

# 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*

## Sea lions do their worst

*No free rein to marine mammals while fish populations struggle.*

The states of Washington and Oregon are likely to phase out the catch-and-release fishery for white sturgeon in the Lower Columbia River, the latest blow to a recreational activity that has spiraled sharply downward this decade.

Though fishermen largely regard catch-and-release with tepid enthusiasm, it provided at least a tenuous connection to the mourned glory days for the sturgeon fishery. Sturgeon seasons that allowed retention gained many ardent fans in the 1990s as salmon seasons languished. Delicious and tenacious, the medium-sized sturgeon fishermen were allowed to keep generated a lot of economic activity for Columbia estuary ports, merchants and charter operations.

Apparent spawning problems and a surge in numbers of predatory sea lions led to a steep population decline. Sea lions took a particularly severe toll on breeding-age sturgeon near Bonneville Dam, and are undoubtedly a negative factor throughout the estuary.

A policy adviser to the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife told the state's fish commission-

ers last month that sturgeon behavior is being disrupted by intense predation. Sturgeon are having to move often and are migrating into tributaries in search of safety. Even so, the legal-size sturgeon population has increased to an estimated 147,000 this year, up from 72,700 in 2012.

The Washington commission voted 9-0 not only to bar retention, but also to end catch-and-release. Oregon commissioners will consider the issue later this week.

Sturgeon are well-suited to hatchery propagation. The states should begin such a program. Beyond this, more proactive management of sea lion populations is clearly justified. Although the idea is repellent to avid animal-right activists, sea lion numbers are out of proportion to available prey in the Columbia River. It is irresponsible to allow such free rein to marine mammals while fish populations struggle.

## Klamath deal lives in spite of Walden

While compromise is a dirty word with Republicans in Congress, it is essential in the West, where water intersects with agriculture, fish and hydroelectricity. The Klamath Basin Restoration Agreement of 2010 was one of the most historic water compromises of this century. But it languished in Congress for five years.

The good news is that part of the agreement will move forward. The Klamath Hydroelectric Settlement Agreement, one of the larger agreement's most controversial sections, came together last week.

This newly ratified agreement among the states of Oregon and California, PacifiCorp and the federal government allows for decommissioning and removal of four dams on the Klamath River.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, who represents the Klamath Basin, says that the renewed hydroelectric agreement will make it easier to move the res-

toration agreement through Congress. But Walden fails to note an unfortunate thing. The agreement on restoration lapsed during the years of Congress' inaction. Thus that negotiation would have to be restarted.

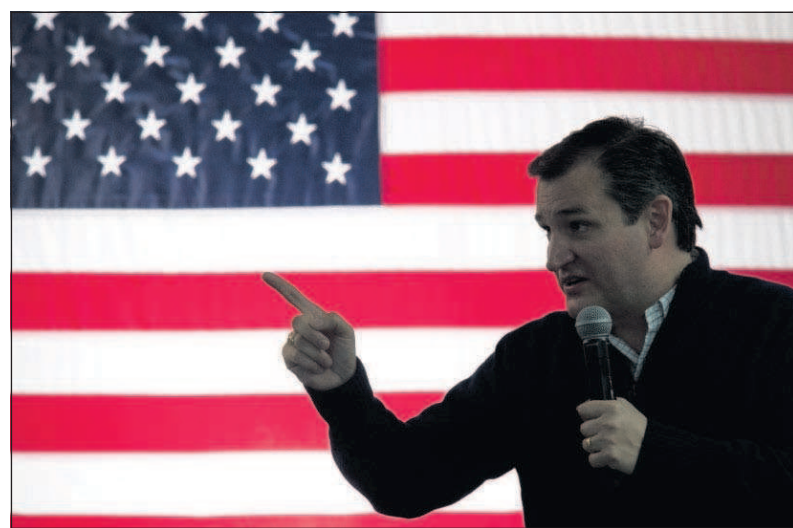
Rep. Walden is something of a mystery. While he has risen in the House Republican leadership ranks, he fails to go to bat for his district when the chips are down. It fell to Sen. Ron Wyden to move the historic 2013 Malheur Ten Year Stewardship Contract. After supporting the Klamath agreement, Walden backed away when tea party interests in that county opposed it.

