

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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OUR VIEW

Letter writers give us a Callout

Instead of our normal Shoutouts and Callouts today, highlighted below are three of four letters we received from readers who called out The Daily Astorian for our lack of coverage of Martin Luther King Day on the holiday itself. The fourth appeared in the newspaper last week. At the conclusion is an explanation and a thought or two about public discourse on our Opinion pages.

Appalled at coverage

I was appalled to see no mention, whatsoever, of the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. in the newspaper the day we celebrate him nationally.

When calling the editor to ask why, his answer was that, "We only cover local news." Oh.

Since he was not honored in any way by The Daily Astorian, I would like to do so, here, now: I am forever grateful for the life and work of Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

SANDY REA
Seaside

Needed to know

It is very disturbing that The Daily Astorian chose to completely ignore Martin Luther King's birthday, a federal holiday since 1986. Most especially in these times of great turmoil and unfettered greed and violence, we borgs out here need to know that a courageous person of real faith, who eloquently warned us of the dangers of the "triple evils of poverty, racism, and militarism," a man who gave his life in the struggle for real justice and equality, indeed existed on this

earth, and less than 50 years ago.

The deliberate omission of even a word about Dr. King on the federal holiday that celebrates his life is unconscionable. It is also frightening, because this action is at odds with other Daily Astorians, on other MLK Days, all through the 30 or so years I've been a keen reader and subscriber. Why now?

SUSAN SKINNER
Astoria

Noticed it too

In response to Carol Hahn's question, no you are not the only one to notice that the paper contained no mention of Martin Luther King Day. I noticed immediately. The front page was occupied with the Coast Guard, who are certainly deserving of it ... but on another day.

Has the new Daily Astorian decided that Martin Luther King Day and civil rights is no longer worthy of mention, that these are passé?

I noticed and it made me wonder.

RODNEY MERRILL
Astoria

An explanation

As information messengers, newspapers — The Daily Astorian included — often become targets for those who are upset with coverage we provide, or sometimes don't.

That's part of our business; we accept it and the reverberations that come with it, and know that we can easily be taken out of context.

We aren't perfect and we make mistakes. But we don't do so intentionally, or as one of the letter writers put it, "deliberately" omit something we know our readers are passionate about. We don't get up in the morning and look for ways to upset our readers.

Unlike other businesses, we expect to be called out now and then, and we encourage readers to do so. The letter writers did. We didn't provide any stories or opinion columns in our print edition regarding Martin Luther King Day on the holiday itself. We should have.

While we did in the days leading up and following it, we should have done a better job of communicating within and commemorating Dr. King in some fashion on the day itself.

Locally, we planned to cover the region's MLK events in the holiday paper, as a local newspaper should. We do try and give priority to local stories without ignoring national events that affect us all.

No local events

Surprisingly though, and unfortunately, there were no local MLK Day events that we were made aware of on the holiday or during the prior weekend. None of the letters noted that or asked why there weren't any. We wish there had been, we would have covered them, as we did the Coast Guard memorial service that occurred on that weekend.

Internally the lack of coverage and subsequent response reinforced our need for better communication as our paper is being planned and produced each day. We will do a better job of that and of "marking the moment" on national matters when there aren't any corresponding local events.

Also, while it doesn't mitigate our lack of coverage in print, readers should know that throughout the prior weekend, on the holiday and the days following, we did provide stories that cycled through our website via the Associated Press, which all subscribers have free access to.

Martin Luther King's messages of tolerance, nonviolence and unity are as meaningful, important and relevant today as they were during his lifetime of fighting for equality and civil rights.

In retrospect, we should have noted the lack of commemoration events, and asked why there weren't any. We hope there are events scheduled next year, and we would encourage those who want to express their passion for Dr. King to be involved.

As a reminder, the goal of our Opinion page is interaction, the exchange of ideas and civil discourse. That interaction is better served when it isn't "over the top" and there isn't vitriol, rancor or "facts" that aren't, which won't be tolerated or published.



Trump's foreign policy revolution

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — The flurry of bold executive orders and of highly provocative Cabinet nominations (such as a secretary of education who actually believes in school choice) has been encouraging to conservative skeptics of Donald Trump. But it shouldn't erase the troubling memory of one major element of Trump's inaugural address.



The foreign policy section has received far less attention than so revolutionary a declaration deserved. It radically redefined the American national interest as understood since World War II.

