

From the editor —

Being a patriotic citizen

This weekend marks the 244th anniversary of our declaring our independence, when, as Lincoln said at Gettysburg, “our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.”

This is the perfect moment to consider binding up our nation’s wounds, as he also wrote, in his second inaugural address.

Our nation. Our wounds. Our defense. It is us, plural. We are both citizens and patriots together. Patriots defend us, the people, our country. That is we, together, whether it is the community of La Conner, the state of Washington or the entire United States.

Everyone is a citizen. That comes with obligations and responsibilities, but the only enforcement is internal. Each of us is guided by ethics and shaped by our environment and education.

We are citizens together, but each citizen decides how to interact with her neighbors and participate in the community. Attending meetings, speaking in public, writing letters, voting, these are all icing on the cake of community that make it denser, richer, tastier and more vibrant for others as well as oneself. All of these are necessary, but none are mandatory.

Citizenship’s responsibilities are all voluntary. That is the wonderful, frustrating miracle of democracy. We trust, and thus depend on each other. Yet anyone has the freedom to absent herself. But individualism does not mean disregarding the governor’s public health directive. That is neither freedom nor choice. That is chaos. It is the non-choice of shouting fire in a crowded theatre. Anyone making that choice can destroy lives, literally.

Some, calling themselves patriots, are eager to do what they want, freedom for themselves. That confuses patriotism with narcissism, a love of oneself and, in the dictionary definition, a lack of empathy.

Samuel Johnson, a wise Englishman who observed his country carefully 250 years ago, found that “patriotism is the last refuge of a scoundrel.” When one fails to make a solid case, he makes a show of wrapping himself in the flag.

But true patriots defend their fellow citizens. Patriots protect the community. Love of country is not the bluster to do what you please. That is immaturity. Real patriots defend their neighbors. Today, in the midst of a pandemic that has killed 125,000 of their fellow citizens and is growing in size daily, arguing for the freedom to spit out breath that may contain a virus that has no cure is no public health policy at all.

Public health departments and professionals exist to protect the community. They are another breed of first responders. They defend the young and old, the most vulnerable among us. The very nature of their work is patriotic.

They are preaching the gospel that the first line of defense of our citizens and country is mask wearing.

By definition, patriots sacrifice for their neighbors. If wearing a mask is bad for your image or fogs your glasses or makes you claustrophobic, or worse, you feel you can’t breathe, the patriotic thing to do is suck it up and march on. It is because of your fellow citizens that you act patriotically.

Anyone who is not sacrificing for their fellow citizens and the safety and health of their country to ensure the glory of its future is not much of a patriot.

Our time tries men’s souls, as Thomas Paine wrote in “The Crisis” in the early, dark days of the Revolutionary War, continuing: “The summer soldier and the sunshine patriot will, in this crisis, shrink from the service of his country; but he that stands by it now, deserves the love and thanks of man and woman.”

The struggle today is to mask up – that and keep six feet of distance and keep from mixing with more than five people a week who are not members of your household.

Those are our marching orders, as critical as any given to any soldiers at any time.

– ken stern

Musings – on the editor’s mind

I have received the best third year anniversary gift ever from the people around the country embracing the Black Lives Matter movement: Hope. This surprise gift welled up inside of me recently, completely unexpected, as I reflected on finishing my third year as owner of the Weekly News. What are the important nuggets that I have mined since July 2017 when I started here? What have I experienced and learned?

Turns out that the lesson is life-long, not from La Conner at all. That happens sometimes.

My version of the last 50-plus years of life in these United States is that it has been a bumpy ride at best. If a highpoint was landing on the moon in 1969, that bright shining moment is sandwiched between a lot of – sorry folks – wars, riots, chaos and an economic prosperity for some that has not lifted all boats but has sunk many small craft.

For decades I have marked the loss of any sense of hope as 1968, the year of assassinations and riots. Killed were Martin Luther King, Jr. and Bobby Kennedy. The Democratic convention in Chicago brought cops into the streets and Richard Nixon was elected president while George Wallace won five southern states.

All that happened just as the movie version of The Beatles “Yellow Submarine” appeared. “Yellow Submarine” was the last anthem of innocence. What a silly tune, and a cartoon movie, too: “We all live in a yellow submarine, yellow submarine, yellow submarine.” What did it mean? What did it matter? In a time of innocence and hope, meaning wasn’t always first, or needed.

(Continued on Page 8)

• LETTERS •

Biden also dodged draft

Mel Damski is pleading for President Trump to resign because he knows that is the only way Sleepy Joe could win. Can you imagine if he did resign and we were stuck with a President Biden, who can’t put a coherent sentence together, sniffs young women and girl’s hair and supports the Democrat mayors who are letting mobs ravage our cities and who has a son who reaps millions because of daddy’s political influence? And, yes, Joe avoided the draft by claiming he has asthma. Funny but I have not noticed him ever having trouble breathing. Oh, wait, maybe hair sniffing helps his asthma.

