

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Obama puts the ball in play in Cuba

*This is leadership of the highest sort*

In the complex world of diplomacy — where gestures carry meaning — President Barack Obama was not greeted by a head of state after he landed in Cuba on Sunday afternoon. The historic significance of Obama's trip can be summed up in this simple calculus: What the U.S. government tried for 50 years has led nowhere. It is time for diplomatic change. With a prod from Pope Francis, the president last April took the extraordinary step of opening diplomatic relations with Cuba for the first time since the administration of Dwight Eisenhower.

This is no sure thing. But as with the president's offensive on health care, which led to the Affordable Care Act, and his multi-state agreement with Iran, he is all about getting on with the future.

Perhaps the most photogenic and joyous aspect of the Obama trip to Cuba was today's baseball game between the Tampa Bay Rays and the Cuban National Team. The president was joined by Jackie Robinson's widow, Rachel, Derek Jeter and Luis Tiant. A number of MLB teams wanted this game, reports Bill Chastain. but the Rays were picked through a lottery.

Within the Cuban-American population, support for the Cuban trade embargo

has declined dramatically over the past 25 years. Before the president would propose congressional action to end the embargo, there must be progress on human rights in Cuba. In that sense, our president is aligned with the Cuban people.

Just as 50 years of frozen diplomacy has not worked, neither has Fidel Castro's economic model. As ABC's Chris Cuomo said on Sunday: "At the end of the day, Cuba is a Third World country."

If official Havana will grasp it, President Obama's bold step holds great promise.

This is leadership of the highest sort. It is what we should expect of a U.S. president.

## Another crop of retail leaders wins our support

*Group showcases local talents and products to build success*

The 2016 Clatsop County Outstanding Businesses Awards last week were an enjoyable reminder that creative and successful people are exploring how to make a living on the coast.

Clatsop Economic Development Resources, which sponsors the awards, has proven during its relatively brief existence to be a valuable advocate and educator both for startups and long-term businesses.

The awards were in part a tribute to CEDR's co-founder and past president Skip Hauke, who operated grocery stores in Astoria for many years before becoming executive director of the Astoria-Warrenton Chamber of Commerce. Hauke was ahead his time in highlighting local seafood and Pacific Northwest wines.

CEDR reflects the same fundamental priority — showcasing local talents and products to build success in a nation that increasingly values homegrown quality.

Our coverage of the CEDR awards, plus additional photos and details in the April

edition of *Coast River Business Journal*, make it clear that we have much to be proud of. Running a small business — or really big ones like Hampton Lumber Mill and Bornstein Seafoods — demands energy and fortitude.

The awards are a tacit recognition of how far Clatsop County communities have come in recent decades. No longer isolated and insular, cities like Astoria, Warrenton, Seaside and Cannon Beach have established a reputation as good places to start a business.

Kathy Kleczek, award-winning owner of La Luna Loca, offered this perspective on our pro-business environment: "This award is also a representation of the people behind our success, the people that work with me and the people that spend their hard-earned dollars in our store for things that may not be the cheapest, but are made the best way possible."

Every year, CEDR offers accolades for local products and services. Let's give them our business.

# Foretelling Trump, Sanders

BY ADAM DAVIS  
 For The Daily Astorian

The Donald. We know the national story, but how about here in Oregon? It is a similar story. He is currently leading the pack in the Republican primary election (though not by much) and is viewed positively by a narrow majority of Republican voters and about a third of all Oregon voters.

And Bernie? He's doing better than Trump with his party in Oregon. Among Democrats, he is viewed a little more positively than Hillary and is narrowly leading her in the Democratic primary election, although voters feel she will ultimately be the party's nominee.

Readers of the 2013 Oregon Values and Beliefs Study should not be surprised by how well these unlikely candidates are doing with broad swaths of Oregon voters. (Go to [www.oregonvaluesproject.org](http://www.oregonvaluesproject.org) to refresh your memory about this study.) The study may not have named names, but it essentially foretold three years ago Trump's and Sanders' current appeal to many Oregon voters. A quick refresher course not only illuminates their appeal to many Oregonians, but also reminds us how much Republicans and Democrats in Oregon differ in some of their core social values and beliefs, including those that touch on the economy. The numbers may also foretell the outcome of the November presidential election in Oregon when you consider the party registration numbers as of February for Republicans (649,731), Democrats (846,143), and non-affiliated/others (713,343) — depending, of course, on which groups mail in those ballots.

Both Trump and Sanders are tapping into the anger many voters feel toward government, politics, and the media by painting themselves as anti-establishment and their opponents as part of the status-quo responsible for what's wrong with America. They are also singing the right tune about trade agreements sending U.S. jobs overseas. Beyond these general commonalities, however, the two candidates take different roads to connect

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with voters. And, as foretold in the 2013 study, what they're saying is resonating big time. Check out these findings, now almost three years old.

### For many Trump supporters

Society as a whole has become too soft and feminine.

Two-thirds (66%) of Oregon Republicans in 2013 agreed with this statement compared to 21% of Democrats and 37% of non-affiliated/others. America has to become harder and macho? Sounds, a little Trumpish, doesn't it?

We've gone too far in pushing equal rights in this country.

About the same number (68%) of Oregon Republicans agreed with this statement. Democrats were at only 16% agreement and 81% disagreement. Non-affiliated/others were 37% agreement, 57% disagreement. Validating this finding for Republicans was the 74% agreement with the statement, "It seems like blacks, women, homosexuals and other groups don't want equal rights, they want special rights just for them." Perhaps this explains why there's applause when Trump talks about women using words like bimbo, dog, and fat pig.

