

By another name

I hope that we soon stop calling the terrorist group in Syria and Iraq by the name it wants to be called, and start using the acronym Daesh. It is being used by many of the Middle East foes of the terrorists.

Why should we be calling these guys the name by which they want to be known? If someone declares himself the Lord of Clatsop County we certainly wouldn't give them any legitimacy by calling him that.

DAVID AMBROSE
Astoria

California's tears

As a former 20-year resident of San Bernardino County, California, specifically Redlands, and a former San Bernardino County employee, I feel I have a dog in the fight re: the San Bernardino shootings.

I lived and worked with many fine people of all faiths and backgrounds in our Redlands town of 80,000 people, with a county workforce of 900,000 and a consumer population of 21 million. We all worked hand in hand, side by side, for decades, truly a working melting pot.

That two individuals, in some ill-conceived grievance, would open fire on a group assembled for a casual end-of-year party does not speak for the mass majority of any religious/ethnic base in the San Bernardino area, or in the nation.

The Muslim faith is no more responsible for the San Bernardino murders than the Christian faith is for Colorado or Oregon's recent gun violence. Please, let's dial back the bias and remember individuals of any faith can do both good and evil.

BLUE ANDERSON
Astoria

Too broad a brush

I respectfully suggest that the Dec. 3 editorial ("We must take care of ourselves," *The Daily Astorian*) could have taken a more thoughtful approach in describing possible environmental threats. Cosmetics and personal care products companies are committed to making products that are safe for consumers and the environment alike, and for some time we have voluntarily committed to phasing out plastic microbeads by actively supporting legislation now moving through Congress.

That said, microbeads, whether from consumer products or other sources, are at most a very small contributor to the plastics found in water, and removing them from products will have a minimal, if any, benefit to the environment.

Thoughtless broad-brush approaches to managing environmental risk is not scientific, will remove many helpful products from store shelves



Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

The Astoria Column renovations become clearly visible as crews from Safway Services LLC. take down the scaffolding in October.

Astoria Column reopens — with thanks to all

Many *Daily Astorian* readers may recall with a shudder what the Astoria Column looked like in the mid-1980s after years of neglect: a blackened smokestack on Coxcomb Hill, with its historical "sgraffito" murals by Italian painter Attilio Pusterla largely obscured. So, when Astoria's then-Mayor Edith Henningsgaard approached me asking to help save and preserve the beloved Astoria Column, I absolutely agreed, and in 1988, the nonprofit The Friends of Astoria Column was formed.

With the support of the city and citizens of Astoria, private donations and grants we raised the \$1 million needed for the extensive restoration of the Column in 1995. But, 20 years of torrential wind and rain had taken their toll on the Column, and specialists were brought in to survey and assess the structural repairs and mural restoration that was needed. It was time for another restoration.

This past summer, with the full support of Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear and the Astoria City Council, the Friends of Astoria Column fundraised and oversaw another much-needed restoration which has returned the

Column to beyond its original glory. Special kudos are due to all for staying on schedule despite a major wind storm and senseless vandalism — even this did not delay the reopening of the Column to the public in October.

I particularly want to recognize and thank Marie Laibinis, of MCL Conservation, the internationally recognized conservator who led the renovation project. Marie assembled a talented crew; Site Manager John Goodenberger and Documentation Manager Aretta Christie. Scenic artists from the Seattle Opera did an amazing job of artistically bringing the original depth and warmth of the murals back to life. Additional thanks go to the dedicated plastering students of the Tongue Point Job Corps Center, who gave countless volunteer hours to the project, while gaining valuable on-site experience in the process.

Thanks are also due to Astoria Mayor Arline LaMear, Astoria City Council, Parks and Recreation Director Angela Cosby, and former Mayor of Astoria Willis Van Dusen. Their support of our unique public-private partnership of the city-owned Astoria Column is unwavering.

Special thanks are also due to the Friends of Astoria Column Executive Director Sheri Mitchell and Site Coordinator Jay Mitchell, who manage the day to day operations of the Astoria Column, keeping it ready to welcome the over 400,000 visitors each year. They have gone above and beyond their duties this past summer — you are most appreciated.

