

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## Water under the bridge



Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers

### 10 years ago this week — 2006

Many emotions were running through Chip Jenkins as he watched, sometimes in tears, as firefighters doused the flames on the smoldering ruins of Fort Clatsop late on the night of Oct 3, 2005.

But one of the strongest was determination.

"I knew we would be here — I knew we would rebuild the fort," he said Saturday as the new Fort Clatsop was dedicated. "I didn't know how, or how long it would take. But by 10 o'clock the next morning, it was obvious we were going to follow the example of 1955."

Almost 400 people turned out for Saturday's ceremony celebrating the completion of the new fort replica, built on the exact same spot as the 50-year-old landmark destroyed by accidental fire last year.

**On the waterfront at the edge of Astoria's former Chinatown, a tribute to Astoria's Chinese heritage is taking shape. A tiny park at Ninth and Astor streets will be transformed in a way that commemorates the culture and contributions of Chinese immigrants and celebrates their hard work, bravery and pioneering spirit.**

At the end of the Nov. 28 Warrenton City Commission meeting, City Engineer/Public Works Director Alan Johansson lost his job and the city's engineering department was eliminated.

Prompted by public criticism, Commission members are having second thoughts about the way they handled the issue, which was not on the agenda that night.

"No time is a good time (to eliminate and employee's position), but our timing was less than ideal," Commissioner Mark Kujala said at the start of Tuesday's regular meeting. "It was a surprise, but yet I agreed to it. I could have asked to table it, but I chose not to," he said. "I now think that was a mistake.."

### 50 years ago — 1966

#### LETTERS TO SANTA

Dear Santa,

I would like to have a Golden Treasure Chest of Games there are 63 games for only \$3.98. Green Ghost Game \$4.98.

Andy

P.S. Please come this year, please. Get the stuff out of a Spiegel Christmas catalog 66.

Dear Santa Claus,

My name is Kay. I am six years old. For Christmas I would like Cheerful Tearful, and a Sewing Machine. My sister Sharon is writing this for me, because I can't write good yet. I have tried to be a good girl.

Dear Santa,

My name is Ross. I am 3 years old. For Christmas I would like a toot-toot train and some puzzles. My sister Sharon is writing this for me because I can't write yet. I am trying to be a good boy.



There's some variety in vocational instruction at Tongue Point. Here are David Nigh, in front, and Thomas Kelly Jr. working on a Christmas tree welded together from pipes and rods. It will adorn one of the dormitory areas.

### 75 years ago — 1941

Her hull broken in two by stormy seas, the ground steamer Mauna Ala is fast digging a grave for her shattered bones in the surf off Clatsop beach. Early Sunday morning the hull "jack knifed," with the bow section heading for the beach and the stern remaining broadside to the breakers. At high tide the stern is buried in white water except for a quivering mast and cargo booms.

Cargo continues to wash ashore. Thousands of beachcombers examined the debris on the sand for salvageable items. Cars crowded the beach, many of them stalled in the sand for a time. Some salvagers risked their trucks and cars by picking up salvage as it came in with the surf. Warnings that cargo contained arsenic and caustic soda appeared to be taken with a grain of salt.

