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Goonies burden is unfairly shared

The movie's mystique probably will eventually run its course

It's difficult to think of close parallels with the Goonies House in Astoria, an accidental tourist attraction in a residential neighborhood of a small town. This is partly because for many fans the house itself is virtually a character in the movie, a personification of quirky Pacific Northwest coastal life.

In England, a tourist constantly trips over famous film locations, from Downton Abbey's Highclere Castle to the dozens of places co-opted for Harry Potter and James Bond movies. But not only are there distinctly lower expectations of privacy in the United Kingdom, they also are used to monetizing such popularity. Visitation to any one place tends to be somewhat diluted due to the many choices that fans have in a nation that is physically smaller than Oregon.

The decision by the Goonies house's owner to begin actively discouraging visitors is entirely understandable. Sandi Preston wanted a comfortable home. Foreknowledge that it had been used as a film set was a sort of slight brush with celebrity, a fun thing to mention in conversations with family and friends. In no way could she have imagined what it would be like to try living in a house that is itself a celebrity. It must be a little like having the high school sweetheart you married gradually become a movie star — with all paparazzi, but none of the money and glamour.

The uncomfortable overpopularity of the Goonies house in some ways illuminates a downside of tourism as a whole. Making an incredible contribution to our retail and hospitality sectors, most residents understand that we are fortunate to have assets that attract visitors. But tourist communities must work hard to find creative ways to preserve livability, affordability, accessibility and other traits that make them pleasant places. This requires smart planning and spending to make sure infrastructure is right-sized to support visitation. Resident buy-in must be obtained for

tourism promotion that will have a mix of long-term impacts, not all of which will be positive. Already, there is a serious need to deal with issues like parking in downtown Astoria.

The Goonies phenomenon probably will eventually run its course. It's hard to envision it having the same enduring appeal as, for example, "The Wizard of Oz." Two or three years of persistent efforts by the city, chamber and others to discourage in-person visits to the house might stuff the genie back into the bottle, at least to the extent that Preston and her neighbors no longer feel oppressed by the sheer weight of uninvited visitors. As neighbor Will Caplinger has noted, such a deliberate change in marketing practices is needed to wrestle the neighborhood back into its zoned residential purpose.

The Oregon Film Museum, an imaginative creation of the Clatsop County Historical Society, can continue and expand its celebration of our area's Hollywood connections.

Daily Astorian reader comments reveal an intense interest in the Goonies house story. It touches a nerve in terms of tourism impacts. There are many suggestions on social media, including buying the house and relocating it to an appropriate commercial zone. Another possibility is to do as they do in England and sell access for a few weeks or months in the summer, and keep it a private home and neighborhood the rest of the time.

But that's largely up to Preston and the other people living in the vicinity to decide. It's unfair for them to bear far more of the burden from community popularity than the rest of us.

Nativism is not pretty

Feeding anger at immigrants ignores reality

There was a time when farmers — a reliable Republican constituency — could count on congressional Republicans.

Not now. Farmers rely upon immigrant labor. Republicans in the House of Representatives have failed to act on immigration reform, which farmers desperately need. Even a GOP House leader like Greg Walden, whose Eastern Oregon seat is bulletproof, won't respond to his farmers' need.

Following the lead of Donald Trump, Republican presidential candidates in Iowa this week are doubling down on punishing immigrants, even children who were born in the U.S. Seeing a Republican base eat up the anti-immigrant talk, none of the presidential candidates will stand up to Trump and talk reality. Trump's notion of deporting 11 million immigrants is unthinkable, but it apparently is a guaranteed applause line in Iowa.

Nativism is never pretty. In the early 20th century, the hatred was directed at Italians and Irish, and at Catholics in general. The Ku Klux Klan that was a force in Astoria politics in the 1920s was anti-Catholic.

The cruel joke is that America has

always been an immigrant nation. But many whose ancestors emigrated to the U.S. are eager to bad-mouth the latest applicants for admission.

Eventually immigrant groups become too large for politicians to trash or ignore. That's what the Republican Party faces in the Hispanic population. *The New York Times* reported Wednesday that, "The population of Latinos eligible to vote by 2016 is expected to increase by 18 percent over 2012 to about 28 million people, more than 11 percent of voters nationwide, according to projections by the National Association of Latino Elected and Appointed Officials, a nonpartisan organization."

Moreover, the larger electorate does not approve of the extremist immigration solutions being promoted in Iowa this week.

For the next 15 months, we are condemned to the rhetoric of our too-long presidential campaign. Feeding nativist anger makes some people feel good and it wins short-term gains.

