

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Think small City Council's library decision is underwhelming

There is a proverb, sometimes attributed to Goethe, that is useful to big thinkers. "Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it."

The spirit of that admonition has been alive in Astoria over the past 25 years. Big thinkers — in our public and private sectors — have accomplished transformative projects.

The Astoria Public Library decision from the City Council on Monday night was small thinking. Actually, the decision was so muddled it is not clear where we are going.

The greatest disappointment in the council's discussion was the failure to grasp the potential of private fundraising. It was, after all, an extraordinary gift from a former mayor that launched this exploration many years ago.

When Councilor Cindy Price criticized the library foundation for not leading on fundraising, Councilor Drew Herzig delivered an

exceptionally appropriate retort.

Said Herzig: "It's the council's responsibility to give the foundation a clear directive, and we have failed to do that," he said, apologizing to the library foundation. "It's our failure, not yours. And I do apologize."

There have been discussions among knowledgeable, experienced hands, about how to raise \$8 million privately for the library, and Price knows that. But just as Herzig notes, fundraisers do not make "asks" or approach funders such as foundations and charitable trusts until there is a defined project.

Within the murky direction the council has delivered, there is room for elaboration, and for exceptional private fundraising. Just ask.

## It's time for self defense as fires come

The driest place in the U.S. — that's what the Pacific Northwest is between now and, typically, sometime in September. Even here in this normally damp coastal zone where we measure seasonal rainfall in feet rather than inches, this means residents need to manage property with an eye to fire safety.

This was most vividly demonstrated by a fire in the dune grass last month in Surfside, Washington, on the Long Beach Peninsula. Despite some grass maintenance, an out-of-control campfire came within feet of destroying oceanfront houses.

Dune grass is a type of fuel that dries out and is ready to burn after less than an hour of wind. Beach pines also are prone to rapid ignition. Gorse, Scotch broom, wild berry canes and many other types of local vegetation enhance fire danger.

Our Columbia River counties have many homes mingled among beach grass, shore pines and rural forests. These homes are closely sur-

rounded by increasingly dry vegetation.

Most of us appreciate the trees and plants we live with, and are loath to make changes, but rural residents need to examine their homesteads in light of wildfire danger.

To create a "fire-wise" landscape, you must remember that the primary goal is fuel reduction with zones of increasing safety nearest your home. Local fire departments can provide full details, but at a minimum homeowners should create a well-irrigated area encircling their structure for at least 30 feet on all sides, providing space for fire suppression equipment in the event of an emergency. Plantings should be limited to carefully spaced low-flammability plants.

More plants are appropriate outside this zone, but still should be kept low and tidy. Selectively prune and thin all plants and remove highly flammable vegetation.

Now is the time to practice some self-defensive vegetation management.

# Web People vs. Wall People

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN  
New York Times News Service

Yes, we're having a national election right now.

Yes, there are two parties running. But no, they are not the two parties that you think.

It's not "Democrats" versus "Republicans." This election is really between "Wall People" and "Web People."

The primary focus of Wall People is finding a president who will turn off the fan — the violent winds of change

that are now buffeting every family — in their workplace, where machines are threatening white-collar and blue-collar jobs; in their neighborhoods, where so many more immigrants of different religions, races and cultures are moving in; and globally, where super-empowered angry people are now killing innocents with disturbing regularity. They want a wall to stop it all.

Wall People's desire to stop change may be unrealistic, but, in fairness, it's not just about race and class. It is also about a yearning for community — about "home" in the deepest sense — a feeling that the things that anchor us in the world and provide meaning are being swept away, and so they are looking for someone to stop that erosion.

Wall People have two candidates catering to them: Donald Trump, who boasts that he is "The Man" who can stop the winds with a wall, and Bernie Sanders, who promises to stop the winds by ending our big global trade deals and by taking down "The Man" — the millionaires, billionaires and big banks. I don't see how the country could afford either man's plans, but they have a simple gut appeal, and there is overlap between them.

Web People instinctively understand that Democrats and Republicans both built their platforms largely in response to the Industrial Revolution, the New Deal and the Cold War, but that today, a 21st-century party needs to build its platform in response to the accelerations in technology, globalization and climate change, which are the forces transforming the workplace, geopolitics and the very planet.

As such, the instinct of Web People is to embrace the change in the pace of change and focus on empowering more people to be able to compete and collaborate in a world with-



AP Photo/Andrew Hamik

Democratic presidential candidate Hillary Clinton arrives to speak to volunteers at a Democratic party organizing event at the Neighborhood Theatre in Charlotte, N.C., Monday.



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump calls on a reporter during a news conference at Trump National Doral, Wednesday, in Tampa, Fla.

## Everything rides on the coalition that Clinton assembles.

out walls. In particular, Web People understand that in times of rapid change, open systems are always more flexible, resilient and propulsive; they offer the chance to feel and respond first to change. So Web People favor more trade expansion, along the lines of the Trans-Pacific Partnership, and more managed immigration that attracts the most energetic and smartest minds, and more vehicles for lifelong learning.

