

## A straight face

The presidential sweepstakes that have been so prominent over the nation's TV programs for so long, have produced some rather humorous incidents as the candidates of both parties are subjected to a seemingly interminable list of questions from news reporters.

So far, the most humorous interview, in my opinion, was held recently when CBS news reporter Scott Pelley asked Democratic candidate Hillary Clinton, whose reputation as a serial liar has been well-established over the years, if she had always told the truth. Her answer: "I've always tried to. Always. Always."

Coming from a person with her reputation, that answer was funny enough. But even funnier was the fact that she managed to keep a straight face ... and it takes an enormous amount of practice to possess that ability.

E. ROBERT NASSIKAS  
Astoria

## The gospel defined

This past week's smorgasbord of current events included a dish with hot ingredients, the pope and leading presidential contender, Donald Trump.

The taste of it was the pope's questioning Mr. Trump's Christianity by commenting, "A person who thinks only about building walls, wherever they may be, and not building bridges, is not Christian. This is not the Gospel." The pope's comments were alluding to Mr. Trump's campaign pledge to build a wall on the southern border of the U.S. in an effort to stem the influx of illegal immigrants into the country.

We can all appreciate the pope's clarity and bold declaration of what the Gospel is not. But the story does uncover an unanswered question. Namely, while we are told what the Gospel is not, we are not told what the Gospel is. We learn from the pope that building walls is not the Gospel and building bridges has, according to the context, something to do with being Christian. OK, fine. But what's Gospel?

Turns out there is a "text-book" definition of the Gospel found in the book which is the authority on the subject, the Holy Bible. In I Corinthians, Chapter 15 starting in verse 1, the Bible says: "Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein ye stand; By which also ye are saved, if ye keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless ye have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; And that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures: And that he was seen of Cephas, then of the twelve: After that, he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once."

Remarkable. And more than a definition, a declaration (as in "I declare unto you") in simple, plain English, no word more than three syllables.

Key point: there are answers, but like with a manual of any sort, you have to read the book to get them.

GARY MAURO  
Warrenton

## Available land?

Concerned Seaside residents: There have been some decisions made during the last seven months that will impact all residents, some much more than others. In any event, we will all be impacted.

Briefly, there is a contingent of people, public and private, who insist we (the city of Seaside) need more land in order to have sufficient land available to cover the needs of the burgeoning population of Seaside. The issue being referenced is "The Urban Growth Boundary" also known as the UGB. I have attended the Planning Commission meetings regarding this since last summer. I have yet to hear one Seaside resident stand up for this; the only proponent is Weyerhaeuser.

At issue here is how the numbers (various statistics) developed as they did, in order to qualify this endeavor. It's really quite simple: Does Seaside have enough vacancies and other land to meet the influx of people to Seaside in the coming years?

We have to ask: Whose idea

# Support plan to build up MERTS

After a year's search for living wage employment in 2002, I enrolled in the merchant maritime program at Clatsop Community College, the Maritime and Environmental Research and Training Station. Within a month I had a U.S. Coast Guard commercial mariner's license and began to look for jobs. After nine months I found one with lucrative pay and good healthcare — body, dental and eye.

As a mariner for six plus years with Crowley Maritime Services, I cooked on the old tug and barge system vessels, set and broke bridles, hauled lines, and operated cranes. As crews evolved to the modern Articulated Tug and Barge, I moved there, too.

The Pacific Ocean was my playground. For \$800 tuition and a month of classes, I obtained a union maritime job starting me off at \$50,000 a year. A schedule of 28 days on and 28 off gave me almost six months vacation per year. When I left, I was making considerably more money and had a pension with the Inland Boatman's Union.

During my time at sea, we were required to take safety training, refresh our maritime skills, and pass hazardous materials courses to keep our certifications. These trainings were held for groups of us in Seattle, sometimes California. Often these trainings were in muddy waterside mobile homes withport-a-potties and

other substandard facilities.

Not only will an improved maritime education center train students for living wage work but also could attract crews from many maritime areas for the annual trainings and recertification of licenses. Sailors wanting to "move up the hawsepole" would be able to complete coursework to move into higher levels of seamanship. Adding expanded curriculums in ship-building skills, diesel mechanics and maritime engineering would open doors to even more living wage jobs.

Please support the college plan to build up the offerings at MERTS.

P. MATTSO MCDONALD  
Astoria

was this, who is financing this, who stands to gain? You know, interesting questions like that.

Weyerhaeuser is the sole stake holder in this venture. The city of Seaside is using the services of a consultant, who is paid for by Weyerhaeuser. Weyerhaeuser owns approximately 140 acres of the proposed 200 acres needed "to cover the needs of the influx of people to Seaside." The city of Seaside is under no directive to do this. The city is being led by the consultant who is — that's right, paid by Weyerhaeuser.

The current proposal being considered has an unmet housing need of 833 units, whereas reasonable statistics show as few as 41 housing units needed. While the Planning Commission and the consultant are seeking another 200 acres to be included in the UGB, there is no mention of the 100 acres Seaside has in inventory already.

