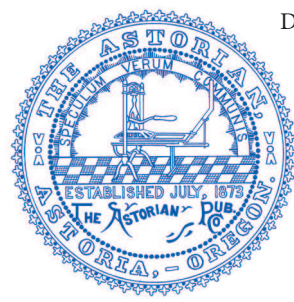


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OUR VIEW



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

Sawyer Linnett waves to his grandmother for a photo Saturday, while an U.S. Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk hovers in the background. Air Station Astoria, located at the Astoria Regional Airport since 1966, hosted a celebration for 100 years of Coast Guard aviation.

Coast Guard to the rescue

Coast Guard aviation preserves Columbia River lives and economy

There can be few if any federal services with a stronger local reputation than the search and rescue operations performed by Air Station Astoria.

As we reported Monday, the air station welcomed guests Saturday in honor of a century of Coast Guard aviation nationwide, and about half a century here at the mouth of the Columbia River.

Even as Buoy 10 salmon season winds down this week, there will continue to be many recreational boaters on the water — in addition to our region's diverse mix of commercial fisheries, which often operate out of sight of land. It will soon again be time for Dungeness crab season in Pacific Northwest waters, one of the most hazardous occupations in the nation.

All these fisheries are highly dependent on the Coast Guard, and often specifically the aviation division. Particularly come crab season, the sound and sight of a Coast Guard MH-60 Jayhawk making a beeline out into the ocean is cause for both anxiety and relief: Anxiety that a crabber may be in serious danger, but relief that help is quickly on the way.

Newsworthy events

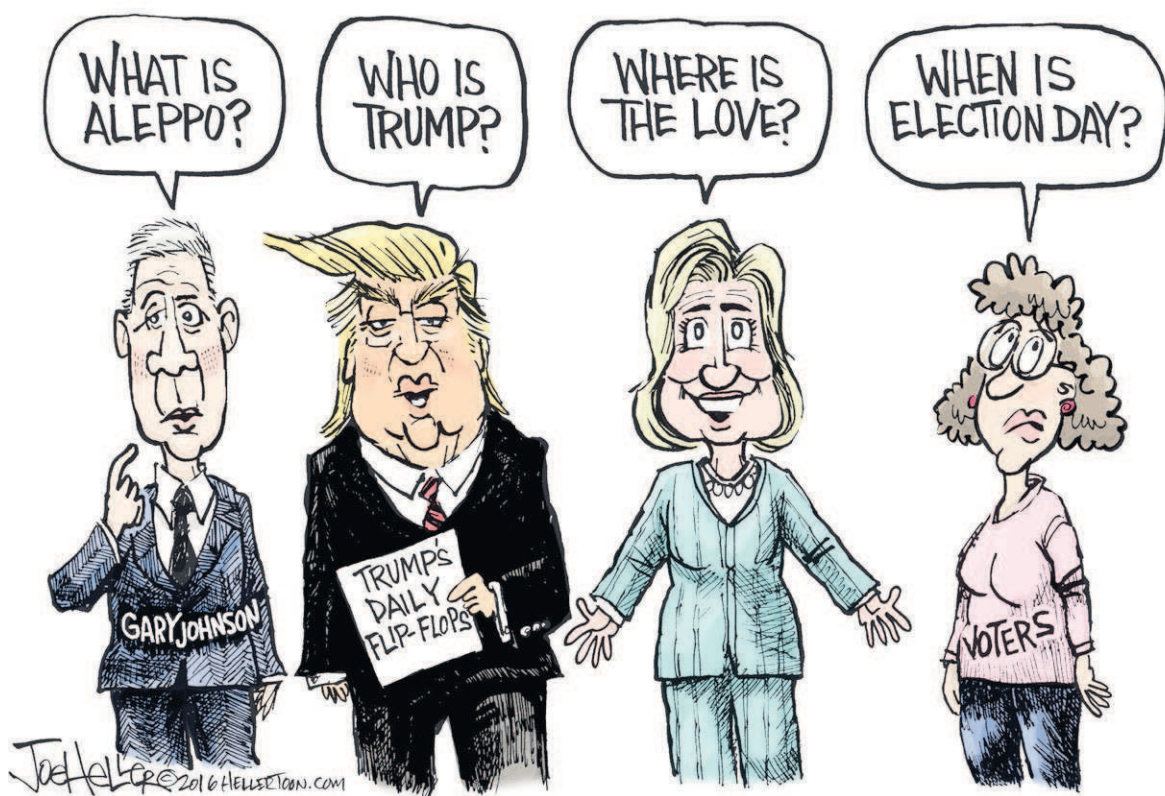
Coast Guard helicopters are routinely engaged in some of our region's most newsworthy events — everything from evacuating injured merchant mariners from cargo ships out in the Pacific to extracting injured climbers from local mountains. A search of the internet finds nearly endless stories of pragmatic and low-key heroism on the part of air crews and not a whiff of controversy.

