

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Musicians will again fill our streets

Astoria Music Festival is an economic and cultural asset

At 14, the Astoria Music Festival is one of our younger regional festivals. But since its explosive first year, the festival has been noticed across Oregon and the Pacific Northwest. It draws singers and musicians from well beyond Oregon's borders.

Before the Liberty Theater was restored, a young Portland State University graduate named Katherine Matschiner had the boldness to mount a fully costumed and staged production of Mozart's opera, *The Marriage of Figaro*, during summer 2002.

While Matschiner was the festival's spark plug, Keith Clark — then of PSU's music faculty — gave the festival longevity. Astorians have helped keep the festival going by opening their homes to musicians. Financial support comes from a broad array of contributors, here and around the region.

The digital world has changed our lives in many ways. Small towns have become contenders in the

competition for the younger creative demographic. Culture and the arts are one of the magnets in that game. For a town of 10,000 to have a festival of this quality is eye-catching and it becomes a remarkable draw.

When a group of Astorians during the 1990s began the quest to acquire and restore the Liberty Theater, none of them could imagine that an attraction of the Music Festival's excellence and excitement would appear.

It is no secret that the festival's board has done considerable heavy lifting to make this year's production come off. We owe them our gratitude.

And if you've never gone to the Astoria Music Festival, give it a try. You will be amazed.

GUEST COLUMN

Oregon's economy: Weeds in the rose garden?

By ADAM DAVIS
 For The Daily Astorian

Have you heard? Everything His coming up roses in Oregon.

How appropriate considering it is Rose Festival time of year.

"All good news" according to the Oregon Office of Economic Analysis. The roses: a 4.5 percent unemployment rate, 5,000 jobs added per month for the past two years, gains in wages and personal income, general fund revenue growth, and increased lottery sales.

I don't want to rain on our (Grand Floral) parade, but I for one see some weeds in the rose garden, and their roots go deep.

Yes, many numbers coming out of economic research are showing positive trends at the national, state, and local levels. But numbers coming out of opinion research paint a very different picture of Oregon's economy.

Many of our survey results and a lot of what we hear in our focus groups across the state suggest the vocabulary of recovery, growth, and prosperity isn't enough. There are other words to consider in politics, public policymaking, and community development, words like uncertainty, inequality, and distrust. And the distrust extends to government reports painting a rosy picture of the economy that doesn't match up with what many Oregonians are experiencing and reporting to us.

Many Oregonians feel the state is off on the wrong track. Large numbers feel angry, sad, or fearful about the state's direction — though they do at least feel more positive about Oregon than the country at large. The economy remains among the top issues people want to do something about. This should come as no surprise, considering that 55 percent of Oregonians are worried about their personal financial situation and another 27 percent are "not too worried." This concern is an important one to track regularly over time if we want a meaningful understanding of the state's economic condition.

The worry about personal financial situations extends across population subgroups, but rural Oregonians and those with an incomplete college education are especially fearful. A whopping 62 percent of Oregon residents outside the Portland metropolitan area and the Willamette Valley are somewhat or very worried about their financial future. Oregonians with some college education but no degree feel similarly.

Why worry?

Why are people worried? It's those weeds in the economic rose garden: part-time instead of full-time jobs, low pay, no benefits, having education, experience, or skills beyond the requirements of the job, credit card debt, little to no retirement savings, no emergency fund, high cost of living (especially for healthy food, health care, and utilities), student debt, employment discrimination, and jobs that disappear as technology evolves. And one more weed that has grown up quickly as a major concern in some areas of the state: affordable housing.

The deep roots of the weeds can be found in income inequality and the disappearing middle class. Asked how they feel about so many Americans having so little while a few have so much, 59 percent of Oregonians said angry and 42 percent said sad. Donald Trump and Bernie Sanders have hit this issue hard, and it was a big driver for many of the votes Oregonians cast in the primaries. Feeling economically victimized by international trade was another important factor.

Economic ignorance is another deep root. People don't know what government does to help the economy, and they don't understand what public services cost or how they are paid for. Close to four in



Adam Davis

Many Oregonians feel the state is off on the wrong track.

ten Oregonians cannot name a single tax that helps pay for state government services. Many do not connect the importance of good transportation or public education systems with a strong economy. They also don't know the poor condition of these two systems in Oregon.

The weeds are also deeply rooted in distrust of institutions that play important roles in the state's economy, including big business, government, and the media.

And the distrust of traditional consumerism is a powerful issue to watch as well. Majorities feel the country

would be stronger if we consumed less, as opposed to buying things to support a strong economy; more and more Oregonians are questioning the toll "chasing the almighty buck" is taking on their households and on them personally.

There are also those Oregonians who feel consumerism is contributing to climate change and they want to protect the environment. They are looking for models of economic development that don't jeopardize the natural beauty and environmental quality that so many residents value in the state.

We're being told that Oregon's economy is rosy, and by some measurements it is. That's good news. But the deep-rooted weeds paint a different picture, and their implications are potentially far-reaching. We have more to do to tend our garden.

Adam Davis, who has been conducting opinion research in Oregon for more than 35 years, is a founding principal in DHM Research, a leader in opinion research, providing consultation for private, public, and nonprofit clients. Located in Portland, Seattle, and Washington, D.C., it is a nonpartisan and independent firm.

Lessons of Hiroshima and Orlando

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
 New York Times News Service

I want to talk today about the horrific human tragedy of Orlando. But first I want to talk about Hiroshima — or, more precisely, the profound speech that President Barack Obama gave there May 27 that got lost in all the campaign noise here.