The real kicker to all this is the buried agenda in all this UGB garbage. They have the intension of extending South Wahanna through the wetlands to the south in order to hook up with Beerman Creek. Whether you have a stake in this or not, this undertaking solves nothing for anyone. I'm at a loss as to whom this would benefit. Why would it even be considered?

There are details ad infinitum, I encourage you to come to the next Planning Commission meeting, held at Seaside City Hall at 7 p.m. March 1. Your attendance is crucial.

BUZ OTTEM  
Seaside

## Tobacco 21

I want to thank *The Daily Astorian* editors for the editorial in support of raising the state's age of tobacco sales to 21 ("Raise smoking age from 18 to 21," Feb. 18).

Recently, the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, and more than 20 other organizations, held a news conference in Salem to announce our "tobacco 21" campaign, and I was lucky to be one of about 40 volunteers at the capital urging our state legislators to support these efforts. We hope this will culminate in legislation next session to raise the age of tobacco sales in Oregon to 21.

Every day, seven Oregon kids start smoking and 95 percent of lifelong smokers begin smoking before the age of 21. Just think of the number of lives that can be saved if this legislation passes. If we don't take steps to curb smoking rates, 68,000 Oregon kids alive today will die prematurely from tobacco.

Thank you again for taking such a strong position on raising the age of sale to 21. It's wonderful to have your support.

LOIS FITZPATRICK  
Seaside

## Wage consequences

The article claiming that Oregon is "trailblazing" with the highest minimum wage in the nation overlooks the consequences of embarking on such a path ("Oregon lawmakers approve landmark minimum wage increase," *The Daily Astorian*, Feb. 19).

Oregon has long had one of the highest state minimum wages in the country, and its least-skilled job seekers have suffered as a result. In 2015, for instance, the state's youth unemployment rate of 22.2 percent was over 5 percentage points higher than the national number; during the worst of the recession, the state's teens faced an unemployment rate above 30 percent.

The empirical data support the harm suggested by these top-line figures. For instance, in a study in *Economic Inquiry*, economists from the University of Oregon in Eugene found that Oregon's higher minimum wage generated "consistently negative" effects on employment in the restaurant industry.

Raising the state's mandated wage floor further, whether in a three-tiered approach or all at once, will only compound this damage. The takeaway from Oregon's past experiments with the minimum wage is clear: Trailblazing on minimum wage levels is a dangerous venture.

MICHAEL SALTSMAN  
Washington, D.C.

## Protect medical pot

Open letter to Oregon senators: Please protect medical marijuana.

Marijuana, or cannabis, is a medicine. Edibles, tinctures, creams and oils are potent medicines and should be recommended by a physician who understands their properties and side effects. Allowing a person to get anything they want at a dispensary is the same as allowing them to go to a pharmacy and get medicine without seeing a doctor or a pharmacist.

Our bodies, just like the cannabis plant, make cannabinoids (major ingredients) and we have receptors for them everywhere including the brain, blood system, liver, lungs, ovaries, kidneys, etc. The cannabinoids in marijuana are very therapeutic.

Getting high is a side effect of cannabis. Historically it was used by the plant to protect itself from animals that liked to eat its leaves but would go to sleep when intoxicated. Most of my patients do not like to get high and have learned to adjust the dose so that the psychoactive effects are minimal. They use marijuana because of its remarkable medicinal properties — research-based for pain, nausea, appetite issues, seizures, anxiety, depression, Alzheimer's diagnosis, neuropathies, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and cancer.

Like all medicines, marijuana can be dangerous for patients who have not been educated in its appropriate use and have not seen a physician.

What are the risks, particularly high for seniors and mid-lifers? They include: Suffering a heart attack from tachycardia or rapid heart rate; a stroke from increased blood pressure; losing consciousness from lowered blood pressure; fractures secondary to falls from poor motor control; bleeding internally, as marijuana may interfere with blood thinners; psychotic episodes, either predisposed or from using a large amount of oil; and children becoming intoxicated with edibles, as the concentration is unreliable.

You have a moral and legal obligation to protect the citizens of Oregon.

Please use your God-given privilege of serving others to promote what is right and honorable. Keep medical marijuana as a separate entity, and do not legalize the purchase of edibles, tinctures, creams, and oils without a doctor's recommendation. Do not cater to those who think that money is more important than human lives.

Also, please save our small farmers.

JUDY EMANUEL, D.O.  
board certified physician  
Ashland

## 'Beggars belief'

Regarding "Respite center commits to secure rooms" (*The Daily Astorian*, Feb. 18):

Secure rooms? That means, if I read it correctly, that "patients" — and who called these folks patients anyway — are going to be locked in.

If they are locked in, then who locks them in? A judge? How can one be deprived of liberty without due process? As I understand it, the "residents" of the "respite center" are most likely to be homeless people who are picked up for allegedly committing some crime or public nuisance, but not run-of-the-mill homeless — whether mentally ill or not. Are they going to be referred from the jail? Or from the policeman on the beat? Or the Emergency Department? Or can anyone just call up and say, "My wife is nuts. Come and lock her up."

