

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Ditching day care would be a quake

*Lil' Sprouts partnership is essential to parents and employers*

It is understandable that city leaders would examine the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department's scope of activities. For a town of 10,000, we enjoy a large inventory of park land and facilities. Erick Bengel's April 1 story outlined the discussions within the citizens advisory committee that is tasked with evaluating the department's programs and resources.

Lil' Sprouts, the child care program that the parks department operates within Gray School is one of the activities. As the committee and the City Council examine Lil' Sprouts, it is essential to know the history of how the city got involved with day care management.

Some six years ago there was a crisis in Astoria day care when a budding non-profit program began to fail and needed a new home. A group of leaders convened at *The Daily Astorian*. They represented Clatsop Community College, Columbia Memorial Hospital, the U.S. Coast Guard, the city of Astoria, the Astoria School District the Bank of Astoria and the *Astorian*.

Out of those deliberations came an offer to

move the day care center from the First Presbyterian Church to Gray School, where classrooms would be remodeled for a new purpose. Within a year, the board of the nonprofit crumbled and the center desperately needed new management. Parks Manager J.P. Moss suggested that his department manage what was known as Lil' Sprouts.

Having a stable operator for a day care center in a small rural town is rare. The city parks department's role in Lil' Sprouts is part of a coalition that has given the town's parents and employers an essential asset. This partnership is something we can be proud of. If the parks department pulled out of Lil' Sprouts, it would be an earthquake.

## Again .... a scary leak at Hanford

It's an example of a culture at Hanford of 'We don't have problems here. We're doing just fine.' Which is a total lie," former Hanford Nuclear Reservation worker Mike Geffre told KING 5 this week.

Geffre was reacting to news that a supposedly supersafe double-walled underground storage tank for highly radioactive waste has a major leak in the space between its inner and outer walls. Geffre warned officials in 2011 about the potential for such an event, but a response was ridiculously slow in coming.

Washington state's Department of Ecology sought to allay public worries, saying there is no sign that sludge created during plutonium production made it past the tank's outer shell into the environment. To its credit, the state been a more zealous watchdog than other parties involved in Hanford oversight. But its reassurances are starting to ring hollow.

"This is catastrophic," Geffre told KING 5. "This is probably the biggest event to ever happen in tank farm history. The double shell tanks were supposed to be the saviors of all saviors" as far as keeping waste away from people and the environment. A current Hanford worker said, "The primary tanks weren't designed to stage waste like this for so many years. There's always the question, 'Are the outer shells compromised?'"

Three of Hanford's other double-shell tanks have the same design as the one now in the news.

Millions live downriver from Hanford. As massively expensive as the cleanup has been — around \$40 billion so far, with maybe \$75 billion more in the offing — it will pale in comparison to damages from a major toxin spill into the air and groundwater.

Citizens must use every political and legal tool to impose competent and responsive management on this dreadful fiasco.

# The danger of a single story

By DAVID BROOKS  
*New York Times News Service*

In 2009 Nigerian writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie gave a fabulous TED talk called "The Danger of a Single Story."

It was about what happens when complex human beings and situations are reduced to a single narrative: when Africans, for example, are treated solely as pitiable poor, starving victims with flies on their faces.

Her point was that each individual life contains a heterogeneous compilation of stories. If you reduce people to one, you're taking away their humanity.

American politics has always been prone to single storyism — candidates reducing complex issues to simple fables. This year the problem is acute because Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders are the giants of Single Storyism. They reduce pretty much all issues to the same single story: the alien invader story.

Every problem can be solved by finding some corrupt or oppressive group to blame. If America is beset by wage stagnation it's not because of intricate structural problems. It's because of the criminal Mexicans sneaking across the border or it's because of this evil entity called "the banks."

