

**Beware 'easy money'**

Recently, Linn County served notice of its intention to file a class action lawsuit against the state of Oregon and the Department of Forestry to seek \$1.435 billion or more in damages on behalf of the "Forest Trust Lands Counties" and "all other government entities (i.e. taxing districts) that receive timber revenue from these lands." The suit also seeks "relief to alter the state's current management practices to ensure to the Forest Trust Land Counties and other class members the appropriate level of future timber revenues."

Before Clatsop County and its local taxing districts decide to participate in this lawsuit, they have a duty to thoroughly understand the potential longstanding and serious consequences of this action. When the counties turned over their burned and logged-over land to the state over 70 years ago, it became public state land to be restored and by law provide a steady stream of timber revenue to the Forest Trust Counties and their respective taxing districts. The law also requires that these state forests be managed to produce a sustainable flow of social and environmental benefits for the public.

Over the years, these forests have been restored, miles of logging roads and trails have been built or improved and many camp sites opened. As the forests have matured, many millions of dollars in harvest revenue have been returned — two thirds of

this revenue to the counties and local taxing districts, and one third to the department for management of this land.

Essentially, this lawsuit will require the department to generate harvest revenue using private, commercial logging standards. The key question the county and taxing districts must decide: Do they want to cannibalize our state forests, damage the land and aquatic environment, diminish our aesthetic and recreational enjoyment of this land, and expose our people to more toxic spraying in the interest of gaining more tax revenue? Since commercial standards have shorter rotation periods and more frequent clear cutting, do they also want to contribute to global warming and increase our forest's risk of catastrophic fires?

They should also be aware that Trust Lands officials have been very open in stating that they want to target Clatsop County's big, old trees (i.e. 70-90 years old) first, less they become home to any endangered species. Once these trees are gone, it will take more than 100 years before our forest grows back to a level even close to where it is today. Seventy plus years of cooperative effort between the counties and the department has already been disrupted, as both sides have been instructed by their lawyers to have no further contact with the other while this case is pending.

Finally, as the Clatsop County Board of Commissioners chairman

was quoted as saying in a recent editorial on this subject, he is concerned that the lawsuit could tie up the county's revenue stream and bring lawsuits from environmental groups, too. What sort of hardship and turmoil would it create if a prolonged legal battle ensued?

I strongly urge the Board of Commissioners and officials in the taxing districts not to participate in this foolhardy and potentially devastating lawsuit, and support a more balanced approach to managing this county's state forest.

CAROLYN EADY  
Astoria

**Worries**

I received a call from my son, who lives on the Kenai Peninsula in Alaska. He said, "We are having an earthquake." It was a 7.1. He felt his house moving, and looked outside to see his truck also moving back and forth, and he said to me, "It stopped. But I hear the whistles from the LNG plant going off." He got his radio, and there was a fire.

I can't tell you how scared I was, as the LNG plant is 1.5 miles from where my son lives. I was watching the news at home when he called, and it was the worst feeling I ever had.

I had gone to see him in Alaska with my daughter three months ago, and I saw the LNG plant. Alaska is beautiful like Oregon. My question is why would anyone put such a dan-

gerous plant in such a beautiful place — like Warrenton — that is free of hazardous air, water, and fears of the type that my son in Alaska has faced?

We have lived less than one mile of the proposed site in Warrenton for 55 years. Please don't let this dangerous plant be built in my back yard. If they want to export it to Asia, then let them build it there.

ELISE AND JIM CULP SR.  
Warrenton

**Outrageous bill**

Are you aware of what is happening in our little Cullaby Lake neighborhood? We just received our first bill from city of Warrenton with the sewage being pumped through a pipe a distance of over 4 miles: Water bill, \$42.86; sewer bill, \$88.25; total, \$131.11 per month. Outrageous I say.

People have been selling and moving. I wonder if they have disclosed this bill to potential buyers? Some people have just walked away. So there are now many foreclosed homes in what was previously a very nice area.

Another thing I believe is unfair is that we have a certain amount of control over our electric/heating, cable, our water usage etc. But here everybody pays the same sewer bill if you are one person in a home or eight.

Plus \$100 per \$100,000 of home value will be added to our property taxes. Landlords will have no choice but to raise the fees charged to their

renters. Those who bought homes within the last seven years are underwater of the value of that house. There are many senior citizens on Social Security here, and families with children. How can they afford to live here?

And good luck trying to sell your house.

BERNADINE THOMAS  
Warrenton

**TV Guide**

I am wondering who made the decision to remove the TV listings from the Wednesday edition of *The Daily Astorian*. It was a stupid idea. Does this person think we only watch TV from 6 until 11:30 p.m.? Most people like to look ahead to see what programs are going to be on later in the week, or the following week.

