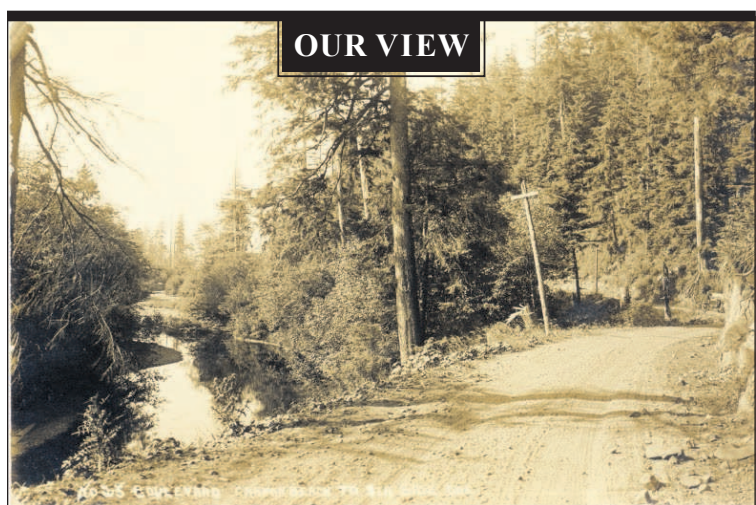


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



DAVID F. PERO, *Publisher & Editor*
 LAURA SELLERS, *Managing Editor*
 BETTY SMITH, *Advertising Manager*
 CARL EARL, *Systems Manager*
 JOHN D. BRUIJN, *Production Manager*
 DEBRA BLOOM, *Business Manager*



OUR VIEW

EO Media Group/File Photo

The road between Seaside and Cannon Beach a century ago must have been especially challenging in wet weather.

A pivotal time to serve on parks commission

Last week's visit by the Oregon Parks and Recreation Commission to some of Cannon Beach's many attractions was a valuable reminder for commissioners and residents alike of the North Coast's attractions and the need to protect them in light of 21st century challenges.

The accessibility of Clatsop beaches and other assets was a motif of the meeting.

Elaine Murdy-Trucke of the Cannon Beach History Center and Museum told park leaders of difficulties reaching the community in the time before modern highways. Our rugged coastline backed by the Coast Range is a treasure of worldwide significance. Though the coast comprises only a small percentage of Oregon's land area, it plays an oversized role in defining our state's image for visitors and residents alike.

The fact that Gov. Oswald West a century ago began the process of enshrining the coastline as public property places him in company with his contemporary, President Theodore Roosevelt, as a farsighted steward of the West. Theirs was a pragmatic and selfless conservationism, which understood that natural wonders properly belong to all Americans and must never be sacrificed for private profit. Not that there's anything wrong with making money — the coast's preservation protects the livelihoods of generations of Oregonians. But everyone can savor our coast, not just the wealthy few.

Next year's 50th anniversary of Gov. Tom McCall's Beach Bill will be a chance to reaffirm our belief in the philosophy of public beaches. Accompanying publicity is likely to encourage even more people to experience driving or bicycling the Oregon Coast — a bucket list item for many Americans and an increasing number of international visitors.

The anniversary also will be a great time redouble our attention to the problems and threats confronted by the coast. Some are directly related to its popularity and the Pacific Northwest's swelling population, while others are of a more natural origin.

As this hectic century moves forward, coastal accessibility — getting here in the first place and then getting around — is going to become more challenging. Already, summer traffic sometimes comes to a crawl on U.S. Highway 101 and Oregon Highway 26. State, federal and local officials must continue exploring ways to keep things moving. Sometimes this will mean widening roadways and providing more passing lanes, but this alone won't be enough to stay ahead of the crowd. Innovation is essential.

Besides continuing to safeguard beaches, Oregon must ensure that state parks are maintained and improved to keep up with demand. Park infrastructure built to serve Baby Boomers and their families is in need of constant refurbishment, while steps must also be contemplated to give new generations of park users the up-to-date amenities they seek.

Profound threats to the Oregon Coast — a rising sea level, subduction zone quakes and tsunamis, and more powerful storms and erosion — all require continuing planning. Cost will limit what can be done. But now is the time to envision how the seashore will change and start taking steps toward protecting the vision of a publicly accessible Oregon Coast long into the future. This probably will mean gradually acquiring additional upland parkland, along with steps like strengthening emergency evacuation routes and facilities. Ultimately, we may confront a time when rising waters will cut off some coastal communities from their neighbors.

This is a pivotal time to be on the parks commission. We must pay attention to their plans and try to help however we can, for example by telling legislators about how much we value state parks. Parks and beaches belong to us — it's up to us to pass them on to the future.

Parks and beaches belong to us — it's up to us to pass them on to the future.



Can the Democrats move to the right?

By ROSS DOUTHAT
New York Times News Service

Since Election Day the great intra-Democratic debate over What Went Wrong has been dominated by two visions of how



liberalism should be organized — identity politics versus economic solidarity — with writers variously critiquing or defending each tendency, or arguing that they are complements and that any tension can and ought to be resolved.

