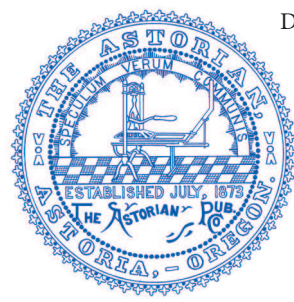


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OUR VIEW

Don't just batten the hatches, get well-prepared

Fifty-four years isn't ordinarily considered a notable anniversary, but the remarkable series of storms late last week and over the weekend sparked memories of the history-making 1962 Columbus Day Storm that killed dozens and damaged tens of thousands of homes.

Though we all can hope the tornado and remnants of a typhoon combo was a 100-year storm — a once-in-a-century event — such catastrophes appear to be happening with greater frequency now than in the past. The start of another winter is a good time to review some of what we learned from the Columbus Day Storm, the Great Coastal Gale of 2007 and this past weekend.

One of the most fundamental lessons was that the coast is largely on its own during and immediately following a major disaster. Although inland areas typically aren't as impacted by hurricane-strength winds as we are, thousands of downed trees can block every access highway along which emergency personnel and supplies would travel. In some storms, these routes are partially cleared in fairly short order. After a future subduction zone earthquake and tsunami, they will be blocked far longer and inland areas will be preoccupied with their own problems.

Coastal agencies and families must plan on getting by for a protracted period. Three days used to be the recommendation. It's now widely recognized this isn't enough — keeping a week or 10 days of supplies is desirable — including food, gasoline, money and vital prescriptions. This is close to impossible for many coastal residents, but we all should do our best to prepare in light of our own financial wherewithal.

When we know a big storm is coming, it behooves us to fill our gas tanks, get some cash out of the bank, stock up on easy-to-prepare foods and drinking water, firewood and cooking fuel, and make sure we have warm clothes and blankets in case the power is out for long. Keep extra batteries on hand and make sure you have some way to recharge cellphones from car batteries or some other way.

Public agencies and private charities should plan to have to make up the difference between the essentials that residents have on hand and what they actually must have following a disaster. It is a continuing instance of irresponsibility on the part of Oregon and Washington state governments to not pre-stage emergency food and medical supplies in vulnerable areas such as ours.

For more frequent small-scale crises, such as coastal wind storms and associated power outages, residents have learned to better monitor weather forecasts and warnings. Residents had far better warnings about this past weekend's storm than we did in 2007. The Doppler radar on the south Washington coast greatly improved the accuracy and timeliness of these warnings. Additional Next-Generation Radar installations are still needed in the Pacific Northwest, along with continuing comprehensive upgrades. The existing system is close to its operational lifespan and needs many millions in upgrades and maintenance.

Each of these epic storms reminds us how much about how we depend on one another — of the need to check on neighbors and family members to make sure they're safe and have what they need to get by. This can lead to creation of community emergency response teams who do things like check vacant houses following cold snaps to make sure pipes haven't burst. Citizen ham radio operators have placed equipment in key locations to facilitate emergency communications during and after a disaster.

Surviving is both an individual responsibility and a social obligation. Planning for emergencies on the coast has to be an automatic part of living here.

Last but not least, many thanks to emergency and utility crews for their work and courage. We couldn't live on this remarkable coast without you.

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

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. 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.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com; online 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

Burning down the house

By TIMOTHY EGAN

New York Times News Service

A wounded bear is a dangerous thing. Detested and defeated, Donald Trump is now in a tear-the-country-down rage. Day after day, he rips at the last remaining threads of decency holding this nation together. His opponent is the devil,

he says — hate her with all your heart. Forget about the rule of law. Lock her up!

He's made America vile. He's got angel-voiced children yelling "bitch" and flipping the bird at rallies. He's got young athletes chanting "build a wall" at Latino kids on the other side. He's made it OK to bully and fat-shame. He's normalized perversion, bragging about how an aging man with his sense of entitlement can walk in on naked women.

The lesson

Here's his lesson for young minds: If you're rich and boorish enough, you can get away with anything. Get away with sexual assault. Get away with not paying taxes. Get away with never telling the truth. Get away with flirting with treason. Get away with stiffing people who work for you, while you take yours. Get away with mocking the disabled, veterans and families of war heroes.

You know this by now — all the sordid details. For much of the last year, the Republican presidential nominee has been a freak show, an oh-my-God spectacle. He opens his mouth, our cellphones blow up. But now, in the final days of a horrid campaign, an unshackled Trump is more national threat than punchline. He's determined to cause lasting damage.

Is there one sector of society he has yet to maul? Until this week, it was the denial wing of his own party, those "leaders" who looked the other way while their leader walked all over the Constitution.

But those who take pleasure in watching Trump destroy the Republican Party are missing the bigger picture. He's trying to destroy the country, as well. Civility, always a tenuous thing, cannot be quickly restored in a society that has learned to hate in public, at full throttle.

Trump has made compassion suspect. Don't reach out to starving refugees — they're killers in disguise. Don't give to a charity that



**So it has come to this:
The core lessons that bind a civilized society are in play in the last days of this election.**

won't reward you in some way. Don't pay taxes that build roads and offer relief to those washed away in a hurricane. That's a sucker's game. We're not all in this together. Taxes are for stupid people.

Every sexual predator now has a defender at the top of the Republican ticket. The most remarkable thing about Sunday's debate was Anderson Cooper having to school a 70-year-old man on workplace taboos that most of us learn on our first job.

"You described kissing women without consent, grabbing their genitals," Cooper said. "That is sexual assault. You bragged that you have sexually assaulted women. Do you understand that?"