### For many Sanders supporters

Our society would be better off if the distribution of wealth was more equal

Among Democrats, there was 83% agreement in 2013 with this statement, compared to 31% of Republicans, and 64% of Independents. A strong majority (63%) of all Orego-



Adam Davis

nians agreed with the statement, with majorities in all geographic and demographic groups except ... you guessed it, party. Is that the sweet smell of socialism in the air?

Publicly funded health insurance for all citizens. Almost three quarters of Oregon Democrats (73%) felt this was important in 2013 compared to just

one quarter of Republicans. Non-affiliated/others split the difference at 50%. Among all Oregonians, it was 53% to 27%, with the remaining neutral or not sure. It should not be a surprise then that Sanders' support for increasing government spending to guarantee health care to all citizens as a right, and not a privilege, has legs with many Democratic primary voters three years later.

Trump and Sanders are not flashes in the pan. Similar to what we see at the national level, significant numbers of the party faithful here in Oregon support Trump's and Sanders' messages. That support has been waiting to be harnessed since 2013 and likely before then. But, there is something else. A look at the core values and beliefs underlying this support is revealing. It tells us a lot about Oregon voters and particularly, considering the voter registration numbers, how out of touch Republicans are with most Oregonians about key issues related to equity and the economy.

Adam Davis, who has been conducting opinion research in Oregon for more than 35 years, is a founding principal in DHM Research, a nonpartisan and independent firm in Portland and Washington, D.C. Visit [www.dhmresearch.com](http://www.dhmresearch.com)

# On invincible ignorance

By PAUL KRUGMAN  
 New York Times News Service

Remember Paul Ryan? The speaker of the House used to be a media darling, lionized as the epitome of the Serious, Honest Conservative — never mind those of us who actually looked at the numbers in his budgets and concluded that he was a con man.

These days, of course, he is overshadowed by the looming Trumpocalypse.

But while Donald Trump could win the White House — or lose so badly that even our rotten-borough system of congressional districts, which heavily favors the GOP, delivers the House to the Democrats — the odds are that come January, Hillary Clinton will be president, and Ryan still speaker. So I was interested to read what Ryan said in a recent interview with John Harwood. What has he learned from recent events?

And the answer is, nothing.

Like just about everyone in the Republican establishment, Ryan is in denial about the roots of Trumpism, about the extent to which the party deliberately cultivated anger and racial backlash, only to lose control of the monster it created. But what I found especially striking were his comments on tax policy. I know, boring — but indulge me here. There's a larger moral.

You might think that Republican thought leaders would be engaged in some soul-searching about their party's obsession with cutting taxes on the wealthy. Why do candi-

dates who inveigh against the evils of budget deficits and federal debt feel obliged to propose huge high-end tax cuts — much bigger than those of George W. Bush — that would eliminate trillions in revenue?

And economics aside, why such a commitment to a policy that has never had much support even from the party's own base, and appears even more politically suspect in the face of a populist uprising?

But here's what Ryan said about all those tax cuts for the top 1 percent: "I do not like the idea of buying into these distributional tables. What you're talking about is what we call static distribution. It's a ridiculous notion."

Aha. The income mobility zombie strikes again.

Ever since income inequality began its sharp rise in the 1980s, one favorite conservative excuse has been that it doesn't mean anything, because economic positions change all the time. People who are rich this year might not be rich next year, so the gap between the rich and the rest doesn't matter, right?

Well, it's true that people move up and down the economic ladder, and apologists for inequality love to cite statistics showing that many people who are in the top 1 percent any given year are out of that category the next year.

But a closer look at the data shows that there is less to this observation than it seems. These days, it takes an income of around \$400,000 a year to put you in the top 1 per-



Paul Krugman

cent, and most of the fluctuation in incomes we see involves people going from, say, \$350,000 to \$450,000 or vice versa. As one comprehensive survey put it, "The majority of economic mobility occurs over fairly small spans of the distribution." Average incomes over multiple years are almost as unequally distributed as incomes in any given year, which means that tax cuts that mainly benefit the rich are indeed targeted at a small group of people, not the public at large.

And here's the thing: This isn't a new observation. As it happens, I personally took on the very same argument Ryan is making — and showed that it was wrong — almost 25 years ago. Yet the man widely considered the GOP's intellectual leader is still making the same old claims.

OK, maybe I'm just indulging a pet peeve by focusing on this particular subject. Yet the persistence of the income mobility zombie, like the tax-cuts-mean-growth zombie (which should have been killed, once and for all, by the debacles in Kansas and Louisiana), is part of a pattern.

Appalled Republicans may rail against Donald Trump's arrogant ignorance. But how different, really, are the party's mainstream leaders? Their blinkered view of the world has the veneer of respectability, may go along with an appearance of thoughtfulness, but in reality it's just as impervious to evidence — maybe even more so, because it has the power of groupthink behind it.

This is why you shouldn't grieve over Marco Rubio's epic political failure. Had Rubio succeeded, he would simply have encouraged his party to believe that all it needs is a cosmetic makeover — a fresher, younger face to sell the same old defunct orthodoxy. Oh, and a last-minute turn to someone like John Kasich would, in its own way, have similar implications.

What we're getting instead is at least the possibility of a cleansing shock — of a period in the political wilderness that will finally force the Republican establishment to rethink its premises. That's a good thing — or it would be, if it didn't also come with the risk of President Trump.

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