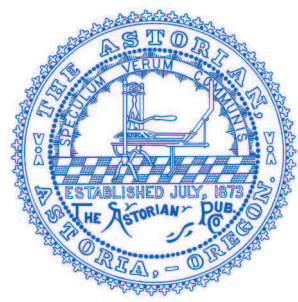


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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

Each week we recognize those people and organizations in the community deserving of public praise for the good things they do to make the North Coast a better place to live, and also those who should be called out for their actions.



SHOUTOUTS

This week's Shoutouts go to:

- The **Oregon Community Foundation**, which recently approved \$162,600 in grants to North Coast nonprofits. The grants awarded include \$25,000 to the Columbia Memorial Hospital Foundation toward the construction of the CMH/OHSU Cancer Center to expand local access to advanced cancer treatment, and a \$25,000 grant to the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council in Astoria to support and expand adult and youth education programs through increased staff capacity. Additionally, the foundation, with the Oregon Cultural Trust, also awarded \$11,240 in Clatsop County Cultural Coalition grants to 10 other local organizations. In total, the North Coast grants contributed to more than \$8.5 million awarded by the OCF statewide.

- The Seaside-based **North Coast Land Conservancy** and the private investment equity firm **Onion Peak Holdings**, which took the first steps toward the acquisition of 3,300 acres of timberland from Stimson Lumber Co., in what could be the largest private land-preservation deal in western Oregon. The deal, signed in November, gives the land conservancy five years to raise money to complete the transaction. Conservancy Executive Director Katie Voelke called it a "monumental act of preservation." The land is located between Tillamook Head and Nehalem Bay, and together with Oswald West State Park and Cape Falcon Marine Reserve, the acquisition would create a conservation corridor of more than 29 square miles linking land and sea.



Katie Voelke

- **Senior Library Assistant Patty Skinner**, who is retiring after 17 years at the Astoria Library. As the senior library assistant, Skinner led the library's Preschool Story Time sessions, developed children's reading programs and served as a resource for helping parents with building their children's reading abilities and habits. Library Director Jimmy Pearson called Skinner "awesome," and said the library is "definitely going to feel her loss." Pearson said he is seeking a part-time successor who will focus solely on children's activities.



Patty Skinner

- The **Warrenton Business Association**, which recently conducted a "First Responder Appreciation Event" at Camp Rilea that raised \$5,600. The proceeds from the dinner event and silent auction were evenly divided between the city's police and fire departments.

- Supporters of **Clatsop Animal Assistance**, which conducted a fundraiser last weekend at Fort George Lovell Showroom. The event, which raised more than \$40,000, featured raffles, a silent auction, a bake sale and pet pictures with Santa to benefit the Clatsop County Animal Shelter. The proceeds will be used for veterinary care and adoption programs for dogs and cats at the shelter.



CALLOUTS

This week's Callouts go to:

- The **U.S. Postal Service**, which hasn't been able to install a new cluster mailbox near Irving Avenue and 22nd Street in Astoria after the one there was vandalized and severely damaged in September. The vandalism has forced 12 postal customers to travel to the Astoria Post Office to pick up their daily mail. Sarah Green, the post office supervisor, said a new replacement collections box has arrived at the post office, but the post office is still waiting to receive the hardware to assemble the box so it can be installed.



The Daily Astorian/File Photo
 Damaged cluster mailbox near Irving and 22nd Street.

Suggestions?

Do you have a Shoutout or Callout you think we should know about? Let us know at news@dailyastorian.com and we'll make sure to take a look.



For Mitt Romney, dinner and a kiss-off

By GAIL COLLINS

New York Times News Service

Farewell, Mitt Romney, farewell. Romney, who once spent nearly a decade being rejected by the American electorate, got the heave-ho from Donald Trump this week — passed over for the secretary of state nomination in favor of an oil executive who is great pals with Vladimir Putin.

It is, of course, extremely fashionable in Trump's Washington to be great pals with Vladimir Putin. Also to be a general or a climate change denier. Romney was always suspicious of Russia, never served in the military, and although he came up with multiple positions on the environment over the years, he would still have been one of the only Trump nominees to have sporadically held an opinion that the globe was warming.

