

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Bad behavior

Port of Astoria gets its comeuppance

Astoria City Councilors Drew Herzig and Cindy Price did the right thing in voting against the enterprise zone proposed by the Port of Astoria. Herzig and Price were right for two reasons. They had the gumption to tell the imperial and wrong-headed Port of Astoria where to get off. And enterprise zones are not the economic development magnets that business groups would like us to believe.

The Port of Astoria's attitude is profoundly offensive to its neighbors. One may imagine a dialogue within the Port clubhouse: "How can we maximize the anger of our tenants?" asks a commissioner. "I know, let's remove the centerpiece of the Marine Services Center concept—the boatyard that lured Englund Marine and the others here!"

Another Port commissioner asks: "How can we ramp up Astorians' resentment of the Port? I know, let's screw with the Astoria Riverwalk and that little park."

The Port got three wake-up calls this week. The City Council deadlocked on the enterprise zone. Port Executive Director Jim Knight attended a meeting in Salem that was an intense reality check. And Tuesday night's overflow Port Commission meeting was a reminder that the public has intense interest in the Port Commission's self-destructive culture.

Councilor Herzig summed up the disconnect: "I don't know why the Port commissioners are

so tone deaf to how they come across to the public."

Knight returned from Salem with a revelation. The boatyard would not be closed. Instead the commission will (sound the trumpets) appoint a committee to study options.

Public bodies seldom reject enterprise zones. They have pledged allegiance to this bromide so many times that they believe in them.

These tax break schemes generate resentment among existing businesses who have started and expanded without tax breaks. And there is a point at which the tax break game becomes a money-losing proposition, because growth has a cost that taxpayers must pay.

Astoria's newest enterprises, such as Fort George Brewery, Buoy Beer and the Hampton Inn came without benefit of tax breaks.

The best economic development strategy a city can take is to improve its infrastructure. The Astoria Riverwalk (which the Port scorns) makes Astoria much more appealing.

Brown lets in sunshine; Obama closes the door

In a bold stroke of cruel irony, President Obama chose Sunshine Week to strike a blow for government secrecy. Obama closed a major window that Americans use for federal public records requests.

By contrast, Oregon Gov. Kate Brown has sent two bills to the Legislature that would greatly abet the cause of open and transparent government. Here are the major ingredients of Brown's bills.

- Require the state auditor to survey state agencies' disposition of public records requests.

- The position of first spouse or first lady would have the status of public official.

- No statewide elected official or the first spouse could take paying speaking engagements.

- Remove the requirement that a state ethics investigation must cease while a federal investigation begins.

- Reduce the amount of time the Ethics Commission has to decide whether to investigate a

complaint.

- Create an online reporting system to include Ethics Commission complaints filed and other procedural matters.

All of these proposals make abundant sense. They reflect a governor who seems to understand her moment in history. Under John Kitzhaber, the governor's office had become a travesty. It is time for the Legislature to draw new rules.

At the other end of the spectrum, President Obama on Freedom of Information Day is removing a federal regulation that subjects its Office of Administration to the Freedom of Information Act. This is no small matter, because this office has responded to FOIA requests for 30 years.

Doing this is diametrically opposed to Obama's professed desire for transparency.

If we have a president whose profile is losing clarity, we have a governor who wants to bring state government back in focus.

GUEST COLUMN

Proposals require scrutiny

By JIM KNIGHT
For The Daily Astorian

Recently, our community learned of a proposed project that would essentially change the look of nearly all Port property.

This included redeveloping Tongue Point into a large container shipping terminal, a new cruise ship terminal, significant development on the Skipanon Peninsula and an overhaul of the Warrenton-Astoria Regional Airport among other items.

Such a far-reaching project necessitates careful examination of each component and the potential impacts to our community.

Project proposals such as these, remind us of what a valuable potential asset our community has in our Port. They also remind us how important it is that the Port, with public participation, engages in careful examination of potential projects. Any project that creates significant opportunities for new jobs in Clatsop County requires careful analysis of our community's ability to absorb these jobs within our existing infrastructure.

For the Tongue Point portion of this proposed plan, in order to fully develop Great Ocean's strategy, it appears that Great Ocean plans to construct a large container and barge shipping terminal, among other things. These plans will purportedly create thousands of new jobs. One estimate was approximately 4,000



Jim Knight

It appears that Great Ocean plans to construct a large container and barge shipping terminal.

new jobs. With Astoria's current population of more than 9,500 and Clatsop County at more than 37,000 and average household sizes of nearly four per household in Astoria and over three in the county, adding 4,000 new jobs is not inconsequential.

Briefly, the Port's process for evaluating projects such as these include but are not limited to:

- Obtain sufficient information such as a business plan or a comprehensive proposal which contains verifiable data for evaluation.

- Assessment of the project's viability—is it possible? Is it sustainable?

- Determine the project's compatibility with the Port's mission, goals and strategic plans.