What you heard was the lecture the human resources director gives just before saying, "You're fired." Trump could not get hired at the drive-through window at a Jack in the Box. Knowing about his history would make any employer liable. It took decades to get the workplace to that point where Trumpian predators are shunned. Given the biggest pulpit in the world, Trump is trying to bring that consensus down.

Locker room

He calls it locker room talk. The locker room has pushed back, resoundingly. Let's call it what it is — the workplace. And as Trump told Howard Stern in 2005, when he bragged about his voyeur intrusions into backstage beauty pageants, "I sort of get away with things like that." He made a similar comment — the blueprint for his actions — in the 2005 television

tape that has blown up in his face. If he can do it, any creep outside of the celebrity bubble should be able to get away with the same thing.

He's destroyed whatever moral standing leading Christian conservatives had — starting with Mike Pence. Their selective piety is not teachable. Take solace in one of the small acts of courage breaking out in recent days: a group of students at Liberty University telling their Trump-supporting president, Jerry Falwell Jr., to practice what the school preaches.

Trump is "actively promoting the very things that we Christians ought to oppose," the students wrote. These young people, at least, are smart enough to see what Trump is doing to their world.

It will take many people like those students, and like the first lady, Michelle Obama, a model of decency and class, to repair the awful damage Trump has done.

In a powerful speech Thursday, the nation's most respected public figure scorned the "hurtful, hateful language" of Trump and its effect on children: "The shameful comments about our bodies. The disrespect of our ambitions and intellect. The belief that you can do anything to a woman. It's cruel. It's frightening."

So it has come to this: The core lessons that bind a civilized society are in play in the last days of this election. We long for family dinners where Trump no longer intrudes, for tailgate parties where football is all that matters, for normalcy. Remember those days? They may be gone forever.

It's not the 'locker room' talk. It's the 'Lock her up' talk.

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — The second presidential debate — bloody, muddy and raucous — was just enough to save Donald Trump's campaign from extinction, but not enough to restore his chances of winning, barring an act of God (a medical calamity) or of Putin (a cosmically incriminating WikiLeak).

That Trump crashed because of a sex-talk tape is odd. It should have been a surprise to no one. His views on women have been on open display for years. And he'd offered a dazzling array of other reasons for disqualification: habitual mendacity, pathological narcissism, profound ignorance and an astonishing dearth of basic human empathy.

To which list Trump added in the second debate, and it had nothing to do with sex. It was his threat, if elected, to put Hillary Clinton in jail.

After appointing a special prosecutor, of course. The niceties must be observed. First, a fair trial, then a proper hanging. The day after the debate at a rally in Pennsylvania, Trump responded to chants of "lock her up," with "Lock her up is right." Two days later, he told a rally in Lakeland, Florida, "She has to go to jail."

Such incendiary talk is an affront to elementary democratic decency and a breach of the boundaries of American political discourse. In democracies, the electoral process is a subtle and elaborate substitute for combat, the age-old way of settling struggles

for power. But that sublimation only works if there is mutual agreement to accept both the legitimacy of the result (which Trump keeps undermining with charges that the very process is "rigged") and the boundaries of the contest.

The prize for the winner is temporary accession to limited political power, not the satisfaction of vendettas. Vladimir Putin, Hugo Chavez and a cavalcade of two-bit caudillos lock up their opponents. American leaders don't.

Coming undone

One doesn't even talk like this. It takes decades, centuries, to develop ingrained norms of political restraint and self-control. But they can be undone in short order by a demagogue feeding a vengeful populism.

This is not to say that the investigation into the Clinton emails was not itself compromised by politics. FBI director James Comey's recommendation not to pursue charges was both troubling and puzzling. And Barack Obama very improperly tilted the scales by interjecting, while the investigation was still underway, that Clinton's emails had not endangered national security.

But the answer is not to start a new process whose outcome is preordained. Conservatives have relentlessly, and correctly, criticized this administration for abusing its power and suborning the civil administration (e.g., the IRS). Is the Republican response to do the same?

Wasn't presidential overreach one of the major charges against Obama by the anti-establishment GOP candidates? Wasn't the animating spirit of the entire tea party movement the restoration of constitutional limits and restraints?

In America, we don't persecute political opponents. Which is why we retroactively honor Gerald Ford for his pardon of Richard Nixon, for which, at the time, Ford was widely reviled. It ultimately cost him the presidency. Nixon might well have been convicted. But Ford understood that jailing a president for actions carried out in the context of his official duties would threaten the very civil nature of democratic governance.

What makes Trump's promise to lock her up all the more alarming is that it's not an isolated incident. This is not the first time he's insinuated using the powers of the presidency against political enemies. He has threatened Amazon's Jeff Bezos, owner of The Washington Post, for using the newspaper "as a tool for political power against me and other people. ... We can't let him get away with it."

With exercising free political speech?

Trump has gone after others with equal subtlety. "I hear," he tweeted, "the Rickets (sic) family, who own the Chicago Cubs, are secretly spending \$'s against me. They better be careful, they have a lot to hide!"

He also promises to "open up" libel laws to permit easier prosecution of those who attack him unfairly. Has he ever conceded any attack on him to be fair?

This election is not just about placing the nuclear codes in Trump's hands. It's also about handing him the instruments of civilian coercion, such as the IRS, the FBI, the FCC, the SEC. Think of what he could do to enforce the "fairness" he demands. Imagine giving over the vast power of the modern state to a man who says in advance that he will punish his critics and jail his opponent.