. I can't imagine anything existing beyond space or anything existing in the tattooing world beyond inking the eyeball.

But enacting a law to ban this type of self-expression seems dubious. First, even the bill's sponsor says it's not a problem in Washington, and second, anyone involved in either side of this transaction — the tattooer or the tattooee — is likely wrapped up in other shenanigans that imperil life and limb, and perhaps eyeballs. You can stop them at needles in the eye, but what about when the next edgy fad is shoving flashing LED lights up your nose or injecting cricket larvae into your eardrums?

Life, like sports, seems to go much better if you avoid the unforced errors. Don't fumble the football, don't fall off of the roof, don't overthrow the cutoff man and don't test how long you can hold that lit firecracker.

And don't put anything sharp in your eye except your elbow.

■ Contact Kirk Ericson at kirk@masoncounty.com



By KIRK ERICSON

JOURNAL EDITORIAL

Stand up for what you believe

A video showing a man speaking to the Seattle City Council last month sparked some outrage.

Richard Schwartz, addressing the council during a public comment period March 11, politely called out council members for having their "heads down" while he was speaking.

"It's really discouraging to come up here and see all the heads down," he said at the podium.

At one point, he asked whether his two-minute timer could be reset so he could begin again with the attention of council members. He was denied — "No, we're not going to. Just go ahead," Councilwoman Debora Juarez interjected.

Schwartz went on to cite a previous meeting where members of the public were limited one minute each to speak, yet Pramila Jayapal, a U.S. representative, was allowed to speak as long as she wanted.

He said the exchange reminded him of George Orwell's "Animal Farm," citing the novel's famous passage — "All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

Schwartz's comment struck a chord with some Mason County residents. We understand why.

Why should the movers and shakers have more say during a public meeting? Do their opinions count for more? Do they get more than one vote during our elections? Does more wealth equal more valuable input?

Of course not.

So, let's politely make sure our own civic leaders and elected officials know this when we speak during public meetings. We can do this by respectfully addressing our electeds during the public comment period at any of the dozens of public meetings that take place each month in Mason County.

In case you're unfamiliar with protocol, all publicly elected boards or entities in Mason County — including school boards, boards of fire commissioners and hospital district boards — set aside time for you to speak directly to their councils, boards or committees. You might be asked to sign your name on a sheet or contact a particular board in advance, but it's your right to directly address in person the elected men and women who serve you in public office.

Some boards limit your time to one or two minutes; others will let you speak as long as you wish.

It's your right to speak

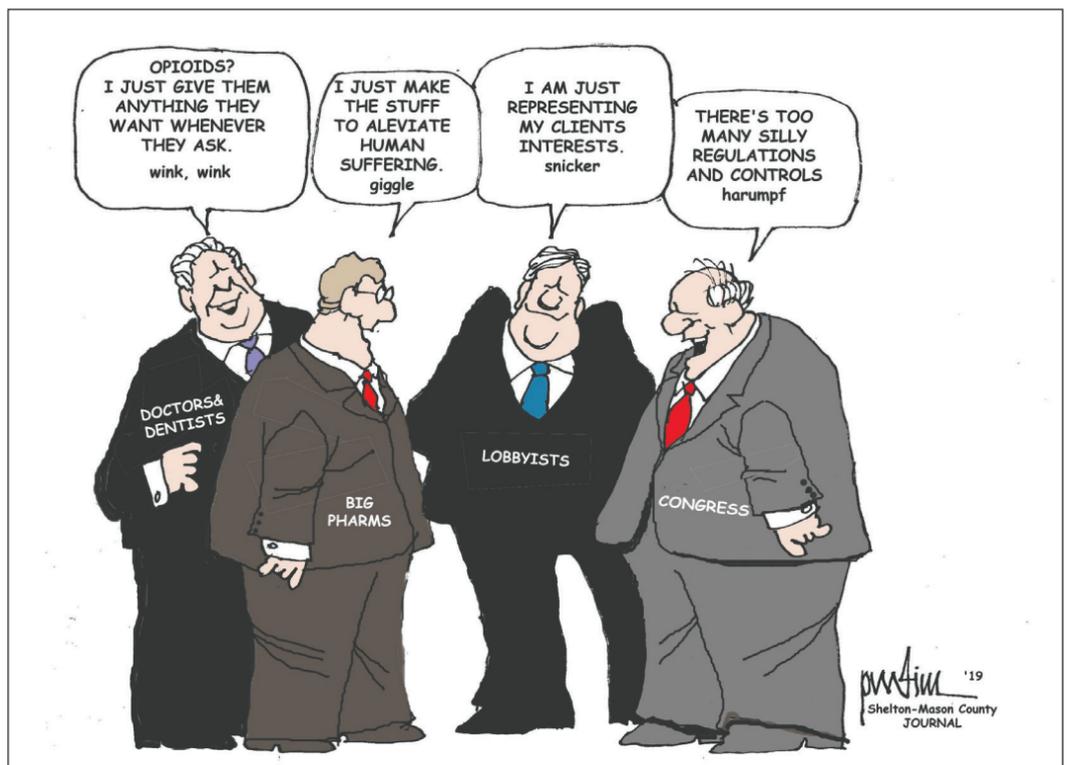
out on issues that are important to you — you are not wasting their time. If you don't feel like your voice was heard, follow up during the next meeting until you're sure they've heard you.