- Determine what potential cargoes will be handled when construction is

completed. Equally important, what cargoes won't be handled.

- Determine the potential impacts to the Port's existing customers.

- Determine potential environmental and economic impacts.

- Assess the impacts to our transportation systems in particular rail transport of cargo.

- Understand if the plan will support our various communities' vision and strategic plans.

- Will the project be embraced by the community?

Obviously, a project such as this creates innumerable important questions which must be answered before agreements can be executed. Careful examination of the project's components by Port staff and Commission along with public participation and frank discussion with the project promoters, will give our community the best possible outcome.

The Port looks forward to receiving the necessary information that will allow us to fairly evaluate the merits of Great Ocean's proposal. More importantly, the Port looks forward to engaging with our community to help determine whether or not this proposal and most likely, many more to come, can help us all continue to build an amazing community for generations to come.

Jim Knight is executive director of Port of Astoria.

The skill of herding cats

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

Several years ago, Doug Lemov began studying videos of excellent teachers.

He focused not on their big strategies but on their microgestures: How long they waited before calling on students to answer a question (to give the less confident students time to get their hands up); when they paced about the classroom and when they stood still (while issuing instructions, to emphasize the importance of what's being said); how they moved around the room toward a student whose mind might be wandering.



David Brooks

In an excellent piece on Lemov for *The Guardian*, Ian Leslie emphasizes that these subtle skills are often not recognized or even discussed by those who talk about education policy, or even by those who evaluate teachers.

Leslie notes that the Los Angeles school system tabulated the performance of roughly 6,000 teachers, using measures of student achievement. The best performing teacher in the whole system was a woman named Zenaïda Tan. Up until that report, she was completely unheralded. The skills she possessed were invisible. Meanwhile, less important traits were measured on her evaluations (three times she was late to pick up students from recess).

In part, Lemov is talking about the skill of herding cats. The master of cat herding senses when attention is about to wander, knows how fast to move a diverse group, senses the rhythm between lecturing and class participation, varies the emotional tone. This is a performance skill that surely is relevant beyond education.

This raises an important point. As the economy changes, the skills required to thrive in it change, too, and it takes a while before these new skills are defined and acknowledged.

For example, in today's loosely networked world, people with social courage have amazing value. Everyone goes to conferences and meets peo-



Daily Astorian File

Seaside High School English teacher Jan Priddy helps Josiah Price in 2013 with a worksheet on "Macbeth." Columnist David Brooks points out how a teacher's performance is enhanced by body movement and paying attention.

ple, but some people invite six people to lunch afterward and follow up with four carefully tended friendships forevermore. Then they spend their lives connecting people across networks.

People with social courage are extroverted in issuing invitations but introverted in conversation—willing to listen 70 percent of the time. They build not just contacts but actual friendships by engaging people on multiple levels. If you're interested in a new field, they can reel off the names of 10 people you should know. They develop large informal networks of contacts that transcend their organization and give them an independent power base. They are discriminating in their personal recommendations since character judgment is their primary currency.

Similarly, people who can capture amorphous trends with a clarifying label also have enormous worth. Karl Popper observed that there are clock problems and cloud problems. Clock problems can be divided into parts, but cloud problems are indivisible emergent systems. A culture problem is a cloud, so is a personality, an era and a social environment.

Since it is easier to think deductively, most people try to turn cloud problems into clock problems, but a few people are able to look at a complex situation, grasp the gist and clarify it by naming what is going on.

Such people tend to possess negative capacity, the ability to live with ambiguity and not leap to premature conclusions. They can absorb a stream

of disparate data and rest in it until they can synthesize it into one trend, pattern or generalization.

Such people can create a mental model that helps you think about a phenomenon. As Oswald Chambers put it, "The author who benefits you most is not the one who tells you something you did not know before, but the one who gives expression to the truth that has been dumbly struggling in you for utterance."

We can all think of many other skills that are especially valuable right now:

- Making nonhuman things intuitive to humans: This is what Steve Jobs did.

- Purpose provision: Many people go through life overwhelmed by options, afraid of closing off opportunities. But a few have fully cultivated moral passions and can help others choose the one thing they should dedicate themselves to.

- Opposability: F. Scott Fitzgerald wrote, "The test of a first-rate intelligence is the ability to hold two opposed ideas in mind at the same time and still retain the ability to function." For some reason I am continually running across people who believe this is the ability their employees and bosses need right now.

- Cross-class expertise: In a world dividing along class, ethnic and economic grounds some people are culturally multilingual. They can operate in an insular social niche while seeing it from the vantage point of an outsider.

One gets the impression we're confronted by a giant cultural lag. The economy emphasizes a new generation of skills, but our vocabulary describes the set required 30 years ago. Lord, if somebody could just identify the skills it takes to give a good briefing these days, that feat alone would deserve the Nobel Prize.

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