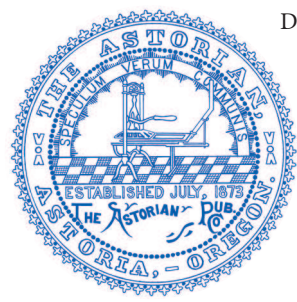


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OUR VIEW



EO Media Group/File Photo

Billions of burrowing shrimp like this one inhabit Willapa Bay, churning up the bottom into a thick paste that suffocates oysters.

Get out of the way and let oyster growers survive

Nobody likes using pesticides, but shrimp control is necessary

It's best to think of the oyster growers of Washington's Willapa Bay as farmers, with the many of the same fundamental worries and pragmatic conservation ethics as their peers on dry land.

Worries include controlling weeds and pests, making a profit, and being allowed to use firsthand knowledge to grow safe and nutritious foods with a minimum of interference. Ethics start with being multigenerational stewards of amazing Willapa Bay — safeguarding it from environmental damage. Like all ethical farmers, they are passionate about food safety. In fact, they are fanatical about it: Willapa oysters, and the men and women who grow them, are all premium quality.

The oyster industry is among the Lower Columbia region's largest economic contributors, generating at least \$35 million in annual sales and supporting a payroll that recirculates throughout Pacific and Clatsop counties.

Oyster growers are in the midst of what many believe to be a make-or-break struggle for economic survival, as outside forces essentially attempt to unilaterally impose an ideologically pure form of organic growing on their entire local industry.

Gentler chemical

Well-intentioned but lacking in knowledge of the oyster industry and local conditions, predominantly urban activists have for decades fought efforts to use chemical sprays to control an exploding population of native burrowing shrimp.

Their concern isn't totally senseless. Nobody is delighted by the idea of pesticides being used in connection with food.

After a long legal wrangle, oyster growers phased out a common but stronger chemical and made plans to substitute a highly diluted application of the pesticide imidacloprid. Related to nicotine, it is the most widely used insecticide in the world.

Spraying opponents accurately call imidacloprid a neurotoxin, a hot-button word that fails to acknowledge that coffee and all sorts of other common products contain neurotoxins. Should we avoid introducing neurotoxins into the environment? Perhaps so, but the inconsequential amount of imidacloprid requested for Willapa Bay is a strange place to draw the line. Elsewhere in the Pacific Northwest, large quantities are used on an array of terrestrial crops.

Imidacloprid is more benign than the chemical it would replace, leaves no residue in oysters and swiftly disappears from the water. It's not even strong enough to directly kill the shrimp, but only makes them susceptible to suffocation. Nothing but shrimp grow on infested mudflats, while oyster beds support a broad cross section of life. Fewer shrimp mean more crab, more fish, more birds — in addition to more oysters and more money in the local economy.

In Tillamook Bay, burrowing shrimp are a leading culprit in the collapse of a once-thriving shellfish industry.

There are efforts to try other growing techniques, no longer placing oysters directly on tidal flats. Most Willapa oystermen, based on decades of experience, say growing oysters on elevated plastic lines and cages above the shrimp-infested bottom is impractical in the stormy and tide-tossed bay, with the plastic itself likely to cause environmental harm.

Toxic politics

This controversy really comes down to politics and the willingness of politicians including Washington Gov. Jay Inslee to throw oyster growers under the bus in order to notch a symbolic win for environmental purity. Is empty symbolism worth sacrificing a way of life that has seen Willapa Bay survive into the 21st century largely intact and healthy? Is it worth driving a stake through the economy of a struggling rural county and that of its neighbors?

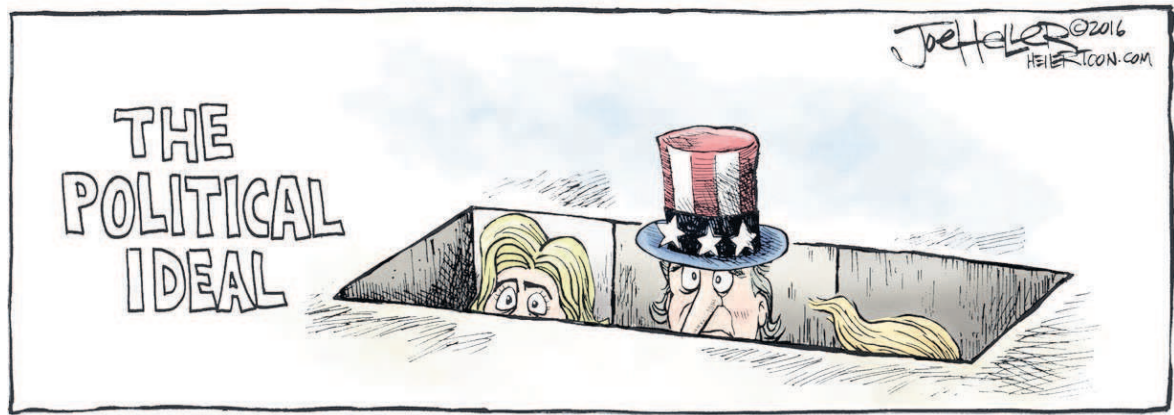
Who are we going to believe? Oystermen, or out-of-town do-gooders?

