

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

GUEST COLUMN

A dirge for the demise of dancing

By GAIL HENRIKSON
For The Daily Astorian

Recently, I have encountered much lamentation regarding the fact that no one dances anymore.

Oddly, this mourning has only been expressed to me by women.

There is no pattern to their socio-economic demographic — I've heard it from women in their early 20s, as well as from

women in their mid-60s. Some are retired, some are stay-at-home moms and some are service industry indentured servants.

Never once, though, have I heard a man clucking his tongue over the lack of people movin' to the groove.

Granted, men have always been more reluctant than women in recent decades to shake their booties on the dance floor. I partially blame this on John Travolta and "Saturday Night Fever" — a film that spawned a polyester revolution and destroyed men's dancing egos.

However, even this doesn't begin to fully explain the demise of dancing — because women aren't dancing either.

As a child who came of age in the mid-1980s in a small rural Wisconsin town, dancing was de rigueur. Even if you had no style, no rhythm and no right feet — dancing was mandatory if there was music within earshot.

We danced to everything — fast or slow, punk, rock, country — everything but classical. In junior high and high school, every dance included a playing of Meatloaf's "Two Out of Three Ain't Bad" and closed with the obligatory "Stairway to Heaven." In between, the most current Top 40 hits were spun by a DJ up on the wooden stage in the gymnasium.

The most popular dancing song was Van Halen's "Jump" — not the most danceable tune, but we swung it out until we could all leap into the air when Van Halen told us "you might as well jump."

Our daily lives were played out against the ubiquitous soundtrack of Michael Jackson's "Thriller" album. I'm willing to bet that every school during that era had at least one person who insisted on donning the red leath-



Rick Crawford/
Submitted Photo
Gail Henrikson



Paramount Pictures/AP Photo
John Travolta and Karen Lynn Gorney are shown in a scene from, "Saturday Night Fever," in 1977.

er jacket and single glove and moonwalking through the hallways between classes.

Music healed us, guided us, and filled every moment in our otherwise boring small town lives. It didn't matter whether you were into heavy metal, new wave, punk, or country. All that was important was that you had a musical affiliation and you were willing to pledge your loyalty to your genre through the oath of dance.

Dancing was part response to beat and part mating ritual. In junior high, the males of the species — or at least the majority of them — had not yet begun to preen and were in that awkward self-aware development period. Oftentimes during the upbeat tempos, only females crowded the gym floor, showing off for the boys and hoping to be asked to dance during a slow song. Of course, it had to be THE RIGHT BOY. The stability of the social hierarchy was based on the foundation of whether you danced to Styx's "Babe" with Joey or Dan. And for lack of a partner, the popularity kingdom was forever lost.

These same social undercurrents carried over to high school. Dances became an excuse to break up, make up or make out — sometimes all of the above with the same person.

When I went to college, and later for extended periods of time overseas, everyone danced. From dimly lit basement bars in Wisconsin, to pulsing discotheque-ish clubs in Vienna, to crossroads tin shacks in Benin, music played and people danced. It was a communal expression of joie de vivre; of excess energy; of seduction and liberation. Sometimes it was just a release of sheer madness, but it was always about movement and it didn't matter if you were male or female — you danced.

We are too coolish to be foolish.

The juicy subplots of the year ahead

By FRANK BRUNI
New York Times News Service

In American politics, one narrative — one question — eclipses all others: Who will become the 45th president?

But there are dramas within that drama.

There's also suspense aplenty beyond center stage, and much of it does not involve Donald Trump, a third-party candidacy or the specter of a brokered Republican convention. This column, in the spirit of the holidays, will be a Trump-free zone.

Some of the following subplots could greatly influence the outcome of the presidential contest while others have big implications for the sway and the health of the Republican and Democratic parties.

They're just a glimmer of what 2016 has in store.

Barack Obama Unbound. He's zipping down the road with Jerry Seinfeld. He's unzipping his lip with Steve Inskeep of National Public Radio. He's intensifying his fight against climate change.

As Obama pivots into the final phase of his presidency, he seems to be heading in a new direction, toward greater candor, fewer inhibitions, no apologies. He has felt muzzled and misunderstood for much of his time in the White House. I sense a catharsis coming.

And it could complicate the inevitably strained etiquette between him and the Democratic presidential nominee, meaning Hillary Clinton. She'll have to defend many aspects of his legacy and disparage others as she does and doesn't campaign for a third Obama term. He'll react to this as someone who's losing his limited patience with political gamesmanship, who's tired

of playing the punching bag and whose aides and associates are sometimes aghast at the Clintons.

Side note: Watch for Joe Biden, by design or accident, to blurt out something harmful to her at some point.

Bill Clinton on the Loose. Until recent weeks, it was almost possible to forget him as presidential-race factor. Then Hillary Clinton, in the last Democratic debate, tagged him as a key economic adviser in any second Clinton administration. Her campaign confirmed that he'd be popping up more often on the campaign trail. And references to his Oval Office misdeeds and the Clintons' marital psychodrama started to creep back into the news.

All of that was a fresh reminder that his proper role in, and impact on, his wife's candidacy is unsettled and unclear. He remains both wildly charismatic and maddeningly undisciplined. He connotes both prosperous times and cynical scheming.

