

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Speak now on waterfront priorities

Next phase of Astoria visioning under scrutiny

Astoria has many success stories over the past couple of decades, but one of the most significant is the Riverwalk.

Connecting the east and west sides of town with a waterfront trail came about from a shared vision of professional planners and concerned citizens. But the development that accompanies it is always going to be a “work in progress.”

A Riverfront Vision Plan approved by the City Council in 2009 was created to better coordinate what gets built along the Columbia River.

With the trail in place, city residents and government leaders face a long-term balancing act: How best to preserve our wonderful river views while encouraging Astoria to stay true to its working waterfront heritage.

Residents have an opportunity tonight to contribute ideas on a piece of that puzzle in Uniontown.

A meeting at 6 p.m. at the Holiday Inn Express will give citizens an opportunity to discuss the Bridge Vista phase of the plan, which stretches from the Port of Astoria to Second Street.

The city's initial recommendations include a pedestrian-friendly zone near the Astoria Bridge that may feature commercial and residential additions. It may include

restrictions on vehicle access.

The process is well underway — but nothing is set in stone. Tonight's meeting will allow members of the Astoria Planning Commission to hear residents' reactions before making their recommendations to the City Council.

Proposed tall waterfront buildings which block views for homeowners on the hill have always been controversial — spawning vigorous opinions. But more factors are under the microscope here, including zoning, building design and setbacks, landscaping and off-street parking.

Bridge Vista is the second phase of the city's Riverfront Vision Plan. In October, leaders approved zoning changes along the Civic Greenway segment from 16th Street to 39th Street.

Two other phases involve the Urban Core from Second Street to 16th Street and the Neighborhood Greenway from 39th Street to the east end of Alderbrook Lagoon.

McLaren Innes, vice president of the planning commission, invites public participation.

Here is another case of speak up now or don't complain afterward.

Ducks show nation the stuff of champions

Northwest football fans have much to cheer about

Did you ever imagine the UO and OSU would compete for the national college football championship?

Unfortunately for Beaver fans, the Ducks will face off against that other OSU team: Ohio State University.

The matchup Monday will determine the first national champion under the new playoff system. Players — not sports writers, coaches or hidden businessmen — will determine the outcome. A welcome change, indeed.

The University of Oregon's rise to football's elite has been something to watch. Greatly aided by Phil Knight's largesse, the program has become a welcome Northwest alternative to

a sport long dominated by teams from the South and Southern California.

In Marcus Mariota, the Ducks not only have highly talented quarterback, they have someone who has brought back to college football a trait that has been missing for the last few years: character. Mariota's humility and respect for the game contrasts greatly with other celebrated quarterbacks who have sullied the sport with their behavior on and off the field.

With the Ducks in the national championship game and the Seattle Seahawks chasing their second Super Bowl victory, it is a thrilling time for Northwest football fans.

Where to write

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Hillary versus history

By GAIL COLLINS
New York Times News Service

When Hillary Clinton thinks about running for president, do you think she contemplates the fact that no Democrat has been elected to succeed another Democrat since James Buchanan in 1856?

We bring you this factoid in honor of the beginning of the 2016 election season. (Only 55 weeks until the New Hampshire primary!)

We've got so much time. It's the perfect moment for random irrelevant trivia about presidential elections of the past. Which, to be honest, is my favorite part.

Consider that succession information for a minute. We have had Democratic vice presidents step into office when the Democratic president died. But the voters haven't gone to the polls and elected one Democrat to follow another since before the Civil War.

What do you think this means? Actually, there weren't all that many Republicans who were elected to succeed Republicans either. Particularly if you acknowledge that Rutherford B. Hayes stole the election from Samuel Tilden. James Garfield did it, but then he was assassinated. William Howard Taft followed Theodore Roosevelt, and then Roosevelt came to hate Taft so much that he ran as a third-party candidate in 1912, throwing the election to Woodrow Wilson. Herbert Hoover succeeded Calvin Coolidge, and we know how well that one worked out. Finally, George H.W. Bush was elected after Ronald Reagan.

Wow, think about that. The only president elected to follow a member of his own party without creating some sort of cosmic disaster was George H.W. Bush. No wonder he always looks so cheerful.

These factoids refer only to elections between Republicans and Democrats. Even with nearly two years to go (but seven months until the Iowa straw poll!), we don't have enough time to deal with the Whigs. Our two current parties began duking it out in — yes! — 1856, when Buchanan ran



AP Photo/Jason DeCrow, File

Former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks after accepting the Robert F. Kennedy Ripple of Hope Award during a ceremony in New York, Dec. 16

against the first Republican presidential candidate, John Charles Frémont. Frémont was an explorer whose political enemies claimed had resorted to cannibalism during one unfortunate Western expedition. I am just telling you this to make it clear how interesting U.S. history can be.

Anyhow, Buchanan won and went on triumphantly to become possibly the worst president ever. Almost every chief executive in American history has his defenders. I had a very nice time last year talking with people who feel Warren Harding hasn't been given his due. But you very seldom run into fans of Buchanan, the man who cozied up to slaveholders and failed to stop Southern secession.

“He was terrible,” said Jean Baker, a professor of history at Goucher College and Buchanan biographer. This despite arriving in office with one of the best résumés in the history of presidential candidates: Buchanan had been a congressman, envoy to Russia, senator, secretary of state and minister to Britain. “He was sitting around waiting and waiting with the best CV of any president we've ever had. That's what's so ironic,” Baker said.