Agencies, politicians and activists who have never set foot on the mud of Willapa should get out of the way and let oyster growers and the bay survive.

THE OLYMPIC IDEAL



THE POLITICAL IDEAL



The Olympics make a grown man cry

By FRANK BRUNI
New York Times News Service

Somewhere between the Zika stories, the doping stories and the stories about what a fetid, toxic swamp Rio really is, I got the message: I was supposed to feel cynical about these Olympics, the way we feel cynical about pretty much everything these days.



I was supposed to marvel at our talent for making messes, cutting corners, evading responsibility, procrastinating. Rio was a testament to that, both as the host of the games and as a sublime, wretched theater of humanity. All the promises we fail to keep, all the plans that go awry: They were and would be on vivid display. I was supposed to shake my head in disgust. Sigh in frustration.

Instead I cried, and I mean good tears. It was Monday morning, and I was telling someone what he'd missed on Sunday night: how American swimmer Michael Phelps defied age and his own stabs at self-destruction to swim toward yet another gold, in a men's relay.

How American gymnast Simone Biles, in the team qualifying round, responded to the gaudy expectations for her not by crumbling but by meeting, even surpassing, every one of them.

And then there was that tiny wisp of a Brazilian girl — 4-foot-4, 16 years old — who floated onto the balance beam, whirled the length of it and turned in a near perfect routine that no one expected. The roar from her hometown crowd was so loud, so true, that I'm certain it crossed time

zones. I bet it traversed the stratosphere. No lottery winner, no matter the purse, has ever matched the glow of elation on her face.

I hadn't even reached the part about the British gymnast who tumbled onto her head, stood up dazed and kept on going when I myself had to stop, because I was suddenly so choked up that I couldn't get another word out.

Don't tell me what's wrong with the Olympics. Let me tell you what's right with them.

In a world rife with failure and bitter compromise, they're dedicated to dreaming and to the proposition that limits are entirely negotiable, because they reflect only what has been done to date and not what's doable in time.

They make the case that part of being fully alive is pushing yourself as far as you can go. Every Olympic record, every personal best and every unlikely comeback is an individual achievement, yes, but it's also a universal example and metaphor.

The swimmer Dana Vollmer, a gold medalist in 2012, stopped training, became a mother and attended to her newborn. But the pool still beckoned, and last weekend, just 17 months after giving birth, she won a silver and a bronze in Rio. Good for her. Good for all women who don't want to obey some timeline that they never signed on to or stay in a box of someone else's construction.

These champions usually aren't children of extreme privilege. Biles was separated from her mother, who battled drug and alcohol addiction, at an early age. Others had worse odds and more daunting setbacks.

But they had a drive more powerful than that. They swapped resent-

ment for goals. And they worked. By God, did they work. We tend to marvel at their freakish gifts, but we should marvel even more at their freakish devotion. That's what made the difference.

They invested hour upon hour, day after day. They sacrificed idle time and other pursuits. They honed a confidence that eludes most of us and summoned a poise that we can only imagine. They took risks, big ones.

And they pressed on, because there was this thing that they wanted so very, very badly and the only way to know if they could get it was to put everything on the line.

I'm no naif. I know that there's another, darker side to this — that some of them are overly preoccupied with fame, with riches. At least they're earning it.

I know that there are flaws in the system, even corruption. I'm reading and I'm hearing plenty about that, about the inane remarks that NBC's commentators have made, and about the excessive commercial breaks that the network builds into the prime-time telecast. A certain crassness and greed have taken over. It's true.

But I fear that with the Olympics, as with so much else, we've let the language of complaint supplant the language of wonder, and there's wonder aplenty here.

Just watch Phelps kick or Biles vault heavenward, a force of will seemingly bound for the stars. Just think about what it means to aim that high, commit that much and invite the eyes of the world to see it all come together or all fall apart.