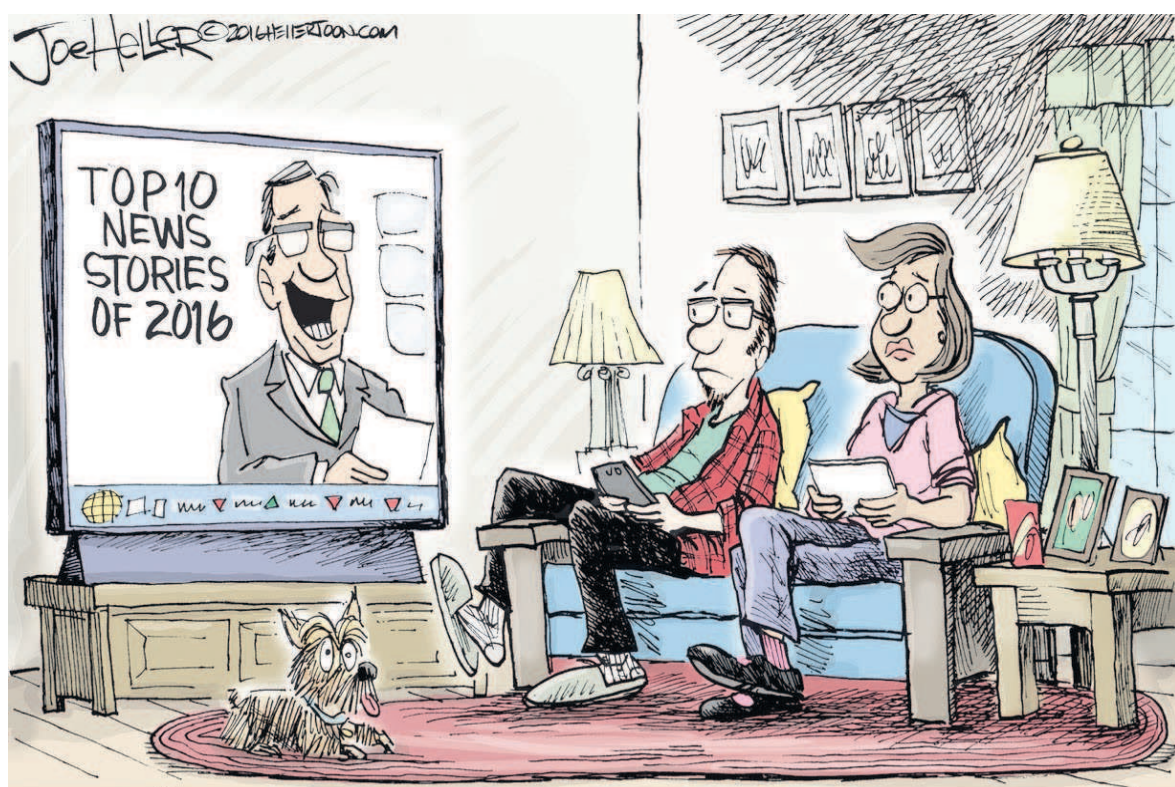
**A clipper-borne letter, written in Honolulu while the Japanese were pounding the United States' Hawaiian naval and army bases a week ago Sunday was received here by Mrs. Marian Sweet Saturday. The clipper which carried the letter is believed to have been the same one which was under fire of Japanese machine guns and landed in San Francisco with 16 bullet holes in the fuselage.**

The uncensored missive was penned by the former Miss Imola Mitchell of Astoria, who lived with Mrs. Sweet. She is now Mrs. Imola Church, wife of Lieutenant Robert Church, stationed in the Hawaiian islands, and she is employed in a millinery store.

"We still can't believe it, but we're being bombed," the letter begins. "We even saw the Japanese planes, yet it seemed like the war games we've been watching."

"We had a ringside seat from our front yard. Peal Harbor is all afire, as is Hickam field."

Following precedent set in other coastal cities, the city commissions of Astoria and Warrenton Monday night passed emergency ordinances declaring it unlawful to violate blackout regulations established by civil, military or naval authorities and gave the rulings teeth by providing that violators are subject to fine and imprisonment, or both.



"...AND NOW ON TO THE TOP 10 FAKE STORIES OF 2016."

# The American dream, quantified at long last

By DAVID LEONHARDT  
*New York Times News Service*

The phrase "American dream" was invented during the Great Depression. It comes from a popular 1931 book by historian James Truslow Adams, who defined it as "that dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone."

In the decades that followed, the dream became a reality. Thanks to rapid, widely shared economic growth, nearly all children grew up to achieve the most basic definition of a better life — earning more money and enjoying higher living standards than their parents had.

These days, people are arguably more worried about the American dream than at any point since the Depression. But there has been no real measure of it, despite all of the data available. No one has known how many Americans are more affluent than their parents were — and how the number has changed.

It's a thorny research question, because it requires tracking individual families over time rather than (as most economic statistics do) taking one-time snapshots of the country.

#### Tax records

The beginnings of a breakthrough came several years ago, when a team of economists led by Raj Chetty received access to millions of tax records that stretched over decades. The records were anonymous and came with strict privacy rules, but nonetheless allowed for the linking of generations.

The resulting research is among the most eye-opening economics work in recent years. You've probably heard some of the findings even if you don't realize it. They have shown that the odds of escaping poverty vary widely by region, for instance, an insight that has influenced federal housing policy.

After the research began appearing, I mentioned to Chetty, a Stanford professor, and his colleagues that I thought they had a chance to do something no one yet had: create an index of the American dream. It took them months of work, using old Census data to estimate long-ago decades, but they have done it. They've constructed a data set that shows the percentage of U.S. children who earn more money — and less money — than their parents earned at the same age.

#### Alarming

The index is deeply alarming. It's a portrait of an economy that disappoints a huge number of people who have heard that they live in a country where life gets better, only to experience something quite different.

