



Tom McCall



Mark Hatfield



Vic Atiyeh



John A. Kitzhaber

Former Oregon Govs. Tom McCall, Mark Hatfield and Vic Atiyeh left things better; John Kitzhaber left wreckage.

When humility vanishes, political wreckage follows

One consequence of John Kitzhaber's sudden resignation is that Oregon will elect a governor three times in three years. Kitzhaber's successor, Gov. Kate Brown, must run for election in 2016. Then we'll have another governor election in 2018.

Of all these, the pivotal race will be the Democratic primary election 14 months from now. The big question is whether state Treasurer Ted Wheeler will challenge Brown.

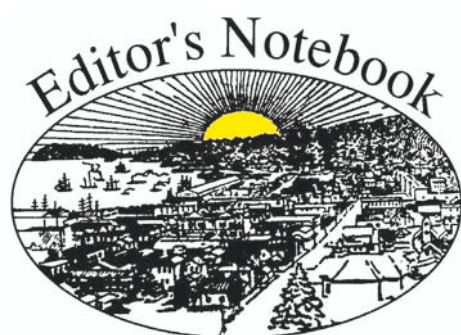
If that is not enough politics, the first stirrings of the 2016 presidential race are out there, with Republican Ted Cruz launching his campaign this week.

It is a safe bet that few of us anticipate greatness as an outcome in all of these races. That is not the political culture we inhabit. We will be fortunate to have unflashy competence. Winston Churchill summed up an attitude of realism toward politics and government. "Democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time."

The bargain we make in a democrat-



Steve Forrester



ic society is that occasionally we'll get a strong governor or president. We hope for a decent batting average.

The two most significant eras in Oregon postwar political history overlapped Jan. 9, 1967. After Tom McCall took the oath of office as Oregon's new governor, Mark Hatfield left by a side door to begin the trip to Washington, D.C., where he entered the Senate. As governor, Hatfield enlarged our consciousness about civil rights. McCall widened our vision of the environment.

During that transition from Hatfield to McCall, my father visited with Warne Nunn, who had been Hatfield's chief of staff.

As Nunn and his subordinates were cleaning out their offices for the advent of McCall, Nunn had a startling moment of self-awareness. "I realized that we had been there so long that we had

They don't realize they are temporary and the office is permanent.

come to believe we *were* the government."

Nunn's observation speaks volumes about what easily happens to people who occupy public office. It also speaks to the virtue of a two-term limit on our governors and the president.

Too often elected officials do not grasp their own mortality. Humility goes out the window. They don't realize they are temporary and the office is permanent.

The best governors and presidents leave the office and the state or nation in better shape than they found it. Both Hatfield and McCall gave new dimension to the office of governor. Vic Atiyeh did the same. All three of them were Republicans.

By contrast, Gov. John Kitzhaber in his third term diminished the office and abandoned the wreckage.

President Abraham Lincoln led the nation through its worst national trauma. President Richard Nixon inflicted the worst national trauma on the nation — what President Gerald Ford called "our national nightmare."

If you watch politicians at close range long enough, you see many who are unable to separate themselves from the office. Recounting the history of Clatsop County government to a newcomer, I mentioned how two separate commissions imploded from self-inflicted wounds. One was a liberal bunch, the other was at the other end of the political spectrum. What they had in common was a lack of humility about themselves and their task. Perspective went out the window.

On Tuesday at the post office I encountered a friend who doubted whether the Port of Astoria Commission would ever improve. Its malady over decades is a succession of players motivated by self interest.

There were rumblings about opposition candidates for the Port Commission in the May election. But the incumbents are running unopposed. There should be no surprise in that. With the exception of John Raichl, the commission has conditioned us to expect wrong-headed decisions motivated by self-dealing.

—S.A.F.

Open forum

Shocked by sign

As I drove to work recently, I was shocked by the raunchy new sign that has been installed by Annie's Tavern. To maximize impact and poke the decent folks of Astoria in the eye, the sign is positioned to make a horrible impression entering Astoria. The sign is an affront to Astoria, to the neighborhood and to the effort to make our community a better place. It's a disgrace to see children waiting for a school bus with Annie's over their shoulder.

It is a widely reported fact that strip bars are a common entry point in the world of sex trafficking. I would like to challenge our school coaches, community leaders, church members and our various great service organizations that work so hard to lift people up to take action.

There is no place for the objectification of women and an industry that leads to so many tragic life stories. Astoria deserves better. The standards of decency in our community should be higher. Don't let Annie's bring us down.

FERGUS LOUGHRAN
Astoria

Hoorah for the vote

I absolutely loved the editorial "Bad behavior" (March 19). It warned the cockles of my heart, and gave me a modicum of faith again in *The Daily Astorian's* editorial thoughts and opinions.

