

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## Ready or not

*Washington's experience with pot is a cautionary tale for Oregon*

Oregon's latest incremental step toward full-out normalization of marijuana and its active ingredient THC comes at a time when there are indications legalization is having a detrimental effect on driving safety in Washington state.

Even five or 10 years ago, it would have strained the imagination to envision Thursday's launch of sales of edible marijuana/THC candy and other products. Although Oregon has a deeper experience than most states with medical marijuana, the cultural and legal changes we're experiencing now are unique in living memory. Such novelty is exciting to those who enjoy marijuana. Even many of those who don't imbibe are content with an end to one destructive aspect of the "War on Drugs."

There are indications, particularly in Washington state and Colorado, that the price of marijuana is rapidly declining. This is likely to also be true in Oregon. This has positive implications that go beyond being easy on the budgets of marijuana consumers.

"As the cost of legal marijuana falls, it puts a strain on any illegal marijuana enterprises still running. This is good because legal marijuana businesses have to do things like ensure product quality and verify the age of their customers. They're also a lot less prone to crime or violence, given that they're legal places of business. So if illegal ventures can't compete, price-wise, everybody wins," commentator Emma Cueto correctly observed on the online magazine bustle.com.

However, the growing ubiquity of marijuana in the Pacific Northwest has downsides.

Even those who had become discouraged with criminal penalties for a comparatively innocuous intoxicant expressed worry about how marijuana would add to existing problems with impaired driving, along with less quantifiable societal impacts like loss of mental acuity and increasing minors' access to drugs.

In Washington state, there has been an upswing in the proportion of fatal vehicular accidents in which marijuana was found present in drivers. Between the legalization approval in November 2012 and 2014, there was a doubling in the number of fatalities in which marijuana may have played a role. Researchers with AAA found that before legalization, 8.3 percent of drivers in fatal crashes had THC in their blood, compared to 17 percent after legalization — many of whom also had alcohol or other drugs present.

Law enforcement is still playing catch-up with the issue. In Washington and Colorado, prosecution for driving under the influence relies on a test finding more than 5 nanograms per milliliter of THC in drivers' blood. Oregon relies on officer observations to determine whether a driver is impaired.

All this clearly demands close scrutiny by lawmakers, police and the public. While it remains unlikely that legalization will be rolled back, refinements in enforcement and personal responsibility on the part of drivers will be essential.

## A spring tide of state athletic skill

It is a big deal when a team from a small town wins a state athletic championship. That has happened a lot in our region this season. Even when they come close, it is still a source of pride. On Friday Knappa High School rallied but fell short of a second consecutive state baseball title. When will scouts with clipboards and speed guns appear?

The Astoria girls track team piled up a record number of points by a 4A team in the Oregon state meet. The team's grade point average was also noteworthy: at 3.79, the second highest in their category.

Across the river, the Ilwaco boys won the state golf championship, in what has become

something of a tradition. On the track and field front, about 20 Pacific County athletes won medals in state competition.

Championships such as these make us feel good about our communities. Remember the elation when the Astoria High School basketball team won its 1998 championship under coach Mike Goin? Then there was the series of Fishermen baseball championships under coach Dave Gasser in 2006 and 2009 and coach Brian Babbitt in 2011.

The boys and girls on these teams have done something remarkable, and they will remember it for a lifetime. So will many of us.

# Where America is working

By DAVID BROOKS  
*New York Times News Service*

As individuals, we all try to build on our strengths and work on our weaknesses, and it's probably a good idea to balance these two activities. But as a country we are completely messing this up.

In this election we've been ignoring the parts of America that are working well and wallowing in the parts that are fading. This has led to a campaign season driven by fear, resentment and pessimism. And it will lead to worse policy-making down the road, since prosperity means building on things we do well, not obsessing over the things that we've lost.

The person chiefly responsible for this all-warts view of America is, of course, Donald Trump.

Trump has focused his campaign on the struggling white neighborhoods in the industrial Midwest. The prototypical Trump voter is an upscale man from a downscale place.

As Nate Silver has demonstrated, Trump voters are not poor. Their median household income is about \$72,000, which is far above the national average. But they tend to be from former manufacturing hubs, which have been in decade-long decline. They tend to be from places like Kokomo, Indiana, which has had a 13.5 percent decline in weekly wages since 2000, and Saginaw, Michigan, which has had a 9.8 percent decline.

These areas enjoyed a brief resurgence four years ago, when manufacturing picked up. But the manufacturing economy has headed south again over the past 19 months, thanks to low foreign demand. People in such places are so desperate for any sort of change that they're willing to overlook all the baggage that comes with Donald Trump.

Trump's general election focus on the swing states of the industrial Midwest means that Hillary Clinton will have to focus her efforts there, too. The whole tenor of the fall campaign will be shaped by the pain of towns that are in long-term decline — where people feel eco-

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David Brooks

nomicly adrift and culturally left behind.

Energy issues will play an outsized role. As Ronald Brownstein of *The Atlantic* has shown, Republicans tend to do well in industrial places heavily reliant on carbon-intensive fuels. Democrats tend to do well in postindustrial places where carbon output is low. Trump will hit Clinton for supporting environmental regulations that hurt the manufacturing economy. Clinton will rally her people with efforts to address climate change.

This style of campaign could also pave the way for a longer-term realignment. Michael Lind of *New America* argues in an essay in *Politico* that Republicans are becoming a Midwestern, white working-class party that embraces economic nationalism — walling out immigrants and global economic competition. The Democrats are becoming a multicultural globalist coalition that will see national boundaries as obsolete.

