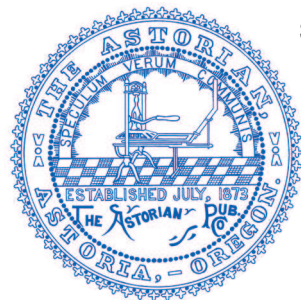


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## Astoria council needs a center of gravity

*Open seats are an opportunity*

Politics is all about what happens next. Drew Herzig's imminent departure from the Astoria City Council holds an opportunity. Similarly, there is promise in the likelihood that former U.S. Coast Guard Sector Columbia Commander Bruce Jones will win election to the council in November.

Any collegial body — city council, state legislature or appeals court — functions best when it has a center of gravity. Some would call it a working majority. The Astoria City Council since January 2015 has groped for that. Both Cindy Price and Zetty Nemlowill are relatively new to this position. Russ Warr and Mayor Arline LaMear are known commodities. Herzig has been a wild card.

Councilor Herzig had been critical of the team concept that former Mayor Willis Van Dusen nurtured. There is validity in Herzig's skepticism. We do want councilors who ask questions. At the same time, however, the councils that Van Dusen headed accomplished great

things over two decades.

The point is that in politics and government — just as in business and the nonprofit world — a measure of predictability and consistency is essential. And that is what many have found frustrating in Herzig. Beyond his concern regarding human welfare, which is laudable and is needed on the council, he has been capricious.

Watching the council deal with the future of the Astoria Library has been painful. And we lack a coherent sense of where the council lies on the apparent need for affordable housing.

In the weeks before the Aug. 30 filing deadline, we hope that a solid candidate or two for Herzig's position will appear.

## Treaty rights without fish are meaningless

*Fifty percent of nothing is nothing*

The fishing rights guaranteed to Indians by treaties and court decisions are meaningless if there are few fish to catch. These "treaty tribes" are entitled to half the salmon. But 50 percent of nothing is nothing. Tribal negotiators are increasingly insisting that there be actual flesh attached to the bare bones of treaty rights.

As a practical matter, this means the team of agencies responsible for salmon must ensure that salmon prosper through a combination of strategies, such as hatcheries, habitat restoration, modifications of hydropower operations, predator management and harvest adjustments.

The current management plan, a result of a federal court ruling, expires Dec. 31, 2017. The states, tribes and feds have started deciding what comes next in terms of harvest strategies.

It is possible the next harvest plan will be essentially identical to the current one, which is based on stock abundance. This means estimating how many fish are return-

ing in various runs, including the 13 species covered by the Endangered Species Act. Managers then determine how many can be caught before the species recover to a healthy population.

There are several suggested alternatives — even including no harvest at all. Chances are good that agencies will prefer to stick to something pretty close to the status quo. But our region's many nongovernmental experts — including commercial and recreational fishermen at the mouth of the Columbia River — may have better ideas and should promote them.

Underlying any approach, we all should bear in mind the principle of insisting on a path toward sustainable salmon recovery, and resist squabbling over a share in an ever-threatened and too often diminishing set of salmon runs. Different fishing interests, cooperating together, must advocate for actual recovery, and be unsatisfied with small percentages of small salmon runs.

# Both sides now?

By PAUL KRUGMAN  
New York Times News Service

When Donald Trump began his run for the White House, many people treated it as a joke. Nothing he has done or said since makes him look better. On the contrary, his policy ignorance has become even more striking, his positions more extreme, the flaws in his character more obvious, and he has repeatedly demonstrated a level of contempt for the truth that is unprecedented in American politics.

Yet while most polls suggest that he's running behind in the general election, the margin isn't overwhelming, and there's still a real chance that he might win. How is that possible? Part of the answer, I'd argue, is that voters don't fully appreciate his awfulness. And the reason is that too much of the news media still can't break with bothsidesism — the almost pathological determination to portray politicians and their programs as being equally good or equally bad, no matter how ludicrous that pretense becomes.