It's not like the list of appointees doesn't have variety. Rick Perry once competed in "Dancing With the Stars." Linda McMahon, the new head of the Small Business Administration, is probably the only one who's performed in a professional wrestling competition. McMahon is among the highest-ranking female nominees.

At the very tiptop, so far, is Elaine Chao, Trump's pick for secretary of transportation. We failed to elect a woman president, but if Chao is confirmed, there will at least be a woman 13th in the line of succession.

On Wednesday, Trump named Romney's niece as head of the Republican National Committee. Do you think that was an attempt to make Mitt feel better — or worse? He had reasons to think he'd get more than a job for his brother's daughter.

Fine and dandy

It's true that during the campaign he had called Trump "a phony, a fraud," and said some rather unflattering things about Trump University, Trump Magazine, Trump Vodka and Trump Steaks. But after the election, everything seemed fine and dandy. He was getting meetings with the president-elect, being dined (not wine; they're both teetotalers) at a fancy Manhattan restaurant in front of half the national media.

Hard not to feel optimistic when the other apparent top finalists for state were David Petraeus, a man currently on probation for sharing military secrets with his mistress, and Rudy Giuliani, who had so come to resemble a bad-tempered Rottweiler that he did everything but howl at the moon.

After his big public dinner date with Trump, Romney bumbled to reporters that they had a "discussion about affairs throughout the world, and these discussions I've had with him have been enlightening and interesting and engaging. I've enjoyed them very, very much."

The man he'd denounced so vigorously during the campaign, he added, had "a message of inclusion and bringing people together, and his vision is something which obviously connected with the American people in a very powerful way." If you had asked Romney at that moment what



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President-elect Donald Trump, center, eats dinner with Mitt Romney, right, and Trump Chief of Staff Reince Priebus at Jean-Georges restaurant Nov. 29 in New York.



Mikhail Klimentyev/Sputnik, Kremlin Pool Photo

Russian President Vladimir Putin presents ExxonMobil CEO Rex Tillerson with a Russian medal at an award ceremony of heads and employees of energy companies at the St. Petersburg economic forum in St. Petersburg, Russia, in 2012.



AP Photo/Carlos Osorio

Ronna Romney McDaniel, the Michigan Republican Party chair, speaks before a Republican presidential primary debate in Detroit in March. President-elect Donald Trump wants Ronna Romney McDaniel to be national party chairwoman, in part as a reward for the party carrying Michigan for the first time in 28 years.

he thought about Trump University, he'd probably have announced plans to enroll.

But then, whammo. He was passed over for Rex Tillerson, the CEO of Exxon Mobil, who seemed to pop up out of nowhere. Trump was reportedly moved by recommendations from Republican luminaries like former Defense Secretary Robert Gates and former Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Rice and Gates have a consulting firm that counts Tillerson's company as a client, but that had nothing whatsoever to do with their miraculous, totally coincidental and spontaneous decisions to drop his name.

'Torture'

Roger Stone, a political consultant who frequently presents himself as a Friend of Trump, told a radio talk show host that the whole wooing of Mitt was just an effort to "torture" the former presidential candidate. Another theory is that Romney's problem was a failure to apologize for those campaign insults.

It's possible. Romney did once write a book called "No Apology." However, given his track record, a better title might have been "No Apology Normally, Unless Something Else Happens."

Should we feel sorry for him? He'd have been a more qualified pick than Tillerson. But really, Romney has been such a jerk during this election that it's hard not to giggle.

He made a huge, dramatic profile in courage out of his refusal to support Trump, but he didn't have the spine to say that he'd be voting for Hillary Clinton. Instead, Romney straddled that swamp masquerading as moral high ground where he rejected everybody, took no responsibility for anybody, and therefore was no help at all.

Then, when the man he denounced as a fraud got elected, Mitt was instantly in the employment line, grinning and blowing kisses. Suddenly we were reminded of all the years of political shape-shifting, when Romney's opinions on everything from gun control to health care changed with every twitch of the polls.

And, of course, he's the guy who once drove to Canada with the family Irish setter strapped to the roof of the car. The worst part was his excuse — not "too many kids in the back seat" but "my dog loves fresh air." Somewhere, the spirit of Seamus is laughing.