But there's another America out there, pointing to a different political debate. For while people are flooding out of the Midwest, they are flooding into the South and the West. The financial crisis knocked many Sun Belt cities to their knees, but they are back up and surging. Jobs and people are now heading to Orlando, Florida; Phoenix; Nashville, Tennessee; Charlotte, North Carolina; Denver and beyond.

There are two kinds of places that are getting it right. The first we might call Richard Florida cities, after the writer who champions them. These are dense, highly educated, highly communal places with plenty of hipsters. These cities, like Austin, Seattle and San Francisco, have lots of innovation, lots of cul-

tural amenities, but high housing prices and lots of inequality.

The second kind of cities we might call Joel Kotkin cities, after the writer who champions them. These are opportunity cities like Houston, Dallas and Salt Lake City. These places are less regulated, so it's easier to start a business. They are

sprawling with easy, hodgepodge housing construction, so the cost of living is low. Immigrants flock to them.

As Kotkin and Tory Gattis pointed out in an essay in *The City Journal*, Houston has been a boomtown for the past two decades. It's America's fourth-largest city, with 35 percent metro area population growth between 2000 and 2013. It's the most ethnically diverse city in America and has had a surge in mid-skill jobs. Houston's diversified its economy, so even the energy recession has not derailed its progress.

We should be having a debate between the Kotkin model and the Florida model, between two successful ways to create prosperity, each with strengths and weaknesses. That would be a forward-looking debate between groups who are open, confident and innovative. That would be a debate that, while it might divide by cultural values and aesthetics, wouldn't divide along ugly racial lines.

We should be focusing on the growing, dynamic places and figuring out how to use those models to nurture inclusive opportunity and rejuvenate the places that aren't. Instead, this campaign will focus on the past: who we need to shut out to get back what we lost.

The future is being built right now. The prevailing sense of public despair is just wrong.

# The id that ate the planet

By PAUL KRUGMAN  
*New York Times News Service*

On Tuesday the political arm of the Natural Resources Defense Council, one of America's most influential environmentalist groups, made its first presidential endorsement ever, giving the nod to Hillary Clinton. This meant jumping the gun by a week on her inevitable designation as the presumptive Democratic nominee, but the NRDC Action Fund is obviously eager to get on with the general election.

And it's not hard to see why: At this point Donald Trump's personality endangers the whole planet.

We're at a peculiar moment when it comes to the environment — a moment of both fear and hope. The outlook for climate change if current policies continue has never looked worse, but the prospects for turning away from the path of destruction have never looked better. Everything depends on who ends up sitting in the White House for the next few years.

On climate: Remember claims by climate denialists that global warming had paused, that temperatures hadn't risen since 1998? That was always a garbage argument, but in any case it has now been blown away by a series of new temperature records and a proliferation of tell indicators that, taken together, tell a terrifying story of looming disaster.

At the same time, however, rapid technological progress in renewable energy is making nonsense — or maybe I should say, further nonsense — of another bad argument against climate action, the claim that nothing can be done about greenhouse gas emissions without crippling the economy. Solar and wind power are getting cheaper each year, and growing quickly even without much in the way of incentives to switch away from fossil fuels. Provide those incentives, and an energy revolution would be

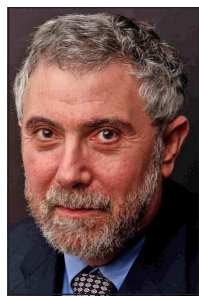
just around the corner.

So we're in a state where terrible things are in prospect, but can be avoided with fairly modest, politically feasible steps. You may want a revolution, but we don't need one to save the planet. Right now all it would take is for America to implement the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan and other actions — which don't even require new legislation, just a Supreme Court that won't stand in their way — to let the U.S. continue the role it took in last year's Paris agreement, guiding the world as a whole toward sharp reductions in emissions.

But what happens if the next president is a man who doesn't believe in climate science, or indeed in inconvenient facts of any kind?

Republican hostility to climate science and climate action is usually attributed to ideology and the power of special interests, and both of these surely play important roles. Free-market fundamentalists prefer rejecting science to admitting that there are ever cases when government regulation is necessary. Meanwhile, buying politicians is a pretty good business investment for fossil-fuel magnates like the Koch brothers.

But I've always had the sense that there was a third factor, which is basically psychological. There are some men — it's almost always men — who become enraged at any suggestion that they must give up something they want for the common good. Often, the rage is disproportionate to the sacrifice: for example, prominent conservatives suggesting violence against government officials because they don't like the performance of phos-



Paul Krugman

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phate-free detergent. But polluters' rage isn't about rational thought.

Which brings us to the presumptive Republican presidential nominee, who embodies the modern conservative id in its most naked form, stripped of the disguises politicians usually use to cloak their prejudices and make them seem respectable.

No doubt Donald Trump hates environmental protection in part for the usual reasons. But there's an extra layer of venom to his pro-pollution stances that is both personal and mind-bogglingly petty.

For example, he has repeatedly denounced restrictions intended to protect the ozone layer — one of the great success stories of global environmental policy — because, he claims, they're the reason his hair spray doesn't work as well as it used to. I am not making this up.

He's also a bitter foe of wind power.

He likes to talk about how wind turbines kill birds, which they sometimes do, but no more so than tall buildings; but his real motivation seems to be ire over unsuccessful attempts to block an offshore wind farm near one of his British golf courses.

And if evidence gets in the way of his self-centeredness, never mind. Recently he assured audiences that there isn't a drought in California, that officials have just refused to turn on the water.

I know how ridiculous it sounds. Can the planet really be in danger because a rich guy worries about his hairdo? But Republicans are rallying around this guy just as if he were a normal candidate. And if Democrats don't rally the same way, he just might make it to the White House.