There's no legitimate worry that his presence might eclipse and diminish hers, but the two of them together root her candidacy as much in the past as in the future. So how to deploy and integrate him? Is it controllable?

All Eyes on New Hampshire. I don't mean the state's Republican and Democratic primaries in February. I mean the U.S. Senate election in November.

The balance of power in the chamber could hinge on the battle between the Republican incumbent, Kelly Ayotte, and her Democratic challenger, Maggie Hassan, the state's governor.

It won't look like many other Senate contests. New Hampshire's peculiar political realities mean that neither candidate is likely to be especially nasty or ideolog-

ically strident; each may well emphasize consensus-building and look for opportunities to flex independence from the party that's paradoxically pumping enormous resources into her race.

And their matchup will underscore New Hampshire's encouraging record of electing women to prominent public offices, where they're still frustratingly underrepresented nationwide.

A Tale of Two Mayors. The Democratic mayors of two of the nation's three most populous cities are under enormous strain, their approval ratings low, their approaches to governing under attack. I speak of Bill de Blasio in New York and Rahm Emanuel in Chicago, each of whom has acknowledged the need for redemption in 2016.

But while de Blasio's greatest problems are with white voters, Emanuel has lost the trust in particular of minorities, who are justly outraged by the deadly actions of his city's police officers.

The methods and success with which these remarkably different men chart their comebacks warrant scrutiny, harboring lessons about the Democratic Party's ability to bridge diverse constituencies and about the most effective style of leadership for fractious, tense times.

Religion on the Run. Same-sex marriage became the law in 50 states despite the opposition of many prominent church figures. The percentage of Americans who don't subscribe to any organized religion steadily grows.

And that means that whoever winds up with the Republican nomination has to figure out how to play down the primary's degree of God talk and moralizing without alienating voters on the so-called religious right, who could cause a distracting scene, impede the party's outreach to moderate and younger voters, and decide to sit out the election.

Can the party soften its image, adapt to the times and expand its appeal while satisfying evangelicals? Its success in presidential contests could hinge on that.

My dance card is open — care to join me?

Gail Henrikson is a born-again dancer, aspiring writer, and former city planner. She recently relocated to Astoria from New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

Responsive salmon management matters

The annual game of forecasting salmon runs got under way earlier this month. Although the process can seem a little like trying to pick lottery numbers using a Ouija board, these early estimates are more than guesses and definitely help shape fishing seasons.

Columbia River salmon runs have never been a sure thing. Long before there were dams, dikes and millions of people living in the watershed, tribal stories tell of years of famine. People like the Chinook and Clatsop survived here for thousands of years because they were adaptable and knew how to utilize fall-back resources when salmon didn't return in lavish numbers.

Nowadays, researchers look at a variety of indicators to estimate upcoming runs, including complicated statistical modeling. But an old standby, the early return of immature jack salmon, remains a favorite. If there are a lot of them, it usually is safe to surmise that many more will try to return to spawning beds when they are 4.

The *Columbia Basin Bulletin* summarizes the first 2016 forecast as "returns at the Columbia River mouth of spring Chinook and summer Chinook salmon will be lower next year than in 2015. Still, the tally will be much higher than the ten-year average. However,

the forecast for sockeye salmon is nearly five times lower than 2015's actual return and about half the ten-year average."

About 188,800 highly valued spring Chinook are predicted to make it at least as far as the Columbia River mouth, down from the 2015 forecast of 232,500 and much lower than the actual return of 289,000 fish.

Stuart Ellis of the Columbia River Inter-Tribal Fish Commission concedes that forecast updates can be "wildly off ... It can be very hard on the fishers when we keep changing the run size, which changes the allowed number of fish that can be caught, but it is better for the fish, because it makes the fisheries much more responsive to the actual number of fish returning."

Estimates provide hope for this spring's recreational salmon seasons, even as commercial gillnetters continue to be unfairly pushed off the river. Choking off their fishery clearly is not creating a salmon bonanza.

No matter the forecasts, once salmon actually start arriving, really responsive management would provide commercial fishermen, and the consumers who rely on them, more access to spring Chinook.

investigative services at the city police and county sheriff level," he says.

A broad-based initiative seeks to have states expand mandatory reporting of elder fraud to the financial industry. *The Journal* reported, "The bill gives brokers and advisers civil immunity from privacy violations for reporting suspected fraud and allows them to put a temporary hold on suspicious account disbursements."

Ellen Klem of the Oregon attorney general's office says that AG Ellen Rosenblum has not taken a position on the bill. Meanwhile, on Jan. 26, Rosenblum will convene a workshop on elder abuse for Oregon law enforcement and district attorneys.

Like so many things, our wired world has given criminals enhanced opportunity. "With the Internet," says Marquis, "there are a lot more opportunities for elder fraud. One of the mythologies is that you have to be demented to be victimized. That's not true."

The Journal notes that, "In some cases, investment advisers or stockbrokers churn accounts through unnecessary trades, resulting in high fees or losses."

Preying on the elderly is especially heinous. Says an Oregon lawyer: "It horrifies me that some children are treating their parents as though they are already dead."