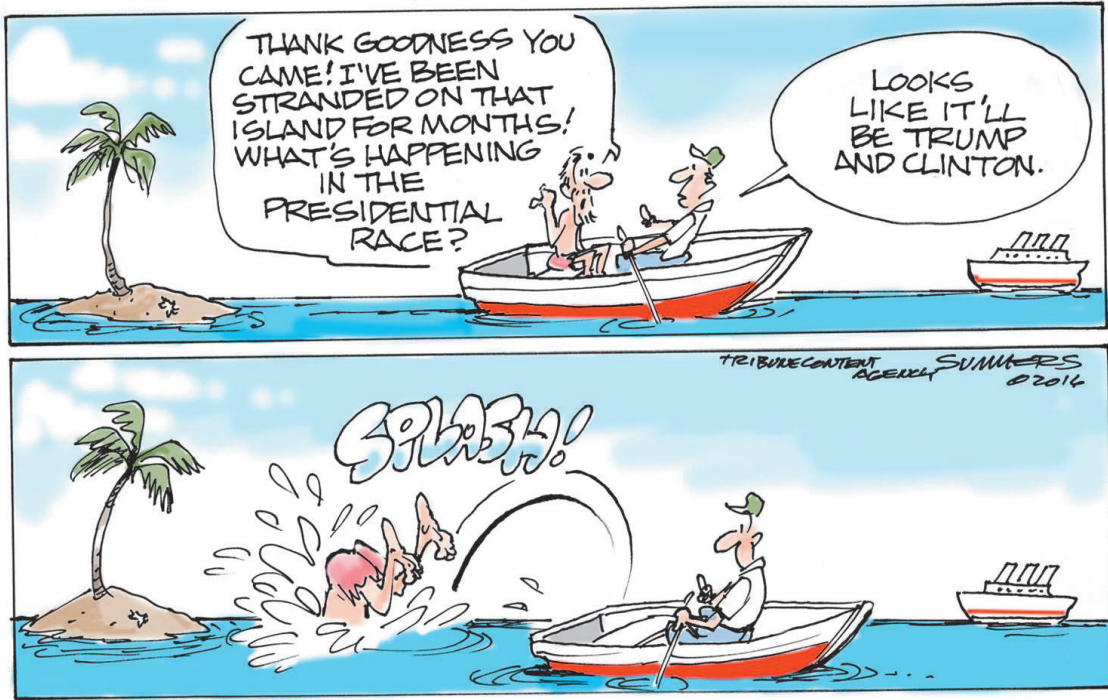


O P I N I O N



Letters to the Editor...

The Nugget welcomes contributions from its readers, which must include the writer's name, address and phone number. Letters to the Editor is an open forum for the community and contains unsolicited opinions not necessarily shared by the Editor. The Nugget reserves the right to edit, omit, respond or ask for a response to letters submitted to the Editor. Letters should be no longer than 300 words. Unpublished items are not acknowledged or returned. The deadline for all letters is noon Monday.

To the Editor:

What a great editorial ("Saving the West," *The Nugget*, February 17, pg. 2).

I was born and raised in Burns and my grandparents were cattle ranchers. I spent many days at the refuge because my grandparents were good friends of the first manager of the refuge. His name was John Scharff. Also the fishing was good at the Blitzen River.

Every year (first of April) there is the John Scharff Migratory Bird Festival and people come from all over the US. All kinds of workshops and birding trips. Two years ago, within about six hours, I counted 62 different species of birds. I hope the refuge headquarters can be restored before this year's festival.

I've talked to a couple of friends who told me how this whole event has divided the community. Maybe we need to send Robyn Holdman and Speak Your Peace over there.

I'm so afraid of what that bunch of hooligans have done to the refuge headquarters. There is/was a very old small museum with stuffed birds of the refuge and some Paiute artifacts.

Again, thank you for writing this editorial.
Ann Marland



To the Editor:

The column "A thank-you to police officers," written by Dan Glode in the February 17 *Nugget*, needs to be applauded and praised.

