

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## Another massacre, another set of clichés

“Escalating cycle of violence” has become a cliché — something we skip over on our way to more novel news. Last week’s attack on police in Dallas, close on the heels of video-recorded killings of civilians by police, deserves to wrench our attention back to this complex issue.

It has always been true that the misdeeds of one evil or reckless man can unravel the carefully woven norms crafted by civilization. It was, for example, one assassination that set off the terrible chain reaction that precipitated World War I, killing 17 million.

In the 21st century U.S., the growing cyclone of deadly shootings is in no sense on the scale of warfare. But it is nevertheless deeply shocking and worthy of action.

Last week’s episode was all the more troubling because it again involved slayings by and of society’s defenders, the police. Homicides by police in Minnesota and Louisiana added to the nearly 500 fatal shootings of U.S. civilians by police in the first half of 2016, compared to 465 in the first six months of 2015. A disproportionate number of those killed are African-American. Even so, many of these killings by police occurred in circumstances that were not considered controversial.

The highly publicized incidents last week initially appear unreasonable, but investigations are still far from arriving at any formal allegations of wrongdoing by officers. The

## Marine commandant should imitate Comey

FBI Director James Comey broke ground last week in publicly making judgments on Hillary Clinton’s behavior with classified emails. *The Register-Guard* of Eugene wrote Friday that Comey had crossed a line and should not have. It is true that Comey broke precedent. The director’s comments on Clinton were extraordinary. But this was an extraordinary situation in which the director’s candor added credibility to the FBI’s decision not to seek an indictment of the former secretary of state.

All bureaucrats easily can hide behind process. That is especially true for law enforcement, because it is based on a set of processes that are governed by statutes and rules. A bureaucratic answer is fundamentally unsatisfying.

In another part of Washington, D.C., another

gunman who murdered five innocent officers in Dallas, wounding seven more, said his actions were vengeance for police shootings of African-Americans

There undoubtedly are racist and trigger-happy police, just as there are flawed individuals in every other profession. On the other hand, few citizens blame police for being on edge. Last Thursday’s events in Dallas bring the number of American officers killed in the line of duty in 2016 to 58. In 2015, 130 died; in 2014, the death toll was 145.

It would be the worst possible outcome if hateful actions by a few lead to more lives being lost — either civilian or police. We expect calm and mature policing.

At the same time, this is yet another in a seemingly endless sequence of mass murders, too often committed with weapons originally designed for warfare. It verges on political insanity that we permit such easy access to killing machines by virtually any murderous crank who desires one.

When will enough rational citizens stand up and say we’ve had enough?

agency head is wrestling with a highly visible, potentially criminal matter. The commandant of the Marine Corps, Gen. Robert Neller, oversees an investigation of a Marine recruit’s suicide at the Parris Island Marine Corps Recruit Depot. The dead Marine was a Muslim. *The Wall Street Journal* reports that the deceased’s chief drill instructor was under investigation for hazing recruits, including mistreatment of another Muslim recruit. More than a dozen Parris Island drill instructors are under investigation by the Naval Criminal Investigative Services.

Eventually this will reach Gen. Neller’s desk. In making the Navy prosecutors’ judgments public, we hope Neller will follow FBI Director Comey’s example. The public, as well as Marines everywhere, deserve candor, not a bureaucratic answer.

## Discovering Seaside by the numbers

### SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

By R.J. MARX



This industry employs the most people in the city of Seaside:  
 A) Education and health services  
 B) Retail trade  
 C) Manufacturing  
 D) Accommodation and food services

If you said D, you’re right. About 41.8 percent of workers in Seaside are in the hotel and food businesses. Retail trade was a distant second, with 14.1 percent.

One of the first things I noticed when I became the editor of both the *Seaside Signal* and the *Cannon Beach Gazette* was how fiercely competitive the cities in the South County are — with each other. Living in Gearhart complicates matters.

I’ve often thought if Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach all got together we could sure give Astoria a run for its money.

There seem to be more divisions in Clatsop County than the European Union and I’ve met plenty of Seasideers who are quite happy to never stray south of Avenue U or north of the Necanicum Bridge. But what does being a Seasideer really mean?

