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Preservation still possible in Oysterville

A vocal fan club stands up for iconic Northwest village

The only fan club for most small American villages consists of longtime residents, and sometimes not even them. In contrast, Oysterville, Washington is one of a few places fortunate to have an abundance of enthusiastic supporters — many with only a scant connection to one of Pacific County's oldest surviving settlements.

A National Historic District with a picturesque setting on Willapa Bay and a colorful past grounded in the Pacific Northwest's iconic shellfish industry and the San Francisco Gold Rush, Oysterville has greater significance than almost anyplace else its size on the West Coast.

Unlike other historical lodestones — the East Coast's Colonial Williamsburg comes to mind — Oysterville is very lightly commercialized and essentially is a cherished residential neighborhood. Its isolation and lack of an economy protected it from redevelopment for decades, until by the 1980s there were enough people who appreciated it as a kind of time capsule from a bygone era to spur preservation efforts.

The Oysterville Design Review Board was a valiant attempt to enshrine the village's quasi-New England motif. It was never perfect, but its mere existence was a strong

encouragement to adhere to an essential vision of a place where jarring modernization would be avoided. Although its most avid defenders will doubtless take issue, it always was pretty much on the "honor system," in that Pacific County government has neither the funds nor fortitude to pursue enforcement in court.

With much disagreement, the board was recently dissolved. Design controversies and plans will now be handled by a hearings examiner in a process adhering to modern administrative law standards. Time will tell whether this change protects Oysterville as well as the board did; at this point, there is no reason to think that it will not.

Those who served on the board and believed in it can take justified pride in having stewarded their village past the time when it was most vulnerable to clumsy exploitation. Their passion will continue to serve Oysterville well.

Mayor Wheeler may be a friend of ag

Incoming Portland mayor offers hope for rural Oregon

Portland's mayor often has an effect well beyond the bounds of that city. Ted Wheeler, who is the mayor-elect, brings a much different perspective to the job than his recent predecessors. In a word, he is less myopic.

Wheeler could be one of agriculture's best friends in a city that has oversized influence on Oregon's vast rural expanses. The divide between Portland and rural Oregon is a chasm.

Farmers and ranchers may not fully appreciate Portland's importance as a market and a hub of vital services. But there's no mistaking Portland's willingness to push its agenda on farming practices, labor, economic development and the environment on its rural neighbors.

"What can agriculture do," the Oregon Farm Bureau's Dave Dillon asks, "to better connect with city government and thought leaders who seem to have insularity and

sometimes utopian vision of food production that does not match the marketplace and the demands of a growing world population?"

In Wheeler, rural Oregon may have a partner in Portland. His family made its money in the timber industry. He appreciates the urban-rural divide and urban-rural interdependence.

"You can't talk about success in the agricultural industry without talking about the role urban areas play," he said. "Urban communities in America are increasingly clueless about the challenges facing rural communities."

From our distant vantage, Wheeler seems the best choice Portland has made in recent years. He's a smart guy, a sensible choice for voters who often prefer the unconventional.

Though we won't know for sure until he takes office in January, Wheeler seems like someone agriculture can work with to advance both rural and urban interests.

The real plot against America

By TIMOTHY EGAN

New York Times News Service

In retrospect, it worked out much better than planned.

Who'd have thought a pariah nation, run by an authoritarian who makes his political opponents disappear, could so easily hijack a great democracy?

It didn't take much. A talented nerd can bring down a minnow of a nation. But this level of political crime requires more refined mechanics — you need everyone to play their assigned roles.

You start with a stooge, a fugitive holed up in London, releasing stolen emails on the eve of the Democratic National Convention, in the name of "transparency." Cyberburglars rely on a partner in crime to pick up stolen goods. And WikiLeaks has always been there for Russia, a nation with no transparency.

The emails show office gossip — catty, sometimes crude back-and-forth by party operatives, and a bias for one candidate. Ho-hum. To make the plot work, reporters have to take the bait. On cue, they decry the fact that politics is going on inside a major political party. The horror — Democratic hacks saying nasty things about Sen. Bernie Sanders.

Next, leftist extremists have to act like leftist extremists — that is, myopic to the greater good, guided by a Trumpian sense that they alone know how to solve the world's problems, and everyone else is a sellout. Angered at the contents of the cyber-theft, they boo any mention of their party's nominee. And told by Sanders, the man who brought them there, that booing is too easy, they boo his call to unite to save their country from a monster.

But Russia still has to seal the deal. Some work remains. If enough angered lefties won't go for the Democratic nominee, a longtime foe of Vladimir Putin, it will be just enough to put a Putin puppet in the White House. And it would also usher in the term that drove the right wing crazy when George H.W. Bush used it — a New World Order.

What's in it for Russia? Well, everything. Territory. Hegemony. Its takeover of the Crimean Peninsula has brought sanctions and condemnation from the West. What stands between Putin and further aggression in, say, the Baltic States, is a NATO pact that has kept Europe safe for nearly 70 years. And if you thought Trump stiffed the poor suckers who signed up for his "university," wait till you see how he treats some of our oldest allies.