This dedication was most recently on display in Long Beach, Washington, last week, as an air crew and motor lifeboat searched through the night for a young woman swimmer. Though unsuccessful in this tragic instance, the effort was a shining example of the Coast Guard's intense focus on public service.

Meanwhile, in terms of watercraft, the Coast Guard continues its acquisition program for 58 Sentinel-class fast-response cutters at a cost of nearly \$3.8 billion. The Coast Guard took delivery of the 18th and 19th of these vessels this summer. Two will eventually be stationed in this region, presumably either in Astoria or Newport.

Physical assets and personnel

The concentration of Coast Guard physical assets and personnel here at the mouth of the Columbia must be counted as one of our foremost advantages. It's impossible to imagine what our economy and society would be like without the energy, talent and professionalism the Coast Guard displays on land, air and sea.



About the 'basket of deplorables'

By CHARLES BLOW
New York Times News Service

Let's get straight to it: Hillary Clinton's comments Friday at a fundraiser that half of Donald Trump's supporters could be put in a "basket of deplorables" wasn't a smart political play.

Candidates do themselves a tremendous disservice when they attack voters rather than campaigns. Whatever advantage is procured through the rallying of one's own base is outweighed by what will be read as divisiveness and disdain.

Here is Clinton's full quote: "You know, to just be grossly generalistic, you could put half of Trump's supporters into what I call the basket of deplorables. Right? The racist, sexist, homophobic, xenophobic, Islamophobic — you name it. And unfortunately there are people like that. And he has lifted them up. He has given voice to their websites that used to only have 11,000 people — now 11 million. He tweets and retweets their offensive, hateful, mean-spirited rhetoric. Now some of those folks — they are irredeemable, but thankfully they are not America."

Then, she continued: "But the other basket — and I know this because I see friends from all over America here — I see friends from Florida and Georgia and South Carolina and Texas — as well as, you know, New York and California — but that other basket of people are people who feel that the government has let them down, the economy has let them down, nobody cares about them, nobody worries about what happens to their lives and their futures, and they're just desperate for change. It doesn't really even matter where it comes from. They don't buy everything he says, but he seems to hold out some hope that their lives will be different. They won't wake up and see their jobs disappear, lose a kid to heroin, feel like they're in

a dead end. Those are people we have to understand and empathize with as well."

Too little attention

That second basket got too little attention. Context doesn't provide the sizzle on which shock media subsists. Noted.

What Clinton said was impolitic, but it was not incorrect. There are things a politician cannot say. Luckily, I'm not a politician.

Trump is a deplorable candidate — to put it charitably — and anyone who helps him advance his racial, religious and ethnic bigotry is part of that bigotry. Period. Anyone who elevates a sexist is part of that sexism. The same goes for xenophobia. You can't conveniently separate yourself from the detestable part of him because you sense in him the promise of cultural or economic advantage. That hair cannot be split.

Furthermore, one doesn't have to actively hate to contribute to a culture that allows hate to flourish.

It doesn't matter how lovely your family, how honorable your work or service, how devout your faith — if you place ideological adherence or economic self interest above the moral imperative to condemn and denounce a demagogue, then you are deplorable.

Active support

And there is some evidence that Trump's supporters don't simply have a passive, tacit acceptance of an undesirable platform, but instead have an active set of beliefs that support what is deplorable in Trump.

In state after state that Trump won during the primaries, he won a majority or near majority of voters who supported a temporary ban on Muslims entering this country and who supported deporting immigrants who are in this country illegally.

In June a Reuters/Ipsos poll found: "Nearly half of Trump's supporters described African-Americans as more 'violent' than whites. The same proportion described African-Americans

as more 'criminal' than whites, while 40 percent described them as more 'lazy' than whites."

A Pew poll released in February found that 65 percent of Republicans believe the next president should "speak bluntly, even if critical of Islam as a whole" when talking about Islamic extremists.