Just to be clear, I'm not arguing that distorted news coverage is the whole story, that nobody would support Trumpism if the media were doing their job. The presumptive Republican nominee wouldn't have gotten this far if he weren't tapping into some deep resentments. Furthermore, America is a deeply divided country, at least in its political life, and the great majority of Republicans will support their party's nominee no matter what. Still, the fact is that voters who don't have the time or inclination to do their own research, who get their news analysis from TV

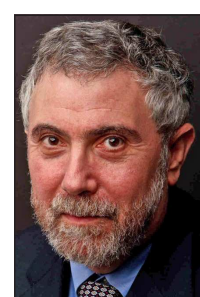
or regular news pages, are fed a daily diet of false equivalence.

This isn't a new phenomenon. During the 2000 campaign George W. Bush was flatly dishonest about his policy proposals; his numbers didn't add up, and he claimed repeatedly that his tax cuts, which overwhelmingly favored the 1 percent, were aimed at the middle class. Yet mainstream coverage never made this clear. In frustration, I wrote at the time that if a presidential candidate were to assert that the earth was flat, news analysis articles would have the headline "Shape of the planet: Both sides have a point."

And Trump is far from being the only current political figure who benefits from the determination to find balance where none exists. Paul Ryan, the speaker of the House, has a reputation as a policy wonk, committed to fiscal responsibility, that is utterly incomprehensible if you look at the slapdash, fundamentally dishonest policy documents he actually puts out. But the cult of balance requires that someone on the Republican side be portrayed as a serious, honest fiscal expert, so Ryan gets slotted into that role no matter how much a con man he may be in reality.

Still, there are con men, and then there are con men. You might think that Donald Trump, who lies so much that fact-checkers have a hard time keeping up, who keeps repeating falsehoods even after they've been proved wrong, and who combines all of this with a general level of thuggishness aimed in part at the press, would be too much even for the balance cultists to excuse.

But you would be wrong. To be fair, some reporters and news organizations try to point out Trump statements that are false, frightening, or both. All too often, however, they



Paul Krugman

**Part of the answer, I'd argue, is that voters don't fully appreciate his awfulness.**

still try to maintain their treasured balance by devoting equal time — and, as far as readers and viewers can tell, equal or greater passion — to denouncing far less important misstatements from Hillary Clinton. In fact, surveys show that Clinton has, overall, received much more negative coverage than her opponent.

And in the last few days we've seen a spectacular demonstration of bothsidesism in action: an op-ed article from the incoming and outgoing heads of the White House Correspondents' Association, with the headline "Trump, Clinton both threaten free press." How so? Well, Trump has selectively banned news organizations he considers hostile; he has also, although the op-ed didn't mention it, attacked both those organizations and individual reporters, and refused to condemn supporters who, for example, have harassed reporters with anti-Semitic insults.

Meanwhile, while Clinton hasn't done any of these things, and has a staff that readily responds to fact-checking questions, she doesn't like to hold press conferences. Equivalency!

Stung by criticism, the authors of the op-ed issued a statement denying that they had engaged in "false equivalency" — I guess saying that the candidates are acting "similarly" doesn't mean saying that they are acting similarly. And they once again refused to indicate which candidate was behaving worse.

As I said, bothsidesism isn't new, and it has always been an evasion of responsibility. But taking the position that "both sides do it" now, in the face of this campaign and this candidate, is an act of mind-boggling irresponsibility.

## Trump's chance to reboot

By CHARLES BLOW  
New York Times News Service

As the Republican National Convention kicked off Monday, Donald Trump has a tremendous opportunity to rebrand and reboot his campaign, to make it look and feel more professional and less petulant.

Even for the people who loathe him — and there are many — the intensity of outrage inevitably wanes. This says less about those people's commitment to their core principles or the veracity of their objections, and more about the very human propensity toward fatigue.