Web People also understand that while we want to prevent another bout of recklessness on Wall Street, we don't want to choke off risk-taking, which is the engine of growth and entrepreneurship.

Because the GOP was out of the White House for the last eight years, the party's base and leadership are the least understanding of the world in which we're living. That is why the GOP fractured first and why some Republican Web People, particularly from the business world, are either sitting this election out or voting for Hillary Clinton.

Having been secretary of state, Clinton has been touching the world. She knows America has to build its future on a Web People's platform, which was first articulated by Bill Clinton and, to this day, is best articulated by him. But Hillary has not always shown the courage of her own, or her husband's, convictions.

So, rather than take on Wall People in her party — and saying to Sanders,

## Banking on delusions of chaos

By PAUL KRUGMAN  
New York Times News Service

Last year there were 352 murders in New York City.

This was a bit higher than the number in 2014, but far below the 2,245 murders that took place in 1990, the city's worst year.

In fact, as measured by the murder rate, New York is now basically as safe as it has ever been, going all the way back to the 19th century.

National crime statistics, and numbers for all violent crimes, paint an only slightly less cheerful picture. And it's not just a matter of numbers; our big cities look and feel far safer than they did a generation ago, because they are. People of a certain age always have the sense that America isn't the country they remember from their youth, and in this case they're right — it has gotten much better.

How, then, was it even possible for Donald Trump to give a speech accepting the Republican nomination whose central premise was that crime is running rampant, and that "I alone" can bring the chaos under control?

Of course, nobody should be surprised to see Trump confidently asserting things that are flatly untrue, since he does that all the time — and never corrects his falsehoods. Indeed, the big speech repeated some of those golden oldies, like the claim that America is the world's most highly taxed country (when we are actually near the bottom among advanced economies).

But until now the false claims have been about things ordinary voters can't check against their own experience. Most people don't have any sense of how their taxes compare with those paid by Europeans or Canadians, let alone how many jobs have been displaced by Chinese competition. But 58 million tourists visited New York last year; tens of millions more visited other major cities; and of course many of us live in or near those cities, and

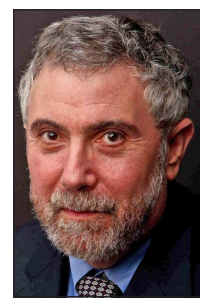
see them every day. And while there are, as there always were, bad neighborhoods and occasional violent incidents, it's hard to see how anyone who walks around with open eyes could believe in the blood-soaked dystopian vision Trump laid out.

Yet there's no question that many voters — including, almost surely, a majority of white men — will indeed buy into that vision. Why?

One answer is that, according to Gallup, Americans always seem to believe that crime is increasing, even when it is in fact dropping rapidly. Part of this may be the wording of the question: People may have a vague, headline-fueled sense that crime is up this year even while being aware that it's much lower than it used to be. There may also be some version of the "bad things are happening somewhere else" syndrome we see in consumer surveys, where people are far more positive about their personal situation than they are about the economy as a whole.

Again, however, it's one thing to have a shaky grasp on crime statistics, but something quite different to accept a nightmare vision of America that conflicts so drastically with everyday experience. So what's going on?

Well, I do have a hypothesis, namely, that Trump supporters really do feel, with some reason, that the social order they know is coming apart. It's not just race, where the country has become both more diverse and less racist (even if it still has a long way to go). It's also about gender roles — when Trump talks about making America great again, you can be sure that many of his supporters are imag-



Paul Krugman

## Our big cities look and feel far safer than they did a generation ago, because they are.

ining a return to the (partly imagined) days of male breadwinners and stay-at-home wives.

Not incidentally, Mike Pence, Trump's running mate, used to fulminate about the damage done by working mothers, not to mention penning an outraged attack on Disney in 1999 for featuring a martially minded heroine in its movie "Mulan."

But what are the consequences of these changes in the social order? Back when crime was rising, conservatives insistently drew a connection to social change — that was what the whole early '90s fuss over "family values" was about. Loose the bonds of traditional society, and chaos would follow.

Then a funny thing happened: Crime plunged instead of continuing to rise. Other indicators also improved dramatically — for example, the teen birthrate has fallen 60 percent since 1991. Instead of societal collapse, we've seen what amounts to a mass outbreak of societal health. The truth is that we don't know exactly why. Hypotheses range from the changing age distribution of the population to reduced lead poisoning; but in any case, the predicted apocalypse notably failed to arrive.

The point, however, is that in the minds of those disturbed by social change, chaos in the streets was supposed to follow, and they are all too willing to believe that it did, in the teeth of the evidence.

The question now is how many such people, people determined to live in a nightmare of their own imagining, there really are. I guess we'll find out in November.

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.