Worse, the stories have become identity markers. This is a phenomenon borrowed from campus political correctness. In order to express your solidarity with the virtuous team, you have to embrace the socially approved story. If you differ from the official story — the way Bill Clinton differed from the official progressive crime story a few weeks ago — it is not so much a sign that you are wrong (truth is not the issue). It is a sign that

you have false allegiances. You must embrace the approved story to show you are not complicit in a system of oppression.

Hillary Clinton is not naturally a single-story person. But while she is controlling the delegate race this campaign, Sanders is controlling the conversation and she is gradually coming around to his version of everything. For example, last week she came closer to embracing a nationwide \$15 minimum wage, though still with caveats.

One true minimum wage story is that corporations are reaping record profits while pushing down wages of the unskilled. But another true story, embodied in the vast trove of research, is that if you raise the minimum wage too high, you end up punishing less skilled workers. One study found the modest hike in the national minimum wage between 2006 and 2009 reduced employment among young people without a high school degree by almost 6 percent.

The key is to find a balance between those stories. Raising the minimum wage to \$15 may make sense in rich areas, but in most of the country there will be horrendous consequences for less-skilled workers trying to find jobs.

In the realm of criminal justice, one true story is that America's criminal justice system was constructed within a system of slavery and racism. It enables police brutality, often of a racist sort. It has led to massive over-incarceration, which has devastated individuals, families and neighborhoods.

Yet there are other opposing stories, also true:

- Incarceration reduces crime. Experts disagree wildly on how



David Brooks

much, but most studies show a significant effect. That's partly because most of the people who do serious crime are career criminals. Among inmates released from state prison in 2005, the average number of previous convictions was five and the average number of previous arrests was greater than 10.

- Less aggressive policing means more crime. After the release of the horrific Laquan McDonald video — which showed a Chicago cop killing him in cold blood — there was a 69 percent drop in the nonfatal shooting arrest rate and a 48 percent drop in the homicide arrest rate. In the meantime, according to an analysis by Rob Arthur and Jeff Asher of FiveThirtyEight, nonfatal shootings rose 73 percent and homicides rose 48 percent.

- While the overall system is steeped in structural racial inequality, parts of the system don't seem that biased. As the criminologist Barry Latzer notes in his book "The Rise and Fall of Violent Crime in America," there is not a wide disparity between whites and blacks in time served for various offenses.

- Moderate, bipartisan efforts are reducing inequality. Decades ago, evangelicals like Chuck Colson joined with a swath of progressives to reduce incarceration rates. These efforts are having an effect. Total U.S. imprisonment has declined for the past seven years. The imprisonment rate among black women has dropped 47 percent since 2000, while the rate of imprisonment among white women has risen 56 percent. Male imprisonment trends are similar though less striking.

As in life generally, every policy has the vices of its virtues. Aggressive policing cuts crime but increases brutality. There is no escape from trade-offs and tragic situations. The only way forward is to elect people who are capable of holding opposing stories in their heads at the same time, and to reject those who can't.

**Every problem can be solved by finding some corrupt or oppressive group to blame.**

## Open forum

### Strong community

I was excited to attend a screening of "Paper Tigers" and the panel discussion afterward April 5 at the Liberty Theater. I was also excited to hear of the organization Trauma Informed Oregon — I have already signed up for their newsletter — and that the movement to develop trauma informed communities is getting a foothold in this county.

This is particularly evident in the Warrenton School District, and in Jill Quackenbush's work with our preschoolers and Head Start. Kudos to them for being our pioneers, for they are creating the road map for our community as a whole.

I was glad to see many staff from Tongue Point Job Corps attending, as well as from Astoria School District. It is likely other school districts were represented, as well, since this event was well attended. As a parent of two Astoria School District students, I can state with confidence that there are staff there who already practice the philosophy of unconditional acceptance, nonjudgment and in taking a nonpunitive approach, and that my daughters have benefited from this philosophy being enacted.

If the school district as a whole gets on board, then this positive impact upon the students will be magnified and the ripple effects will go beyond what we could even imagine in terms of how they will then impact their/our community.