We are so grateful to the men and women who help and protect us silently every day of our lives. A perfect example is our cousin's son-in-law, Jason Schermerhorn, who is the chief of police in Cannon Beach and was best friend of Jason Gooding, the 39-year-old policeman who was shot and killed recently while trying to arrest a felon in Seaside.

Not only does Jason work so diligently and long hours as police chief, but also as a volunteer fireman. He was injured in the Seaside fire which happened last month and had to have a knee repaired. His wife, Jennifer, has been a 911 operator.

Jason Gooding's life was honored by the

See **LETTERS** on page 22

Sisters Weather Forecast

Courtesy of the National Weather Service, Pendleton, Oregon

Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	Monday
Partly sunny 57/30	Partly sunny 58/33	Mostly sunny 60/37	Rain 52/33	Mostly cloudy 53/32	Partly sunny 53/na

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Robert B. Reich

American Voices

"I wish that we could elect a Democratic president who could wave a magic wand and say, 'We shall do this, and we shall do that,'" Hillary Clinton said recently in response to Bernie Sanders' proposals. "That ain't the real world we're living in."

So what's possible in "the real world we're living in?"

There are two dominant views about how presidents accomplish fundamental change.

The first might be called the "dealmaker in chief," by which presidents threaten or buy off powerful opponents. Barack Obama got the Affordable Care Act this way—gaining the support of the pharmaceutical industry, for example, by promising them far more business and guaranteeing that Medicare wouldn't use its vast bargaining power to negotiate lower drug prices.

But such deals can be expensive to the public (the tab for the pharmaceutical exemption is about \$16 billion a year), and they don't really change the allocation of power. They just allow powerful interests to cash in.

The costs of such deals in "the world we're living in" are likely to be even higher now. Powerful interests are more powerful than ever thanks to the Supreme Court's 2010 Citizens United decision opening the floodgates to big money.

Which takes us to the second view about how presidents accomplish big things that powerful interests don't want: by mobilizing the public to demand them and penalize politicians who don't heed those demands.

Teddy Roosevelt got a progressive income tax, limits on corporate campaign contributions, regulation of foods and drugs, and the dissolution of giant trusts—not because he was a great dealmaker but because he added fuel to growing public demands for such changes.

It was at a point in American history similar to our own. Giant corporations and a handful of wealthy people dominated American democracy. The lackeys of the "robber barons" literally placed sacks of cash on the desks of pliant legislators.

The American public was angry and frustrated.

Roosevelt channeled that anger and frustration into support of initiatives that altered the structure of power in America. He used the office of the president — his "bully pulpit," as he called it—to galvanize political action.

Could Hillary Clinton do the same? Could Bernie Sanders?

Clinton fashions her prospective presidency as a continuation of Obama's. Surely Obama understood the importance of mobilizing the public against the moneyed interests. After all, he had once been a community organizer.

After the 2008 election he even turned his election campaign into a new organization called "Organizing for America" (now dubbed "Organizing for Action"), explicitly designed to harness his grassroots support.

So why did Obama end up relying more on deal-making than public mobilization? Because he thought he needed big money for his 2012 campaign.

In the interim, Citizens United had freed "independent" groups like OFA to raise almost unlimited funds but retained limits on the size of contributions to formal political parties.

That's the heart of problem. No candidate or president can mobilize the public against the dominance of the moneyed interests while being dependent on their money. And no candidate or president can hope to break the connection between wealth and power without mobilizing the public.

(A few years ago, OFA wanted to screen around America the movie Jake Kornbluth and I did about widening inequality, "Inequality for All," but only on the condition that we delete two minutes identifying big Democratic donors. We refused. They wouldn't show it.)

In short, "the real world we're living in" right now won't allow fundamental change of the sort we need. It takes a movement.

It's about standing up to the moneyed interests and restoring our democracy.

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