And hoorah for Cindy Price and Drew Herzig for their votes against the quite questionable proposed enter-

prise zone and whom it would benefit ("Council rejects enterprise zone," *The Daily Astorian*, March 17).

Perhaps Zetty Nemlowill thought that the Port of Astoria commissioners do not read *The Daily Astorian* (which could possibly be correct, considering their stand on so many issues that affect the working people of Astoria) and she felt prompted to tell the Port commissioners in person how sorry she was that she couldn't vote because of a conflict of interest, but she would if she could.

If Nemlowill is going to apologize to anyone, it should be the constituents who put her in office. Her first meet and greet event as a City Council member was held in another ward, not her own. There are several quite nice places here in Uniontown that would have just fit the bill, and everyone would have appreciated the gesture.

MARY TANGUAY WEBB
Astoria

Sad sacks

When I moved to Astoria two years ago, I was delighted to benefit from the city's provision of high-quality dog waste disposal bags. These well-placed, attentively restocked, biodegradable Mutt Mitts made it easy for owners to clean up after their sidekicks, keeping the Riverwalk and the entire town far more "doody-free" than they would be otherwise. However, the recent downgrade in the quality of the bags has effectively, by and large, rendered them useless.

The new bags are so small as to

prevent use by anyone with large hands or a large dog. I can barely wedge one of my mitts into the things, and the advantage of the opposable thumb, upon which I rely is negated by the tight fit, as I am unable to splay my digits inside. These bags are entirely insufficient to handle the capacity of my dog's deposits, not only failing to collect the object in its entirety but leaving no plastic with which to tie off the package. It has been recommended that I use two bags for each episode, but this does not alter the limitations noted above.

It is my understanding that this low-quality option was intended as a cost-saving measure by the Parks and Recreation Department. Of course, the savings will be even greater in that a large proportion of the population will not be able to use the bags at all, thereby making them last even longer, unless some people with small hands end up using two bags, which, of course, would negatively impact said savings. If intended cost-saving is the justification, why not cite the same motive and refrain from purchasing any bags at all?

Ostensibly, these bags are provided to aid in keeping the city free of pet waste. But I would argue that to provide a product that won't serve the very group in greatest need — those whose large dogs leave the largest, most offensive statements — is undermining the purpose of providing them in the first place. I recognize that budget cuts are occurring everywhere, and that provision of these bags is a privilege.

And sure, I can resume use of the

plastic bags from grocery stores, until the county votes to ban them, at which time I can add the expense of purchasing bags to the dog budget. But if the goal of a town free of pet droppings is taken seriously, I would ask that a viable product once again be provided.

NATE MARTIN
Astoria

Not a ghost town

Please don't misunderstand what I am saying. The improvements in Ilwaco, Wash., are great. Cleanup and "new" are always good. Here is my concern: There has been so much focus on what Ilwaco doesn't have, little has been said about what we do have.

Ilwaco is not a ghost town. Does a ghost town have the sound of children playing, dogs barking, joggers, bicyclists and the hustle of regular truck deliveries? School buses, city buses, trucks, cars, mobile homes? It's time to stop rolling through the light on red at First Avenue and Spruce Street — we have pedestrians.

Businesses in Ilwaco made a choice to take on new opportunities elsewhere or to retire. Maybe those of us still here did not have any other opportunities? Maybe we are just willing to risk it all in our desire to be self-employed? Maybe we are too young to retire? Or too young to know any better?

I don't know. I would like to know. I would like to see some focus on those of us who are still here in Ilwaco. Those of us who survived the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. We deserve an award.

Before we are drowned out by the

thrill of the new, could we have a nice write-up in *The Daily Astorian*, *Coast River Business Journal*? Maybe by looking at what worked in Ilwaco, we will encourage those looking to go in to business to give Ilwaco a chance.

I took a chance, and Ilwaco took a chance on me. Thank you for 10 years of ups and downs, and most likely 10 more years.

KELLY FRECH
Ilwaco, Wash.

Dogs and graveyards

Through recent decades, the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department has grown to an abundant size, although the population of Astoria has remained the same 10,000. All sorts of entertainment can thus be enjoyed by children and retirees. Now, a dog park has been suggested to be added to the amenities, at an added cost, with possible problems of traffic and parking.

With parks' department budget fully used for all of the many current amenities, it seems that the city's century-old responsibility for upkeep of Ocean View Cemetery would possibly be negated by the young.

To solve that budget problem, may I suggest that the city incorporate the proposed dog park into the whole cemetery, where there would be all sorts of space for dogs and parking. This would also relieve the congestion of dogs and bicycles on downtown sidewalks, and might alleviate some of the costs of lawn fertilization at the Ocean View Cemetery.

PAUL VAN DER VELDT
Astoria



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