

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



STEPHEN A. FORRESTER, *Editor & Publisher*
 LAURA SELLERS, *Managing Editor*
 BETTY SMITH, *Advertising Manager*
 CARL EARL, *Systems Manager*
 JOHN D. BRUIJN, *Production Manager*
 DEBRA BLOOM, *Business Manager*
 HEATHER RAMSDELL, *Circulation Manager*

Hospital raises its game

Columbia Memorial's deal with OHSU brings cancer care here

Being diagnosed with a serious illness and then confronting a 100- to 200-mile commute for radiation treatment five days a week for five to eight to weeks has been a handicap of living where we do. Cancer is bad enough without losing dozens of days away from family, home and employment.

Building upon Clatsop County's already impressive health care infrastructure, a partnership formally announced Saturday between Columbia Memorial Hospital and Oregon Health and Sciences University to create the Knight Cancer Collaborative will fill most of this gap. The project is a new 18,000-square-foot comprehensive cancer treatment center and specialty clinic in Astoria. Construction will start in 2016.

Creation of such an asset in a county with fewer than 40,000 people is a stellar achievement — the sort of community investment that sets the stage for additional progress. OHSU officials last week made clear their zeal for extending top-flight care beyond OHSU's hilltop location in Portland to the rest of the state. The partnership with CMH is a major step toward this goal. It has helped inspire similar talks with local healthcare providers in The Dalles and Coos Bay.

The fact that Astoria is the first to benefit from this outreach is a tribute to the leadership of a number of local individuals. Several years ago, CMH's board and CEO Erik Thorsen made a positive effort to seek novel ways of addressing health needs, correctly identifying OHSU as the best place to go to obtain the specialties and depth of advanced care that were lacking here. Both knew

they weren't interested in acquisition and merger — the default outcome of most talks between rural and large urban hospitals.

Aided by then-Mayor Willis Van Dusen and other civic leaders, ways have been found to help OHSU and CMH achieve their goals. Defying stereotypes, this series of transactions proves once and for all that Clatsop County people can "play well with others." Transforming our county into a regional hub for health care, CMH and Providence Seaside in different ways both manage to overcome geography and institutional politics by capitalizing on Portland's proximity and expertise instead of fighting it.

Even smaller institutions, like Ocean Beach Hospital in Ilwaco, can look at the CMH/OHSU model for the best ways to serve patients — building collaborations that neither duplicate nearby services nor needlessly step on toes.

There is still money to be raised to bring the Knight Cancer Collaborative to reality. As its name implies, the generosity of the Knight family facilitates OHSU's ability to think big. But it will be up to us to raise another \$1.7 million of the \$3 million in required capital funds — not easy, but attainable. It is a small price to pay to provide cancer care here at home.

Incentives work on neglectful owners

Astoria's Derelict Building Ordinance aids another property transfer

With names and location removed, here is a current example of how Astoria's Derelict Buildings Ordinance is having a positive effect on the town's housing stock.

A woman years ago spotted a Victorian home she liked. The house was vacant, but the owner would not respond to the woman's offers to purchase.

But once the owner was confronted by demands that were triggered by the Derelict Buildings Ordinance (DBO), he had an incentive to sell the home that had been vacant and neglected for years. The woman purchased the home and is in the midst of giving the Victorian a makeover.

This is only the most recent of many examples of the DBOs beneficial influence.

Incentives motivate neglectful landlords. Some 15 years ago the Liberty Theater was

owned by an absentee landlord who fell into that category. Moviegoers routinely brought blankets, because the owner did not fix the furnace.

Because the Liberty was on the National Register of Historic Places, its owner got a tax break from the state of Oregon. The State Historic Preservation Office made it clear that his tax break was in jeopardy if he didn't maintain the building.

Suddenly the theater's owner responded to purchase offers from Robert Jacob. After Jacob and his partner, Rosemarie Paavola, purchased the theater, they sold it to the nonprofit Liberty Restoration Inc.

Putting buildings into the hands of motivated, caring owners is the benefit of the DBO. Astoria continues to see the value of the City Council's accomplishment.

Republicans climb on the clown bus

By TIMOTHY EGAN
New York Times News Service

In 2008, Mike Huckabee ran for president as a likable chucklehead who had lost 100 pounds.

And you can, too!