At some point, Congress and a president must govern. The nation cannot afford to continually postpone immigration reform. Farmers, among others, need a solution.

GUEST COLUMN

Hanford's fascinating past, future

By DON HASKELL
For *The Daily Astorian*

I was 9 years old when the Japanese struck Pearl Harbor. Seventy-five years later, with-in days of the anniversary of the dropping of the bomb on Nagasaki, I visited the Hanford nuclear site where the federal government developed the atomic energy that ended World War II and thereafter fueled the Cold War.

The environmental aftermath of those efforts is staggering. The liquefied natural gas ruckus here at the mouth of the Columbia is but a spit in the ocean compared to the cleanup efforts of old nuclear reactors, 300 miles upriver from Astoria. Even after 75 years, the site is by far the largest Superfund site in America. The Department of Energy's current estimate of when the site will be cleaned up? Incredibly, not until 2060!

The Hanford nuclear site is no secret. But few know about the federal government's cleanup project, which has gone on for decades and, so far, has cost trillions. Half of the project's \$2 billion annual budget is going into the construction of a treatment plant for decades-old radioactive waste. This construction project is the largest in the United States and when completed years from now will have cost over \$12 billion! And that's only one Hanford construction project that deals with atomic waste.

A recent Columbia Forum program (Anna King of Northwest Public Radio) piqued my curiosity about Hanford. I went to the site feeling suspicious, concerned about the site's proximity to the Columbia River, and with visions of inefficiencies of a large bureaucratic federal government enterprise. I left with feelings of awe about the remarkable engineering and use of new technology, a sense of relief to find the river well protected, and to discover the waste-treatment activity is conducted mostly by dedicated private contractors. The original nuclear reactor, one of the first in human history, is a National Historic Landmark.

The National Park Service and the Department of Energy are reviewing a draft proposal to create a Manhattan Project National Historical Park, of which Hanford would be a component.

You know something's up when you're driving on a six-lane highway in the middle of nowhere in the high desert outside of Richland, Wash. I counted 10 traffic lanes at one intersection. The traffic early in the morning rivaled Portland's rush hour,

Republicans against retirement

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

Something strange is happening in the Republican primary — something strange, that is, besides the Trump phenomenon. For some reason, just about all the leading candidates other than The Donald have taken a deeply unpopular position, a known political loser, on a major domestic policy issue. And it's interesting to ask why.

The issue in question is the future of Social Security, which turned 80 last week. The retirement program is, of course, both extremely popular and a long-term target of conservatives, who want to kill it precisely because its popularity helps legitimize government action in general. As the right-wing activist Stephen Moore (now chief economist of the Heritage Foundation) once declared, Social Security is "the soft underbelly of the welfare state"; "jab your spear through that" and you can undermine the whole thing.

But that was a decade ago, during former President George W. Bush's attempt to privatize the program — and what Bush learned was that the underbelly wasn't that soft after all. Despite the political momentum coming from the GOP's victory in the 2004 election, despite support from much of the media establishment, the assault on Social Security quickly crashed and burned. Voters, it turns out, like Social Security as it is, and don't want it cut.

It's remarkable, then, that most of the Republicans who would be president seem to be lining up for another round of punishment. In particular, they've been declaring that the retirement age — which has already been pushed up from 65 to 66, and is scheduled to rise to 67



Ted S. Warren/AP File

A sign informs visitors of prohibited items on the Hanford Nuclear Reservation near Richland, Wash., in 2014.

and indicated the thousands of people working at the site — which covers 586 square miles with 500 miles of paved highway.

The tour bus that my wife, Carol, and I took traveled 100 miles on paved roads over a five-hour period. Our tour guide was a physicist who retired after 30 years working for contractors at the site. His dedication to the mission of the facility and his knowledge of its history and operation was fascinating.

The highlight of the tour was Reactor B, the world's first successful nuclear reactor for plutonium-239. In those frantic wartime days of the early 1940s, the United States raced Nazi Germany to build "the Bomb," considered at the time to be the ultimate weapon. Fortunately, Germany surrendered before its nuclear reactors went online.

America's first controlled nuclear reaction occurred at the Stagg Field laboratory in Chicago in 1942. America's first nuclear production facility built at Oak Ridge, Tenn. produced enriched uranium and made enough plutonium for the bomb that devastated Hiroshima in 1945. Since World War II, the Oak Ridge facility is used only for scientific research.

The country's second nuclear production facility, also established in 1942, is at Hanford, Wash., right alongside the Columbia River.

