

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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America's past is this man's future

Clatsop Community College's historic preservation program changed a life

College changes lives. If you didn't believe that, the story of Chris Gustafson will give you an entirely new perspective.

The essence of Gustafson's story — which Edward Stratton told in last Thursday's edition — is about two ingredients: the man's personal resourcefulness and the value of Clatsop Community College's 6-year-old program in historic preservation and restoration.

Having lost his job in logging, Gustafson's family lived, in Stratton's words, on the charity of the community. In his search for a new career, Gustafson found the CCC program.

By graduation, window restoration became Gustafson's specialty. In Albany, he has founded a business that's doing restorations in Astoria, Burns, Bandon and Cottage Grove.

In the life of Clatsop Community College, there have been many life turnaround stories. This newspaper writes annually about the successes in the Lives in Transition program. Gustafson's story is especially powerful, because it also involves an evolution in how communities

regard their historic buildings. In other words, CCC responded to a megatrend by starting a new program that is unique among northwest post-secondary schools. The program's enrollment is typically about 15 students.

The Liberty Theater's restoration, 2000-2006, sparked a succession of preservation stories, such as the Hotel Elliott, the Chinook School and, most recently, the Odd Fellows Building in Clatskanie, which was unveiled last weekend.

Restoration has gained a national ethos. It has created jobs and businesses in our region and across the country. Rickenbach Construction gained regional visibility from its central role in the Liberty Theater restoration.

In Stratton's story about Chris Gustafson, there is a touching detail. He now takes on students. More than most people, Gustafson understands the power of mentoring, education and a fresh start.

Stay alive, take storms seriously

Saturday's storm was a reminder of what's to come

Last Saturday's storm was bush league compared to some past events. It topped out at about 85 mph and only cut power for a few hours, instead of days.

There's never been consensus on what to call the furious typhoon of December 2007 — the Great Pacific Gale is one favorite — but whatever label you apply, that storm was a doozy, lasting two days and topping out at 140 mph.

In the aftermath of the 2007 storm, we observed, "In much the same way people of the mid-20th century always simply refer to World War II as 'The War,' we who lived through it may come to think of last week's raging sea monster as 'The Storm.'"

This Saturday's storm was certainly not a "raging sea monster," but ought to serve as a reminder for individuals, agencies and companies to get set for the coming storm season, while reviewing emergency-preparedness plans in general.

Electricity providers — Pacific Power in Clatsop County and Public Utility District No. 2 of Pacific County — generally deserve kudos for line maintenance and outage response, despite the lights going out for up to a half a dozen hours in some locations. There was much tree trimming in the wake of the 2007 storm — some of it controversial at the time — and it has proven effective at avoiding most long outages. But a serious wind storm while leaves are still on deciduous trees was bound to cause unusual problems. Without getting too carried away with branch and tree removal, the aftermath of Saturday's storm may reveal addressable weaknesses in our electricity-delivery systems.

It's also evident that most local people respond well to weather information. There were storm-relat-

ed fatalities elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, but not here. Helped by a still-new Doppler radar station on the Washington coast, the National Weather Service issued timely advisories and warnings that local news providers and social media widely shared. This allowed time to reinforce scaffolding at the Astoria Column restoration project. Hood to Coast organizers hoped for the best and were caught somewhat flatfooted, but the event succeeded.

Boaters stayed off the water, mostly, and individual impacts on land amounted to inconveniences instead of life-and-death struggles.

For future purposes, here are some reminders about storm and disaster preparedness on this coast:

- When disaster strikes, we can be on our own for hours or days. Try to keep up to 10 days of ready-to-eat meal supplies on hand, drinking water, batteries, vital prescriptions, blankets and pet food. Be as stocked up as you can afford to be; even a day or two of supplies will be helpful and give some peace of mind.

- When serious weather warnings are issued, fuel up vehicles and get some cash. The 2007 storm knocked out ATMs, filling stations and store credit card readers.

- Residents owe it to ourselves and our families to have battery-powered radios on hand. Watch for community events where free or low-cost NOAA radios are provided.

- Storms are no time for close-up sightseeing. Stay away from trees — even small falling branches can be deadly. Stay off beaches and jetties, where storm surge can pull people out to sea or cause drift logs to trap unsuspecting walkers. Don't try to drive through flooded areas.

Most residents love a good storm. They make us feel more alive. But staying alive and well means taking storms seriously.

Pretending to do a heckuva job

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

There are many things we should remember about the events of late August and early September 2005, and the political fallout shouldn't be near the top of the list.

Still, the disaster in New Orleans did the Bush administration a great deal of damage — and conservatives have never stopped trying to take their revenge.

Every time something has gone wrong on President Barack Obama's watch, critics have been quick to declare the event "Obama's Katrina." How many Katrinas has Obama had so far? By one count, 23.