Now he's running for president as a grievance-burdened theocrat who has lost his mind. In the interim, he lent his name to infomercials hawking a dubious diabetes treatment of cinnamon and some other concoction, putting the Huckabee in Huckabee.

In 2005, Carly Fiorina was fired as chief executive officer of Hewlett-Packard, after laying off nearly 30,000 people and overseeing the collapse of the company's stock price. She left with a \$21 million severance package. She then lost a Senate race in California by 1 million votes. Now she's running for president. And why not? Rewarded for failure in business, she's trying it in politics.

Until 2013, Dr. Ben Carson was known mainly as a celebrated neurosurgeon, much in demand on the speaking circuit for his inspirational talks. But then he compared President Barack Obama to a psychopath, said expanding health care was the worst thing to happen to this country since slavery, and claimed homosexuality was a choice, because "people go into prison straight — and when they come out, they're gay." Of course, he's now running for the highest office in the land.

As David Axelrod noted, politics ain't brain surgery. It's harder.

Last election cycle, the Republican presidential field was a clown car, holding the thrice-married Newt Gingrich lecturing about values, the pizza magnate Herman Cain fending off sexual harassment claims, and Michele Bachmann confusing John Wayne with a serial killer. That was just the front seat. This time around it's a clown bus, with as many as 17 Republicans expected to compete.

Most of them are unelectable, to say the least. But can any of them get out of the party's winning period without saying things they picked up in the far right netherworld? Probably not. As previous gaffe-a-matics have

The Wall Street vampires wait to strike again

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

Last year the vampires of finance bought themselves a Congress.

I know it's not nice to call them that, but I have my reasons, which I'll explain in a bit.

For now, however, let's just note that these days Wall Street, which used to split its support between the parties, overwhelmingly favors the GOP. And the Republicans who came to power this year are returning the favor by trying to kill Dodd-Frank, the financial reform enacted in 2010.

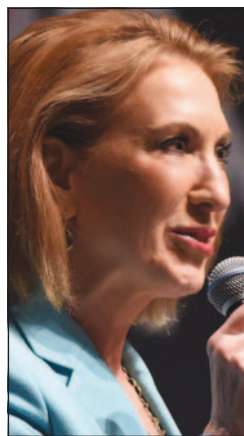
And why must Dodd-Frank die? Because it's working.

This statement may surprise progressives who believe that nothing significant has been done to rein in runaway bankers. And it's true both that reform fell well short of what we really should have done and that it hasn't yielded obvious, measurable triumphs like the gains in insurance thanks to Obamacare.

But Wall Street hates reform for a reason, and a closer look shows why.

For one thing, the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau — the brainchild of Sen. Elizabeth Warren — is, by all accounts, having a major chilling effect on abusive lending practices. And early indications are that enhanced regulation of financial derivatives — which played a major role in the 2008 crisis — is having similar effects, increasing transparency and reducing the profits of middlemen.

What about the problem of financial industry structure, sometimes oversimplified with the phrase "too big to fail"? There, too, Dodd-Frank



AP photos
 Carly Fiorina



Mike Huckabee



Sen.
 Ted Cruz

shown, it pays to be crazy. And for many Republicans, crazy is the new mainstream.

In Texas, the Republican governor, Greg Abbott, is not sure if simulated military maneuvers planned for his state are routine exercises by our men and women in uniform, or a plot to take everyone's guns and enforce martial law. He's ordered the state guard to monitor his government's soldiers — just in case. Oh, and Walmart is involved. Something about tunnels beneath abandoned stores.

There is no ceiling for crazy in Texas, nor political consequence. This year, the Lone Star State's most odious export is Sen. Ted Cruz, who also has some concern about the nefarious designs of our military, and those Walmart tunnels. He couldn't just say, as the Pentagon did, that our troops would soon be conducting a long-planned field operation, called Jade Helm 15. He had to dog-whistle to the mouth frothers.

"I understand a lot of the concerns raised by a lot of citizens about Jade Helm," said Cruz. "It's a question I'm getting a lot, and I think part of the reason is we have seen, for six years, a federal government disrespecting the liberty of citizens." Dwight Eisenhower — look him up, Texans — is rolling over in his five-star grave.