It's not a burden for them. It is their job to listen to their constituents — not just the ones who have fancy titles or donate money to their campaigns.

We know that it can be difficult for the average local resident to find time to attend a Shelton City Council or Board of Mason County Commissioners meeting. The city council meets at 6 p.m. on the first and third Tuesday of each month. The county meetings are even tougher — commissioners meet at 9 a.m. on the first, second and third Tuesdays of each month, and 6 p.m. on the fourth Tuesday of the month.

If you're not able to address an elected board in person, you can always write, email or call them directly. If they don't get back to them, show up and ask for a response in person.

We know it can be tough to get up and speak in front of a crowd, but sometimes democracy isn't easy. Standing up for what you believe is important — in this case, literally.



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Mainstream media the problem

Editor, the Journal

For the last two to three years, we have been witness to what is perhaps the greatest scandal in the history of American politics. The Obama administration, in particular the senior leaders (and some lesser lights) of his Department of Justice, Central Intelligence Agency, Federal Bureau of Investigation, et. al., have plotted and attempted to carry out a “soft (non-violent) coup” to overthrow a duly elected president of the United States, Donald J. Trump. His crime? Winning the election.

The loser of that election was, of course, the truly awful Hillary Rodham Clinton. Some might view her as a marginally sympathetic character owing to her lout of a husband, but she was arguably the worst presidential candidate in the history of history. For what appears to be a number of (legitimate) reasons, author and columnist Kurt Schlichter calls her “Felonia Milhous von Pantsuit.” What should give everyone a case of the creeps is the real possibility that had she won, the Obama-style corruption would have continued and the cast of sleazeball actors attempting the aforementioned coup could easily have been placed right back in the upper echelons of her administration. We dodged several bullets here.

By mainstream media (MSM), I refer to the large East Coast outlets in print and on TV, in particular the *Washington Post*, *New York Times*, CNN and MSNBC (there are others.) These organizations have done great harm to our citizens’ faith in higher institutions. This harm has taken place in every home where there is a TV set tuned to CNN.

MSM pollution reaches us regionally as well. For example, the pea-wit, racist and *Seattle Times* regular Leonard Pitts claims in his column this week that the MSM are just swell and did a great job covering this fiasco. But the MSM are joined at the hip with the Democratic Party and, it seems clear, hypnotized themselves and that party against any belief in their own dereliction.

Sadly, and because of this, a too large percentage of Democrats still – still – believe Donald Trump colluded with Russia.