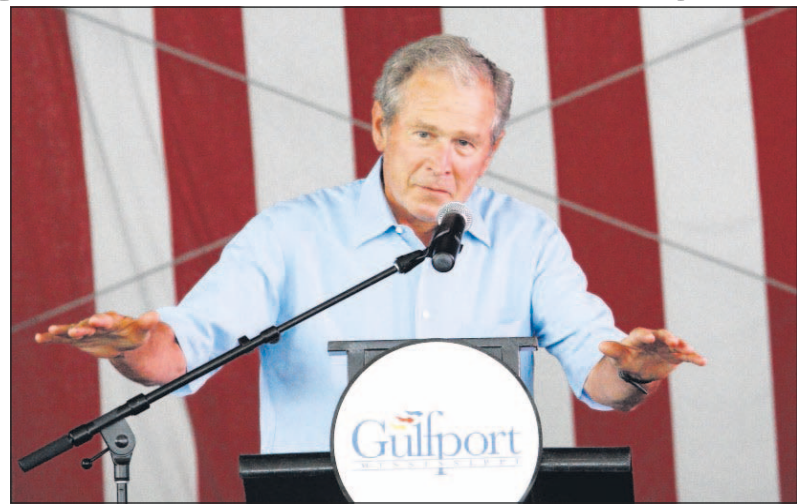
Somehow, however, these putative Katrinas never end up having the political impact of the lethal debacle that unfolded a decade ago. Partly that's because many of the alleged disasters weren't disasters after all. For example, the teething problems of Healthcare.gov were embarrassing, but they were eventually resolved — without anyone dying in the process — and at this point Obamacare looks like a huge success.

Beyond that, Katrina was special in political terms because it revealed such a huge gap between image and reality. Ever since 9/11, former President George W. Bush had been posing as a strong, effective leader keeping America safe. He wasn't. But as long as he was talking tough about terrorists, it was hard for the public to see what a lousy job he was doing. It took a domestic disaster, which made his administration's cronyism and incompetence obvious to anyone with a TV set, to burst his bubble.

What we should have learned from Katrina, in other words, was that political poseurs with nothing much to offer besides bluster can nonetheless fool many people into believing that they're strong leaders. And that's a lesson we're learning all over again as the 2016 presidential race unfolds.

You probably think I'm talking about Donald Trump, and I am. But he's not the only one.

Consider, if you will, the case of Chris Christie. Not that long ago he was regarded as a strong contender for the presidency, in part because for a while his tough-guy act played so well



Rogelio V. Solis/AP Photo

Former President George W. Bush tells the audience to lessen the applause as he salutes the first responders to the Mississippi Gulf Coast, Aug. 28, 2015, in Gulfport, Miss.



Paul Krugman

with the people of New Jersey. But he has, in fact, been a terrible governor, who has presided over repeated credit downgrades, and who compromised New Jersey's economic future by killing a much-needed rail tunnel project.

Now Christie looks pathetic — did you hear the one about his plan to track immigrants as if they were FedEx packages? But he hasn't changed; he's just come into focus.

Or consider Jeb Bush, once hailed on the right as "the best governor in America," when in fact all he did was have the good luck to hold office during a huge housing bubble. Many people now seem baffled by Bush's inability to come up with coherent policy proposals, or any good rationale for his campaign. What happened to Jeb the smart, effective leader? He never existed.

And there's more. Remember when Scott Walker was the man to watch? Remember when Bobby Jindal was brilliant?

I know, now I'm supposed to be evenhanded, and point out equivalent figures on the Democratic side. But there really aren't any, in modern America, cults of personality built around undeserving politicians seem to be a Republican thing.

True, some liberals were starry-eyed about Obama way back when, but the glitter faded fast, and what was left was a competent leader with some big achievements under his belt —

most notably, an unprecedented drop in the number of Americans without health insurance. And Hillary Clinton is the subject of a sort of anti-cult of personality, whose most ordinary actions are portrayed as nefarious. (No, the email thing doesn't rise to the level of a "scandal.")

Which brings us back to Trump. Both the Republican establishment and the punditocracy have been shocked by Trump's continuing appeal to the party's base. He's a ludicrous figure, they complain. His policy proposals, such as they are, are unworkable, and anyway, don't people realize the difference between actual leadership and being a star on reality TV?

Trump isn't alone in talking policy nonsense.

But Trump isn't alone in talking policy nonsense. Trying to deport all 11 million illegal immigrants would be a logistical and human rights nightmare, but might conceivably be possible; doubling America's rate of economic growth, as Jeb Bush has promised he would, is a complete fantasy.

And while Trump doesn't exude presidential dignity, he's seeking the nomination of a party that once considered it a great idea to put George W. Bush in a flight suit and have him land on an aircraft carrier.