If "patients" are not "free to walk away" — and presumably, most of those "patients" will have been free (probably homeless) before they were placed in the "respite center" — are they then being held against their will, and effectively prisoners? If they aren't prisoners, why couldn't they "just walk away"?

Who is going to keep the keys? Who is going to supervise these "secure rooms"? Is there to be a sheriff deputy or Warrenton policeman on duty 24/7? What if they do go violent or berserk? Will they be taken to jail? Is someone going to medicate the psychotic residents? Who? Clatsop Behavioral Health can't

manage what they are doing right now. It beggars belief that they could supervise 16 "inpatients" — four of whom might be "violent".

I really don't understand what is going on, and I hope there will be some more in-depth reporting. Mental illness is a complex problem that governments worldwide just hope will go away, but it won't. And it costs a lot of money to even begin to deal effectively with that problem. I'm not convinced that Clatsop County has really thought this through.

I applaud the various agencies involved for their concern and effort, but there seem to be too many loose ends and too little transparency about goals, required resources and detailed operating systems at the present time.

Easy to build buildings. Much more difficult (and expensive) to create a functional organization. This has the makings of an embarrassing fiasco.

TOM DUNCAN  
Astoria

## Key climate bills

Who knows what spark can turn the tide of climate change and its costs to us and, more painfully, to our grandchildren? This spark may come from our North Coast legislators in Salem in these next two weeks.

Two well-considered bills

begin to tackle the shift from fossil fuels to an alternative energy economy sit poised for a vote. Rep. Deborah Boone, D-Cannon Beach, has led the advancement of the coal transition bill HB4036 through the House, now cleared for a Senate vote. The Healthy Climate Bill, SB1574, which sets a cap and price on carbon, was initiated in the Senate. It sits in the Joint Ways and Means Committee, co-chaired by our Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose. The future may be riding on our districts to move the inertia of democracy — all by March 6.

It tears me apart watching this lumbering process while facing what science, and now our own experience, say is an increasingly challenged future for our grandchildren.

The Healthy Climate Bill, generates huge benefits seemingly tailored for the North Coast. It targets early effects of climate change, storms, drought; helps build a 21st century alternative energy economy, jobs, job training; helps rethink our forests looking to carbon offsets as a powerful new revenue source for the region; reinforces the resiliency efforts led by Rep. Boone, looking to the risks of earthquake, tsunami and climate change; and, in this new low carbon economy, reduces the pressures for risky transportation and infrastructure for fossil fuels.

This bill hits close to home. Then, beyond us, it joins a snowball already rolling in our region, nationally and globally that just might begin to reverse the accelerating drought, flooding, erosion, storm damage, ocean acidification and warming around the world. Maybe our sinkholes here can energize a global change.

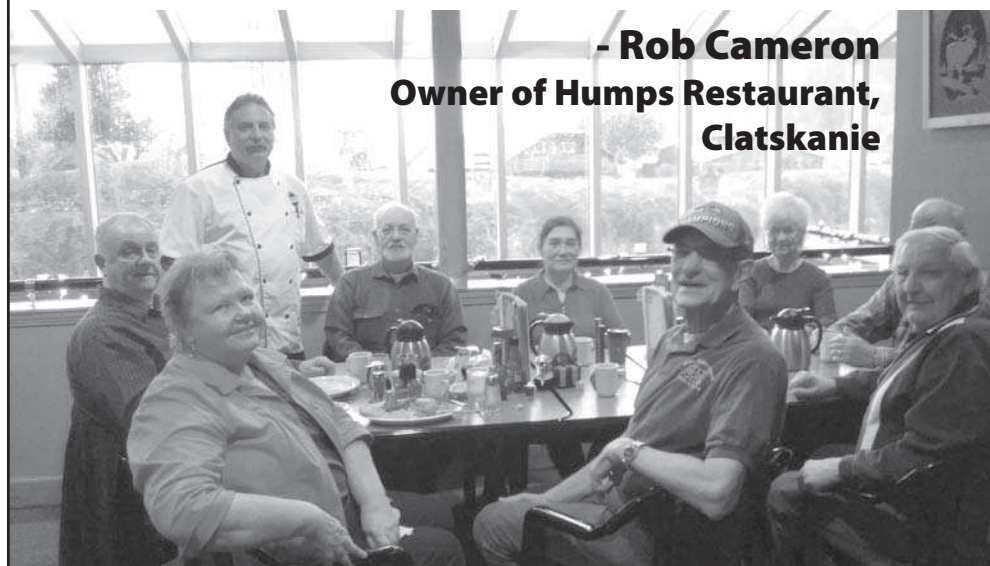
Gratefully, a huge part of that democratic process is us, our letters, calls, art, marches, coffee, meetings with our legislators. I speak for a group here in the Nehalem Bay communities who have joined this powerful statewide movement for these bills. Your added voice may be the one that pushes them over the top.

Go to [www.reneworegon.org/healthy\\_climate\\_bill](http://www.reneworegon.org/healthy_climate_bill) for more information.

MIKE COOK  
Nehalem

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