I am also a mental health therapist who is now in private practice, and I think of Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare as being, in a way, my alma mater. Therefore I was excited to see that Summer Watkins, CEO, was on the panel, and to hear of all of the proactive work that this agency is doing to provide counseling services in our schools, and to support the creation of a trauma-informed community.

And last, a shout out must go to my professional peer, trauma therapist Liz Covey, for keeping it real. She's right, there is still much work to be done, both in educating our community members and in impacting our systems at the governmental level. It really does boil down to voting for people who are going to raise our taxes. But the research is there to support what we all innately know, that when you strengthen even just one community member, you strengthen the whole community.

As an obnoxiously proud parent, I can tell you that my girls are already supporting this community and, by doing so, providing an example to their peers. This support is in part a result of our tax dollars in action, and they are now, at just 15 and 17, in a position to not only say "thank you" but "you're welcome."

WYNNE PRESTON  
 Astoria

### Letters welcome

Letters should be exclusive to *The Daily Astorian*. We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Letters should be fewer than 450 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was

published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also mention the headline and date of publication.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to [editor@dailyastorian.com](mailto:editor@dailyastorian.com);

Online form at [www.dailyastorian.com](http://www.dailyastorian.com);

Delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside.

Or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103

### Pride in the Pacific

Spring has come to the Pacific Northwest, and many of us are getting outside to connect with the lands, waters, wildlife, and great people that make this region so special.

Our region and the prospects of maintaining these qualities for generations to come were recently given a major boost from the White House. In his 2017 budget submitted in February to Congress, President Obama made an unprecedented investment in the Pacific Northwest by proposing to fund something called the Pathways to the Pacific.

This large landscape, collaborative conservation project will protect and restore tens of thousands of acres along the last 250 miles of the lower Columbia River, from the John Day to the mouth of the Columbia. The \$30 million dedicated in the president's budget would be largest federal funding request for the region in over 15 years. The projects in Pathways will tie together a network of lands conserved and restored by federal, state and local agencies, and private non-profit partners, including the Columbia Land Trust.

Pathways to the Pacific will be funded through the Land and Water Conservation Fund, arguably America's most important conservation program. Over its 50-year history, LWCF has provided billions of dollars for parks, open space, wildlife habitat, agriculture, and forest conservation, and is funded from fees collected by oil and gas leases, not taxes.

In our coastal region in Oregon and Washington alone, LWCF has protected special places such as Cascade Head, Fort Clatsop National Memorial, Nestucca Bay National Wildlife Refuge, Lewis and Clark National Historical Park, and the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Although Congress allowed the 50-year old LWCF program to expire in September 2015, a bipartisan group

of elected officials gave it a three-year extension at the end of last year. Now, a broad coalition of businesses, community leaders, and conservation groups are working to make LWCF a permanent part of our nation's legacy. The president's budget calls for making this fund permanent, and the four senators from both Oregon and Washington have consistently fought for permanency.

We are excited about the opportunities that Pathways to the Pacific will bring to our region. It is this type of collaborative conservation that shows how important making permanent the Land and Water Conservation Fund is for our nation.

GLENN LAMB  
 Vancouver, Washington

### Free press

*The Daily Astorian* editorial, "Fighting for press freedom ... again?" (April 11), is much ado about nothing. The actions of the Arizona House of Representatives constitute no threat to a free press.

While I agree that "government must always be watched," it is absurd to argue that limiting press access to the floor of the House is any potential threat to the First Amendment.

The business of the people's government must always be open to public scrutiny, but the demands of the press for special seating privileges are not a constitutional concern.

For a free press to be relevant, it must also be reliable. Sensationalizing this minor snit as "barriers thrown up by those in political power" betrays that responsibility. As does the claim that "by the time the Constitution was written," an "unbridled press" was operative in America in the 1580s. It didn't exist.

I recommend that *The Daily Astorian* take its own advice to "do our jobs effectively." Moving forward, that would be the most responsible thing to do.

ROBERT JOHNSTONE  
 Astoria