Trump outlined a world in which foreign relations are collapsed into a zero-sum game. They gain, we lose. As in: "For many decades, we've enriched foreign industry at the expense of American industry; subsidized the armies of other countries" while depleting our own. And most provocatively this: "The wealth of our middle class has been ripped from their homes and then redistributed all across the world."

JFK's inaugural pledged to support any friend and oppose any foe to assure the success of liberty. Note that Trump makes no distinction between friend and foe (and no reference to liberty). They're all out to use, exploit and surpass us.

No more, declared Trump: "From this day forward, it's going to be only America First."

Imagine how this resonates abroad. "America First" was the name of the organization led by Charles Lindbergh that bitterly fought FDR before U.S. entry into World War II — right through the Battle of Britain — to keep America neutral between Churchill's Britain and Hitler's Reich.

Not that Trump was consciously imitating Lindbergh. I doubt he was even aware of the reference. He just liked the phrase. But I can assure you that in London and in every world capital they are aware of the antecedent and the intimations of a new American isolationism. Trump gave them good reason to think so, going on to note "the right of all nations to put their own interests first." America included.

Some claim that putting America first is a reassertion of American exceptionalism. On the con-



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

Vice President Mike Pence, left, and White House Chief of Staff Reince Priebus watch as President Donald Trump shows off an executive order Monday to withdraw the U.S. from the 12-nation Trans-Pacific Partnership trade pact.

trary, it is the antithesis. It makes America no different from all the other countries that define themselves by a particularist blood-and-soil nationalism. What made America exceptional, unique in the world, was defining its own national interest beyond its narrow economic and security needs to encompass the safety and prosperity of a vast array of allies. A free world marked by open trade and mutual defense was President Harry Truman's vision, shared by every president since.

We are embarking upon insularity and smallness.

Until now.

Some have argued that Trump is just dangling a bargaining chip to negotiate better terms of trade or alliance. Or that Trump's views are so changeable and unstable — telling European newspapers two weeks ago that NATO is obsolete and then saying "NATO is very important to me" — that this is just another unmoored entry on a ledger of confusion.

But both claims are demonstrably wrong. An inaugural address is no off-the-cuff riff. These words are the product of at least three weeks of deliberate crafting for an address that Trump said would express his philosophy. Moreover, to remove any ambiguity, Trump

prefaced his "America first" proclamation with: "From this day forward, a new vision will govern our land."

Trump's vision misunderstands the logic underlying the far larger, far-reaching view of Truman. The Marshall Plan sure took wealth away from the American middle class and distributed it abroad. But for a reason. Altruism, in part. But mostly to stabilize Western Europe as a bulwark against an existential global enemy.

We carried many free riders throughout the Cold War. The burden was heavy. But this was not a mindless act of charity; it was an exercise in enlightened self-interest. After all, it was indeed better to subsidize foreign armies — German, South Korean, Turkish and dozens of others — and have them stand with us, rather than stationing even more American troops everywhere around the world at greater risk of both blood and treasure.

We are embarking upon insularity and smallness. Nor is this just theory. Trump's long-promised but nonetheless abrupt withdrawal from the Trans-Pacific Partnership is the momentous first fruit of his foreign policy doctrine. Last year the prime minister of Singapore told John McCain that if we pulled out of TPP "you'll be finished in Asia." He knows the region.

For 70 years, we sustained an international system of open commerce and democratic alliances that has enabled America and the West to grow and thrive. Global leadership is what made America great. We abandon it at our peril.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

An everyday hero retires

Sunset Empire Parks and Recreation recently held a retirement celebration for one of its very long-term employees, Elizabeth MacDonald. Elizabeth is, or rather was, my supervisor until a few days ago. I wanted to make sure that those who don't know Elizabeth realize some of the things she has done to serve Clatsop County's children and residents for almost 20 years.

She started out running the day care program at SEPRD, then she oversaw the nutrition services, and ended as the supervisor for the

After School Adventure Program at the newly minted Seaside Heights Elementary School.

We love listening to her stories of storms and escapades that happened a while ago, like the flooding that occurred in 1994, and how she and her husband Tracy took food out to people in Jewell because they were stranded. They serve many boards and organizations, and volunteer for causes that are dear to their hearts.



Elizabeth MacDonald

I've had the privilege to work for Elizabeth about two years now. I want to thank her for a wonderful work environment, and coalescing a team that works closely together to have fun and learn with our children. I could not stand up and say all this, but I can sit and write it. Congratulations, Elizabeth, for a job well done.

GLADYS KLINGERMAN
Seaside