

Letters to the Editor

'Repurposing' auditorium doesn't disrespect veterans

To the Editor:

As our city commissioners do their best to serve all the people of Manhattan in the most money-saving way possible, the issue of the Peace Memorial Auditorium has arisen. It is suggested that "the people" be heard from. So far, that has included tearful veterans who deplore using space that is now used for a stage, destroying the memorial to themselves.

A letter in the Mercury from Robert Beardsley of Leavenworth renames World War II the "second Great War." He writes that it would show "supreme disrespect" to the veterans of the second Great War to repurpose the memorial space.

While our city commissioners try to not waste money, concerned citizens are suggesting ways of using the stage,

apparently unconcerned that using the auditorium involves after-hours maintenance and staff wasting time for the event to be over so they can close up. And such wasted expense should be justified by saying it was to make use of the memorial stage. Bad thinking.

Who will show up to express opinions about the memorial? It will be the tearful ones who believe their service was more important than those who fought in other battles or in any of the numerous wars we have had since World War II.

Those who will not be heard from are families who now struggle to raise children while a loved one is on his or her fourth or fifth deployment in harm's way.

Nor will we hear from the families of loved ones who now lie in hospital beds with multiple amputations. Or those whose loved ones suffer from the mental destruction of multiple deployments.

Shouldn't we trust our city commissioners to handle the "here and now" of our city instead of a selective memorialization of those who demand loudest that they be recognized? Please, let us not discount the value of every person who served our country regardless of where they were from. Space used for city offices is space honorably used. It disrespects no one.

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