

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*

West Coast fisheries land stunning totals

For fishing communities, NOAA Fisheries’ annual publication about commercial landings makes for great reading — in much the way farmers enjoy the crop report.

Make no bones about it: Irrespective of decades of impressive economic diversification, the Lower Columbia and nearby places like Garibaldi, Willapa Bay and Westport, Wash., are fishing communities in essential cultural and monetary senses.

Our story last week focused on the horse race between Astoria and Newport for top West Coast fishing port — Newport edged us out in poundage in this latest tally — but there is much else to be gleaned from “Fisheries of the United States 2014.” (www.tinyurl.com/2014FishReport)

Here are a few eye-catching items and our reaction to them:

- Estimated U.S. per capita consumption of fish and shellfish was 14.6 pounds of edible meat in 2014, up from 14.5 pounds in 2013. It is safe to guess that some in our area eat several times this amount.
- Nationwide, U.S. fishermen landed 9.5 billion pounds valued at \$5.4 billion in 2014. This was a decrease of 394 million pounds and \$43 million from 2013, but the average ex-vessel price paid increased 57 cents a pound, compared to 55 cents a year earlier. Normal economic theory suggests that higher prices go hand in hand with a diminishing supply.

- Oysters — which play an enormous role in Washington’s Pacific County’s economy — are on a sharp upward trend in terms of price. The average price was \$7.04 in 2014, up from \$4.85 the year before. Overall, the U.S. produced 34.1 million pounds valued at \$240.3 million. Gulf states produced 16.4 million pounds, the West Coast 10.6 million and Middle Atlantic states 5.3 million. Washington state alone produced 9.1 million pounds, 86 percent of the West’s total.
 - Shrimp are surprisingly large factor in West Coast fisheries. Oregon landed 51.7 million pounds (up 9 percent) and Washington 31.4 million pound (up over 120 percent).
 - Salmon, once the foundation of the Lower Columbia economy, are now pretty tiny here in a commercial sense. Alaska accounted for 95 percent of 2014 landings, Washington nearly 4 percent. Oregon, California and the Great Lakes combined for the remaining 1 percent. Even so, 2014 was a comparatively good year for Oregon salmon, up 82 percent in poundage and 62 percent in value.
- This all is much to discuss and wonder over for old fishermen gathering for strong black coffee.

Why women are the target

Sen. Ted Cruz misrepresents the merit of a birth-control advocate

What three factors enlarged women’s opportunities in the 20th century? How about this list? Greater access to higher education. The right to vote. Birth control.

Contraception opened up life options for women. It introduced the concept of family planning. By delaying pregnancy or limiting the number of children, women could enter the workforce and aspire to a profession.

Margaret Sanger founded the Birth Control League, which became Planned Parenthood. Now that Planned Parenthood is a political football, being kicked around by Republican politicians, Sen. Ted Cruz of Texas and other legislators are asking the National Portrait Gallery to remove Sanger’s bust, which is on display as part of an exhibit titled “The Struggle for Justice.”

Describing Cruz’s political maneuver in *The New Yorker*, Amy Davidson quotes the Portrait Gallery’s director, Kim Sajet, who notes this is not the first time Margaret Sanger’s bust has become a target. “It happens during election cycles,” says Sajet.

The value of political demagoguery targeting Sanger is obvious. Even without the election cycle, Republicans frequently display skepticism of birth control,

as though it were something new. The contraception bugaboo is akin to denial of the 20th century. It also denies that Republican women rely on it, just as a preponderance of Catholic women rely on birth control, despite church teaching.

Planned Parenthood’s significance is its connection with low-income women, who may go to its clinics for gynecological care.

At the heart of far right Republican orthodoxy is an anti-intellectualism that denies modern science such as evolution and climate change and global warming.

It is odd to see an Ivy Leaguer join in the dumbing down of political discourse. But here is Ted Cruz, Princeton class of 1992, essentially questioning women’s access to birth control.

The struggle over Planned Parenthood and birth control are part of the long sweep of where women stand in history. Despite the gains of the 20th century, there is always a countervailing force that wants to reverse history.

