

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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Another good outcome

Derelict building ordinance forced Flavel property sale

The purchase of a Flavel-owned downtown block is monumental news. The block — on the north side of Commercial Street — had been on the market for some 18 months. The Astoria City Council in December 2014 used the derelict building ordinance to force a sale of this downtown property as well as the Flavel residence at 15th Street and Franklin Avenue.

For as long as most Astorians can remember, the two Flavel blocks — facing each other on Commercial — have been virtually empty. In fact, Sears left the north-side building in 1996, leaving it vacant.

To the visitor entering downtown, these dead zones make a bad first impression. Despite the gains downtown has made over the past 20 years — with restoration of the Liberty Theater and Hotel Elliott and birth of a host of restaurants — the two Flavel blocks have been a weight around our neck.

The building's purchasers — Marcus and Michelle

Liotta of Warrenton — are relative newcomers to our region. They appear to have the experience necessary to put a new face on this block's faded glory.

The City Council's terms for this deal require Mary Louise Flavel to put proceeds from this sale — \$135,000 — into improvements in the facing block.

We are fond these days of trusting that the marketplace will solve things. But a willfully negligent property owner does not fit the economic model of a market. That's where the derelict building ordinance comes in. Astoria is fortunate to have it.

July 4 plan still needs work

To avoid a ban, fireworks supporters must curb residential problems

With July 4 now a receding memory, Pacific County, Washington, residents and officials are engaged in the latest round of postgame analysis about what went right, wrong and what else to do about it.

In 2015, July 4 was a bacchanal worthy of ancient Rome, resulting in a homicide, hundreds of complaints, and ugly tons of garbage left on the beach.

A new group, Not a Ban a Better Plan, formed to see if existing laws could be better enforced to address residents' concerns while avoiding a heavy regulatory hand in a place that prides itself on freewheeling spirit.

Did the corrective measures work? In part, they did. Parks and Washington State Patrol, along with local law enforcement, provided a highly visible presence on peninsula streets and beaches.

However, fireworks remain a problem for numerous residents. In 2016, there

were in effect an escalating sequence of four nights of explosions, culminating on the Fourth.

What should the next steps be? Starting next year, the Vancouver, Washington, City Council is banning personal use and sale of any fireworks, including sparklers.

The Long Beach Peninsula and Pacific County need not be so draconian. They can choose, for example, to do as the city of Ocean Shores does and allow fireworks only on the beach, but not in residential areas. And if Vancouver has been legally able to enact an outright ban, surely local governments can impose additional date and time restrictions without the need of state legislation.

If fireworks supporters want to avoid a ban, additional action is required to address the concerns of those who believe the "better plan" helped curb misbehavior on the beach but did little for the streets where local people live.

Both are unpopular. Only one is a threat

By THE WASHINGTON POST EDITORIAL BOARD

"This election," a spokesman for U.S. Sen. Ben Sasse (R-Neb.) said Thursday, "remains a dumpster fire." Well, yes, the two major-party candidates for president are historically unpopular. But if this election is unusually bad, it is not because both parties chose bad candidates. There is no equivalence between Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton — as even responsible Republicans should be able to recognize.

Clinton is a knowledgeable politician who has been vetted many times over. She understands and respects the U.S. Constitution. She knows policy. She can cite accomplishments in the public interest, such as pressing through an important children's health insurance program during her husband's administration. As a senator, she was respected by colleagues on both sides of the aisle. She completed four years as secretary of state to generally positive reviews. She began her presidential campaign by rolling out a series of serious policy papers.

None of this means you have to like Clinton or believe she would be a good president. You may disagree with her views; we have done so often enough and will do so again when we think she is wrong. You may believe she was foolish to push for the Libya intervention, arrogant to keep her emails out of the official State Department server, greedy to take large speaking fees as a private citizen. But measured against other major-party candidates of recent times, Clinton is well within established bounds of competence, knowledge, commitment and integrity. She is not a dumpster candidate.

Trump, by contrast, has waged a campaign based on bigotry, ignorance and resentment. He has no experience as a public servant, and his private record of bankruptcies and exploitation should be disqualifying. He regularly circulates falsehoods. He has no discernible interest in or knowledge of policy. Just in recent days, Trump tweeted out an anti-Semitic image circulating on neo-Nazi websites and attacked the media for reporting as much. He called one sitting senator a loser and threatened another while



AP Photos
 Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump gestures during an interview after a rally in Virginia Beach, Va., Monday.



Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton speaks at the African Methodist Episcopal church national convention in Philadelphia Friday.

proving that he lacks even a passing familiarity with the Constitution. He praised one of the most vile dictators of the 20th century.

Those Republicans with enough self-respect to be mortified by the man their party is about to nominate continually hold out hope for some magical transformation. Yet even if Trump flipped his agenda — not a problem for a man with almost no fixed beliefs — he would still be the candidate who mocked a disabled reporter, proposed banning Muslims from entering the United States, attacked a judge based on his ethnicity, celebrated violence at his rallies, demeaned women and promised to round up and deport 11 million undocumented immigrants. He would still be the candidate who vaulted to political prominence with race-based attacks on the incumbent president and launched his campaign by calling Mexicans rapists.

