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Crude oil mishap would wreak havoc

Hakai magazine, an interesting online journal devoted to coastal science and societies, devotes an Aug. 2 article to ramifications of more than doubling crude oil shipments through the Columbia River and out past the Graveyard of the Pacific. It makes for thought-provoking reading. (See tinyurl.com/Columbia-Oil-Tankers.)

State hearings concluded last week on whether to allow construction of the nation's largest oil-by-rail terminal in Vancouver, Washington, which would move crude oil from North Dakota's Bakken Formation to West Coast refineries via ships and barges.

"If the new facility is built, it's estimated that one oil tanker would visit the terminal every day, traveling more than 170 kilometers upriver to Vancouver. The vessel would also have to navigate one of the most dangerous bar crossings in the world, where the swift current of the Columbia collides with the Pacific. The chaos creates the shifting maelstrom of shoals, currents and towering breakers known as the Columbia River Bar," *Hakai* reports.

We who live here may find this description of the

bar somewhat exaggerated, but there's no denying that is sometimes is too dangerous to cross, even for oceangoing and professionally piloted vessels.

A major wreck could release nearly 200,000 barrels of oil, which could be hard to recover in the dynamic conditions around the river's mouth. Ocean beaches, endangered salmon and other species, and valuable crab, clam and oyster fisheries could all be placed in harm's way. A Washington state report said such a spill "could cause between U.S. \$170-million and \$1.16-billion in damages, and would require decades of recovery."

The odds of an accident are low. But the consequences are very great. Washington Gov. Jay Inslee will have final say over the terminal's fate. Let him know what you think.

How do we think about war veterans?

Trump inadvertently offers us a teachable moment

Donald Trump's first blunder into a minefield began with his disparagement of Arizona Sen. John McCain. In reference to McCain's long captivity as a prisoner of war, Trump said he liked guys who weren't captured.

By logical extension, would Trump also say that he prefers soldiers and Marines who aren't killed in combat?

The lessons that are lost in Trump's stumbling between his insults to McCain and the parents of an Army captain killed in Iraq are twofold. War is an equal opportunity snare and killer. And war is often a matter of inches.

Michael Herr makes the latter point in his book *Dispatches*. Herr wrote that Vietnam was a place where one was never safe, no matter your location. You were grateful when a rocket or mortar landed 100 feet away. And if you read the memoir of a prisoner of war, you realize the full trauma of that experience.

If we talk about these things on Veterans Day, they are seldom heard in the din of a national holiday. But in

the heat of this presidential campaign, it is impossible to ignore the values underpinning the thicket that Donald Trump has staggered into.

Another Vietnam draft evader, Ted Gup, wrote about himself and Trump in Wednesday's *New York Times*. Said Gup: "The ignobility of the Vietnam era — the corruption and manipulation of the draft, the disproportionate numbers of the poor and minorities pressed into service, the ability of so much of the nation to carry on as if there were no war — created in many of us a special sense of purpose, a desire to make amends, to carry the weight of citizenship, albeit belatedly." And that desire, wrote Gup, seems lacking in Trump.

As Gup implies, serving in the military is about citizenship. Because we have post-Vietnam all-volunteer services, that particular citizenship is carried by a narrow slice of our population. Unlike the postwar 20th century, the number of veterans in Congress is tiny. That is not healthy.



You must stop indulging Trump

By **FRANK BRUNI**
New York Times News Service

John McCain, Paul Ryan, Mitch McConnell and the rest of you: It's time to stop suggesting that Donald Trump doesn't represent you, because he *does* represent you.

He's your party's nominee, with your endorsements.

Until you withdraw those, he has your blessing. Your permission.

And if you keep forgiving him and prioritizing your political survival over the country's stability, he could wind up representing all of us.

Tell me that doesn't scare the bejesus out of you. Do it with a straight face.

Sen. McCain, Rep. Ryan, he's just given you fresh cause to bolt, saying in a Tuesday interview with *The Washington Post* that he doesn't support either of you in your respective Republican primary contests.

From the standpoint of tradition, this is shocking. From the standpoint of Trump, not so much. You've upbraided him (mildly). You've bruised his tender ego. So now he gets to stick out his tongue at you.

It has to make you wonder why you twisted and turned and tried to justify your support of him in the face of his petulant, gratuitous attack on the Muslim parents of a soldier who died fighting for America. Or why so many GOP leaders twisted and turned after his petulant, gratuitous attack on a Mexican-American judge. Or why you all should stick around to twist and turn the next time.

Trump isn't slouching toward gravitas. He's having a tantrum, and to threaten him with timeouts that never come only encourages it. Spare the rod, spoil the Donald.

This isn't a normal presidential election, he isn't a normal political candidate, and you know it. We all do. And it's well past time to reckon fully with that.