Another Reuters/Ipsos online poll in July found that 58 percent of Trump supporters have a "somewhat unfavorable" view of Islam and 78 percent believe Islam was more likely to encourage acts of terrorism.

A February Public Policy Polling survey found "Trump's support in South Carolina is built on a base of voters among whom religious and racial intolerance pervades." What the poll found about those South Carolina supporters' beliefs was truly shocking:

— Eighty percent of likely Trump primary voters supported Trump's proposed ban on Muslims.

— Sixty-two percent supported creating a national database of Muslims and 40 percent supported shutting down mosques in the United States.

— Thirty-eight percent wished the South had won the Civil War.

— Thirty-three percent thought the practice of Islam should be illegal in this country.

— Thirty-two percent supported the policy of Japanese internment during World War II.

— Thirty-one percent would support a ban on homosexuals entering the country.

On Saturday, Clinton issued a statement pointing out that "I regret saying 'half' — that was wrong." Place the percentage where you will — or don't — but the fact is indisputable.

I understand that people recoil at the notion that they are part of a pejorative basket. I understand the reflexive resistance to having your negative beliefs disrobed and your sense of self dressed down.

I understand your outrage, but I'm unmoved by it. If the basket fits ...

Thugs and kisses on Russia

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

First of all, let's get this straight: The Russian Federation of 2016 is not the Soviet Union of 1986. True, it covers most of the same territory and is run by some of the

same thugs. But the Marxist ideology is gone, and so is the superpower status. We're talking about a more or less ordinary corrupt petrostate here, although admittedly a big one that happens to have nukes.

I mention all of this because Donald Trump's effusive praise for Vladimir Putin — which actually reflects a fairly common sentiment on the right — seems to have confused some people.

On one side, some express puzzlement over the spectacle of right-wingers — the kind of people who used to yell "America, love it or leave it!" — praising a Russian regime. On the other side, a few people on the left are anti-anti-Putinists, denouncing criticism of Trump's Putin-love as "red-baiting." But today's Russia isn't communist, or even leftist; it's just an authoritarian state, with a cult of personality around its strongman, that showers benefits on an immensely wealthy oligarchy while brutally suppressing opposition and criticism.

And that, of course, is what many on the right admire.

Am I being unfair? Could praise for Russia's de facto dictator reflect

appreciation of his substantive achievements? Well, let's talk about what the Putin regime has, in fact, accomplished, starting with economics.

Putin came to power at the end of 1999, as Russia was recovering from a severe financial crisis, and his first eight years were marked by rapid economic growth. This growth can, however, be explained with just one word: oil.

For Russia is, as I said, a petrostate: Fuels account for more than two-thirds of its exports, manufactures barely a fifth. And oil prices more than tripled between early 1999 and 2000; a few years later they more than tripled again. Then they plunged, and so did the Russian economy, which has done very badly in the past few years.

Putin would actually have something to boast about if he had managed to diversify Russia's exports. And this should have been possible: The old regime left behind a large cadre of highly skilled workers.

In fact, Russian émigrés have been a key force behind Israel's remarkable technology boom — and the Putin government appears to have no trouble recruiting talented hackers to break into Democratic National Committee files. But Russia wasn't going to realize its technology potential under a regime where business success depends mainly on political connections.

So Putin's economic management is nothing to write home about.

Russia does, of course, have a big

military, which it has used to annex Crimea and support rebels in eastern Ukraine. But this muscle-flexing has made Russia weaker, not stronger. Finally, what about soft power, the ability to persuade through the attractiveness of one's culture and values? Russia has very little — except, maybe, among right-wingers who find Putin's macho posturing and ruthlessness attractive.

Which brings us back to the significance of the Putin cult, and the way this cult has been eagerly joined by the Republican nominee for president.

There are good reasons to worry about Trump's personal connections to the Putin regime (or to oligarchs close to that regime, which is effectively the same thing.) How crucial has Russian money been in sustaining Trump's ramshackle business empire? There are hints that it may have been very important indeed, but given Trump's secretiveness and his refusal to release his taxes, nobody really knows.

Beyond that, however, admiring Putin means admiring someone who has contempt for democracy and civil liberties.

When Trump and others praise Putin as a "strong leader," they don't mean that he has made Russia great again, because he hasn't. He has accomplished little on the economic front, and his conquests, such as they are, are fairly pitiful. What he has done, however, is crush his domestic rivals: Oppose the Putin regime, and you're likely to end up imprisoned or dead. Strong!