President Roosevelt approved the Army's top secret choice of the Hanford site as part of the WWII's top secret Manhattan Project because of its very low rainfall (6 inches per year), its deep aquifer (at least 240 feet), the available cold water of the Columbia River needed to cool a reactor and the very sparse population.

Hanford's Reactor B produced enough plutonium to make three bombs — one for the initial test at Los Alamos in 1945, one that was dropped on Nagasaki, and a spare that was not needed when Japan unconditionally

surrendered.

The federal government's intent to rid the site of radioactive contamination as soon as World War II ended was never realized. Almost immediately the Cold War with Russia began and Hanford's expansion began instead.

From 1946 until 1987, nine nuclear reactors and five plutonium processing complexes to manufacture weapons-grade plutonium-239 were built and operated. The facility furnished fissionable material for many thousands of atomic weapons. It was not until 1987, during the Reagan era, that the Cold War ended and the government shut down the last Hanford reactor. The radioactive cleanup then began in earnest.

Hanford is by far the largest Superfund site.

To me, the most fascinating part of the cleanup effort at Hanford is the multi-billion dollar vitrification plant now under construction. The plant's process will solidify the liquid radioactive waste now stored in 177 aging underground tanks by encapsulating the radioactive waste in a form of glass that cannot be absorbed into the air or into the aquifer. The glass modules will then be placed underground and left for the many thousands of years it takes for the material to become harmless. Our physicist tour guide told me with a wry smile that even the glass modules will have to be addressed "someday."

Representatives of governments from around the world travel to Hanford to learn about the cleanup of nuclear waste. A week after we took the tour, a group of scientists from Japan is scheduled for the same tour.

Public tours of the Hanford site are free, but space is very limited. Reservations can be made at the U.S. Department of Energy's public tour of Hanford website: <http://1.usa.gov/1TCenUc>

Don Haskell served on the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners, 1991-1995. After retiring from a Chicago law career, Haskell and his wife moved to Astoria in 1988.

— should go up even further.

Thus, Jeb Bush says that the retirement age should be pushed back to "68 or 70." Scott Walker has echoed that position. Marco Rubio wants both to raise the retirement age and to cut benefits for higher-income seniors. Rand Paul wants to raise the retirement age to 70 and means-test benefits. Ted Cruz wants to revive the Bush privatization plan.

While most Americans love Social Security, the wealthy don't.

For the record, these proposals would be really bad public policy — a harsh blow to Americans in the bottom half of the income distribution, who depend on Social Security, often have jobs that involve manual labor, and have not, in fact, seen a big rise in life expectancy. Meanwhile, the decline of private pensions has left working Americans more reliant on Social Security than ever.

And no, Social Security does not face a financial crisis; its long-term funding shortfall could easily be closed with modest increases in revenue.

Still, nobody should be surprised at the spectacle of politicians enthusiastically endorsing destructive policies. What's puzzling about the renewed Republican assault on Social Security is that it looks like bad politics as well as bad policy. Americans love Social Security, so why aren't the candidates at least pretending to share that sentiment?

The answer, I'd suggest, is that it's all about the big money.

Wealthy individuals have long played a disproportionate role in politics, but we've never seen anything like what's happening now: domination of campaign finance, especially on the Republican side, by a tiny group of immensely wealthy donors. Indeed, more



Paul Krugman

than half the funds raised by Republican candidates through June came from just 130 families.

And while most Americans love Social Security, the wealthy don't. Two years ago a pioneering study of the policy preferences of the very wealthy found many contrasts with the views of the general public; as you might expect, the rich are politically different from you and me. But nowhere are they as different as they are on the matter of Social Security. By a very wide margin, ordinary Americans want to see Social Security expanded. But by an even wider margin, Americans in the top 1 percent want to see it cut. And guess whose preferences are prevailing among Republican candidates.

You often see political analyses pointing out, rightly, that voting in actual primaries is preceded by an "invisible primary" in which candidates compete for the support of crucial elites. But who are these elites? In the past, it might have been members of the political establishment and other opinion leaders. But what the new attack on Social Security tells us is that the rules have changed. Nowadays, at least on the Republican side, the invisible primary has been reduced to a stark competition for the affections and, of course, the money of a few dozen plutocrats.

What this means, in turn, is that the eventual Republican nominee — assuming that it's not Trump — will be committed not just to a renewed attack on Social Security but to a broader plutocratic agenda. Whatever the rhetoric, the GOP is on track to nominate someone who has won over the big money by promising government by the 1 percent, for the 1 percent.