This is an interesting and fruitful debate, but it has been mostly about a debate about two different ways of being (sometimes very) left-wing. There has been much less conversation about the ways in which the Democratic Party might consider responding to its current straits by moving to the right.

That kind of movement is often part of how political parties recover from debilitation and defeat — not just by finding new ways to be true to their underlying ideology, but by scrambling toward the center to convince skeptical voters that they've changed.

It's what Democrats did, slowly but surely, after the trauma of Ronald Reagan's triumphs; it's what Bill Clinton did after his 1994 drubbing; it's what Rahm Emanuel and Howard Dean did, to a modest degree, on their way to building a congressional majority in 2006. And it's also what Donald Trump did on his way to stealing the Midwest from the Democrats this year — he was a hard-right candidate on certain issues but a radical sort of centrist on trade, infrastructure and entitlements, explicitly breaking with Republican orthodoxies that many voters considered out of date.

If the idea of moving rightward seems distinctly strange to today's Democrats, it's partially because until this rude awakening, much of liberalism was in thrall to demographic triumphalism: convinced that the party's leftward drift under President Barack Obama and candidate Hillary Clinton was in line with the drift of the country as a whole, and confident that with every birth and death and naturalization and 18th birthday their structural advantage would only grow.

Because Trump won without the popular vote, a version of this theory is still intact — but it shouldn't be. The Democratic coalition is a losing coalition in most states, most House districts, most Senate races; the party's national bench is thin, its statehouse power shattered, its congressional leadership aged and inert. It has less political power than it did after the Reagan revolution and the Gingrich sweep. To repurpose an aphorism often applied to Brazil: It has the majority of the future, and if current trends continue, it always will.

So the incentives are there to look for issues where Democrats might plausibly move rightward, back toward voters they have lost. And so are the issues themselves. The Democrats have ceded a lot of territory in their recent gallop leftward, and it wouldn't be that hard to come up with a revised version of the (again, Bill) Clinton playbook suited to the present time.

For instance: Democrats could



AP Photo/Andrew Harnik

House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi speaks to the media Wednesday following her re-election as Democratic leader.

attempt to declare a culture-war truce, consolidating the gains of the Obama era while disavowing attempts to regulate institutions and communities that don't follow the current social-liberal line. That would mean no more fines for Catholic charities and hospitals, no more transgender-bathroom directives handed down from the White House to local schools, and restraint rather than ruthlessness in future debates over funding and accreditation for conservative religious schools. Without backing away from their support for same-sex marriage and legal abortion, leading Democratic politicians could talk more favorably about moral and religious pluralism, and offer reassurances to people who feel themselves to be dissenters from a very novel cultural regime.

The Democratic coalition is a losing coalition in most states, most House districts, most Senate races; the party's national bench is thin.

Democrats could also talk anew about the virtues of earned benefits, about programs that help people who help themselves, about moving people from welfare back to work. This (Bill) Clintonian rhetoric hasn't entirely disappeared from the party, but it has diminished, and some of the Trumpian (and pre-Trumpian) backlash against liberalism in white working-class communities was associated with welfare programs — disability rolls, food stamps, Medicaid — that seem to effectively underwrite worklessness at a time of social disarray. It would not require Democrats abandoning their commitment to the social safety net to foreground programs more directly linked to work and independence, and to acknowledge the problems of dependence and stagnation associated with no-strings-attached support.

There is similar room for Democrats to move toward the center on immigration policy — to retain their support for humane treatment

of migrants but reverse the creep toward open borders-ism and abjure mass amnesty by presidential fiat; to support a path to citizenship without supporting a perpetually ascending immigration rate.

Likewise on crime and terrorism. The party's (laudable) support for criminal justice and policing reform left its leaders struggling to find a language to address the post-Ferguson spike in lawlessness that pushed public support for the police upward and helped Trump on his path. And Obama's obvious preference for a stiff-upper-lip approach to terrorism, similarly, made it hard for his party to address the anxieties created by San Bernardino, Orlando, Paris and Nice, and the sense that the Islamic State and its disciples had ushered in a new and frightening status quo.

In each of these cases, I suspect that the party wouldn't have to move that far or compromise that much to end up in a stronger political position. A centrist crime-control agenda to pair with sentencing reform, a more incremental, Dream Act-ish approach to immigration, a stress on the most pro-work elements in the party's arsenal of welfare policies, a mild softening of the party's secularism and complete-the-sexual-revolution zeal ... with the right leadership and salesmanship, these moves might reassure and win over a crucial fraction of the many voters — blue-collar and white-collar, male and female — who pulled the lever very reluctantly for Trump.

But these shifts would require asking both identitarian and populist liberals (and the many-if-not-most liberals who identify with both strands) to compromise some of their commitments, to accept that open borders and desexed bathrooms and a guaranteed income and mass refugee resettlement will remain somewhat-radical causes rather than simply and naturally becoming the Democratic Party line.

This is a hard ask, since even modest shifts require compromising deeply held (if, in some cases, recently discovered) ideals. And it's made much harder by the fact that liberals spent the last four years telling themselves that such compromises were not necessary anymore, that they belonged to the benighted 1990s and need trouble liberal consciences no more.

But that was a lie. And harder truths are what the buckling Democratic Party needs now.