Open forum

Act locally, CBH

"Think globally, act locally." I believe that we have an opportunity to "act locally" in support of quality community mental health services. Amy Baker, the interim executive director at Clatsop Behavioral Healthcare, has earned a strong reputation as a leader in mental health systems of care, with expertise in prevention and trauma informed care.

The challenges are real. As is the current science on how to prevent much suffering and the potential for healing where suffering exists. Amy and her colleagues at CBH deserve our support and a sense that there is community curiosity about how we can build a strong and responsive organization.

In this important time of transition, let's learn together in support of quality community mental health care.

LYNN MCCONNELL
Astoria

Homeowner help

Oregon Housing and Community Services (OHCS) announces a foreclosure prevention program and has launched their website, www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org. Community Action Team Inc. has been identified as the local agency to help deliver the state's Mortgage Payment Assistance (MPA) Home Rescue Program in Clatsop, Columbia and Tillamook counties. The funding for this program comes from the U.S. Department of Treasury's "Hardest Hit Fund."

On Wednesday, OHCS will open an online application for the MPA/Home Rescue program at www.oregonhomeownerhelp.org. Community Action Team will help homeown-



AP Photo/David Goldman

A woman wears a shirt reading 'Trump Putin '16' while waiting for Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump to speak at a campaign event at Plymouth State University in Plymouth, N.H., in February. Donald Trump just keeps giving Russian President Vladimir Putin more reasons to hope he wins the U.S. election, while raising serious questions about the Republican candidate's intentions toward the Kremlin.



Mikhail Klimentyev, Sputnik, Kremlin Pool

Russian President Vladimir Putin listens during a meeting in the Kremlin, in Moscow, July 26.

Plus, Putin despises Hillary Clinton. Like Trump, his skin is rice-paper thin, albeit a paler shade of orange; and, like Trump, he never forgets a slight. He still hasn't gotten over Clinton's comment on George W. Bush's infamous look into Putin's soul. As a former KGB agent, Clinton said, "he doesn't have a soul."

What's in it for Trump? Help at winning the ultimate throne of his gilded dreams. And maybe some investment money from Russian oligarchs close to Putin, one of many things Trump may be hiding in his tax returns. The two narcissists share a love of torture, authoritarian rule, and women on runways in bathing suits.

But then, a wild card, something unplanned. Putin didn't expect Trump to be so all-in with his collusion. He knows Trump is a fool, world class in only one thing — ignorance. He doesn't need spies for that. He knows Trump is a man who will say anything, and deny in the same breath that he ever said it. The Talented Mr. Trump.

In November, before a national television audience, Trump said of

What's in it for Russia? Well, everything.

Putin, "I got to know him very well." And Wednesday, Trump said, "I never met Putin." That was a standard Trump lie, on one end or the other. But even Putin couldn't fathom that Trump really will say anything.

So there was the Republican Party nominee for president inviting an American adversary to wage cyberwar against the country he wants to lead. If that wasn't Trump's shoot-somebody-on-Fifth-Avenue moment, nothing will be. What's more, he was way too obvious about the role of the other pawns in the scheme. "I think you will probably be rewarded mightily by our press," he said to Mother Russia.

Also, he's getting carried away with his dictator-philias. On Thursday, he said Putin was a better leader than President Barack Obama. D'oh! In public, at least, you're supposed to root for the home team.

Trump misses the old days, back when you could "knock the crap out of" a demonstrator. Yeah, the old days. Back when it was disqualifying for an American politician to flirt with treason.

This all seems too preposterous to be planned. Where are the conspiracy nut jobs when you really need them? Even fiction, Philip Roth's "The Plot Against America," about a fascist-lite president during World War II, does not have this level of absurdity.

But it unfolds, still, if not according to Russia's design, then according to Russia's will. Trump is now a national security risk, actively rooting for a foreign adversary to tamper with an American election. And very soon, he will start receiving classified briefings on that adversary. Ehhhhcellent!

tion to prove that they are, indeed, eligible to run for office. Perhaps if we scrutinized the candidates as closely as we do the voters, we would get a better class of elected official.

But I guess that is not necessarily a requirement by the politicians that run the elections because, in point of fact, voters are not even allowed to actually vote. Voters are simply allowed to select delegates who do the actual voting for the people. In an effort by the political parties to exert even more control over the outcome of elections, some delegates are no longer are even required to vote the way they have been instructed to by the peoples vote — in other words, it is totally up to them to cast their vote the way they see fit, or the way they are coerced to do so by those in control. Boy, if that is not the very definition of a fair and open election, I don't know what is.

I don't want to hear you belly-aching about the popular vote electing the candidate or any of that nonsense. You, as an educated voter, must realize that the awesome responsibility of electing individuals to run our government and therefore, our lives, is far too demanding to be left to the common voter.

I mean — what would happen if the average voter all of a sudden got a flush of common sense and elected someone who had the good of the country and its citizens at heart? And, worse yet, what if the people elected someone who could not be bought or controlled by either political party? Chaos would most certainly ensue, and the country would definitely never be the same.

That is what I think; I could be wrong.

DAVID GRAVES
Astoria

Voting woes

Speaking of elections: It's kind of a funny old world when a person must provide credentials to prove that they are eligible to vote, but the candidates do not have present documenta-