If you don't think the inability to distinguish a military exercise from a totalitarian takeover disqualifies you from leading the free world, Fox News has a hosting chair for you. That's where Mike Huckabee promoted his brand of Gomer Pyle politics over the last few years, building a following for quack health remedies and Christian victimhood.

Since moving out of the Fox nursing home, he's gone ever deeper and darker, all while trav-

eling by private jet and building a palace in Florida. He suggested that military recruits should wait until Obama leaves office before joining the service. Huckabee, an ordained Baptist minister who learned his shtick on the traveling preacher circuit, has become an outright theocrat, attacking the constitutional foundation against state-sanctioned religion.

"You've got to understand, this for me is not about the right side or the wrong side of history," he said last year, regarding same-sex marriage. "This is the right side of the Bible."

Ben Carson, like Huckabee, sees the secular world through Scripture. He makes much of his standing as a Seventh-day Adventist, those nice people who show up at your door with pamphlets, prompting little kids to ask, "What's a Seventh-day Dentist?"

But the Adventists, to their credit, are distancing themselves from Carson. After his presidential announcement, the church released a statement that the pul-

For many Republicans, crazy is the new mainstream.

pit should remain neutral in politics, based on "our historical position of separation of church and state."

So in the past week Republicans have gained two people whose political philosophy could find a home among Iran's governing ayatollahs, and a failed chief executive who thinks driving a great company into the ground is a good business model. All are featured prominently in conservative media.

This shows that if you're on TV long enough, you start to think you'd make a good president. Or perhaps it's that if you run for president as a Republican, you can ensure that you'll be on TV. One reinforces the other, and ultimately influences the nominee. And that's when the rest of us start paying attention.

seems to be yielding real results, in fact, more than many supporters expected.

As I've just suggested, too big to fail doesn't quite get at the problem here. What was really lethal was the interaction between size and complexity. Financial institutions had become chimeras: part bank, part hedge fund, part insurance company, and so on. This complexity let them evade regulation, yet be rescued from the consequences when their bets went bad. And bankers' ability to have it both ways helped set America up for disaster.

Dodd-Frank addressed this problem by letting regulators subject "systemically important" financial institutions to extra regulation, and seize control of such institutions at times of crisis, as opposed to simply bailing them out. And it required that financial institutions in general put up more capital, reducing both their incentive to take excessive risks and the chance that risk-taking would lead to bankruptcy.

All of this seems to be working: "Shadow banking," which created bank-type risks while evading bank-type regulation, is in retreat. You can see this in cases like that of General Electric, a manufacturing firm that turned itself into a financial wheeler-dealer, but is now trying to return to its roots. You can also see it in the overall numbers, where conventional banking — which is to say, banking subject to relatively strong regulation — has made a comeback. Evading the rules, it seems, isn't as appealing as it used to be.

But the vampires are fighting back. OK, why do I call them that? Not because they drain the economy of its lifeblood, although they do:



Paul Krugman

There's a lot of evidence that oversize, overpaid financial industries — like ours — hurt economic growth and stability. Even the International Monetary Fund agrees.

But what really makes the word apt in this context is that the enemies of reform can't withstand sunlight. Open defenses of Wall Street's right to go

back to its old ways are hard to find. When right-wing think tanks do try to claim that regulation is a bad thing that will hurt the economy, their hearts don't seem to be in it. For example, the latest such "study", from the American Action Forum, runs to all of four pages, and even its author, the economist Douglas Holtz-Eakin, sounds embarrassed about his work.

What you mostly get, instead, is slavery-is-freedom claims that reform actually empowers the bad guys: for example, that regulating too-big-and-complex-to-fail institutions is somehow doing wheeler-dealers a favor, claims belied by the desperate efforts of such institutions to avoid the "systemically important" designation. The point is that almost nobody wants to be seen as a bought and paid-for servant of the financial industry, least of all those who really are exactly that.

And this in turn means that so far, at least, the vampires are getting a lot less than they expected for their money. Republicans would love to undo Dodd-Frank, but they are, rightly, afraid of the glare of publicity that defenders of reform like Warren — who inspires a remarkable amount of fear in the unrighteous — would shine on their efforts.

Does this mean that all is well on the financial front? Of course not. Dodd-Frank is much better than nothing, but far from being all we need. And the vampires are still lurking in their coffins, waiting to strike again. But things could be worse.

The enemies of reform can't withstand sunlight.