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Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

10 years ago this week — 2005

In the past two years, just 30 advisories about high bacteria levels have been issued at 16 beaches along the 362-mile Oregon Coast — far fewer than in many other coastal states.

In addition state health officials say that because Oregon's cool waters keep swimming at a minimum, there are fewer chances for people to be exposed to bacteria.

But some coastal residents and environmentalists say the Oregon Beach Monitoring Program doesn't go far enough.

They criticize Oregon's saltwater quality sampling and advisory notification as not comprehensive enough. Testing is done on 20 beaches, and signs are not at all access points to beaches.

Some also say the state allows for too much bacteria in the water. California and Washington issue health warnings for beaches when there is less contamination than allowed in Oregon.

The Oregon Board of Maritime Pilots cut Columbia River Bar Pilots fees to lower shipping operators' rates Friday, a move that will decrease the number of pilots from 20 to 16.

"Our whole function as pilots is the safe and efficient movement of ships over the bar. In order to do that, we need to have rested pilots available when the ships arrive," said Capt. Robert Johnson.

"At time of peak traffic, we fear that there's going to be delays to the ships," he said, because bar pilots can't work when they are fatigued. With 16 pilots, eight will be working at a time; when more than eight ships are moving across the bar, some will have to wait.

Seven miles of the lower Columbia River navigation channel are deeper than they were a month ago, as the dredge ship Sugar Island has started work on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' channel deepening project.

Work began June 25 to deepen the first 13 miles from River Mile 3 to River Mile 16. The Corps expects to deepen an additional 10 miles of the river near Portland in the fall.

50 years ago — 1965



Courtesy Clatsop County Historical Society/Submitted Photo

The Miss Oregon Pageant was founded by the Seaside merchants in 1947. Here contestants pose for the 1965 swimsuit competition.

SEASIDE — The largest parade in the history of the Miss Oregon pageant is expected to unfold this year, according to Joe Fulop, chairman. The annual event, which features the 21 girls seeking the 1965 Miss Oregon crown, Miss Seaside and Miss Oregon 1964 will be Saturday in Seaside at 2 p.m.

NEHALEM — Robert B. Nash of Everett, Wash., who had an article published in the current issue of *Treasure* magazine, was scuba diving recently in 60 feet of water off the Nehalem spit north of the north jetty, when he found and picked up a rusty object which has caused a stir of excitement here.

It is believed by many to be the head of an ancient Spanish halberd, and there is speculation that it might have come from the shipwreck of the Spanish galleon, the San Francisco Xavier, believed to be the "beeswax ship" which was wrecked on the Nehalem spit during the late 17th or 18th century. Chunks of beeswax from that ship have been recovered from time-to-time from the sands of the spit.

75 years ago — 1940

The Greek steamer *Hellenic Skipper*, twisted and ravished by 70 hours of raging fire, cheated the Coast Guard cutter *Onondaga*'s efforts to tow her into port Saturday afternoon and plunged to a grave in the salty seas she has traveled for 45 years.

Lieutenant-Commander Frank Higbee, captain of the cutter, returned to Astoria Sunday with a dramatic story of the forlorn vessel's death. The *Onondaga*'s hawser, affixed to the battered hulk Saturday afternoon, was hacked apart with an ax in the 90-seconds between the time when the Skipper heaved her last and plunged to the ocean floor. The weary old tramp blew a cloud of soot, dirt and steam from her racked boilers and torrid innards; and a vast oil slick closed another chapter of maritime disaster — this one leaving no ghosts of dead men.

Clatsop County has suffered an invasion of Miller moths. The insects appeared last night, and this morning were found sometimes as much as three deep under lights which attracted them during the night.

Seaside was the worst sufferer. The moths were so thick that driving was sometimes made difficult with the insects smearing windshields and headlights.

In Astoria, some of the restaurants had to close, because the moths would get into the food. In stores where lights were burning in the windows, oftentimes the moths were so thick that one could not see through the windows.

The moths are apparently the results of the cocooning of the caterpillars which were so numerous earlier in the year. The insects are short lived, living for only about 24 hours.