Sasse has proved to be a rare Republican official with the moral courage to speak as honestly about Trump after he clinched the nomination as he did before. It's not surprising that the senator would want to dismiss the whole campaign as a mess, and we don't doubt that he genuinely fears the direction in which Clinton would lead the nation.

But to equate the two candidates as indistinguishably unqualified products of a rigged or failed system only feeds public cynicism while blurring distinctions that should not be blurred. Clinton is a politician, long in the arena, whom you may or may not support. Mr. Trump is a danger to the republic.

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A week from hell for Americans

By CHARLES BLOW
 New York Times News Service

Last week was yet another week that tore at the very fiber of our nation.

After two videos emerged showing the gruesome killings of two black men by police officers, one in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, and the other in Falcon Heights, Minnesota, a black man shot and killed five officers, and wounded nine more people, in a cowardly ambush at an otherwise peaceful protest. The Dallas police chief, David O. Brown, said, "He was upset about Black Lives Matter" and "about the recent police shootings" and "was upset at white people" and "wanted to kill white people, especially white officers."

We seem caught in a cycle of escalating atrocities without an easy way out, without enough clear voices of calm, without tools for reduction, without resolutions that will satisfy.

There is so much loss and pain. There are so many families whose hearts hurt for a loved one needlessly taken, never to be embraced again.

There is so much disintegrating trust, so much animosity stirring.

So many — too many — Americans now seem to be living with an ambient terror that someone is somehow targeting them.

Friday morning, after the Dallas shootings, my college-student daughter entered my room before heading out to her summer job. She hugged me and said: "Dad, I'm scared. Are you scared?" We talked about what had happened in the preceding days, and I tried to allay her fears and soothe her anxiety.

How does a father answer such a question? I'm still not sure I got it precisely right.

Truth is, I am afraid. Not so much for my own safety, which is what my daughter was fretting about, but more for the country I love.

This is not a level of stress and strain that a civil society can long endure.

I feel numb, and anguished and heartbroken, and I fear that I am far from alone.

And yet, I also fear that time is a

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requirement for remedy. We didn't arrive at this place overnight, and we won't move on from it overnight.

Centuries of U.S. policy, culture and tribalism are simply being revealed as the frothy tide of hagiographic history recedes.

Our American "ghettos" were created by policy and design. These areas of concentrated poverty became fertile ground for crime and violence. Municipalities used heavy police forces to try to cap that violence. Too often, aggressive policing began to feel like oppressive policing. Relationships between communities and cops became strained. A small number of criminals poisoned police beliefs about whole communities and a small number of dishonorable officers poisoned communities' beliefs about entire police forces. And then, too often the unimaginable happened and someone ended up dead at the hands of the police.

Since people have camera phones, we are actually seeing these deaths, live and in living color. Now a terrorist with a racist worldview has taken it upon himself to co-opt a cause and mow down innocent officers.

This is a time when communities, institutions, movements and even nations are tested. Will the people of moral clarity, good character and righteous cause be able to drown out the chorus of voices that seek to use each dead body as a societal wedge?

Will the people who see clearly that there is no such thing as selective, discriminatory, exclusionary outrage and grieving when lives are taken, be heard above those who see every tragedy as a plus or minus for a cumulative argument?

Will the people who see both the



Charles Blow

protests over police killings and the killings of police officers as fundamentally about the value of life rise above those who see political opportunity in this arms race of atrocities?

These are very serious questions — soul-of-a-nation questions — that we dare not ignore.

We must see all unwarranted violence for what it is: a corrosion of culture.

I know well that when people speak of love and empathy and honor in the face of violence, it can feel like meeting hard power with soft, like there is inherent weakness in an approach that leans so heavily on things so ephemeral and even clichéd.

But that is simply an illusion fostered by those of little faith.

Anger and vengeance and violence are exceedingly easy to access and almost effortlessly unleashed.

The higher calling — the harder trial — is the belief in the ultimate moral justice and the inevitable victory of righteousness over wrong.

This requires an almost religious faith in fate, and that can be hard for some to accept, but accept it we must.

The moment any person comes to accept as justifiable an act of violence upon another — whether physical, spiritual or otherwise — that person has already lost the moral battle, even if he is currently winning the somatic one.

When we all can see clearly that the ultimate goal is harmony and not hate, rectification and not retribution, we have a chance to see our way forward. But we all need to start here and now, by doing this simple thing: Seeing every person as fully human, deserving every day to make it home to the people he loves.

Editorials that appear on this page are written by Publisher Steve Forrester and Matt Winters, editor of the Chinook Observer and Coast River Business Journal, or staff members from the EO Media Group's sister newspapers.