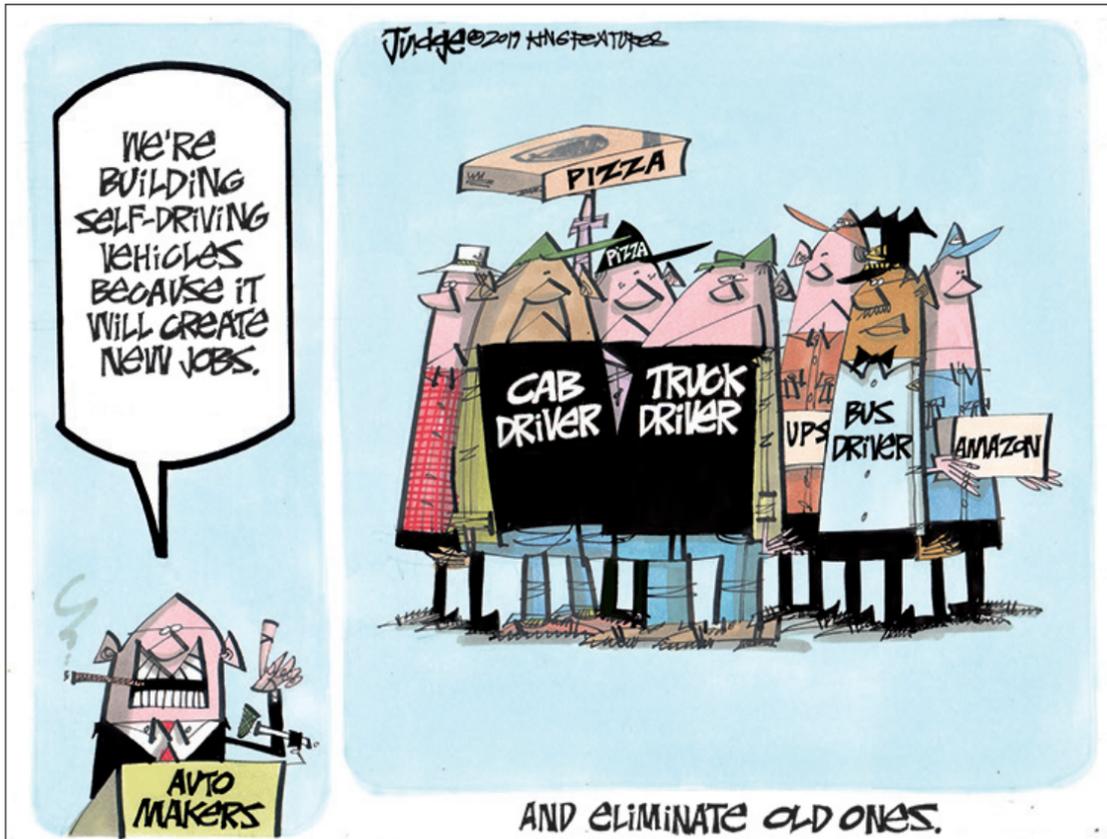
Sigh.

Robert E. Graham
Union

Death column was welcome

Editor, the Journal

My thanks to Kirk Ericson



for his informative piece on the Death With Dignity Act. The passage of that act 10 years ago showed a side of our humanity that we should all be proud of. The voters of Washington recognized that there are times when we should be allowed to take our life without the social stigma of committing suicide. Putting aside for a moment the disdain some have for something they call “assisted suicide,” the Death With Dignity Act is one of the most humane and compassionate laws ever passed.

My experience with the workings of the act started nearly two years ago when my wife was diagnosed with incurable, untreatable lung cancer. She was given four to six months to live, and she chose not to waste away in the suffering that was to come. Although she never came out and said it, I had the idea that she wished me as little trauma as possible too.

The volunteers at End of Life Washington helped us through the bureaucracy and forms of getting the lethal drug. I can’t say enough about them. One of their doctors (retired) even came to our house and mixed the cocktail on the day my wife chose to die.

When I tell this story to those who ask, I tell them this: if you or someone you know meets the act’s criteria and wants to check out on his or her own terms, start the process as soon as possible. Don’t put it off. It takes time to figure out which doctors will help, to fill out the forms, and to set up and travel to appointments. There are built-in wait times in the law, and always expect some delays and mistakes at any stage of the process. And remember, no one is forced to follow through.

What I noticed was that once my wife had the pills here at home, her anxiety drained away. She could go anytime she wanted, and that was essential for her; she

knew she would die without pain. We spent our last days together going over our old photos, listening to our favorite music, holding each other, and eating a lot of pizza. On the day before she died we sat together on the banks of a creek, listening to running water.

Bill Young
Shelton

School report is eye-opening

Editor, the Journal

Do you care about school safety? Do you think more gun laws and more rules will improve the safety of our kids in schools? What is the solution?

Take a few minutes and view the Marjory Stoneman Douglas Commission Report, just released, regarding the Parkland, Florida, school massacre. It is online at www.fdle.state.fl.us. The conclusions will startle you and anger you. The conclusions are similar to those released after the Columbine school shootings 20 years ago in Colorado. We, as a society, do not seem to learn very quickly. Read the report, please.