Gary Wade, an orchardist in The Dalles, has nailed Walden on his negligence. In a letter to the *Capital Press*, Wade noticed Walden's high profile in Congress during the Malheur wildlife refuge occupation. So Wade asked, "Why, Mr. Walden, did you torpedo the Klamath Basin agreement, a perfect example of local control without federal intervention?"



Tony Gutierrez/AP Photo

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump pumps his fist as supporters cheer him after speaking at a campaign rally Wednesday, in Little Rock, Ark.



Mary Altaffer/AP Photo

Republican presidential candidate, Sen. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, speaks during a campaign event at the Grace Baptist Church, Feb. 1, in Marion, Iowa.

## The 'establishment' nonsense

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

*Washington Post Writers Group*

WASHINGTON — The reigning idiocy of the current political season is the incessant tossing around of "establishment," an epithet now descending into meaninglessness.

Its most recent abuse is by Donald Trump supporters rationalizing his Iowa defeat with the following consolation: If you tally up Trump and Ted Cruz (and throw in Ben Carson), a whopping 60 percent of the vote is anti-establishment!

So what? The threat to the GOP posed by the Trump insurgency is not that he's anti-establishment. It's that he's not conservative. Trump winning the nomination would convulse the Republican Party, fracture the conservative movement and undermine the GOP's identity and role as the country's conservative party.

There's nothing wrong with challenging the so-called establishment. Parties, like other institutions, can grow fat and soft and corrupt. If by establishment you mean the careerists, the lobbyists and the sold-out cynics, a good poke, even a major purge, is well-deserved.

That's not the problem with Trump. The problem is his, shall we say, eclectic populism. Cruz may be anti-establishment but he's a principled conservative, while Trump has no coherent political philosophy, no core beliefs, at all. Trump offers barstool eruptions and whatever contradictory "idea" pops into his head at the time, such as "humane" mass deportation, followed by mass amnesty when the immigrants are returned to the United States.

That's the reason his harebrained ideas — barring all Muslims from entering the country, a 45 percent tariff on Chinese goods, government-provided universal health care through "a deal with existing hospitals to take care of people" (why didn't I think of that?) — have received such relatively little scrutiny. No one takes them seriously. His actual platform is all persona — the wonders that will emanate from his own self-proclaimed strength, toughness, brilliance, money, his very yugeness.

Trump's is faith-based politics of the Latin American caudillo variety. "At the (Sarah) Palin rally," reports John McCormack of *The Weekly Standard*, "Trump promised he would localize education. 'How?' shouted one man in the crowd. 'Just you watch,' Trump replied." Meaning: I have no idea. Just trust me.

Cruz does not lack for self-confidence. And he constantly wraps himself in anti-establishment rhetoric. He reasonably calculates that his hard-edged conservatism sells best when presented not as pristine ideology but as a revolt against entrenched interests.

To imagine, however, that his railing against "the Washington cartel" makes him a Trumpian brother-in-arms is to mistake tactics for strategy, style for substance. To be sure, it's a misperception Cruz himself encouraged throughout 2015 as he drafted in Trump's wake. But that's yesterday's story. It's been over for weeks.

The story since January is of a romance blown up, clearing away the anti-establishment veneer and allowing their fundamental political differences to finally emerge:

- Over Trump's "New York (read: liberal) values."



Charles Krauthammer

- Over government power. Cruz's most biting commercial showed Trump enlisting government to tear down the home of a little old lady standing in the way of a casino parking lot.

- Over ethanol, which Cruz opposed on classic small-government grounds that the state should not be picking winners and losers, and which Trump supported because "it happens to be a

lot of jobs for Iowa."

The Iowa results clarified the dynamic of the Republican race. There are only three candidates in the race and, as I argued last week, each represents a different politics. The result is a three-way fight between Trump's personalized strongman populism and two flavors of conservatism — Marco Rubio's more mainstream version and Cruz's more uncompromising take-no-prisoners version.

We can now read the Iowa results as they affect the Republican future. Trumpian populism got 24 percent, conservatism (Rubio plus Cruz) got 51 percent. There will be a spirited contest between the two conservatives over who has the better chance of winning the general election and of governing effectively. But whatever the piques and preferences of various "establishment" party leaders, there's no denying that either Rubio or Cruz would retain the GOP's fundamental ideological identity. Trump would not.