Did I mention that Buchanan was also the last former secretary of state elected president?

I don't think Clinton-Buchanan commonalities are likely to be a big concern. Liberals worry that Hillary might be overly aggressive when it comes to foreign policy; I don't think anybody thinks she'd sit on her hands and let any

states secede. (Only 58 weeks until the South Carolina primary!)

Still, it never hurts to push a little random presidential history into the mix, if only to liven things up for the next year or so. Any suggestions? I am in the market for some comparisons between Ted Cruz and Millard Fillmore.

But about James Buchanan: Baker thinks his unwillingness to stand up to the South was because, at least partly, of his close friendships with Southern politicians. (He described the abolition movement as “weak, powerless and soon to be forgotten” and referred to white men from the South as “the chivalrous race.”) Buchanan roomed with William King of Alabama during their Senate days, and the pair were so close that people referred to them as “Siamese twins.” King went on to become the only bachelor vice president, under Franklin Pierce. Buchanan, you may recall, was our only bachelor president.

Baker said that when she was writing her book on Buchanan, Arthur Schlesinger Jr., her editor, demanded that she “take a position on whether he was gay or not.” She demurred. Buchanan never said, and he spent a great deal of time pretending to be courting various widows, none of whom managed to get him anywhere near the altar. Baker wishes she could have said for sure: “It would have been one of the few things I could present as positive about James Buchanan.”

Well, he was kind to his nephews and nieces. He had two pet bald eagles, which sounds sort of interesting. And he was the only president who hailed from Pennsylvania. Perhaps I should point out that Joe Biden was born in Scranton.

Privilege of ‘arrest without incident’

By CHARLES M. BLOW
New York Times News Service

The day after Christmas, a shooter terrorized the streets of a Chattanooga, Tenn., neighborhood.

According to the local newspaper, the shooter was “wearing body armor” and “firing multiple shots out her window at people and cars.”

One witness told the paper that the shooter was “holding a gun out of the window as if it were a cigarette.”

There's more: “Officers found two people who said they were at a stop sign when a woman pulled up in a dark-colored sedan and fired shots into their vehicle, hitting and disabling the radiator. Then more calls reported a woman pointing a firearm at people as she passed them in her car, and that she fired at another vehicle in the same area.”

When police officers came upon the shooter, the shooter led them on a chase. The shooter even pointed the gun at a police officer.

Surely this was not going to end well. We've all seen in recent months what came of people who did far less. Surely in this case officers would have been justified in using whatever force they saw fit. Right?

According to the paper, the shooter was “taken into custody without incident or injury.”

Who was this shooter anyway? Julia Shields, a 45-year-old white woman.

Take a moment and consider this. Take a long moment. It is a good thing that officers took her in “without incident or injury,” of course, but can we imagine that result being universally the case if a shooter looks different? Would

this episode have ended this way if the shooter had been male, or black, or both?

It's an unanswerable question, but nevertheless one that deserves pondering. Every case is different. Police officers are human beings making split-second decisions — often informed by fears — about when to use force and the degree of that force.

But that truth is also the trap. How and why are our fears constructed and activated? The American mind has been poisoned, from this country's birth, against minority populations. People of color, particularly African-American men, have been caught up in a twister of macroaggressions and micro ones. No amount of ignoring can alleviate it; no amount of achieving can ameliorate it.

And in a few seconds, or fractions of a second, before the conscious mind can catch up to the racing heart, decisions are made that can't be unmade. Dead is forever.

It's hard to read stories like this and not believe that there is a double standard in the use of force by the police. Everyone needs to be treated as though his or her life matters. More suspected criminals need to be detained and tried in a court of law and not sentenced on the street to a rain of bullets.



Charles Blow

lice treat both equally.”

Michael Brown was unarmed. (Some witnesses in Ferguson, Mo., say he had his hands up. Others say he charged an officer.)

Eric Garner was unarmed on a Staten Island street.

Tamir Rice was 12 years old, walking around a Cleveland park and holding a toy gun that uses nonlethal plastic pellets, but he didn't

shoot at anyone.

John Crawford was in an Ohio Wal-Mart, holding, but not shooting, an air rifle he had picked up from a store shelf.

The police say Antonio Martin had a gun and pointed it at a police officer in Berkeley, Mo., but didn't fire it.

And Tuesday, the police say, a handgun was “revealed” during a New Jersey traffic stop of a car Jerome C. Reid was in.

But none had the privilege of being “arrested without incident or injury.” They were all black, all killed by police officers. Brown was shot through the head. Garner was grabbed around the neck in a chokehold, tossed to the ground and held there, even as he pleaded that he couldn't breathe; it was all caught on video. Rice was shot within two seconds of the police officers' arrival on the scene. Crawford, Martin and Reid were also cut down by police bullets.

In the cases that have been heard by grand juries, the grand juries have refused to indict the officers.

Maybe one could argue that in some of those cases the officers were within their rights to respond with lethal force. Maybe. But shouldn't the use of force be equal and gender-blind? Shouldn't more people, in equal measures, be taken in and not taken out?

Why weren't these black men, any of them, the recipients of the same use of force — or lack thereof — as Julia Shields?

You very seldom run into fans of Buchanan.

Before the conscious mind can catch up to the racing heart, decisions are made that can't be unmade.