

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*

Why make it easy for terrorists?

A tectonic plate is shifting on guns

If more than 30,000 Americans were dying from a certain disease, Congress would pay attention. That is one way of framing last week's House firearms sit-in spectacle and the Senate filibuster that preceded it.

Following the June 12 Orlando gun massacre, a tectonic plate in American politics is shifting. Large majorities of Americans favor narrowing or eliminating the ability of people on the no-fly list to buy firearms.

Congressional Republicans don't see that. They are operating from their time-honored game strategy, in which they do what the National Rifle Association demands. But House and Senate Democrats have found their voice on the guns issue. It is resonating with a large segment of the public.

It is puzzling that House Speaker Paul Ryan shut down the House for a holiday recess, instead of holding a vote on the Democrats' gun proposals.

There are many ways of questioning guns and their impact on American culture. There has always been the public health issue of more than 30,000 gun-related deaths annually. After Orlando, many question why we give terrorists access to weapons. And a third perspective was stated succinctly by Rep. Seth Moulton — an Iraq War veteran — who said: "Civilians have no reason

for owning assault weapons."

In the face of the behemoth lobby, the NRA, conventional politicians laugh at the Democratic offensive. But let's remember recent history.

It is difficult to imagine an America in which smoking permeated the workplace, even hospitals. It's hard to remember when auto manufacturers resisted automobile safety measures such as seat belts. Read biographies of 20th century black musicians and you'll learn about the extent of racial segregation, into the 1960s — even reaching into Salem. And remember how recently gay bashing was common. If you had asked tobacco companies, auto manufacturers, African-Americans and gays whether any of these societal norms would ever change, the answer was probably a resounding "no."

Republican slavishness toward the NRA's hard line no longer matches reality. And the thing they forget is that assuredly there will be another Orlando-type massacre within months. That's because Congress makes it easy for the deranged and the terrorists.

Forecasting ocean conditions is smart

We're at the dawn of forecasting what to expect from the planet's oceans. J-SCOPE, a collaboration between the University of Washington and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, is showing promise as a sophisticated way of looking into the previously blank slate of the Pacific Ocean off our shores.

What happens in the ocean can have massive impacts on land. The vast area of warmer-than-normal seawater called The Blob brought drought and severe forest fires to the Pacific Northwest in 2014 and 2015, and probably contributed to a toxic algal bloom that disrupted the multimillion dollar recreation razor clam season last year, while also delaying commercial crabbing. Beyond economic considerations, the algae caused untold suffering among birds, marine mammals and other wildlife.

Research published earlier this month shows J-SCOPE is

useful in predicting ocean conditions, including water oxygen, temperature, chlorophyll and pH. Scientists also are working on a sardine forecast and may extend their efforts to hake, also known as whiting.

What good does it do to know what's about to happen in the ocean? Knowing that summer water temperatures will be warmer could help prepare for fire season. Hydro-system operators might better time releases of reservoir reserves. This knowledge could help communities anticipate the danger of seashore drownings by tourists lured into warmer waters. While there is as yet no ability to intervene and block toxic algal blooms, someday there may be, and knowing conditions are primed for a bloom could be key to managing them.

J-SCOPE is very promising. It deserves our attention and tax-dollar support. U.S. investment in science saves lives and money.

Trump in the dumps as campaign slumps

By MAUREEN DOWD
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — He won't pivot. So I have to.

Having seen Donald Trump as a braggadocious but benign celebrity in New York for decades, I did not regard him as the apotheosis of evil.

He seemed more like a toon, a cocky huckster swanning around Gotham with a statuesque woman on his arm and skyscrapers stamped with his brand. I certainly never would have predicted that the Trump name would be uttered in the same breath as Hitler, Mussolini and scary menace, even on such pop culture staples as "The Bachelorette."

Trump jumped into the race with an eruption of bigotry, ranting about Mexican rapists and a Muslim ban. But privately, he assured people that these were merely opening bids in the negotiation; that he was really the same pragmatic New Yorker he had always been; that he would be a flexible, wheeling-and-dealing president, not a crazy nihilist like Ted Cruz or a mean racist like George Wallace. He yearned to be compared to Ronald Reagan, a former TV star who overcame a reputation for bellicosity and racial dog whistles to become the most beloved Republican president of modern times.