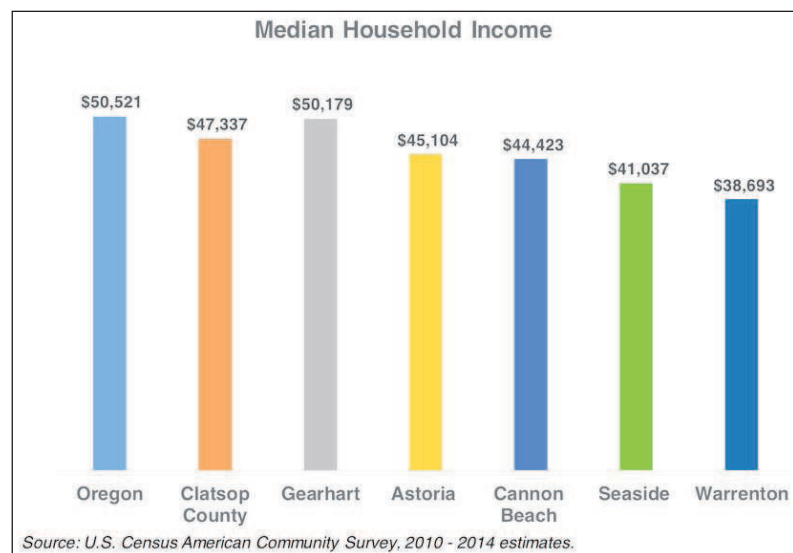
Fourth of July fireworks, surfing at the Cove and griping about Hood to Coast come to mind.

But Shawna Sykes, workforce analyst of the Oregon Employment Department Research Division has a more scientific approach. Working for the employment department, her mission is to support businesses and promote employment.

Sykes reinforces what we already know, and shatters what we think we know. Sykes unleashed a PowerPoint demonstration at a Seaside Downtown Development Association’s June breakfast. She put it all out there in numbers and graphs, city by city, county by county and throughout the state. Using a “Jeopardy!” format, she ingeniously force-fed a half hour of dry labor and population data to an audience pleasantly distracted by Pig ‘N Pancake French toast and blintzes.

Categories were Employment and Unemployment, Industry Facts and Trends and Demographics. Responses revealed data about who’s working, who’s not, in what fields, education, income, age and housing.

The Clatsop County labor force



has actually decreased since 2006, by 450 jobs — an 8.8 percent drop. Yet the unemployment rate is the same as the state’s 4.5 percent, below the national average of 4.7 percent.

The county’s unemployment rate is 11th lowest in the state, tied with Tillamook County. Corvallis, home to Oregon State University, at 3.3 percent, is the lowest; Grant County, at 8.8 percent, is the highest.

There were 3,551 total jobs in Seaside in 2014.

Top median household income goes to Gearhart at \$50,179; status seekers may be surprised to hear Astoria’s median income is higher than that of Cannon Beach, \$45,104 to \$44,423. Seaside falls behind at \$41,037, but still beats Warrenton’s \$38,693.

Highest percent of residents 25 years and older by educational attainment is led by Cannon Beach. More than 13 percent of its residents hold graduate or professional degrees. Another 26 percent are college grads. Seaside’s 11.2 percent with graduate or professional degrees is the same rate as the state overall. Of Seaside residents, 22.4 percent have some high school, 30.9 percent possess a high school degree or equivalent and 24.9 percent hold bachelor degrees.

Gearhart’s residents are 51.7 married couples, slightly above the Clatsop County average of 51.1 percent. About 47.6 percent of Seaside residents are wed.

Which Clatsop County city has the youngest median age? Warrenton wins by more than a decade, with a median age of 32.1. The average Seaside resident is 44.2 years old, Gearhart, 45.2 and Cannon Beach, 52.4 years not-so-young.

Manufacturing, public administration and finance and insurance have the lowest housing turnover rates; accommodation and food service are among the highest.

### What does being a Seasideer really mean?

More females are employed in Seaside than males, 58.6 percent to 41.4 percent.

The city’s housing crunch and employment needs are easily seen by the numbers: an aging, affluent population of mostly second homeowners who occupy the housing stock yet and drive the demand for labor.

Sixty percent of the city’s housing units are vacant — yet the city is unable to build for those who are here.

The state percentage of total housing units is that are vacant is 10 percent. Yet Clatsop County has a 27 percent vacancy rate. Cannon Beach stands at 60 percent vacant, Gearhart, 58 percent and Seaside 37 percent. About two-thirds of the county’s housing is used for seasonal, recreational or occasional use.

Only 10.8 percent of homes are available for rental.

I’m trying to figure out what this all means.

In a June *Wall Street Journal* piece, a headline reads: “In era of big data, storytelling matters more than ever.” It was addressed to the advertising industry, but it could impact all of us as we translate the mountains of data before us.