William Zeigler
Shelton

Illegal immigrants ruining the vote

Editor, the Journal

President Trump won the presidency but lost the popular vote by 3 million votes because the vote was corrupted by illegal aliens and dead people voting. Because of suspected voting irregularities, Judicial Watch (JW) filed a lawsuit in 2017

(Judicial Watch, Inc. et al v. Dean C. Logan, et al; No. 2:17). JW represented four lawfully registered Los Angeles County voters against Los Angeles County and won the lawsuit. Here’s what they found.

■ Los Angeles County has 112 percent of age-eligible citizens as registered voters.

■ The entire state of California has a registration rate of 101 percent of age-eligible citizens.

■ Eleven of California’s 58 counties has registration rate more than 100 percent of age-eligible citizens.

The lawsuit confirmed Los Angeles alone has more than 1.5 million potentially ineligible voters. More than one in five Los Angeles County registrations belongs to a voter who has moved or died. There are more illegal voters in Los Angeles County than legal voters in some states.

With 1.5 million illegal voters in Los Angeles County alone, no wonder Hillary got 3 million more popular votes than Trump. The Electoral College saved this election, (please note, League of Women Voters)!

The lawsuit also found neither the state nor Los Angeles County has been removing inactive voters for the past 20 years. The Supreme Court required removal of ineligible voters. The California Secretary of State agreed to do this and to update manuals requiring counties purge voter files of ineligible voters regularly.

Judicial Watch estimates there are 3.5 million ineligible voters nationwide. They won lawsuits in Ohio and Kentucky; filed a successful lawsuit against Indiana; supported North Carolina’s efforts to clean up voter rolls; and filed an amicus brief in the 11th Circuit Court for Alabama and Georgia’s voter law.

Democrats, who won’t give their immature 16-year-old children the keys to the car, now want to give 16-year-olds the right to vote. These disgraceful Democrats, in-

cluding Congressmen Denny Heck and Derek Kilmer, want Trump defeated so badly they support corrupting our ballot box and the caravans of illegals overrunning our borders. Even Jay Johnson, Homeland Security Chief for Obama, says there is a crisis at the border. Democrats are either in denial or don’t care; which is it?

Republicans, find quality Congressional candidates for the 2020 election. Democrats, purge your corrosive swamp critters from Congress! LWV, read our Constitution. Voters, fire Denny and Derek!

Ardean A. Anvik
Shelton

Commentary on America

Editor, the Journal

Visions fill eyes from these hallowed American skies

America and heritage cannot be denied

Justice among US obviously blind

Our hearts they jolted our emotions have molted

Americas heaven not so kind

As lightning bolted so do our hopes

And the lies they told US Defame and scold US notions of the blithered miserable and hopeless

Frozen and comatose our homeless

Dire ignites these fires of lies that goad US

America stirred and blurred completely out of focus

United these states so they told US

Tragic this black magic American hocus pocus

The flack and static like electric ghosts

Anger it seethes scorches and roasts

As skeletons with daisies dance on their toes

America barely ... and everyone knows

We treat ourselves unfairly and so it goes

Love and forgiveness nary Mired in angst and thanklessness we are buried

My o my Why o why Our children go hungry their fathers die

As a Mother sits lonely she weeps and cries

Time to open our eyes reprise America before she dies

Create new parallels form new minds

Unite the perilous suffering and blind

Remake America strong and wise

Eliminate hate no longer our neighbors we despise

Recreate this wondrous enterprise

Give US purple mountain majesty not drug addicted travesty

Give US cobalt skies and smiling eyes

As we try and deny the American lie

Douglas Brayton
Shelton

OPINION

THESE TIMES

A visit to McMicken Island

Things seen, heard and learned during a sunny late Sunday afternoon, at low tide, on McMicken Island, a state park – a marine park – on the east side of Harstine Island:

■ If you don't have a boat, you can walk onto the island at low tide by way of a narrow stretch of sand that connects McMicken to Harstine. Such a stretch of land is called a "tombolo," a word that comes to us from Italy. When the tide recedes and exposes the tombolo, the connected island is then known as a "tied island." The tombolo to McMicken Island at low tide is firm, about 100 yards long and 15 yards wide, and is covered with shards of clam shells. You have several hours on either side of low tide to make the passage, but if you dawdle on the island and the land bridge gets swallowed by water, you'll become a cast-away.