Trump was applying his business cunning, Twitter snarkiness and bendy relationship with the truth to his new role as a Republican pol. The opposition was unappetizing: Cruz, a creepy, calculating ideologue; Marco Rubio, a hungry lightweight jettisoning his old positions and mentor; Chris Christie, a vindictive bully; Jeb Bush, a past-his-sell-by-date scion.

When Trump pulled back the curtain on how Washington Republicans had been stringing their voters along for years with bold promises, like repealing Obamacare, that they knew had no chance, it was a rare opportunity to see them called out. And when Trump was blunt about how cheaply you could buy and sell politicians in both parties, it made this town squirm.

His obnoxious use of ethnicity only exposed the fact that Republicans had been using bigotry against minorities and gays to whip up voters for decades. The GOP would love to drop Trump now because it prefers a candidate in the party's more subtle racist traditions. (Or even a candidate savvy enough to heap disdain on the 47 percent of government freeloaders at a ritzy fundraiser without having a bartender tape it and leak it.)

The neocons calling Trump a fascist would certainly prefer a more militaristic candidate. Trump realized the Iraq War was misbegotten long before much of the media cognoscenti in New York, and he was willing to hold W. accountable for being asleep at the switch



AP Photo/Ryan Kang

Protestors hold up signs in protest of a visit by Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump in Eugene in May.

before 9/11 and using a bait-and-switch on Iraq. Even though he ranted about the press, he was also far more available to the media than the cloaked Hillary Clinton, who has yet to give a news conference this year. But he undermines his accessibility when he incites nastiness against reporters at his rallies and revokes *The Washington Post's* credentials for a headline he doesn't like.

Before his campaign became infused with racial grievance, victimhood and violence, Trump told me, "I have fun with life, and I understand life, and I want to make life better for people." If he had those better angels, he didn't listen to them. Seduced by the roar of the angry crowd, Trump kept dishing out racially offensive comments about "my African-American," a black man he spotted at a California rally; the "Mexican" judge on the Trump University case; and the "Afghan" who committed the atrocities in Orlando. Mitt Romney is right that Trump's rhetoric causes "trickle-down racism" and misogyny. *The Washington Post* had a front-page story on Friday about the vulgarities freely directed at Clinton by men and women at Trump rallies.

Trump told me he could act like the toniest member of high society when he wanted, and he would as soon as he dispatched his Republican rivals. He said his narcissism would not hinder him as he morphed into a leader. But he can't stop lashing out and doesn't get why that turns people against him. Everything is filtered through his ego. He reacted to Orlando not as a tragedy so much as a chance to brag about "the congrats" he got for "being right on radical Islamic terrorism."

The presumptive but now tenuous nominee seemed bereft at a Dallas



Maureen Dowd

Everything is filtered through his ego.

rally Thursday night when he could no longer brag about his polls, which are shattering records for negativity. Finally, on Friday, Trump couldn't stop himself from tweeting out a poll, even though it was one that showed him behind Clinton.

Trump has made his campaign all about his ability to win. So if he stops winning, what's his raison d'etre?

Trump's pledges to release his tax returns and surround himself with an A-team fell through. A month after his hostile takeover of the Republican Party, he's got a skeletal operation a few floors below his office suite in Trump Tower.

Trump shocked himself by shooting to the top of the Republican heap. It was like watching a bank robber sneak into a bank, only to find all the doors unlocked. But like Dan Quayle and Sarah Palin, Trump refused to study up on policy. So he has been unable to marry his often canny political instincts with some actual knowledge.

He has made some fair points. A lot of our allies do take advantage of us. Our trade deals have left swaths of America devastated. And it was a positive move to propose a meeting with the NRA on gun control for people on the terrorist watch list. But his fair points are getting outnumbered by egregious statements and nutty insinuations, like suggesting that President Barack Obama is tolerant of Islamic State attacks, an echo of the kooky birther campaign that he led, suggesting that Obama wasn't qualified to be president.

