

No transparency

My family has owned a property on the west bank of the Skipanon, several blocks upstream from the Eighth Street Dam, for the last 44 years.

From 1972 into the late 1980s, the Skipanon River was full of all kinds of fish. Perch, crappie, whitefish, suckers, carp, bass and a few crayfish and others. Fishing for these fish was the No. 1 summer activity for a decade of Warrenton children.

The Skipanon today is sterile of small aquatic life. The modification and removal of the tide gates simply flushed an entire thriving ecosystem of small wildlife down the drain and out into the Columbia. It repeats on every low tide. I would like to hear Oregon Fish and Wildlife Department's take on that.

Our property lost 30 feet of dry land bank area that used to be above the high tide from erosion that started by the change in operation of the tide gate. Adjacent neighbors have lost a similar amount of property. The erosion continues to this day. We pay taxes on property that no longer exists.

The water district denied that the fish I described were ever in the Skipanon, and offered no help for the erosion or the fish.

I echo Kathleen Zunkel's statement from the paper ("Warrenton turns to Army Corps in dam fight," *The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 14). There is a lack of transparency. It's not like this dam is in a remote hidden place.

It is smack dab in the center of town, and every Warrenton city official and water district official, past and present, has had a front row seat to every change that has happened to it over the course of the last five decades. Ignoring an issue for 50 years, then declaring an emergency, just does not sound transparent to me.

One thing I learned is that absolutely nothing happens in the city of Warrenton without the approval of undisclosed real estate speculations. Is that the emergency? I have to wonder.

EDWARD McFADDEN
Warrenton

The good fight

Concerning the article by David Leonhardt, "The American dream, quantified at last" (*The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 14):

In April 1969, I can home from the Navy after 3 1/2 years away. Two weeks later, I was off to Alaska for Bumble Bee ("join a union"). When I got back, I went to work for Unur Fish ("join a union"). In six months, I had medical and dental insurance. With the \$4,000 I had saved, I had \$10,000 plus the GI Bill to go to college.

We have made a good middle-class life. If the wife worked, it was teaching or the canneries (unions). There was money for college.

Yet only two lines in the article mention unions and their effect.

There were around 30 unions in Astoria in the 1940s and 1950s. The unions that stayed — electrical and plumbing — are now billing \$75 an hour, and they are the middle class.

My daughter is president of the Service Employees Union in Portland, and giving the good fight.

EDWARD NIEMI
Astoria

Russian ties

In a recent interview, Central Intelligence Agency former head Leon Panetta said "When it comes to Russian interference in our last campaign, 17 intelligence agencies agree that Russia is involved in that effort."

He also said, "We ought to find

Support our Oregon culture

As a very eventful 2016 draws to a close, I encourage members of our community to consider culture — and the Oregon Cultural Trust — for their end-of-year giving.

During times of great change, culture helps keep us centered. Regardless of what is happening in the world, we have our culture — our music, our books, our art, our dance and our heritage to bring us together. Astoria is especially blessed with a bounty of cultural activity enabling us to connect with each other.

Here in Oregon, we also have the unique opportunity to receive a tax credit when we support culture. The process is quite simple: donate to one of Oregon's 1,400-plus qualified cultural groups, donate the same amount to the Cultural Trust in addition, deduct that same amount from your state taxes. You double the impact of your donation for free. No other state in the union rewards its citizens so well for investing in culture.

out what Russia's role was, we ought to investigate it and ensure that it never happens again."

In 2008, Donald Trump Jr. said, "The Russians make up a pretty disproportionate cross-section of a lot of our assets." We don't know how much is owed or who it is owed to, we just know, per Trump Jr., that a lot of Russian money was "pouring into" Trump business interests.

Several of Trump's main advisers have significant Russian ties. When you look closely at his cabinet appointments, the concept of quid pro quo or pay to play is clearly at work. Plus, they are all climate change deniers, pro fossil fuel extraction and anti-regulation.