Clinton's new old liberalism

By DAVID BROOKS

New York Times News Service

Well, Hillary Clinton hasn't gone crazy.

At a time when some in her party are drifting toward Bernie Sanders/ Occupy Wall Street-style rhetoric, Clinton delivered her first major economic address of the campaign.

It was solidly liberal — very solidly — but in tone and substance it was well within the general election mainstream. If any Republicans were hoping that Clinton would make herself unelectable by wandering into the class warfare fever swamps, they can forget about it.

The main narrative of the Sanders camp is that the economic game is rigged against ordinary people. The top 1 percent controls the fundamental economic conditions. Major transformation is required. There's not much individuals can do given the structure of economic power.

Clinton did some Wall Street bashing in this speech, but it was either meaningless, bland (punish criminals) or broadly sensible (end the carried interest deduction). The main underlying assumption behind her speech was that individuals can rise and succeed if they are given the right helping hands from government.

This speech revealed a woman who does not have her heart in class conflict. The most passionate parts of her speech involved classic liberal efforts to give people a boost: early childhood education, family and medical leave, tax credits for job training, affordable child care programs.

She carefully avoided the more radical policy ideas embraced by the left, such as a blanket tax on the rich. She dodged the trade issue. She endorsed a minimum wage hike but didn't commit, as many progressive do, to a \$15-an-hour rate.

This speech was more Children's Defense Fund than Thomas Piketty. It was the sort of speech you give if you spend more time listening to voters, especially female ones, than studying the quintiles in the income distribution charts.

Stylistically, Clinton still sounds as if she is talking down to her audiences. But there was a wonky authenticity to this speech, which would not have been



David Brooks



Seth Wenig/AP

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Rodham Clinton speaks at a campaign event in New York Monday. Clinton outlined the themes of her economic agenda in the speech at The New School in New York City.

there if she had tried to sound like a pitchfork marauder. She has echoes of Hubert Humphrey or George McGovern in her voice, or a more liberal Michael Dukakis.

She's way to the left of where her husband was and to the left of where Barack Obama was in 2008 or 2012. But she's responded to the reality of growing inequality with a revived paleoliberalism, not with the edgier, angry economic policy you find among Bernie Sanders and the cutting-edge left. She is best viewed, as the progressive commentator Matt Yglesias put it in a Vox essay, as a new paleoliberal.

She's cleared the first political hurdle in this campaign.

This neopaleoliberalism is built less on going after Wall Street and the rich and more on a tremendous faith in government to manage the economy more intelligently than the private sector. It's less a negative assault on the elites and more an optimistic faith in the power of planning. The private sector is not evil or power hungry, just kind of dumb.

New Democrats like her husband believed in using market mechanisms to increase economic security. As a neopaleoliberal, Hillary Clinton used her kickoff economic address to embrace the idea that government can write rules to govern how much companies pay their workers. Government can direct investors toward more sensible long-term investments. Government can refashion the way companies distribute equity in their companies. Government can determine how companies should structure and manage

themselves. "We'll ensure that no firm is too complex to manage and oversee," Clinton declared. One pictures squads of Federal Simplicity Enforcers roaming through the corridors of Midtown Manhattan telling CEOs when their outfits are too mind-boggling.

In each case, in this view, government is more competent at steering companies toward their own best interests than the companies are themselves. Clinton's constant refrain in this speech was that these federal interventions would increase growth and productivity, not limit them in the name of fairness.

Personally I find this faith epistemologically naive. Clinton seems to have no awareness that many of the programs she endorsed have been tried and did not work. The Obama administration spent mightily on green energy jobs programs and they did not work to significantly increase employment. Empowerment zones, which she endorsed, have mostly failed to help low-income neighborhoods. Clinton displayed no awareness that most federal requirements involve difficult trade-offs. According to the Congressional Budget Office, raising the minimum wage to even \$10.10 an hour would increase pay for millions of workers, but would cost roughly 500,000 jobs.