Hiroshima, Obama suggested, represents a world in which for the first time ever a country possessed the power to kill all of us — and if it had to be any country, I am glad it was America.

But today, he said, we're entering a world where small groups — maybe even soon a single super-empowered person — will be able to kill all of us; therefore we'd better start thinking about the moral implications of where technology is taking us.

"Science allows us to communicate across the seas and fly above the clouds, to cure disease and understand the cosmos, but those same discoveries can be turned into ever more efficient killing machines," the president noted. "The wars of the modern age teach us this truth. Hiroshima teaches this truth. Technological progress without an equivalent progress in human institutions can doom us. The scientific revolution that led to the splitting of an atom requires a moral revolution as well."

What the president was describing is the central strategic issue of our time: the growing mismatch between the combined rapid evolution of our technological prowess and the power this gives to a single individual or group to destroy at scale (you can make your own gun now with a 3-D-printer), and the pace of our moral and social evolution to govern and use these powers responsibly.

And that brings me to the Orlando massacre — to what happens when, on a smaller scale, we refuse to re-imagine the social and legal changes we need to manage a

world where one loser can now kill so many innocent people. The notion that such a person — any person — should be able to buy a military-style assault rifle is insane. That the Republican Party cannot see the wisdom of common-sense guns laws is just begging for bigger massacres.

At the same time, year after year, we keep seeing young Muslim men drawing inspiration and permission from Islam to kill large numbers of civilians in the West and, even more so, killing other Muslims in Muslim lands.

I've lived too long in the Muslim world, and experienced the decency of Muslim communities, to believe that this is the essence of Islam. But I have seen too much of this suicidal violence for too long to believe that it has nothing to do with the puritanical, anti-gay, anti-transgender, anti-female, anti-religious-pluralism versions of Islam that are too often promoted by sources in the Arab world, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The websites, social networks and mosques that promote these intolerant ideas can "light up" lost souls anywhere in the world. Until that stops, we're just waiting around for the next Paris, Brussels, San Bernardino or Orlando.

And the only thing that can stop them is from the inside: a meaningful mass movement by Muslim governments, clergymen and citizens to delegitimize this behavior. It takes a village and stops only when the village clearly says, "No more!" And that has not happened at the scale and consistency it needs to happen.

Finally, in an age when individuals can become super-empowered, we need to ensure our government has all the surveillance powers it needs — under appropriate judicial review — to monitor and arrest violent extremists of all stripes. The bad guys now have too many tools to elude detection.



Thomas L. Friedman

When America goes nuts, the world goes nuts.

Obama closed his speech at Hiroshima with words that could easily have been said of Orlando: "Those who died, they are like us. ... They do not want more war. They would rather that the wonders of science be focused on improving life and not eliminating it. When the choices made by nations, when the choices made by leaders, reflect this simple wisdom, then the lesson of Hiroshima is done."

We need to make choices appropriate for our age when technology can so amplify the power of one. We need common-sense gun laws, common-sense gender equality and religious pluralism and common-sense privacy laws.

But that takes common-sense leaders, not ones who think the complexities of this age can be bombed away, walled away, willed away or insulted away. Stop for a moment and reflect on what this week would have been like had Donald Trump been president — the carpet-bombing he'd have ordered in the Middle East, the fear and isolation his Muslim ban would have engendered in every Muslim-American, the joy that ISIS would have taken from being at war with all of America, the license this would have given to crazies in our own society to firebomb a mosque. And the backlash that would engender among Muslims around the world, the most radical of whom would be firebombing our embassies. When America goes nuts, the world goes nuts.

I don't agree with Obama on all aspects of this issue, but the guy is thinking deeply and acting responsibly. Trump is shooting from the hip, straying insults 360 degrees, telling lies, stoking fears and making threats that many in our military and the FBI would refuse to implement. If you Republican senators and congressmen support Trump for president, he will own you — and you will own everything he does.

Women on boards make a difference

While 3 out of 4 working-age American women are employed, it is startling how relatively few females have cracked the infamous glass ceiling into upper echelons of U.S. corporate governance.

Beyond matters of simple social justice, gender balance in upper management appears to offer significant advantages for the economy. Writing in the online publication *Crosscut* this month, reporter Ruchika Tulshyan notes that "A Credit Suisse report reveals that small and mid-size companies with at least one female board member report an average 17 percent better stock price performance than comparable ones without women. At larger companies, this number goes up to 26 percent." Other research found having "three or more women directors yields significantly higher returns for a company."

A study reported in May by University of Notre Dame Professor Craig Crossland found corporate boards with a balance between genders were less prone to engage in the modern equivalent of war parties and hunting expeditions against rivals. Increasing the number of women on a

board resulted in 18 percent less acquisitiveness, a 12 percent decrease in acquisition size and a reduction of \$97.2 million in merger and acquisition spending in a given year.

"Diverse groups tend to engage in discussions that are more thorough, more contentious and more likely to identify problems with the topic at hand," Crossland said. "Mergers and acquisitions can be beneficial for firms, but at least as often, they can destroy value. We think the boards with higher female representation are more likely to identify these challenges in a given deal, increasing the likelihood that it will be delayed or shelved entirely."

How do Oregon's biggest companies stack up? In a useful new report (www.2020wob.com), the group 2020Women on Boards — which strives for 20 percent female representation on company boards by 2020 — looked at the state's nine biggest companies and found most already exceed the 20 percent threshold.

Considering the advantages of gender balance, consumers, shareholders and lawmakers clearly should advocate for more women in top corporate positions.