I especially want to thank the Friends of Astoria Column Board, a group of citizens from Astoria and with ties to Astoria, who are dedicated to ensuring the Astoria Column continues to stand proud. They all have given considerable time and money to this restoration effort; it just simply could not have been accomplished without them.

On behalf of the Friends of the Astoria Column, I am deeply grateful for the patience and support from the community of Astoria, and we hope you will join in supporting and celebrating this historic icon of Astoria as we approach the 90th anniversary in the fall of 2016.

JORDAN D. SCHNITZER
President, The Friends of Astoria Column

and may make other products less safe. We all want to preserve our environment, but this should be driven by data and not opinion.

BETH LANGE, PH.D.
Chief scientist, Personal Care Products Council
Washington, D.C.

Not a trinket

I typically don't get offended by too much that is published in this paper. However, in the Dec. 7 edition something did manage to do just that. Regarding the park tour that was taken in the area, specifically Ocean View Cemetery, it was men-

tioned that graves were starting to be overrun by fake flowers and "trinkets" on the graves ("Plenty of parks, not enough time," *The Daily Astorian*).

My father was a Korean War veteran. I don't consider the American flag that I place out there, which I have to replace every so often, a trinket, as I'm sure no other loved ones of veterans do, either. And what about the parents who have a child who is laid to rest there? I'm pretty sure they don't consider the little ceramic or stuffed animal they placed on their grave a trinket, either.

As for the fake flowers,

what difference does it make if they're artificial? Did it ever occur to the writer that flowers can be expensive? At least they are being remembered in some way. In a couple of weeks I'll be placing a wreath at my parents' grave, and, no, it will not be called a trinket, it will be a tribute to lives well lived.

JOYCE OLSON
Astoria

A good job

I am writing in regard to the recent firing of our fire chief, Mike Balzer. From my perspective, the Cannon Beach Fire Department has

been doing a good job. The building and equipment appear to be well-maintained (this was not always the case), the bond issues pass with significant margins (this was not always the case), and the volunteers appeared to be happy (this was not always the case).

On several occasions we have called 911 for my mom, stepdad or a customer at the Sea Breeze Court Motel. Personnel start showing up two or three minutes later, and there is no shortage of them.

If the problem is a difference of opinion of what con-

stitutes a good job, the board might want to poll the public. Most likely, the majority of the district would feel similarly, and would agree that the above functions are more important than filling out forms to be sent to another public employee.

KEN QUARLES
Cannon Beach

Safety on the tracks

The recent article, "AP: Railroads beat back new safety rules after derailments" (*The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 5) lacks a complete picture of the freight rail industry's commitment to track safety and the comprehensive regulatory environment that each railroad must follow.

The freight rail industry fully supports a comprehensive approach to track safety and has demonstrated its full support, in research and in money, to drive down rail defect-related occurrences.

Under strict federal regulations, freight railroads have taken an aggressive approach to identifying and removing defective rail as part of an extensive monitoring and replacement process. They are steadfast compliant, going beyond what is compulsory, by often performing more track inspections than required by regulators.

Federal statistics show rail safety has been dramatically improving over the last several decades, by more than 40 percent since 2000. It is the commitment of America's freight railroads to continue to take aggressive actions to advance the safety of the nation's 140,000-mile rail network, even further.

PATRICIA REILLY
Senior vice president,
Association of American
Railroads
Washington, D.C.

We'll be just fine

Every year I try to write one positive letter, so here goes, and this one's a pleasure: I am very proud to think of the TV footage from San Bernardino, California, being seen worldwide on Al Jazeera, CNN and the Inter-

net. I saw American policemen and women at the federal, state, county and local levels behave brilliantly and very quickly, and with great restraint. Their rapid, cool and professional actions could only happen with excellent training, equipment, courage and discipline.

I hope those who are motivated to try to destroy our nation and our culture — imperfect though we are — take a good look at what they're going to be up against. We're going to be just fine.

JOSEPH WEBB
Astoria

Why should we take the Trump stunt seriously?