■ It appears trees die of old age on McMicken Island. I saw a senior citizen fir tree with a thick girth covered in layers upon layers of bark that looked pale and sickly. The tree's crown was almost gone and the tree listed a bit. It was dying at its own pace with little influence from humans. On McMicken Island, it's business as usual for trees.

■ I didn't see any sign of two of the most pernicious plant invaders in Western Washington: Himalayan blackberry and English ivy. McMicken Island might be a fortress against the British invasion.

■ If the sky is clear enough, you can see Mount Rainier, looking resplendent as usual, looming over Key Peninsula, and to the south you can see Mount Adams, our state's second tallest mountain. Seeing nothing but sea, sky and mountains might remind you that concrete doesn't last forever.

■ Two crows cawed constantly at us during our journey along the mile-long trail on the island. I wished I understood

what they were saying. Perhaps it had something to do with their kids. Maybe they were trying to shoo us from their home, but their message was lost on us. When we returned across the tombolo after a

couple of hours on the island, the crows' attention turned to a bald eagle perched on a snag on the southeast corner of the island. One of the crows was taking noisy bombing runs at the eagle, pulling up at the last second. I watched the eagle through binoculars and saw it remain still as a statue in response to the crow's behavior. The eagle was acting like a parent who had had enough of the kids' whining. Just ignore them. They'll calm down. Crows always seem to be pestering their neighbors.

■ We saw a cigarette butt next to a sawed log. That was it for litter.

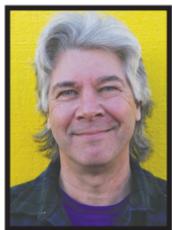
■ Several times we saw splashes of white on the green broad leaves, a sign of nesting birds above. We also saw clam shells on the forest floor. Perhaps birds like to perch in trees and eat clams on the half shell?

■ If I was a bird, I'd never leave McMicken Island, unless I wanted french fries.

■ Twigs on downed tree branches along the shoreline are enmeshed in seaweed, which binds tight like paper mache. You get a crinkling sound when you squeeze the seaweed.

■ Our final sight of McMicken Island was a group of Canada geese – seven wee ones and two big ones – paddling through a seaweed bed a few feet off the tombolo. The parents were in the lead, creating a path through the seaweed, and the children trailed, precisely following the meandering trail cut by the parents. Beyond the gaggle of geese, the eagle in the tree gave them no heed, nor did Mount Rainier.

■ Contact Kirk Ericson at kirk@masoncounty.com



By KIRK ERICSON

EDITOR'S DESK

Labels don't tell the whole story

The homeless man looked like a mess. Waiting in a Columbus, Ohio, emergency room, it was his turn to tell the staff member why he was there.

But instead of listing his ailments, he looked back at a young couple with an infant. He pointed at them. The couple didn't understand the purpose of the gesture.

The emergency room greeter, stationed behind a bulletproof glass window, then motioned to the man, woman and child. The homeless man sat back down.

The young man approached the window. What had that man said?

He wanted to ensure that the baby received medical care first, the greeter told the couple.

"He just had a big heart," the man, now a colleague of mine, recalled more than 25 years later.

How often do we make judgments about the homeless man walking in front of our businesses in downtown Shelton? We lump every homeless individual into a neat category – they're all drug addicts

who are too lazy to get a job. They are panhandlers. They don't deserve a hand-out – they'll just spend it on alcohol. Why don't the cops just arrest them?

Counter to our thoughts, labels, while easy for us to use, are rarely accurate. People don't fit into nice, easy-to-sort categories. People are individuals.

Think about all the ways we label groups of people. We label people by race or sex.

We label them by economic status. We label them by height or weight, or by gay or straight.

We love to label groups of people in political parties, especially these days. Our state legislators – state Reps. Dan Griffey and Drew MacEwen, and state Sen. Tim Sheldon used labels to throw barbs at their opposition last week during a legislative wrapup before the regular Shelton City Council meeting.

MacEwen called his colleagues in Olympia "the most un-business Legislature I have seen." Sheldon, a Democrat, criticized colleagues in his own party, stating "rural areas matter, and it doesn't revolve around the

Space Needle." Griffey put a label on his prediction for 2020 – "toxic division" in Olympia.