Last weekend the Super Bowl wasn't listed, since it started at 3 in the afternoon, and Sunday's listing started at 6. Also, in tonight's paper (Tuesday) we received Monday's TV listings. That was really helpful in planning our evening viewing.

If the reason for removing the TV listings was cost, then how come Friday's paper was stuffed with the business journal and a bunch of ads. The TV listings have advertising included, so they are being paid for. The TV listings need to be returned to the Wednesday paper for the good of all your readers.

KEITH NEAL  
Astoria

# The GOP created Donald Trump

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF  
*New York Times News Service*

The betting markets now say that the most likely Republican nominee for president is a man who mocks women, insults Latinos, endorses war crimes like torture, denounces party icons and favors barring people from the United States based on their religion.

He's less a true-believer conservative than an opportunist, though, for he has supported single-payer health insurance, abortion rights and tighter gun measures. Lindsey Graham says he's "crazy," Jeb Bush says he would be worse than President Barack Obama, and the conservative *National Review* warned that he is a "menace to American conservatism."



Nicholas Kristof

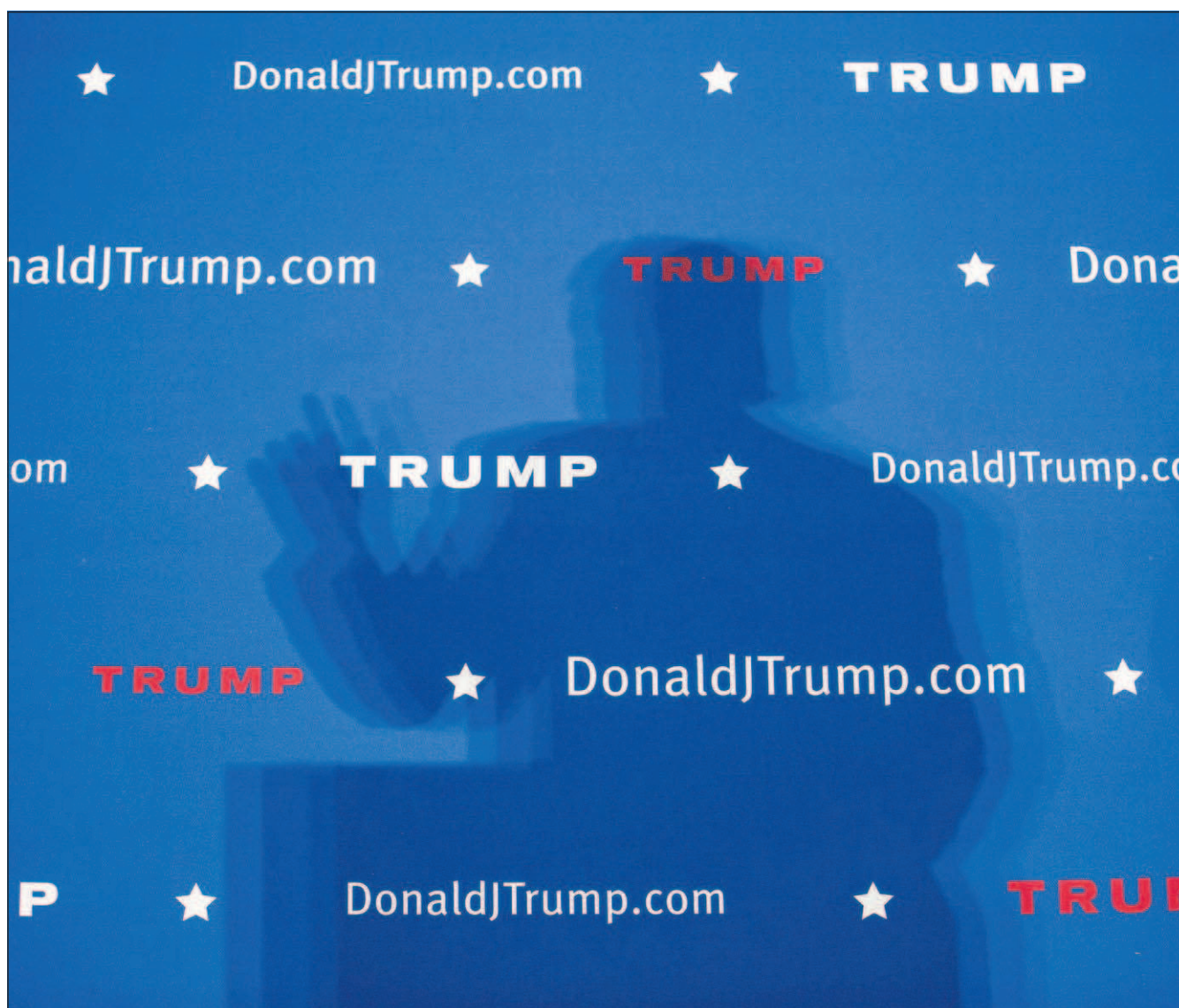
It's Donald Trump, of course. He's smarter than critics believe — he understood the political mood better than we pundits did — but I can't think of any national politician I've met over the decades who was so ill-informed on the issues, or so evasive, or who so elegantly and dangerously melded bombast and vapid.