The point is that those predicting Trump's imminent political demise are ignoring the lessons of recent history, which tell us that poseurs with a knack for public relations can con the public for a very long time. Someday The Donald will have his Katrina moment, when voters see him for who he really is. But don't count on it happening any time soon.

Bush, Clinton dynasties hit Trump bump

By MAUREEN DOWD
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — Pity Poppy.

When I went down to Houston a few years ago to eat pizza with the former president, he was his usual gracious self, speaking fondly about President Barack Obama and his new pal Bill Clinton.

But there was one person who got dismissed with a brusque obscenity: Donald Trump.

It was at the height of Trump's birther madness and Bush was disgusted by it.

So I can only imagine 41's dismay and disbelief — and acid flashbacks to spoiler Ross Perot — now that Trump has popped up to block the path of the son who Poppy desperately wants to see as 45, restoring the family name after 43's spiral.

The New York wheeler-dealer, who held a fundraiser at his Trump Tower apartment for gubernatorial candidate Jeb at Poppy's request back in 1997, has had a devastating and disorienting effect on Jeb's presidential candidacy.

The Trumpster has suckered Jeb! into scraps that have ended up backfiring on Jeb and elevating Trump. And he has trumpeted a lethargic, insubstantial image of Jeb that is at odds with the perky red "Jeb!" campaign logo.

In a *Washington Post* story last week about the fractious relationship, Trump ridiculed Jeb's investment banking work at Lehman Bros. and later Barclays. Trump suggested that the millions Jeb was paid were a reward for steering Florida state funds to Lehman.

"Why would you pay a man \$1.3 million a year for a no-show job at Lehman Bros. — which, when it failed, almost took the world with it?" Trump asked.

In a bank shot, Trump dragged in the Democratic front-runner, noting, "That's a Hillary Clinton kind of

situation."

It's deeply weird, but the jeering billionaire reality star seems authentic to many Americans. Trump is a manifestation of national disgust — with the money that consumed politics, with the dysfunctional, artificial status quo and with the turgid return to a Bush-Clinton race, with a less adept Bush and Clinton.

"The prospect of Hillary and Jeb as the nominees created a huge opening for something like this," said former W. strategist Matthew Dowd. "The American public looked at it and said, 'I do not want that.'"

Dowd said Friday that everyone should stop being in denial and start accepting that Trump could be the nominee.

Trump is a manifestation of national disgust.

"Do I think that Trump should be president?" Dowd asked. "No. Do I think he can be the badly needed match that burns down the status quo? Yes. Do I think he could precipitate an advent of a real third party? Yes."

He thinks the other candidates don't know how to deal with Trump. "They should treat him like an alien visitor," he said, "and, like judo, use his own weight — in this case, his self-absorption and hair-trigger reactions — against him. He doesn't care if you say he's not a real conservative."

Trump's "gusto," as he likes to call it, has thrown into sharper relief the grinding-it-out, impatient entitlement, the overthinking and overcorrecting of Jeb and Hillary.

Both campaign like they are owed, not because of their great national achievements, but because of their byzantine family dynamics.

Jeb feels he is owed because his brother sneaked in and snatched the presidency that his parents had designated for the Good Son, and because he was pressured to help W. purloin Florida in 2000.

And Hillary feels she is owed because she moved to Arkansas and



Maureen Dowd

then stuck it out with Bill through an anachronistic first lady job and Monica; because she was a team player and bided her time in the Senate and as secretary of state; because a whip-persnapper named Barack sneaked in and snatched the presidency that should have been hers.

Funnily enough, the biggest narcissist in the race —

and possibly the universe — has the one slogan that refers to the desires of voters: "Make America Great Again!" Hillary has "Hillary" with an arrow pointing at it. And Jeb has "Jeb!" with an exclamation point that represents the only fizz in his campaign.

Each one of this trio has a dilemma.

Because she is seen as domineering and distant, Hillary is most popular — and becomes most human — when she is brushed back. When she is pushed against the wall, she gets better. But how can she win if she can only convey authenticity when she is losing?

She is so coiled about losing again — carrying her front-runner status around like a Fabergé egg — that she screws up and starts losing. Her server, meant to shield her image and protect her from investigation, ends up sparking an investigation and damaging her image.

Jeb has to avoid the towel-snapping tone of his brother, because that over-compensating testosterone led to tragedy. But how does he convey strength to voters fretting that America is weak and prevent Trump from painting him as a milquetoast?

Trump knows he has a dilemma as well. His hyperbolic style and instinct for the jugular have propelled him to the front of the pack — a fact that has stunned even him. But how does he keep the colored lights going while conveying requisite dignity?

Even Joe Biden, padding around the edge of the campaign, has a dilemma: How does he honor the wish of his late son, Beau, to run when the death of Beau has left him so depleted he may not be able to run?

Matt Dowd thinks Biden would do well in this field: "Trump's the only one who can make Biden seem disciplined."