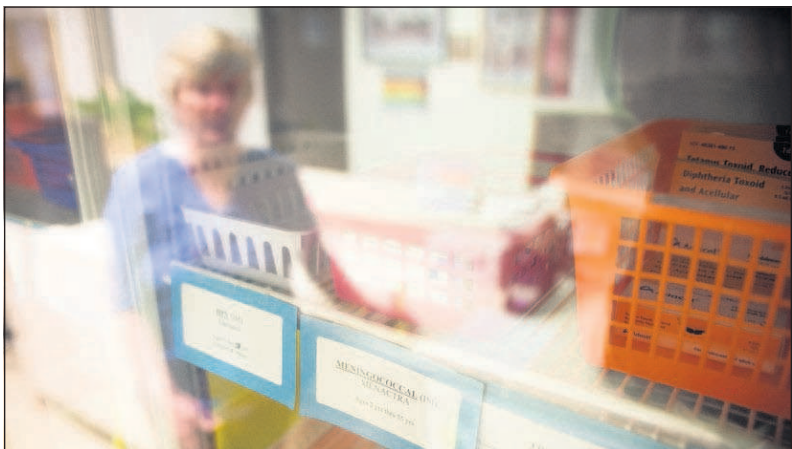


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Joshua Bessex/The Daily Astorian

Sheri Salber, a public health nurse, shows where vaccines are kept in the Clatsop County Public Health Department office. The Health Department offers immunizations for children, teens, and adults.

Bacteria evolves as public health wanes

\$1 spent on disease prevention yields \$5.60 in healthcare savings

The egregious shortage of funding for Clatsop County Public Health reported Friday by Kyle Spurr is a gap echoed around the state and region. It is a failure in public policy that will come back to haunt residents who rarely give public health a second thought.

As we reported, Clatsop County has three full-time nursing positions — split among six individuals — to serve our 37,000-person community. Over the past five years, the local health agency has received nearly \$600,000 less than what was budgeted. Rising costs and a need to pay more to staff mean constant erosion of the agency's purchasing power.

Among many genuine advances in medicine and healthcare in the past century, it's likely nothing has made more of a difference in alleviating suffering and extending lifespans than the systematic efforts made by public health services. In our area, this work effectively ended an assortment of nasty germs that once spread among the population. It is easy to forget that communicable diseases nearly wiped out our region's Native American population. Whites also contracted these illnesses. Despite somewhat stronger immunity, many died.

The age of communicable disease ebbed for decades following the advent of immunizations, antibiotics, clean water and other innovations. Authorities now fear a resurgence as bacteria evolve and public awareness wanes.

One man with tuberculous recently exposed more than 100 people in the county. Public health staff had to find where the person with TB had been, how long he spent in those places and who was exposed. Every one of those people had to be tested and some had to be treated.

TB is a scourge that U.S. citizens have mostly forgotten, but which once killed tens of thousands of Americans each year. It is

far from defeated. According to the biotech organization Aeras, around the world "Each year, more than 9 million people become sick with TB and 1.5 million people die of the disease."

Clatsop County Public Health is tasked with plenty more than just staying on top of potentially deadly disease outbreaks. It runs a general clinic, makes home visits, helps with family planning and assists with key aspects of the Women, Infant and Children (WIC) program.

Public Health Director Brian Mahoney notes a distinct shortfall in existing services in the area of helping confront and manage chronic diseases, several of which are rife in the county. He cites heart disease, high blood pressure and diabetes, to which we would add substance addiction, as problems the agency could play an expanded role in addressing.

The agency is continuing to build collaborative relationships with other key players, including Providence Seaside and Columbia Memorial hospitals, to achieve its complex set of missions.

But there ultimately is no substitute for more money, made reliably available year after year. Public health is not a battlefield on which a final victory can be claimed. It requires constant and consistent diligence, traits that are at odds with current public finances and attention span.

At least on the local level, budget writers must bear in mind that a dollar spent on disease prevention yields \$5.60 in healthcare savings. This is a cost/benefit ratio that warrants action.