Sustained outrage can be exhausting. Some folks eventually succumb to resignation or tacit acceptance. That's just the way people are built.

Outrage is a beast that needs constant feeding to remain strong, and over the past few weeks, after the killing of Alton Sterling, Philando Castile and the police officers in Dallas, Trump has been noticeably more in control and controversy-free.

It seems almost certain that someone has gotten through to him, convincing him that he needs to tamp down the tweets and pump up the scripted speeches.

None of this changes the essence of the man. The intolerance, bigotry and narcissism are not so easily alterable. But public personas are protean. And that's why a convention offers an incredible opportunity for a candidate.

All Trump — or Hillary Clinton, for that matter — has to do is to move a relative few of the people who now say, "I could never ..." toward a position of "I could possibly ..."

Conventions offer the most unfiltered and uninterrupted visions of parties and presidential candidates during a campaign. They are about shaping a message and conveying it. They allow candidates to completely reframe the conversation and to remake people's perceptions.

These are big-money, high-stakes, focused-attention affairs. Voters who don't follow every machination and who don't stay glued to the television are likely to tune in just for the pageantry and spectacle of it all.

**None of this changes the essence of the man. The intolerance, bigotry and narcissism are not so easily alterable. But public personas are protean. And that's why a convention offers an incredible opportunity for a candidate.**

are great shows. When the political parties concentrate on their candidates and put the totality of their attention into a single message, they can even doll up the devil.

But something tells me that Trump does not have the constitutional restraint and self-interested prudence to allow this to happen.

One of Trump's greatest flaws — putting aside for the moment his utter vileness and ignorance of virtually every issue — is that he simply can't stop being himself. He can't coast; he must careen. He doesn't trust drift, only drive.

This instinct may have served him well in business (although the many bankruptcies and lawsuits, as well as the unreleased tax returns, suggest that his business acumen and personal wealth may be in some part an illusion) but it creates conditions that are prime for a cascade of errors.

Unconventional campaigns can handicap what a political convention is great at providing — clarity.

Trump seems allergic to clarity. Just take the rollout of his vice-presidential pick, Mike Pence, about as drab and boring a public figure as one could imagine. Of course this all disguises a man who is rabidly opposed to things like gay rights and a woman's right to choose, but the political minds inside the campaign were apparently able to convince Trump that boring was the perfect balance to his own bombast.

First he orchestrated the selection like a reality show. It was hard to know if one was watching the final decision of a candidate or the final episode of "The Bachelor."

In the end, Pence prevailed, although there were rumblings and reports that Trump still had trepidations up until the last minute.

Was this Trump's preferred



Charles Blow

choice or simply a bow to pressure? Both, according to the meandering, sleep-on-my-sofa-because-you-may-be-drunk speech Trump gave to introduce Pence. In the speech Trump said Pence was both his "first choice" and a choice for "party unity."

Yes, there are many in Trump's own party who still have serious misgivings about him, who no doubt wake up occasionally like I do in a cold sweat, with the realization that this man actually will be the Republican Party's nominee.

Pence is meant to assuage those fears.

In a way, Trump picked Pence, a man who presents as an adult, so that Trump himself can continue to behave like a child. The vice-presidential pick has the presidential disposition on the ticket. Go figure.

But this arranged marriage looks as uncomfortable as it sounds and signals a precarious prelude to a convention that holds the potential to catapult Trump into greater acceptability before the Democrats and their all-star lineup of heavy hitters pick him apart at next week's Democratic National Convention.

It would not surprise me one iota if Trump squanders this opportunity. He is proving to be a horrible general election campaigner. The man seems tragically prone to self-sabotage. For instance, after Sunday's killing of police officers in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Trump was back to sending incendiary tweets calling America a "divided crime scene" when he should have focused on Cleveland and unity.

I will pay close attention this week to see if this candidate transforms an event that has always served as a moment of ascendance into a moment of collapse. If I were a betting man ...

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