Finally, Trump's nominee for Secretary of State is a fossil fuel industry CEO with strong ties to Vladimir Putin, the Russian oil industry and numerous Russian oligarchs. Fossil fuel supplies have been used by Russia as a big stick to weaken NATO and force the European Union toward pro-Kremlin viewpoints.

It is not hard to connect the dots.

Now, consider this: Russia has more nuclear missiles pointed at the U.S. than any other country in the world (nearly 1,800 deployed warheads, the vast majority of which are pointed at us). Also keep in mind, their submarines regularly patrol off our East and West coasts.

If the term "Manchurian Candidate" doesn't mean anything to you, I suggest you look it up. I guarantee you Putin and the Kremlin know exactly what they are doing, and it is not in the best interests of our nation.

BILL GRAFFIUS
Gearhart

Whose money?

The Warrenton City Commission has hired a lawyer from Portland to help them sue the Skipanon Water Control District (SWCD) over ownership of the dam on Eighth Street that the SWCD has maintained for many years. Who is paying for this frivolous lawsuit? We the taxpayers who live in Warrenton? Why is the commission suing a group of volunteers who work for another government body?

The SWCD offered to build a bridge in place of the dam a few years ago, and the commission turned them down. For some strange reason, those with special interests have accused the SWCD of wanting to flood our neighbors and ourselves.

Why is the commission spending taxpayers' money instead of negotiating? How have the SWCD become the bad guys, after years of maintaining the dam and providing for smooth passage of the Skipanon River into the Columbia? The feds told SWCD to do what they thought best with the dam, which they had decided was ancient and crumbling

and of no use in flood prevention.

How much of our money has the commission spent so far on this unnecessary lawsuit? It should be public information for us taxpayers.

MARGARET HINES
Warrenton

Unsung heroes

Sadly, many of us take our public employees for granted until some event alters our perception. As I routinely drive over U.S. Highway 101 south of Seaside, I've noticed the stretch of road near the Circle Creek RV Park has been slowly deteriorating, and knew it would be expensive to fix, involving thousands of tax dollars.

But fortunately, someone at the Oregon Department of Transportation (ODOT) was thinking outside the box, and came up with clever and relatively inexpensive solution to the problem — they've put up simple signs that state "Rough Road." Now every motorist is warned and able to slow down to avoid damaging their vehicle or worse, losing control. And ODOT has saved taxpayers thousands of dollars.

I say bravo. More thinking like this is what America needs right now. So, whoever it was that came up with the idea, you are my unsung hero.

CLEVE ROOPER
Cannon Beach

Trump and Sherman

David Graves closed his letter, "Hero no more," (*The Daily Astorian*, Dec. 16), asking if he is wrong. Yes sir, he is so wrong on so many levels.

First, Richard Sherman was his hero? The only people who should have Sherman as a hero are collegiate freshman football players who see him as a Stanford University graduate — someone who gives back to the community and, by the way, is a very good football player.

Secondly, and most importantly, for God's sake, do not quote the Bible when condemning Sherman. Graves appears to be a Trump supporter, so unlike Sherman, Donald Trump cheated on his first wife Ivana with Marla Maples, cheated on Marla while dating her, bragging about cheating to a news outlet while posing as Trump's publicist Mr. Baron (it was actually him), then married and divorced her. He then was caught bragging about grabbing female anatomical parts while married to his then-pregnant wife, Melania. He's an adulterer, thrice-married, sexual predator.

Thirdly, Sherman expressed his personal views regarding Trump's unconstitutional views regarding Muslims and immigrants. Sherman does not want a

This year, donations to the Cultural Trust had a direct impact on our community's livability and economy. A total of 149 grants totaling \$2.9 million were awarded to Oregon's cultural nonprofits, including \$9,133 to the Monday Musical Club of Tillamook; \$10,336 to the Clatsop County Cultural Coalition; \$9,030 to the Tillamook County Cultural Coalition; and \$66,940 to the Washington County Cultural Coalition.