Not just you but all of us keep according larger historical sense

to his candidacy and trying to fit it into pre-existing frames, but I fear that when we do that, we minimize the outright outrage and singular farce of it.

We throw around terms like demagogue and fascist, but I'm not sure he's coherent, consistent or weighty enough for either.

We label him anti-establishment, and that's a howler. He grew up affluent. Went to an Ivy League college. Sent his kids to posh boarding schools. Mingled with Bill and Hillary Clinton at his (third) wedding. He is the power elite, albeit an ostentatiously gold-tufted version of it.

In presidential races past, we've seen protectionists, nativists, even racists. What we haven't seen, not in my lifetime, is a major-party nominee who is such an unabashed and unrepentant fabulist, with so little control over his temper and a worldview shaped entirely by what and who flatter him.

Never has a nominee pouted with his grandeur. Never has one bragged with his abandon.

He's best described not in political terms but in developmental ones. He's a toddler. I'd say "infant" but infants are pre-verbal, and he has a few words, most of them monosyllabic.

Only a toddler could be so self-justifying and tone-deaf that he'd compare the sacrifice of Humayun Khan — the soldier I mentioned who was killed in Iraq — to his own professional work of erecting tall buildings and simultaneously enriching himself.

Only a toddler would respond to Michael Bloomberg's digs at him by saying that when they golfed together, "I hit the ball a lot longer." Yes, Donald, *everything* about you is longer. We haven't forgotten that GOP presidential debate.

Over the last few days, the word "decency" has popped up a lot, and



Frank Bruni

Spare the rod, spoil the Donald.

it's on target.

"There's just no sense of decency from this man," Rick Tyler, a Republican strategist who worked for Ted Cruz, told Politico.

"He has no decency," Khizr Khan, the fallen soldier's father, told ABC News.

Trump isn't just uninformed, as his recent comments on Ukraine reaffirmed. He's a repository of almost every character trait that we reprimand children for.

And the examples of his indecency get lost in the sheer volume of them. Any one might end another candidate's

quest. But they're the white noise of his bid. He's redeemed by his own repulsiveness.

I appreciate that for many conservatives, a Supreme Court shaped by Hillary Clinton would be an abomination. But can they really elevate that concern above national security and entrust the country to a tyrant-loving, Putin-flirting, NATO-dissing novice?

I understand that renouncing him means abetting her, which hurts, given her considerable flaws and their genuine qualms.

But there are bigger things at stake. That's why so many loyal Republicans have already fled, to regroup over the next four years.

I get it: If McCain and other congressional Republicans turn off Trump's supporters, they might get turned out themselves.

But as the *Post* interview made clear, Trump is already giving those supporters license to do as they wish. Besides which, isn't there a point at which principle must kick in? Aren't there bounds to partisanship and personal interest? I ask that not in favor of Clinton or the Democrats but out of concern — no, alarm — for America, which needs a grown-up who honors our values, not a brat who shreds them.

Open forum

Wonderful show

The Peninsula Association of Performing Artists production of "Once Upon a Mattress" is a summer must-see. I was absolutely enthralled by the dynamic characters, ornate costumes and absolutely hilarious plot line of this comical retelling of the *Princess and the Pea*. Not to mention, the way the Fort Columbia Theater was decorated had me feeling as though I were apart of the show.

The cast and crew will surprise you with their varying walks of life, ages, and wonderful talents they bring to the stage. I can't speak more highly of this wonderful musical because to me it was more than a production, it was a celebration of the music, talent and community that came together to bring the show to life.

MEGAN FECHTER
 Long Beach, Washington

Livability

Here again, we celebrated the Fourth of July, our freedom for life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. Well, unless you are in the city of Gearhart, and your kids want to camp out in the backyard, in their tents. The Gearhart police just might stop to tell you that it's illegal, and the tents must come down.

I believe that they believe this must be done to keep Gearhart livable. Why, I don't know. Do you know why? If so,

please let me know, because I would not want to destroy the livability of this city.

MIKE WALTERS
 Gearhart

Where's the money?

Our City Council outdid itself at the recent crucial meeting on their library site choice. After eight years of consultants, studies, meetings and wasted time, there was no consensus on a site plan, although they did vote not to build at Heritage Square.

Letters welcome

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian. We do not publish open letters or third-party letters.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy and verbal verification of authorship. Only two letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date

the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a respectful manner. Letters referring to news stories should also mention the headline and date of publication.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com;

Online form at www.dailyastorian.com;

Delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside.

Or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103

They finally voted to approve Plan B ... sort of. Now they need to study where the money will come from, and how much we can afford to spend. In other words after all this time, we are exactly where we were eight years ago.

Now, if I were going to buy, say, a new car, and I was choosing from five different models, I would first have some idea of how I was going to finance this purchase. Of course, I'm probably not as intelligent as our City Council.

MARGE PECK
 Astoria