Now Trump's own behavior is casting serious doubt on whether he's qualified to be president.

Hillary gossip redux rears its head

By GAIL COLLINS
New York Times News Service

I am so excited to tell you that we're returning to the question of whether or not Hillary Clinton threw a vase at her husband in the White House.

Really, this one hasn't come up for about 20 years.

But Gary Byrne says he saw the pieces! In a box! Byrne is a former Secret Service officer who has written a tell-all book, *Crisis of Character*, about the (horrible/embarrassing/appalling) things he purportedly witnessed during the Bill Clinton presidency.

It's coming out next week to what's supposed to be a big rollout in the conservative media. Donald Trump has been twittering about it, and he quoted from it in his speech Wednesday. (That was the speech in which the new, measured Trump said Clinton "may be the most corrupt person ever to seek the presidency," whose "decisions spread death, destruction and terrorism everywhere she touched.")

Byrne was a low-ranking officer who could never have gotten near enough to the Clintons to see all the things he says he knew firsthand. His juiciest anecdotes are just a rehash of old rumors. "One must question the veracity and content of any book which implies that its author played such an integral part of so many (claimed) incidents," said the Association of Former Agents of the U.S. Secret Service, which issued a denunciation.

This is typical of what concerned citizens are going through this year. We ought to be diligently examining the downside of Hillary's history as part of our civic duties. But having Trump on the other side of the ledger makes Travelgate and the Goldman Sachs speeches seem sort of

irrelevant. *Crisis of Character* is supposed to give us an insight into the old White House messes, but it's written by a guy who has doubts about whether Vince Foster really killed himself.

One of the legends Byrne rakes up is that Hillary mistreated her security detail. (He claims the first lady's bullying drove some of his comrades to alcohol, drugs, prostitutes or — this is a little unusual — performance enhancers.) This is old gossip, but not everyone agrees.

"Those stories have always kind of been out there. I don't know why; she's more than pleasant," said a higher-ranking agent who had been on the Clinton security detail. "I spent close to two years with her — most days, to be honest. I never found Mrs. Clinton to be anything but professional." Speaking in a phone interview, on the condition of anonymity, the agent said Hillary tended to get irritable mainly when the agents pushed people out of the way when she was walking or stopped traffic for her when she was driving: "She's just kind of someone who wants to swim with the fish. She didn't like royal treatment."

Although the book is being promoted as a cautionary tale about Hillary's character, beyond the rudeness stories there's actually only one juicy anecdote about her. That's the vase-throwing story. It's been around almost since the Clintons arrived in Washington, although the object being hurled has traditionally been described as a lamp.

I remember going home to Ohio a few weeks after the inauguration and telling it to my mother, who had already heard it on Rush Limbaugh.



Gail Collins

Gossip is, in part, an expression of public anxiety.

Several months later, Katie Couric went on a tour of the White House with the first lady and asked her to "point out just where you were when you threw the lamp at your husband."

"Well, you know ... I'm looking for that spot, too," Hillary replied.

Gossip is, in part, an expression of public anxiety — people speculated, endlessly, about which politicians might be secretly gay back when there was an overriding fear of homosexuality, and before that, we had periodic rumors about presidential candidates with "Negro blood."

It's possible the Hillary-lamp stories stemmed from nervousness about a first lady who intended to wield actual political power in the job.

As time went on, a Bible and "punches" were added to the things that Hillary was rumored to have thrown at her husband. Then 23 years later a former Secret Service officer, writing a tell-all book about people he barely glimpsed in the course of duty, breathlessly announced he had once spotted a telltale box full of vase shards. ("The rumors were true.")

Most of the Byrne book is actually devoted to the sex escapades of Bill Clinton. There's one bit about an alleged affair with a woman who's not alive to defend herself. Beyond that, it's likely that those of us who were around for the Monica Lewinsky era know as much as Byrne does about the subject. We've already been there. The country has already demonstrated that it is prepared to accept leaders with stupendously imperfect personal lives if they get us where we want to go in public.

But I vote that if Hillary threw a vase, more power to her.