The Cultural Trust envisions an Oregon that champions and invests in creative expression and cultural exchange, driving innovation and opportunity for all. Our mission is to lead Oregon in cultivating, growing and valuing culture as an integral part of communities.

Please help us protect Oregon's famous quality of life by supporting local cultural groups and the Oregon Cultural Trust.

BERENIECE JONES-CENTENO
Board member, Oregon Cultural Trust

utopian world without boundaries and borders that would cause chaos. Did Graves get that world view by watching Fox? He, like most American believes in a country that does not discriminate, that welcomes immigrants who become assets to this already great country.

Yes, I am one of the many Americans who are upset that Donald Trump will be our next president. I have been labeled words that are too deplorable to print, the worst being called a leftard or liberalard. To my dying day, I will never understand how my fellow Americans accepted Donald Trump as a legitimate contender to be president, and then voted for him.

JANET MARSHALL
Warrenton

Money and politics

We now live in a different world after the election. Remember, the world is what we make it. Regardless of how we feel about the recent election, our system made it possible. If you like the results, great; and if you do not like the results, well, elections have consequences.

Now what? Those who like what happened need to pay attention to what is happening, to make sure it is what you actually wanted when you cast your vote. People who do not like what happened in the election need to seek out what they can do to get involved, and help for the next election.

We may find that what we thought we voted for is not what we will get in the long run, but arguing and being upset is not productive. Seek what you can do for the future, and learn from the past, but do not dwell on that past.

Here are some things that are facts (not fake news): We have elected officials who no longer vote in accordance with the wishes of those who elected them. I consider this to be the beginning of our loss of control of our elected officials.

From George Washington to the year 1976, individuals giving money to a federal official was illegal. The Supreme Court, in the Buckley case, voted to allow individuals to contribute to elected officials. This began the buying of our public officials, but it really took off when, in 2010, the Supreme Court heard the Citizens United Case, and thus allowed corporations to be considered as people, and money as free speech.

This put the buying of our elected officials on steroids. Now, in order to get elected, you have to have big money to win, and that money most easily comes from corporations and the very rich. Those people are happy to contribute, but they always have an agenda that comes with that money.

We no longer have our elected

officials working for the people as a whole, but for the needs and desires of a few — the very rich and their corporations. If we want our elected officials to represent the people as a whole, and work to the benefit of all, then we must get money out of politics.

DON WEST
Astoria

Rich and richer

The Electoral College has rendered its verdict. Donald J. Trump will be our next president. Let me give an example of what his administration is likely to achieve in the next four to eight years with Republican support in both houses of Congress and the Supreme Court.

Of the newly evolving D.C. culture, we can expect a "... permanent, unshakable elite overclass, many of whom are involved in the process by which corporations and the rentier rich tighten their control over the levers of power and use that control to extract as much wealth from the nation's laborers, taxpayers and natural resources as possible." (Quoted from Alex Pareene, *Salon Magazine*)

I don't scare easily, but this incoming administration causes me much concern.

BOB POTTER
Astoria

The Christmas season

Christmas is a wonderful time of year. Stores and streets and many homes are decorated with beautiful lights, ornaments, decorations and messages, indicating this to be a very special season. The air and airways are filled with sweet sounds of carols and hymns. Friends, neighbors, co-workers and even strangers greet one another with smiles and "Merry Christmas!"

Children line up to sit in the lap of Santa and present pleas for bikes, dolls and whatever the latest toy might be.

And of course, they all confess to having been good the past year.

We send cards and receive cards from friends, family, loved ones, and sometimes nearly forgotten acquaintances. The cards are beautiful, often showing appropriate scenes of snow, sleight, Santa, wise men, shepherds, angels, and baby Jesus in manger, etc., with wishes of peace, joy and good will to all.

It is also a very enjoyable season for families to gather and share a feast of good food and express and display love of one another.

Christmas is in many ways the most enjoyable season of the year, but let us not forget, it all points back to Jesus, the Son of God. Without Jesus there would be no Christmas.