At the far extremes of all religions there is an obsession with subjugating women — controlling their lives and denying them opportunity. This year Ted Cruz and others seeking the Republican nomination for president have joined that retrograde movement.

Skip the hearings, win the election

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — At a certain point, you have to realize you can’t hit a fast-ball.

House Republicans don’t quite get that they are hopeless at oversight hearings.

They keep losing — and now the chairman of the House Oversight Committee has just introduced articles of impeachment against IRS Commissioner John Koskinen.



Charles Krauthammer

I’m sympathetic to the GOP motive, given how the Obama IRS has consistently obstructed and misled Congress in the tax-exemption scandal. But impeachment is no ordinary move. No agency chief or Cabinet officer has been impeached since 1876. And even proponents admit that there is no chance of Koskinen being removed from office because the Senate will never convict.

Instead, says Chairman Jason Chaffetz, the purpose is public education, “to demonstrate to the American people” that the IRS “will be held accountable” for violating the public trust.

I’m all for demonstrating malfeasance. But the GOP House has given a five-year display of its inability to successfully demonstrate anything. From Benghazi all the way back to Operation Fast and Furious, its hearings’ impact on public perception has been either zero or negative.

Take the IRS case. The House Oversight Committee, led at the time by Darrell Issa, blew it, allowing the IRS’ Lois Lerner to deliver a statement proclaiming innocence and then claiming Fifth Amendment protection from having to answer any questions. Committee member Trey Gowdy nearly flew out of his seat to point out that she had just forfeited her immunity.

Too late. She got away with it. That failure is what brings us to impeachment today. But impeachment was never intended to be a mulligan.

Or consider the recent Planned Parenthood hearings where the Republicans had a very strong hand — videotaped discussions of the buying and selling of body parts



Jacquelyn Martin/AP Photo
Democratic presidential candidate and former Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton stands up at the end of testimony on Capitol Hill in Washington, Oct. 22, before the House Select Committee on Benghazi.

of dismembered aborted fetuses, a shocking exposition of what actually lies behind such antiseptic terms as “choice” and “women’s health.”

Yet the head of Planned Parenthood, so initially defensive that in July she apologized for the callous tone of those involved, ran rings around the committee.

Yet as a PR disaster for the GOP, nothing compares to Benghazi, in which the select committee, armed with truly damning evidence against Hillary Clinton, handed her instead a major victory.

Scattered amid those 11 hours of hearings (which in and of themselves lent Clinton an air of heroism and victimhood) was a powerful indictment of the administration for what happened both before the Benghazi attack (600 requests for more protection, all denied) and after, namely, the concocted fable of a demonstration-gone-bad caused by an offensive video.

Yet the outcome of the hearing is the current conventional wisdom that the committee presented nothing new and never laid a glove on her.

How could the Republicans have blown it so badly? They had in their hands very new information: a just-obtained email from Clinton to daughter Chelsea the night of the incident saying that it was an attack by an al-Qaeda-like group and, even more damning, a conversation the very next day in which Clinton told the Egyptian prime minister, “We

Impeachment was never intended to be a mulligan.

know that the attack in Libya had nothing to do with the film. It was a planned attack — not a protest.”

This evidence was presented at the hearing, but why not at the very beginning with every camera and microphone running, guaranteeing front-page coverage? To be followed by clip after clip of Clinton, Susan Rice and the president himself blaming the attack on a film and a protest, a fraud that went on for two weeks. That would have changed the entire proceedings.

True, the media played their part in overlooking and ignoring this prima facie evidence of mendacity and political expediency. But why make it so easy for them? Why bury the lede? Instead of highlighting this stunning new evidence, the committee offered endless questions about the emails of Sidney Blumenthal, someone the public has never heard of.

In each of these cases, Republicans had the facts and the argument. And yet in every one, they failed. What makes them think that they will fare any better in the next iteration, the impeachment of a minor official in an expiring administration?

Chaffetz says that the purpose is to rein in the IRS. I’m all for that. You know how you do it? Win the presidency. Appoint honest new IRS leadership. And get your own Justice Department to do a real investigation.

