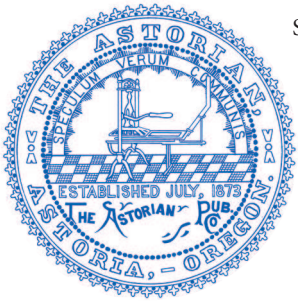


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



STEPHEN A. FORRESTER, *Editor & Publisher*  
 LAURA SELLERS, *Managing Editor*  
 BETTY SMITH, *Advertising Manager*  
 CARL EARL, *Systems Manager*  
 JOHN D. BRUIJN, *Production Manager*  
 DEBRA BLOOM, *Business Manager*  
 HEATHER RAMSDELL, *Circulation Manager*



AP Photo/Susan Walsh

Members of the Old Guard Pvt. Brandon Hyer, left, from Kansas City, Kan., and Pvt. Brad Dixon of Baltimore, Md., place flags in front of headstones at Arlington National Cemetery in Arlington, Va., Thursday. Soldiers were to place nearly a quarter of a million U.S. flags at the cemetery as part of a Memorial Day tradition.

## Today is about the cost of war

*Every war creates a new generation of veterans*

Today we honor those who made the ultimate sacrifice — giving their life because their country sent them to war.

There was a time when Congress contained many veterans. Because there is no draft, there are now few veterans in the House or Senate. There is always plenty of war rhetoric, but very little perspective based on experience.

This also is true of the presidency. Neither Barack Obama nor any of the three candidates seeking to replace him has served in the military.

Obama — elected in part due to a perception he would quickly disentangle the U.S. from wars on the other side of the world — continues all these years later to preside over persistent and deadly military engagements in countries few Americans would otherwise set foot in. Like most modern U.S. political elites, military service is about projecting American power abroad and protecting American interests. Neither they nor their immediate families ever have any actual “skin in the game.”

For a majority of Americans, Memorial Day is most meaningfully about the veterans who are still actively endeavoring to live following the endless years of war begun after the craven attacks of Sept. 11, 2001.

How easy it still is for old men to start wars that burn up the lives of the young. The Iraq War especially deserves to be remembered as a “war of choice” launched by political leaders who never personally risked a drop of their own blood defending the nation.

President Ulysses S. Grant — as good a general as the U.S. ever had — said, “There never was a time when, in my opinion, some way could not be found to prevent the drawing of the sword.” Our sad drumbeat of wars in the 20th and 21st centuries informs us

that we are still too far away from learning this lesson.

But war is not the true subject for Memorial Day. We honor the personal sacrifices that men and women have made in the name of our nation and its Constitution.

We who live in the relative comfort of 2016 cannot ignore these sacrifices. We cannot commend one soldier’s valor and minimize another’s, depending on whether we deem one a “good war” and the other not.

What we honor this day is selfless service to the country. But if this day is to be anything but an excuse for a day off from work, we must put meat on the bones of otherwise empty promises.

Our president and Congress aren’t unique in being shielded from the realities of modern warfare. Although more serve from working-class areas like ours, the shared experience of serving in America’s defense is increasingly uncommon.

History teaches the danger faced by powerful nations where the majority of the citizenry no longer remembers the hardship and realities faced by its defenders. It becomes far too easy to expend their lives for meager pay to achieve too little, then bringing them home and forgetting them.

Repairing the disconnect between decision-makers and these sacrifices is essential to the long-term survival of America’s great experiment in democracy.

Meanwhile, genuinely honoring veterans means remembering them and tending to their needs 365 days of the year, not just this one. Memorial Day is only the start, not the finish, of recognizing the debt we owe to veterans. Truly honoring them means embodying their values and honor in our own lives every day of the year.

## THE GETTYSBURG ADDRESS

# ‘OF THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE’

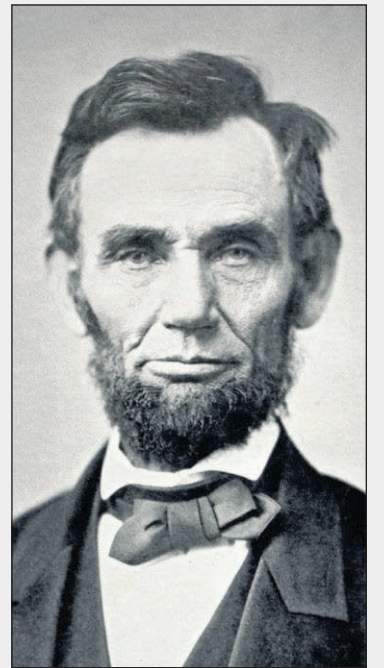
*President Abraham Lincoln delivered this address at the dedication of the cemetery at Gettysburg, Pa., on Nov. 19, 1863.*

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent, a new nation, conceived in Liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal.