What are our own stories, and how do the dots connect? How do our habits, our occupations and our education shape not only ourselves, but those around us?

Would the profile of an average Seaside resident be a 44-year-old female with a high school degree working in the hospitality industry looking for an affordable rental?

Online [worksourceoregon.org](http://worksourceoregon.org) or <https://www.qualityinfo.org>

R.J. Marx is *The Daily Astorian’s* South County reporter and editor of the *Seaside Signal* and *Cannon Beach Gazette*.

## The power of altruism to heal society

By DAVID BROOKS  
*New York Times News Service*

Western society is built on the assumption that people are fundamentally selfish.

Machiavelli and Hobbes gave us influential philosophies built on human selfishness.

Sigmund Freud gave us a psychology of selfishness. Children, he wrote, “are completely egoistic; they feel their needs intensely and strive ruthlessly to satisfy them.”

Classical economics adopts a model that says people are primarily driven by material self-interest. Political science assumes that people are driven to maximize their power.

But this worldview is clearly wrong. In real life, the push of selfishness is matched by the pull of empathy and altruism. This is not Hallmark card sentimentalism but scientific fact: As babies our neural connections are built by love and care. We have evolved to be really good at cooperation and empathy. We are strongly motivated to teach and help others.

As Matthieu Ricard notes in his rigorous book “Altruism,” if an 18-month-old sees a man drop a clothespin she will move to pick it up and hand it back to him within 5 seconds, about the same amount of time it takes an adult to offer assistance. If you reward a baby with a gift for being kind, the propensity to help will decrease, in some studies by up to 40 percent.

When we build academic disciplines and social institutions upon suppositions of selfishness we’re missing the motivations that drive people much of the time.

Worse, if you expect people to be selfish, you can actually crush their tendency to be good.

Samuel Bowles provides a slew of examples in his book *The Moral Economy*. For example, six day care centers in Haifa, Israel, imposed a fine on parents who were late in picking up

their kids at the end of the day. The share of parents who arrived late doubled. Before the fine, picking up their kids on time was an act of being considerate to the teachers. But after the fine, showing up to pick up their kids became an economic transaction. They felt less compunction to be kind.

In 2001, the Boston fire commissioner ended his department’s policy of unlimited sick days and imposed a limit of 15 per year. Those who exceeded the limit had their pay docked. Suddenly what had been an ethic to serve the city was replaced by a utilitarian paid arrangement. The number of firefighters who called in sick on Christmas and New Year’s increased by tenfold over the previous year.

To simplify, there are two lenses people can use to see any situation: the economic lens or the moral lens.

When you introduce a financial incentive you prompt people to see their situation through an economic lens. Instead of following their natural bias toward reciprocity, service and cooperation, you encourage people to do a selfish cost-benefit calculation. They begin to ask, “What’s in this for me?”

By evoking an economic motivation, you often get worse outcomes. Imagine what would happen to a marriage if both people went in saying, “I want to get more out of this than I put in.” The prospects of such a marriage would not be good.

Many of our commitments, professional or civic, are like that. To be a good citizen, to be a good worker, you often have to make an altruistic commitment to some group or ideal, which will see you through those times



David Brooks

### In real life, the push of selfishness is matched by the pull of empathy and altruism.

when your job of citizenship is hard and frustrating. Whether you are a teacher serving students or a soldier serving your country or a clerk who likes your office mates, the moral motivation is much more powerful than the financial motivations. Arrangements that arouse the financial lens alone are just messing everything up.

In 1776, Adam Smith defined capitalism as a machine that takes private self-interest and organizes it to produce general prosperity. A few years later America’s founders created a democracy structured to take private factional competition and, through checks

and balances, turn it into deliberative democracy. Both rely on a low but steady view of human nature and try to turn private vice into public virtue.

But back then, there were plenty of institutions that promoted the moral lens to balance the economic lens: churches, guilds, community organizations, military service and honor codes.

Since then, the institutions that arouse the moral lens have withered while the institutions that manipulate incentives — the market and the state — have expanded. Now economic, utilitarian thinking has become the normal way we do social analysis and see the world. We’ve wound up with a society that is less cooperative, less trusting, less effective and less lovely.

By assuming that people are selfish, by prioritizing arrangements based on selfishness, we have encouraged selfish frames of mind. Maybe it’s time to upend classical economics and political science. Maybe it’s time to build institutions that harness people’s natural longing to do good.