Here is a quote from the net on how his asthma gave him troubles: He was six feet tall and had an athlete’s build. He played football in high school and was active in sports throughout college. He spent one summer as a lifeguard at a local pool. But after he graduated college in the spring of 1968 and became eligible for the draft and – possibly – combat duty in Vietnam, he received a diagnosis that let him avoid military service. No, not bone spurs. Asthma. Mike Morrell
La Conner

Suzanne Woodard for LD 10 Rep

The COVID-19 pandemic has exposed the injustices and inequalities that have plagued our society and our state for far too long. Too often, our state representatives in Olympia have not placed people first. Our health and safety should be a priority; working people should have livable wages; strong education must be the foundation of life and work; transportation ought to meet the demands of our 21st century economy; and sustainable farms, forests, and fisheries will create sustainable jobs.

Now is the time to elect people like us to represent our needs in Olympia. Suzanne Woodard is that kind of leader. A neonatal nurse for three decades in the north Puget Sound, and now a specialized newborn services educator, Suzanne understands how critical well-trained health care workers are, especially in rural areas like ours. A union leader, and the daughter of union workers, she knows the value of labor and how important it is to create and sustain well-paying jobs. A long-time advocate for health and labor, she knows all too well how some legislators put the needs of corporations above the priorities of our families.

Suzanne will put people first! As our representative, Suzanne Woodard will be an unyielding advocate for our health, delivering needed reforms and investments that will ensure no one has to choose between a prescription or a bill. She will build on the work already in progress to assist those with mental and behavioral health issues and tackle the real problem of under-housing across our communities.

Suzanne will stand up for our rural schools, ensuring they are allocated the resources needed for our children’s success, while also championing the need for affordable childcare. For our health, and the health of our local economy, she will develop and enact legislation that will ensure the sustainability of our environment and maintain our quality of life that is so dependent on fishing, recreation and tourism.

Now is the time for a healthy change. Now is the time to elect Suzanne Woodard as our next state representative for the 10th LD.

Albert Ondo
Oak Harbor

A citizen’s view —

What Would POTUS Say? A Rebuttal

By Patricia Bonacic (aka the DONALDoppelganger)

Dear Mel and Ken,

I am writing in response to your respective editorials printed about me in the La Conner Weekly News last week. The newspaper had evidentially been used to wrap up shrimp, and other such fish, and was mailed to a White House aide for his birthday. He brought it to the attention of Jared who then immediately directed it to me. It stinks to high heaven, let me tell you!

I have never heard of La Conner but, judging from your advice and analysis of my presidency, I am seriously considering sending in my armed troops to knock a few heads together, once they have cleaned up The CHOP Erogenous Zone in Seattle. Meanwhile let me set you straight on a few things so you begin to appreciate the greatness and quantum intelligence of my presidency: the likes of which have never been seen in this country, in the history of the world, or in other worlds and galaxies soon to be exploited by my Trump Space Force, of which I am the Commander in Chief, Supreme Leader, AND Starfleet Admiral!

Let me cut to the chase, because I learned from the best! From a man who has no fear, no boundaries, no conscience, no scruples ... none other than Mitch McConnell, OF COURSE! His disdain for the truth, the cutthroat way he wields power in the Senate and Republican Party, and his obvious contempt for the first Black president of the United States was a master class of self-obsession in the midst of the second greatest recession this country has known!

While countless Americans were losing their homes, jobs and life savings, to say nothing of the imminent collapse of the American economy, Mitch showed up night after night on television determined to thwart President Obama’s efforts in this time of crisis at every turn. He never compromised, regardless of how the citizens suffered, because he was out to get his man whatever the cost!

Mitch McConnell had a dream and so do I! Neither of us were asleep at the hull! All of those angry, blue collar Americans, left devastated and adrift after the recession, needed someone to look up to. While Obama was kept busy feeding off Mitch, and his Republican posse, I seized my chance. This was my kind of opportunity: just call me an opportunistic farmer ready to reap a harvest of discontent, division and self-pity.

World-wide pandemic? What is that to Mitch and me? Mitch will retire even wealthier for his wife’s ties to China and their successful business dealings with that country. My kids are running the family businesses – often traveling on the taxpayer’s dime, including bodyguards and security.

Oh, and Mel – I appreciate you are there for me, but I have important friends in high places. Foreign places! They like the way I do business. I like the way I do business. I like the way they and I do business. We do business together very well – probably better than anyone has ever done business before. We will continue to do business because my people are behind me – marching in lockstep, with their hands held high in salute just the way I like it.

The only way I will lose this election is if the voting system is rigged so only mail in and paper ballots are used – oh, and EVERY CITIZEN WILL NEED TO SUPPORT THE ELECTION PROCESS AND TURN OUT TO VOTE!

As they say in Russia: “Do svidaniya i udachi” – goodbye and good luck!

The President

Patricia Bonacic is a La Conner resident who misses the integrity and resilience of the Obama Administration. She finds this especially notable in light of the personal and political adversity faced by President Obama while in office.

No McLean Road construction till mid-July

Rain in the Skagit River watershed and high river flow has halted Drainage and Irrigation District 15’s McLean Road drainage pipe construction project for at least two weeks, said Steve Elde, a District 15 commissioner, Monday. Elde reported the river flowing at 26,000 to 30,000 cubic feet per second, raising the water table.

The return to work depends on river flow, Elde said. July 13 is the earliest project start date.

The project, east of Avon Allen Road on the south side of McLean Road, replaces 2,500 feet of early 1900s drainage pipe going west to Penn Road. Completion will be by July’s end, depending on weather.



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