Labels are easy to use. But what if we try to move beyond them? How about instead of marginalizing somebody who is different than us, we look people as individuals?

Washington skies are rarely bright blue or dark blue. They're usually a shade of gray. Keep this in mind when you talk with friends, colleagues and strangers.

Just as an exercise at home, try to notice during your daily conversations how many times you use labels when you refer to groups of people. I bet you'll be surprised how often and easy it is to do.

Only by recognizing the way that we label one another can we go beyond the label – just because somebody is homeless doesn't mean they're a drug addict. Just because somebody is a Republican or a Democrat doesn't mean they're wrong.

We can be so much better – ditch the labels.

■ Adam Rudnick is the editor in chief for the Shelton-Mason County Journal. He can be reached at adam@masoncounty.com.



By ADAM RUDNICK



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The *Journal* encourages original letters to the editor of local interest. Diverse and varied opinions are welcomed. We will not publish letters that are deemed libelous or scurrilous in nature. All letters must be signed and include the writer's name, address and daytime phone number, which will be used for verification purposes only. All letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. To submit a letter, email adam@masoncounty.com, drop it off at 227 W. Cota St., or mail it to P.O. Box 430, Shelton, WA 98584.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Can Mason County follow Jefferson Co.?

Editor, the *Journal*

I live just outside the Shelton city limits. Along with my neighbors, we notice that first responders out here are often from the Shelton city police. I'm wondering if we could follow the example of the Jefferson County sheriff. He has deputized the Port Townsend police officers so that they can act with more authority when outside Port Townsend city limits.

Monte Ritter
Shelton

Nice work, cemetery groundskeepers

Editor, the *Journal*

A big shout-out to the Shelton Cemetery groundskeepers for their excellent job getting the cemetery ready for Memorial Day. It looked amazing. Thank you!

Also, thanks to the Scouts for putting the flags on the veterans' graves. A job well done!

It warmed my heart to see everything looking so nice in honor of our departed vets.

Lois Heinrich
Shelton

Here's a change that works for everyone

Editor, the *Journal*

There is an answer to the health care crisis, one that fits within America's DNA. America's DNA is not socialism, nor is it the pure, adulterated greed of capitalism. American DNA says two things: we are capitalistic and innovative by nature, but socialistic and benevolent at the same time. We cannot fight who we are as a nation any more than a rhinoceros who wants to be a cow. It cannot happen. As long as we keep trying, it is like running our head into a wall over and over when a door is 3 feet away. We need to just walk through the door.

There are two prongs to the solution for health care in this nation: Having the money to pay for it yearly, and getting the costs permanently lowered by removing the myriad of legal monopolistic loopholes existing in the present system.

For lack of space, here is the plan to get the money yearly. Health care in 2017 was \$3.5 trillion per year. Let's pretend that is the yearly goal: the government needs to get \$3.5 trillion in revenue to pay for it.

The entire IRS intake in 2017 was \$3.4 trillion, \$0.1 trillion (\$100 billion) short of what is needed. Clearly, traditional tax revenue cannot solve this.

Then there is the Robin Hood theory. We will rob the 15 richest Americans and give to health care. But we won't just rob them, we will make them homeless and without a penny. We will seize all their assets and turn it into health care payments. The total is \$0.9 trillion (\$900 billion), only about a quarter of what is needed for a one-time payment toward health care for one year.

Where can that money be found? The way the tax system works today, the government taxes income. There are so many ways to hide and obfuscate income that it is ridiculous that a company like Amazon paid zero in taxes. But even if the income was taxed, the entire GDP for the United States is around \$20 trillion, give or take. There is no room for \$3.5 trillion dollars within the GDP.

Everything mentioned so far represents tiny creeks of money flow. We need a river.

There is a river of money where all these needs can be met. Every year, almost \$200 trillion in treasury securities flow. In addition, approximately \$70 trillion flows in the combination of stocks, and another \$40 trillion flows in the bond market.

That is a \$300 trillion dollar annual river flow! I propose that out of the \$300 trillion river flow, the government takes \$5 trillion (around 1.7 percent), and uses that to cover health care, all present student loan debts, and in addition, cover the cost of higher education. Wall Street and our beloved markets can handle that. Sure, there will be a tiny blip as they get used to the adjustment, however, the benefits would dwarf the "pinky" hurt on Wall Street.