Clinton's unchastened faith in the power of government planning is not shared by most voters. And she has no plausible chance of getting any of this through a divided Congress. But this agenda does pull off a neat trick. It will excite the progressive base without automatically alienating the rest of the country. Substantively she's offered at least a coherent response to today's economic conditions. Politically, she's cleared the first political hurdle in this campaign.

Shale gas and climate change

By JOE NOCERA

New York Times News Service

Every columnist has his or her "go to" sources, people we rely on for their deep understanding of a particular subject, and a mode of thinking about that subject we find persuasive.

For me, one such person is Michael Levi, a senior fellow for energy and the environment at the Council on Foreign Relations.

Levi believes in the power of facts. Though sensitive to the importance of dealing with climate change, he doesn't indulge in the hyperbole you sometimes hear from environmentalists. And while he appreciates the economic import of fracking and shale gas, he isn't afraid to call out the industry on its problems. Early in the fracking boom, he went to Pennsylvania to observe what drilling for shale gas was doing to communities — and came away believing that "it was going to stir up much more local controversy than many were assuming." Which is exactly what happened.

For the latest issue of *Democracy*, a quarterly magazine focused on progressive ideas, Levi has written an article titled "Fracking and the Climate Debate," which he described to me the other day as a kind of summing up of his views about the role of cheap natural gas and fracking in the fight against climate change.

There are many people, of course, who believe that natural gas shouldn't have any role at all in the climate change fight; while it may emit half the carbon dioxide of coal, it is still a fossil fuel that will keep us from going all-in on renewable energy. And the methane that can leak from fracked wells is a potent green-

house gas that can negate natural gas' advantage over coal.

There are others who see natural gas as a panacea. They believe that so long as we keep increasing production of inexpensive natural gas — mooring the need to build more coal-fired power plants, and even making it possible to shut some down — then we will be doing more than enough to control carbon emissions. In his article, Levi says, in effect: You're both wrong.

After recounting a little history — was it really only a half-dozen years ago that environmentalists like Robert F. Kennedy Jr. were promoting natural gas as a "step toward saving our planet"? — Levi delves into the three rationales behind their abrupt change of heart. One is the disruption that fracking imposes on communities. The second is the methane problem. The third is the "rapid progress" being made by renewable energy, which many environmentalists believe makes further reliance on natural gas unnecessary.

Levi believes that appropriate rules by both state and federal governments can mitigate the first two problems. Indeed, he believes that the industry needs to be better regulated for its own sake; otherwise, people will continue to fear the worst. As for renewables, the hard truth is that if the country were to move away from natural gas, the big winner would be coal, not solar or wind.

But that doesn't mean that those who cling to the "free-market fundamentalist dream that a thriving shale gas industry will make climate



Joe Nocera

policy unnecessary" have got it right. On the contrary, Levi writes, "merely making natural gas more abundant may do little, if anything, to curb carbon dioxide emissions." How can this be? The answer is that, although cheap natural gas is helpful in that it "shoves aside coal," it also boosts economic growth (which means more emissions), and "gives an edge to industries that are heavy energy users and big emitters." These two conflicting forces effectively cancel each other out.

The best way to maximize the good that shale gas can do, Levi concludes, is to make it a key component of an overall energy policy that is bent on driving down carbon emissions. The government could promote policies to move the country away from coal, "which accounts for three-quarters of carbon dioxide produced in U.S. electricity generation."

And while he doesn't say so explicitly, he does seem to see shale gas as a potential bridge to renewables: If the government enacted policies that "reward emission cuts" no matter what technology achieves that goal, then coal users would gravitate to natural gas, while natural gas users might well move toward renewables. Government would also have to encourage policies that "drive down the cost of zero-based emissions."

My own belief is that shale gas has been a blessing for all kinds of reasons: It has given us a degree of energy security that we haven't seen in many decades, and has been a key source of economic growth. And, no matter how much environmentalists gnash their teeth, it is here to stay. That's why the responsible approach is not to wish it away, but to exploit its benefits while straightforwardly addressing its problems. Ideologues will never get that done. That's why Michael Levi's realism — and his pragmatism — are so critical to hear.

The industry needs to be better regulated for its own sake.