It’s a harder road to accountability. But it gets you to where you want to go.

Oh, those debating Republicans

By GAIL COLLINS
New York Times News Service

On his way into the big presidential debate, Ben Carson told reporters his plan was “to be me.”

Excellent idea — way better than planning to be Chris Christie.

“We are on the verge, perhaps, of picking someone who cannot do this job!” cried Gov. John Kasich of Ohio at the moment the contest began. Kasich had actually been asked to name his biggest weakness, but the thought of Carson’s tax plan and Donald Trump’s immigration plan seemed to send him a little off topic.

“He was so nice, he was such a nice guy,” sneered Trump at Kasich’s howling. “But then his poll numbers tanked.”

Hard to believe the race is still barely beginning — one week until one year until presidential Election Day! But you can’t say things have been boring. “What the hell are you people doing to me?” Trump demanded in Iowa, where he’s no longer in the lead. Perhaps we will look back on this as the moment when the former star of “The Apprentice” fired a state.

But about Wednesday night’s debate — the topic was economics, and the big takeaway was probably that when there are 10 people onstage, nobody is going to have to explain how that flat tax plan adds up. When in doubt, complain about government regulations.

Carson appears to have a particular genius on this front. Asked what to do about the pharmaceutical industry’s outrageous pricing policies, he mildly said: “No question that some people go overboard

when it comes to trying to make profits,” and then he careened off to the cost of government rules on “the average small manufacturer.”

Every seasoned politician is good at answering a difficult question with the answer to something entirely different. But Carson — who isn’t supposed to be a politician at all — was possibly the champ. Where do you think he picked that up? It’s a little unnerving to think this kind of talent is useful in the operating room.

Because Carson’s voice always sounds so moderate, responses that make no sense whatsoever can sound sort of thoughtful until you replay them in your head. Asked why, as an opponent of gay marriage, he serves on the board of a company that offers domestic partner benefits, Carson said that he believed “marriage is between one man and one woman and there is no reason that you can’t be perfectly fair to the gay community.” He then proposed, in his measured tones, that “the PC culture ... it’s destroying this nation.”

Republicans who have been terrified by Trump and Carson, and in despair over Jeb Bush, keep pointing hopefully to Marco Rubio. During the debate, Rubio demonstrated great verbal talent when it came to explaining why he seems so bad at things like, say, managing his personal finances. (His parents were humble working folk who did not leave him a fortune.) Also, his stupendous absentee record in the Senate is not all that much worse than some other people who have run for president.

“But Marco, when you signed



Gail Collins

up for this — this was a six-year term and you should be showing up to work,” interjected Bush, who seemed as if he had suddenly shaken himself from a nap. Bush’s only two moments of energy involved Rubio, who he seems to hate, and fantasy football, which he really, really enjoys.

Jeb Bush is not going to be the Republican presidential nominee. Neither is, let’s see — Christie, Rand Paul, Carly Fiorina or any of the other supporting cast members. Ted Cruz did have a big moment when he answered a question about raising the debt limit by attacking the questioner. That went over so well that by the end of the two-hour session, the left-wing media had overtaken government regulators as the greatest threat to the future of American democracy.

Or do you think it could actually be Carson? The guy who seems to blame gun control for the Holocaust?

One of the theories on why Carson can’t win — besides the fact that he’s utterly loopy — is that even a lot of Republican voters will be unnerved by his plans to undermine Social Security and Medicare. But his ideas aren’t actually all that different from those of most of the other candidates, who want to raise retirement rates or cut out everybody under, say, 45. “It’s not too much to ask of our generation after everything our parents and our grandparents did for us,” said Rubio.

Hard to imagine this going over well in middle-aged America, but the whole party is on the same page. Except for Mike Huckabee who — yes! — is still in the race, out there somewhere. And Trump, who says everything will be fine after he makes “a really dynamic economy from what we have right now” and builds that wall at the border.

Somebody has got to be nominated. Happy Halloween.

When in doubt, complain about government regulations.