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field, as a final resting place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow — this

ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living, rather, to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced.

It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation, under God, shall have a new birth of freedom — and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.



Abraham Lincoln



AP Photo/Matt York

Passengers retrieve their luggage after their flights Friday at Sky Harbor International Airport in Phoenix.

## Memorial weekend rant about baggage

By GAIL COLLINS

*New York Times News Service*

Summer is upon us, and we are facing important travel decisions.

Such as who to blame when we get stuck in interminable airport lines.

So many options. There’s the government, but how many times can you complain about Congress in the course of a lifetime? There’s the public — air traffic up 12 percent since 2011. But really, people, don’t blame yourself.

Let’s pick a rant that’s good for you, good for me, good for the lines in security: Make the airlines stop charging fees for checked baggage.

Seems simple, doesn’t it? Plus, if you do manage to make it to your flight, these are the same people who will be announcing there’s a \$3 fee if you want a snack.

The largest airlines charge \$25 for the first checked bag, thus encouraging people to drag their belongings through the airport, clogging the X-ray lines and slowing the boarding process as everybody fights to cram one last rolling duffel into the overhead compartment.

The idea that travelers should be hit by an extra charge for, um, having luggage began in 2008, when the cost of fuel went through the roof. We understood the airlines’ pain, sort of. Maybe. But now fuel prices have fallen into the cellar. The airlines are taking in stupendous profits — last year nearly \$26 billion after taxes, up from \$2.3 billion in 2010.

Yet the baggage fees are still with us. In fact, they’ve gone up by about two-thirds. Last year, the nation’s airlines made more than \$3.8 billion off what I believe it is fair to call a scam. It’s also an excellent way to make your prices look lower than they really are when people surf for the cheapest ticket,



AP Photo/Bebeto Matthews

Transportation Security Administration officers, center, wait to screen travelers at LaGuardia Airport Friday in New York.

### Heaven forfend we mess with the business model.

a number that never includes details like the special fees for bags, food, canceling a reservation, booking by phone, sitting in a minimally more comfortable emergency row or, in some cases, requesting a pillow.

Shouldn’t the airlines offer up the baggage fee as a token of solidarity with their miserable passengers? The idea has come up. Homeland Security Secretary Jeh Johnson asked the airlines to “consider possibly” this modest bow to air travel sanity. Two U.S. senators, Edward Markey of Massachusetts and Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut, wrote a letter to the airlines asking them to just drop the fees during the high-traffic summer months.

We pause now for the sound of silence and crickets chirping.

The airlines have maximized profits by making travel as miserable as possible. Boeing found a way to cram 14 more seats into its largest twin-engine jetliner by reducing the size of the lavatories. Bloomberg quoted a Boeing official as reporting that “the market reaction has been good — really positive.” We presume the market in question does not involve the actual passengers.

But the industry is so powerful

that it seems to be able to get away with squishing people into smaller and smaller spaces. Last month, Sen. Chuck Schumer of New York offered an amendment to a bill reauthorizing the Federal Aviation Administration that would have imposed a moratorium on reductions in seat size and space between rows. It failed, 54-42.

Nobody spoke out against the proposal, but only one Republican, Susan Collins of Maine, voted for it. We salute Susan Collins, who has been, for a number of years, virtually the entire population of the Moderate Republican Caucus.

When Schumer flies, his first move is to empty the seat pocket in front of him.

“I take out the magazine and the airsickness bag so I have an extra eighth of an inch,” he said in a phone interview.

It’s a matter of some passion — when the presidents of three airlines visited Schumer’s office for discussion of a totally unrelated issue, he moved the coffee table so it was an inch from their knees. “I said: ‘OK, now you know how it feels.’”

But about the bags.

Rather than reducing the number of bags in security lines, the airlines would like the government to deal with the problem by adding more workers to screen them. And the perpetually beleaguered Transportation Security Administration is going to spend \$34 million to hire more people and pay more overtime this summer. Which, it assured the public, is not really going to solve much of anything.

(Who, you may ask, pays for the security lines anyway? For the most part you the taxpayer do. Also you the passenger pay a special security fee on your tickets. Which Congress tends to grab away from the TSA for use in all-purpose deficit reduction. I know, I know.)

A spokesman for Delta Air Lines, which took in more than \$875 million on baggage fees last year, told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that bowing to the extremely modest Markey-Blumenthal request for a summer suspension of the baggage fee wouldn’t “really help alleviate a lot.” It would also, he said, require a “considerable change to the business model.”

Heaven forfend we mess with the business model.