It also brings hope and resolve to our health care industry. Our students can go to college for free. Foreign money buying U.S. assets would be taxed, not just off of profits easily hidden, but upstream where the money comes into the system. And, drum roll: it finally pays restitution to Main Street for the devastation a few years ago by Wall Street. And this approach by no means stops capitalism. It simply forces Wall Street to pay their dues to society for their privilege of raining wealth onto the top 1%. There are certainly details to work out, but isn't it time for a change that works for everyone?

John Gunter
Belfair

Public safety tax is needed

Editor, the *Journal*

I support the tax for safety. Mason County commissioners are giving us the option

to pay for more law enforcement and more jail space. I think we need it and I'm glad we are being asked, not told in August. We currently are paying a sales tax of 8.7 cents, so this is not even a penny on the dollar.

I think it's important to look at the savings when keeping our citizens safe. Insurance rates drop, people invest in the community and we are all safer. Without it, we may look as dirty and unappealing as a Seattle.

When people move away to safer locations the tax bill we all get increases. All property owners split the spending; it's apportioned by value with properties worth more paying more. So even if your home decreases in value the portion of the pie you pay is still very high.

I get that people are exhausted. But I'm scared. Our community has changed and we need to do something about it. I went to pay my bill at Mason General last week and I parked next to a guy wielding a club and swinging it aggressively next to McDonald's. When I left 15 minutes later, a woman who appeared on drugs was holding a jacket up to her chest to cover herself and nearly stumbled into my car as I was pulling out of the parking lot. This was about 10 a.m.

It's not what it used to be around here and I'll pay one-third of a penny to change it. I already pay that when I shop in Thurston County. Even more of a reason to shop local.

Dinah Griffey
Allyn

Happy 50th anniversary, bridge celebrants

Editor, the *Journal*

There are many different kinds of bridges. The bridge of your nose. The bridge dentists use to connect gaping teeth. The bridge that people play at a card table. A landscaping bridge. My second most favorite bridge is Harstine Island Bridge. The beauty seen in its crossing these past 32 years is a song in my heart.

My favorite bridge, though, is not made of concrete. My favorite bridge is you and me. In our society, so divided right now, I think we are being called to be healing bridges with one another.

It's in our ancient human DNA, passed down through the generations, for safety and comfort purposes, that we humans still want to gather most-often with people who look like us, sound like us, vote like us, worship like us, think like us, engage in sexuality like us, and do things like us. There are always exceptions; but overall, we tend to gather with others who are in similar socio-political-economic brackets, educational

levels, ethnicity and age. We tend to gather with others who might be going through similar hardships in life.

There's nothing inherently wrong with any of that. In fact, in many cases, it's a good thing. We people need affinity groups for mutual support, especially during times of high stress. I know I do. Groups of like-minded people can get a lot done around common goals. Affinity groups are not a bad thing. But, what might we individually — and together — do right now to help bring healing to our beloved country and communities? How can we be a bridge to those in our community who are perceived to be oh-so-different than ourselves?

The science from the National Human Genome Institute a few years ago showed that human beings are 99.9% identical in genetic makeup. Yet, we want to divide ourselves in all sorts of ways! We call one another by different colors: white, black, brown, yellow. We're not crayons! We're one color! That color is called flesh. People belonging to minority human groups share a common experience: that of being alienated by majority human groups. Humanity's inhumanity to humanity has skyrocketed these past few years.

So ... how are we to be a bridge rather than a wall to others perceived as being oh-so-different than ourselves?

It's pretty easy to see the divisions (especially in brutal letters to the editor or leadership meetings), but I've also seen a beautiful kind of bridging too. Instead of an eye-rolling glance to another person, or walking away from a challenging conversation, I've seen accompaniment. I've seen an intent to speak one's mind, but done with actively listening with respect and curiosity. I've seen a seeking to understand another's perspective with empathy. I've seen humility and an offering of apology when an apology is due. I've seen vulnerable and honest communication rather than superior attitudes. I've seen hospitality in welcoming the stranger. I've seen hospitality offered instead of payback for hostility. All that is a bridge of grace, a generosity of spirit. Keep up the amazing and challenging work, dear neighbors and friends!

To the Harstine Island bridge, and to you, I say thank you, thank you for not being a wall or a moat, but rather, a bridge, a bridge to our healing future!