Getting thumped in Iowa does not mean that Trump is done. He's on favorable ground in New Hampshire and leads in practically every other state. But he's in for a long fight.

What Iowa confirms is that whatever beating the "establishment" takes during this campaign, Republicans are choosing conservatism over Trumpian populism by 2 to 1. Which means their chances of survival as the party of Reagan are very good.

## Who hates Obamacare on left, right?

By PAUL KRUGMAN

*New York Times News Service*

Ted Cruz had a teachable moment in Iowa, although he himself will learn nothing from it.

A voter told Cruz the story of his brother-in-law, a barber who had never been able to afford health insurance.

He finally got insurance thanks to Obamacare — and discovered that it was too late. He had terminal cancer and nothing could be done.

The voter asked how the candidate would replace the law that might have saved his brother-in-law if it had been in effect earlier. Needless to say, all he got was boilerplate about government regulations and the usual false claims that Obamacare has destroyed "millions of jobs" and caused premiums to "skyrocket."

For the record, job growth since the Affordable Care Act went fully into effect has been the best since the 1990s, and health costs have risen much more slowly than before.

So Cruz has a truth problem. But what else can we learn from this encounter? That the Affordable Care Act is already doing enormous good. It came too late to save one man's life, but it will surely save many others. Why, then, do we hear not just conservatives but also many progressives trashing President Barack Obama's biggest policy achievement?

Part of the answer is that Bernie Sanders has chosen to make rielitigating reform, and trying for single-payer, a centerpiece of his presidential campaign. So some Sanders supporters have taken to attacking Obamacare as a failed system.

We saw something similar back in 2008, when some Obama supporters

temporarily became bitter opponents of the individual mandate — the requirement that everyone buy insurance — which Hillary Clinton supported but Obama opposed. (Once in office, he in effect conceded that she had been right and included the mandate in his initiative.)

But the truth is, Sanders is just amplifying left-wing critiques of health reform that were already out there. And some of these critiques have merit. Others don't.

Let's start with the good critiques, which involve coverage and cost.

The number of uninsured Americans has dropped sharply, especially in states that have tried to make the law work. But millions are still uncovered, and in some cases high deductibles make coverage less useful than it should be.

This isn't inherent in a non-single-payer system: Other countries with Obamacare-type systems, like the Netherlands and Switzerland, do have near-universal coverage even though they rely on private insurers. But Obamacare as currently constituted doesn't seem likely to get there, perhaps because it's somewhat underfunded.

Meanwhile, although cost control is looking better than even reform advocates expected, America's health care remains much more expensive than anyone else's.

So yes, there are real issues with Obamacare. The question is how to address those issues in a politically feasible way.

But a lot of what I hear from the left is not so much a complaint about how the reform falls short as outrage that private insurers get to play any role. The idea seems to be that any role for



Paul Krugman

the profit motive taints the whole effort.

That is, however, a really bad critique. Yes, Obamacare did preserve private insurance — mainly to avoid big, politically risky changes for Americans who already had good insurance but also to buy support or at least quiescence from the insurance industry. But the fact that some insurers are making money from reform (and their profits are not, by the way, all that large) isn't a reason to oppose that reform. The point is to help the uninsured, not to punish or demonize insurance companies.

And speaking of demonization: One unpleasant, ugly side of this debate has been the tendency of some Sanders supporters, and sometimes the campaign itself, to suggest that anyone raising questions about the senator's proposals must be a corrupt tool of vested interests.

Recently Kenneth Thorpe, a respected health policy expert and a longtime supporter of reform, tried to put numbers on the Sanders plan and concluded that it would cost substantially more than the campaign says. He may or may not be right, although most of the health wonks I know have reached similar conclusions.

But the campaign's policy director immediately attacked Thorpe's integrity: "It's coming from a gentleman that worked for Blue Cross Blue Shield. It's exactly what you would expect somebody who worked for BCBS to come up with." Oh, boy.

Let's be clear: This kind of thing can do real harm. The truth is that whomever the Democrats nominate, the general election is mainly going to be a referendum on whether we preserve the real if incomplete progress we've made on health, financial reform and the environment. The last thing progressives should be doing is trash-talking that progress and impugning the motives of people who are fundamentally on their side.

**The point is to help the uninsured, not to punish insurance companies.**