Trump, the great betrayer

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

Now, at long last, the big guns are being brought to bear.

Now, at long last, some major Republicans like Mitt Romney are speaking up to lay waste to Donald Trump.

For months Trump's rivals and other Republicans have either retreated in silence or tentatively and ineptly criticized him for exactly those traits that voters like about him: for being a slapdash, politically incorrect money-hungry bully.

But now finally — at long last — major Republicans are raising their heads and highlighting Trump's actual vulnerability: his inability to think for an extended time about anybody but himself.

He seduces people with his confidence and his promises. People invest time, love and money in him. But in the end he cares only about himself. He betrays those who trust him and leaves them high and dry.

It's unpleasant to have to play politics on this personal level. But this is a message that can sway potential Trump supporters, many of whom have only the barest information on what Trump's life and career have actually been like.

This is a message that can work in a sour and cynical time among voters who already feel betrayed. This is a message that can work because it's a personality type everyone understands. This is a time when it is not in fact too late, when it may still be possible to prevent his nomination.

The campaign against Trump has to be specific and relentless: a series of clear examples, rolled out day upon day with the same message. Donald Trump betrays.

It can start with Trump University, where Trump betrayed schoolteachers and others who dreamed of building a better life for themselves.

Trump billed his university as a place people could go to learn everything necessary about real estate investing. According to a 2013 lawsuit filed by New York's attorney general, Eric Schneiderman, more than 5,000 people paid \$40 million, a quarter of which went to Trump himself.

Internal Trump University docu-



David Brooks



Carlos Osorio/AP Photo

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump waves as he arrives at a rally at Macomb Community College, Friday, in Warren, Mich.

ments suggest that the university wasn't really oriented around teaching, but rather around luring customers into buying more and more courses.

According to the New York lawsuit, instructors filled out course evaluations themselves or had students fill out the non-anonymous forms in front of them, pressuring them into giving positive reviews. During breaks students were told to call their credit card companies to increase their credit limits. They were given a script encouraging them to exaggerate their incomes. The Better Business Bureau gave the school a D- rating in 2010.

"They lure you in with false promises," one student, Patricia Murphy, told *The Times* in 2011. Murphy said she had spent about \$12,000 on Trump University classes, much of it racked up on her credit cards. "I was scammed," she said.

The barrage can continue with Trump Mortgage. On the campaign trail, Trump tells people he saw the mortgage crisis coming. "I told a lot of people," he has said, "and I was right. You know, I'm pretty good at that stuff."

Trump's biggest lies are the ones he tells himself. The reality is that Trump opened his mortgage company in 2006. Others smelled a bubble, but not Trump. "I think it's a great time to start a mortgage company," he told CNBC. "The real estate market is going to be very strong for a long time to come."

Part of the operation was a boiler room where people cold-called clients, sometimes pushing subprime loans and offering easy approval.

The campaign against Trump has to be specific and relentless: Donald Trump betrays.

Jennifer McGovern had trusted Trump and went to work for him. But she got stiffed in the end. In 2008 a New York state Supreme Court judge ordered Trump Mortgage to pay her the \$298,274 she was owed. The bill wasn't paid.

"The company was set up in a way that we could never recover what we were owed," she told *The Washington Post*.

The stories can go on and on. The betrayal of investors when his casino businesses went bankrupt. The betrayal of his first wife with his flagrant public affair with Marla Maples. The betrayal of American workers when he decided to hire illegals. The people left in the wake of other debacles: Trump Air, Trump Vodka, Trump Financial, etc.

These weren't just risks that went bad. They were shams, built like his campaign around empty promises and on Trump's fragile and overweening pride.

The burden of responsibility now falls on Republican officials, elected and nonelected, at all levels. For years they have built relationships in their communities, earned the right to be heard. If they now feel that Donald Trump would be a reckless and dangerous president, then they have a responsibility to their country to tell those people the truth, to rally all their energies against this man.

Since the start of his campaign Trump has had more energy and more courage than his opponents. Maybe that's now changing.