So how did we get to this stage where the leading Republican candidate is loathed by the Republican establishment?

In part, I think, Republican leaders brought this on themselves. Over the decades they pried open a Pandora's box, a toxic politics of fear and resentment, sometimes brewed with a tinge of racial animus, and they could never satisfy the unrealistic expectations that they nurtured among supporters.

Perhaps it started in 1968 with Nixon's "Southern strategy," recruiting white segregationists infuriated by the civil rights movement. It then expanded to encompass immigration and the three G's — God, guns and gays.

Of course, Democrats also sometimes campaigned outrageously, and some Republicans scorned the politics of hate. There was a marvelous scene in 2008 when John McCain was running against Obama, and a woman at a McCain rally suggested that Obama was an Arab who couldn't be trusted. McCain corrected her and then praised his rival: "No, ma'am. He's a decent family man, a citizen,



Damon Winter/The New York Times

**Donald Trump speaks at a campaign event at the New Hampshire Hills Athletic Club in Milford, N.H., Feb. 2. Trump — more opportunist than true-believer conservative — now leads the betting markets for the Republican presidential nomination. How, exactly, did the GOP get here?**

that I just happen to have disagreements with on fundamental issues."

Political nastiness and conspiracy theories were amplified by right-wing talk radio, television and websites — and, yes, there are left-wing versions as well, but they are much less influential. Democrats often felt disadvantaged by the rise of Rush Limbaugh and Fox News, but in retrospect Limbaugh and Fox created a conservative echo chamber that hurt the Republican Party by tugging it to the right and sometimes breeding a myopic extremism in which reality is irrelevant.

A poll released in September found that Republicans were more likely to think that Obama was born abroad than Ted Cruz was. That poll found that Trump supporters believed by nearly 3-to-1 that Obama was born overseas.

The Republican establishment profited from the insinuations that Obama is a Muslim, that he's anti-American, that his health care plan would lead to "death panels." Rick Perry has described Trump as a "cancer on conservatism" and said his movement is "a toxic mix of demagoguery and meanness that will lead the Republican Party to perdition" — indeed, but it was a mix that too many Republican leaders accepted as long as it worked for them.

This echo chamber deluded its believers to the point that it sometimes apparently killed them. During the 2009-10 flu pandemic, right-wing broadcasters like Limbaugh and Glenn Beck denounced the call for flu shots, apparently seeing it as a nefarious Obama plot.

The upshot was that Democrats were 50 percent more likely than Republicans to say that they would get flu shots, according to a peer-reviewed article in *The Journal of Health Politics, Policy and Law*. So when the pandemic killed up to 18,000 Americans, they presum-

ably were disproportionately conservatives.

The Republican strategy also nurtured expectations at the grass roots that could never be met. "The Republican Party created Donald Trump," said Erick Erickson, the conservative radio host, "because they made a lot of promises to their

**He's not a conservative at heart, just a pandering opportunist.**

base and never kept them."

This is a theme of a smart new book by E.J. Dionne Jr., "Why the Right Went Wrong," who argues that Republican leaders repeatedly made unrealistic pledges — of smaller government, preservation of bygone values and an end to demographic change. "The history of contemporary American conservatism is a story of disappointment and betrayal," he writes, and that helps explain the disenchantment with the Republican establishment.

Maybe Trump's campaign will fall apart, but he has a huge lead in the polls in the South Carolina primary coming up, and he has already done enormous damage to the GOP establishment.

So today the leading candidate for president in the party of Lincoln is an ill-informed, inexperienced, bigoted, sexist xenophobe. And he's not a conservative at heart, just a pandering opportunist.

Donald Trump is the consequence of irresponsible politicking by Republican leaders, the culmination of decades of cultivating unrealistic expectations within the politics of resentment. It's good to see leading Republicans standing up to him today, but the situation recalls the Chinese saying, *qi hu nan xia* — when you're riding a tiger, the hard part is getting off.

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