Their frustration helps explain not only this year's disturbing presidential campaign but also Americans' growing distrust of nearly every major societal institution, including the federal government, corporate America, labor unions, the news media and organized religion.

Yet the data also helps point the way to some promising solutions.

It begins with children who were born in 1940, less than a decade after the publication of Adams' book, "The Epic of America." The researchers went into the project

assuming that most of these children had earned more than their parents — but were surprised to learn that nearly all of them had, said David Grusky, one of the researchers, also of Stanford. About 92 percent of 1940 babies had higher pretax inflation-adjusted household earnings at age 30 than their parents had at the same age. (The results were similar at older ages and for post-tax earnings.)

The few 1940 children who earned less than their parents were also, for the most part, doing just fine. They were generally earning less because they had grown up rich — children of top corporate executives, say, who became, or married, doctors, lawyers or professors.

Achieving the American dream was a virtual guarantee for this generation, regardless of whether people went to college, got divorced or suffered a layoff. Why? Because they spent their prime working years in an economy with two wonderful features. It was growing rapidly, and the bounty from its growth flowed to the rich, the middle class and the poor alike.

Not even the oldest baby boomers, born in the late 1940s and early 1950s, would be quite so lucky. Economic growth began to slow as they were entering the job market in the 1970s, thanks in part to the energy crises.

**If the American dream could survive the Depression, and then thrive in a way few people imagined, it can survive our current troubles.**

#### Globalization

In the 1980s, economic inequality began to rise, a result of globalization, technological change, government policies favoring the well-off and a slowdown in educational attainment and the workforce's skill level. Together, these forces pinched the incomes of the middle class and the poor. The tech boom of the 1990s helped — slowing the decline of the American dream — but only temporarily.

For babies born in 1980 — today's 36-year-olds — the index of the American dream has fallen to 50 percent: Only half of them make as much money as their parents did. In the industrial Midwestern states that effectively elected Donald Trump, the share was once higher than the national average. Now, it is a few percentage points lower. There, going backward is the norm.

Psychology research has shown that people's happiness is heavily influenced by their relative station in life. And it's hard to imagine a more salient comparison than to a person's own parents, particularly at this time of year, when families gather for rituals that have been repeated for decades.

"You're going home for the holidays and you compare your

standard of living to your parents," Grusky, a sociologist, said. "It's one of the few ties you have over the course of your entire life. Friends come and go. Parents are a constant."

#### Revive the dream

How, then, can the country revive Adams' dream of a "better and richer and fuller" life for everyone? The solution has to involve some combination of faster economic growth and more widely shared growth.

The bad news is that lifting GDP growth is terribly difficult. Trump has promised to do so, but offered few specifics. If anything, he favors some of the same policies (deregulation and tax cuts) that have failed in recent decades.

The better news — potentially — is that lifting growth is the less important half of the equation, noted Nathaniel Hendren of Harvard, another of the researchers: The rise of inequality has damaged the American dream more than the growth slowdown.

One way to think about inequality's role is to remember that the U.S. economy is far larger and more productive than in 1980, even if it isn't growing as rapidly. Per-capita GDP is almost twice as high now. By itself, that increase should allow most children to live better than their parents.

They don't, however, because the fruits of growth have gone disproportionately to the affluent.

The researchers ran a clever simulation recreating the last several decades with the same GDP growth but without the post-1970 rise in inequality. When they did, the share of 1980 babies who grew up to out-earn their parents jumped to 80 percent, from 50 percent. The rise was considerably smaller (to 62 percent) in the simulation that kept inequality constant but imagined that growth returned to its old, faster path.

"We need to have more equal growth if we want to revive the American dream," Chetty said.

Given today's high-tech, globalized economy, the single best step would be to help more middle- and low-income children acquire the skills that lead to good-paying jobs. Notably, most college graduates still earn more than their parents did, other data shows — yes, even after taking into account student debt.

But education is not the only answer. Incomes have also stagnated because of the rise of corporate power and the weakening of labor unions, leading profits to rise at the expense of wages. The decline of two-parent families plays a role, too. And tax policy has not done enough to push back against these forces: The middle class, not the affluent, deserves a tax cut.

The painful irony of 2016 is that nostalgia and anger over the fading American dream helped elect a president who may put the dream even further out of reach for many people — taking away their health insurance, supporting ineffective school vouchers and showering government largesse on the rich. Every one of those issues will be worth a fight.

If the American dream could survive the Depression, and then thrive in a way few people imagined, it can survive our current troubles.