If that doesn't put a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye, you're made of stone.

Trump's wink wink to 'Second Amendment people'

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
New York Times News Service

And that, ladies and gentlemen, is how Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin got assassinated.

His right-wing opponents just kept delegitimizing him as a "traitor" and "a Nazi" for wanting to make peace with the Palestinians and give back part of the Land of Israel. Of course, all is fair in politics, right? And they had God on their side, right? They weren't actually telling anyone to assassinate Rabin. That would be horrible.

But there are always people down the line who don't hear the caveats. They just hear the big message: The man is illegitimate, the man is a threat to the nation, the man is the equivalent of a Nazi war criminal. Well, you know what we do with people like that, don't you? We kill them.

And that's what the Jewish extremist Yigal Amir did to Rabin. Why not? He thought he had permission from a whole segment of Israel's political class.

In September, I wrote a column warning that Donald Trump's language toward immigrants could end up inciting just this kind of violence. I never in my wildest dreams, though, thought he'd actually — in his usual coy, twisted way — suggest that Hillary Clinton was so intent on taking away the Second Amendment right to be bear arms that maybe Second Amendment enthusiasts could do something to stop her. Exactly what? Oh, Trump left that hanging.

"Hillary wants to abolish, essentially abolish, the Second Amendment," Trump said at a rally in Wilmington, North Carolina, on Tuesday. "By the way, and if she gets to pick her judges, nothing you can do, folks. Although the Second Amendment

people, maybe there is, I don't know."

Of course Trump's handlers, recognizing just how incendiary were his words, immediately denied that he was suggesting that gun owners do anything harmful toward Clinton. Oh my God, never, Trump, they insisted, was just referring to the "power of unification." You know those Second Amendment people, they just love to get on buses and vote together.

But that is not what he said. What he said was ambiguous — slightly menacing, but with just enough plausible deniability that, of course, he was not suggesting an assassination. Again, it's just like the Rabin story. When I wrote about this issue back in the fall it was to urge readers to see the new movie "Rabin: The Last Day," by the Israeli director Amos Gitai, timed for the 20th anniversary of Rabin's assassination.

As The Times' Isabel Kershner reported from Israel when the film was released, it "is unambiguous about the forces it holds responsible" — the extremist rabbis and militant settlers who branded Rabin a traitor, the right-wing politicians who rode the "wave of toxic incitement against Rabin as they campaigned against the Oslo accords," and the security services who failed to heed the warnings that the incitement could get out of hand.

"Mr. Rabin is almost invisible in the first two hours of the film," she reported. "Benjamin Netanyahu, the opposition leader at the time, is shown in now-infamous historical footage addressing a feverish right-wing rally from a balcony in Jerusalem's Zion Square, as protesters below shouted for the death of Rabin — the 'traitor' — and held up photomontage posters of him dressed in an SS uniform."

Netanyahu, now prime minister, insisted he never saw the posters or heard the curses.

I am sure that is what Trump's supporters will say, too. But Trump

knows what he is doing, and it is so dangerous in today's world. In the last year we have seen a spate of lone-wolf acts of terrorism in America and Europe by men and women living on the fringes of society, some with petty criminal records, often with psychological problems, often described as "loners," and almost always deeply immersed in fringe jihadist social networks that heat them up. They hear the signal in the noise. They hear the inspiration and the permission to do God's work. They are not cooled by unfinished sentences.

After all, an informal Trump adviser on veteran affairs, Al Baldasaro, a Republican state representative from New Hampshire, already declared that Clinton should be "shot for treason" for her handling of the Benghazi terrorist attack.

During the Republican convention, with its repeated chants about Clinton of "lock her up," a U.S.-based columnist for Israel's Haaretz newspaper, Chemi Shalev, wrote: "Like the extreme right in Israel, many Republicans conveniently ignore the fact that words can kill.

There are enough people with a tendency for violence that cannot distinguish between political stagecraft and practical exhortations to rescue the country by any available means. If anyone has doubts, they could use a short session with Yigal Amir, Yitzhak Rabin's assassin, who was inspired by the rabid rhetoric hurled at the Israeli prime minister in the wake of the Oslo Accords."

People are playing with fire here, and there is no bigger flamethrower than Donald Trump. Forget politics; he is a disgusting human being. His children should be ashamed of him. I only pray that he is not simply defeated, but that he loses all 50 states so that the message goes out across the land — unambiguously, loud and clear: The likes of you should never come this way again.