Jeannine Daggett
Shelton

Kudos to letter-writer

Editor, the *Journal*

I read with pleasure Patricia Vandehey's letter to the *Journal* published June 6, titled "Tough to find excuses for stupidity." I have been

wanting to reply to a number of particularly stupid letters published in the *Journal* lately; now I am glad I waited.

Patricia hit all of the correct notes with her letter. There is nothing I would add, and nothing I would take away. And, while you cannot fix stupid, you can put stupid in its place with a well-constructed letter.

Well said, Mrs. Vandehey, very well said.

Katherine Price
Shelton

First debates right around the corner

Editor, the *Journal*

The first debates for the Democrat presidential nomination are just a few days away (I can't wait!). It's still very early in the race, and analysis of the candidates may seem premature, but remember, these are Democrats. In my view, they are wrong about most everything, but reliably fun to watch and listen to.

I want to make some remarks about the scary Kamala Harris, but first, let's see where the leaders stand. Poll positions remain pretty much the same, but we now can see some cracks in the rafters.

Creepy Joe Biden (now Plagarizin' Joe II) still leads it all, but has flip-flopped, again, and is now opposed to the Hyde amendment, a 1976 appropriations bill attachment that prevents government (you) from paying for abortions. He's trailed by the usual suspects: Crazy Bernie, Warren, Harris, Buttigieg, O'Rourke (what?!) and Spartacus (Booker).

After the leaders, there's a thundering herd of 2 percenters or below. Every one is a "Democratic socialist" of some degree, a power-hungry, bug government statist, if you will, each trying to out-liberal the others. (Biden is sheepishly trying to be seen as a member of this bunch). All would likely call for impeaching a tree, were there a Trump poster on it.

I said in an earlier letter that *National Review* columnist Jim Geraghty described this race as a "clown car primary." He now says, though, "maybe the more modern comparison would be Netflix, there's no shortage of options, but after awhile they all start to look the same."

I'm afraid Kamela will have to wait. This whole contest is becoming more interesting than just one candidate. Besides, I can detect a certain Hillary quality in Harris. She gives me the creeps. I'd rather put her aside for now and just try to enjoy the weekend.

Robert E. Graham
Union

LETTERS cont. from page A-5

MGH recently saved my life

Editor, the Journal

Mason County, are you aware of the jewel we have in the Mason County Hospital, right here in our community? I had an experience with urgent care and the emergency room that literally saved my life. Let me explain. I hope editor Adam will let me tell the story, including language.

I have bladder cancer. I had major surgery at St. Joseph's Hospital in Tacoma on April 15. On May 24, in spite of my vitals all being normal, the visiting nurse suggested my breathing was much too labored and suggested urgent care. I saw someone at 4 p.m. I don't know if he was a nurse or a doctor, I just know after about five minutes of working on me, he put me in a wheelchair, took me to the door of urgent care and said, "I want you to go to the building across the parking lot, that's the emergency room. We can take you over by wheel chair, we call an ambulance or if you think you can make it your friend can drive you."

My friend drove me. Upon arrival, I handed them the paper the urgent care person gave me and I immediately became first priority of the emergency room. I was wheeled into a medical room



and people began working on me.

A doctor came in and looked at the result of a few of the tests, asks for more tests, and disappeared. About 20 minutes later, he returned. He told me, "They want your driver to drive you to Olympia to St. Peter's emergency room and ... oh hell, that's not right." He left.

I could only imagine this

emergency room doctor arguing with that big, bad insurance company on the evening of the beginning of a three-day holiday weekend. He evidently got the attention of the doctors at Kaiser Permanente (the replacement for Group Health) or the insurance company at Kaiser Permanente, because he told me that at about midnight an ambulance was going to take me to St.

Joseph's in Tacoma.

I spent 10 nights at St. Joseph's. I was in AFib, had a raging urinary tract infection and had sepsis. This all began with someone in urgent care and continued with a doctor in emergency care who would not back down from Kaiser Permanente insurance company. Mason County, you have a great resource in Mason Gen-

eral Hospital, especially the people. Please honor them, respect them, and support them.

My goal now is to find the two people, one in urgent care and one at the emergency room, who fought for me. I want to give them both a big hug and a big thank you!

Ardean A. Anvik
Shelton



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