Clash of Republican con artists

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

So Republicans are going to nominate a candidate who talks complete nonsense on domestic policy; who believes that foreign policy can be conducted via bullying and belligerence; who cynically exploits racial and ethnic hatred for political gain.

But that was always going to happen, however the primary season turned out.

The only news is that the candidate in question is probably going to be Donald Trump. Establishment Republicans denounce Trump as a fraud, which he is. But is he more fraudulent than the establishment trying to stop him? Not really.

Actually, when you look at the people making those denunciations, you have to wonder: Can they really be that lacking in self-awareness?

Donald Trump is a "con artist," says Marco Rubio — who has promised to enact giant tax cuts, undertake a huge military buildup and balance the budget without any cuts in benefits to Americans over 55.

"There can be no evasion and no games," thunders Paul Ryan, the speaker of the House — whose much-hyped budgets are completely reliant on "mystery meat," that is, it claims trillions of dollars in revenue can be collected by closing unspecified tax loopholes and trillions more saved through unspecified spending cuts.

Ryan also declares that the "party of Lincoln" must "reject any group or cause that is built on bigotry." Has

he ever heard of Nixon's "Southern strategy"; of Ronald Reagan's invocations of welfare queens and "strapping young bucks" using food stamps; of Willie Horton?

Put it this way: There's a reason whites in the Deep South vote something like 90 percent Republican, and it's not their philosophical attachment to libertarian principles.

Then there's foreign policy, where Trump is, if anything, more reasonable — or more accurately, less unreasonable — than his rivals. He's fine with torture, but who on that side of the aisle isn't? He's belligerent, but unlike Rubio, he isn't the favorite of the neoconservatives, aka the people responsible for the Iraq debacle. He's even said what everyone knows but nobody on the right is supposed to admit, that the Bush administration deliberately misled America into that disastrous war.

Oh, and it's Ted Cruz, not Trump, who seems eager to "carpet bomb" people, without appearing to know what that means.

In fact, you have to wonder why, exactly, the Republican establishment is really so horrified by Trump. Yes, he's a con man, but they all are. So why is this con job different from any other?

The answer, I'd suggest, is that the establishment's problem with Trump isn't the con he brings; it's the cons he disrupts.

First, there's the con Republicans usually manage to pull off in national elections — the one where they pose as a serious, grown-up party honestly trying to grapple with America's problems. The truth is, that party died a long time ago, that these days it's voodoo economics and neocon fantasies all the way down. But the estab-



Paul Krugman

lishment wants to preserve the façade, which will be hard if the nominee is someone who refuses to play his part.

By the way, I predict that even if Trump is the nominee, pundits and others who claim to be thoughtful conservatives will stroke their chins and declare, after a great show of careful deliberation, that he's the better choice given

Hillary's character flaws, or something. And self-proclaimed centrists will still find a way to claim that the sides are equally bad. But both acts will look especially strained.

Equally important, the Trump phenomenon threatens the con the GOP establishment has been playing on its own base. I'm talking about the bait and switch in which white voters are induced to hate big government by dog whistles about Those People, but actual policies are all about rewarding the donor class.

What Donald Trump has done is tell the base that it doesn't have to accept the whole package. He promises to make America white again — surely everyone knows that's the real slogan, right? — while simultaneously promising to protect Social Security and Medicare, and hinting at (though not actually proposing) higher taxes on the rich. Outraged establishment Republicans splutter that he's not a real conservative, but neither, it turns out, are many of their own voters.

Just to be clear, I find the prospect of a Trump administration terrifying, and so should you. But you should also be terrified by the prospect of a President Rubio, sitting in the White House with his circle of warmongers, or a President Cruz, whom one suspects would love to bring back the Spanish Inquisition.

As I see it, then, we should actually welcome Trump's ascent. Yes, he's a con man, but he is also effectively acting as a whistle-blower on other people's cons. That is, believe it or not, a step forward in these weird, troubled times.

Yes, Trump's a con man, but he is also acting as a whistleblower on other people's cons.