And the angel said unto (shepherds in the field), "I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, which is Christ, the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men." (Luke 2:10-14)

Enjoy Christmas, but help someone less fortunate, and pray for our military men and women who are serving and protecting our freedoms and way of life. Attend a church service and give thanks for Jesus our Lord. But resolve to let him be your Lord all the time, not just during this brief season.

KEN TIPPS
Astoria Church of Christ

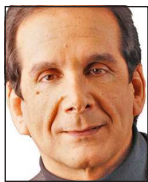
To regain honor lost in Aleppo, it will be on different battlefield

By CHARLES
KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — The fall of Aleppo just weeks before Barack Obama leaves office is a fitting stamp on his Middle East policy of retreat and withdrawal. The pitiable pictures from the devastated city showed the true cost of Obama's abdication. For which he seems to have few regrets, however. In his end-of-year news conference, Obama defended U.S. inaction with his familiar false choice: it was either stand aside or order a massive Iraq-style ground invasion.

This is a transparent fiction designed to stifle debate. Five years ago, the popular uprising was ascendant. What kept a rough equilibrium was regime control of the skies.



At that point, the U.S., at little risk and cost, could have declared Syria a no-fly zone, much as it did Iraqi Kurdistan for a dozen years after the Gulf War of 1991.

The U.S. could easily have destroyed the regime's planes and helicopters on the ground and so cratered its airfields as to make them unusable. That would have altered the strategic equation for the rest of the war.

And would have deterred the Russians from injecting their own air force — they would have had to challenge ours for air superiority. Facing no U.S. deterrent, Russia stepped in and decisively altered the balance, pounding the rebels in Aleppo to oblivion. The Russians were particularly adept at hitting hospitals and other civilian targets, leaving the rebels with the choice between annihilation and surrender.

They surrendered.

Obama has never appreciated that the role of a superpower in a local conflict is not necessarily to intervene on the ground, but to deter a rival global power from stepping in and altering the course of the war. That's what we did during the 1973 Yom Kippur War, when Moscow threatened to send troops to support Egypt and President Richard Nixon countered by raising America's nuclear alert status to Defcon 3. Russia stood down.

Less dramatically but just as effectively, American threats of retaliation are what kept West Germany, South Korea and Taiwan free and independent through half a century of Cold War.

It's called deterrence. Yet Obama never had the credibility to deter anything or anyone. In the end, the world's greatest power was reduced to bitter speeches at the U.N. "Are

you truly incapable of shame?" thundered U.S. Ambassador Samantha Power at the butchers of Aleppo. As if we don't know the answer. Indeed the shame is on us for terminal naivete, sending our secretary of state chasing the Russians to negotiate one humiliating pretend cease-fire after another.

Even now, however, the Syria debate is not encouraging. The tone is anguished and emotional, portrayed exclusively in moral terms. Much less appreciated is the cold strategic cost.

Assad was never a friend. But today he's not even a free agent. He's been effectively restored to his throne, but as the puppet of Iran and Russia. Syria is now a platform, a forward base, from which both these revisionist regimes can project power in the region.

Iran will use Syria to advance its drive to dominate the Arab Middle East. Russia will use its naval and air

bases to bully the Sunni Arab states, and to shut out American influence.

It's already happening. The foreign and defense ministers of Russia, Iran and Turkey convened in Moscow this week to begin settling the fate of Syria. Notice who wasn't there. For the first time in four decades, the United States, the once dominant power in the region, is an irrelevance.

With Aleppo gone and the rebels scattered, we have a long road ahead to rebuild the influence squandered over the last eight years. President-elect Donald Trump is talking about creating safe zones. He should tread carefully. It does no good to try to do now what we should have done five years ago. Conditions are much worse. Russia and Iran rule. Maintaining the safety of safe zones will be expensive and dangerous. It will require extensive ground deployments and it risks military confrontation with Russia.