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — So how exactly does this work, Donald Trump's plan to keep America safe from Islamic terrorism by barring entry to all Muslims? He explained it Tuesday on TV. The immigration official will ask the foreigner if he's a Muslim.

"And if they said, 'yes,' they would not be allowed in the country?"

Trump: "That's correct."

Brilliant. And very economical. That is, if you think that bloodthirsty terrorists — "people that believe only in Jihad, and have no sense of reason or respect for human life," as Trump describes them — will feel honor-bound to tell the truth to an infidel immigration officer. They kill wantonly but, like George Washington, cannot tell a lie. On this logic hinges the great Maginot Line with which Trump will protect America from jihad.

I decline to join the chorus denouncing the Trump proposal as offensive and un-American. That's too obvious. What I can't get over is its sheer absurdity.

Here's a suggestion (borrowed

from my Fox News colleague Chris Stirewalt) to shore it up. At every immigration station at every airport in America, we will demand that every potential entrant — immigrant, refugee, student or tourist — eat a bacon sandwich. You refuse? Back home you go!

True, the Stirewalt Solution casts the net a bit wide, snaring innocent vegetarians and Orthodox Jews. But hey, as Trump said Tuesday "We're at war — get it through your head." Can't get squeamish about collateral damage.

Dozens of others have already pointed out how strategically idiotic is Trump's exclusion principle. Absent a renewed Christian crusade against radical Islam — with those fabulous Hollywood-wardrobe tunics — the war on terror will only be won in alliance with moderate Muslims. Declaring them anathema is not the best beginning to coalition-building.

To take but the most obvious example: Our closest and most effective allies on the ground in the Middle East are the Kurds. Trump would turn them back at the Orlando airport. No Disney World for them. Or does he not know that they are Muslim?



Seth Wenig/AP Photo

Amina Ismail, left, Fatima Amaziane, center, and Dalia Abdallah hold signs during a news conference in the Queens borough of New York, Thursday. The news conference was called to express opposition to hate crimes and rhetoric, particularly in light of a recent attack in the neighborhood that police are investigating as a hate crime.

Cruz beating him for the first time in the Iowa Monmouth poll and five hours later decided it was time to seize the stage again.

This got the thinkers going again. *National Review's* Andrew McCarthy, whom I (otherwise) hold in considerable esteem, spent 1,000 words trying to tart up the ban in constitutional and statutory livery, stressing — hilariously — that he is dealing with the Trump proposal "in its final form." As if Trump's barstool eruptions are painstakingly vetted, and as if anything Trump says about anything is ever final.

Take his Syria policy. In September, he said we should wash our hands and just let Russia fight the Islamic State. Having, I assume, been subsequently informed that Vladimir Putin's principal interest — and target — is not the Islamic State but the anti-Assad rebels, Trump now promises to "bomb the s---" out of the Islamic State.

I'm sure there's a Trump apologist out there working to explain the brilliant complementarity of these two contradictory strategies. Just as a few months ago there was a frenzy of learned scholarship about the constitutional history of the 14th Amend-

Once again, it's the Donald Show.

ment following another Trump eruption — the abolition of birthright citizenship.

Whatever the final outcome, Trump's campaign has already succeeded, indelibly affecting both this race and the Republican future. At a time of economic malaise at home and strategic collapse abroad, Trump has managed to steer the entire GOP campaign into absurdities, like mass deportation of 11 million illegal immigrants, and impossibilities, like the exclusion of Muslims from our shores.

"No Muslims allowed" is the perfect example. President Obama's Oval Office address on Sunday night marked a new low in his presidency. The shopworn arguments, the detached tone, the willful denial that there might be anything wrong with his policy was deeply unsettling for left, right and center. Even *The New York Times* had to admit "Obama's Plans to Stop ISIS Leave Many Democrats Wanting More," which is Timesese for *Democrats Stunned by Vacancy in the Oval Office*. Here was an opportunity for the Republican field to launch an all-out takedown of the Obama (and Hillary Clinton) foreign policy.

Within less than a day that opportunity was wiped out. Once again, it's the Donald Show.