

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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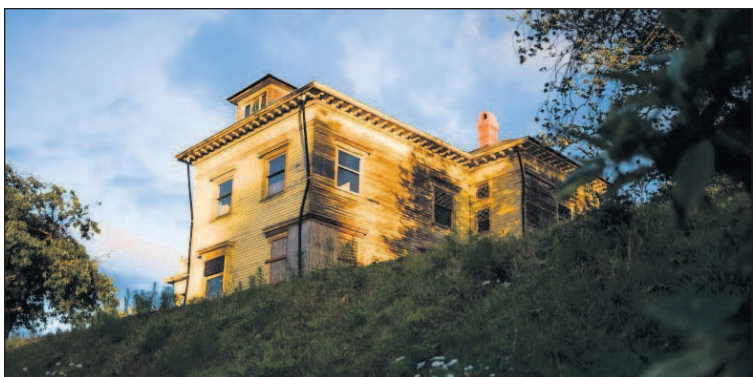
OUR VIEW

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:



Danny Miller/The Daily Astorian

Afternoon light hits the Flavel mansion located at 15th Street and Franklin Avenue in Astoria. Greg Newenhof of City Lumber has been recognized for his restoration effort.

- Flavel mansion restorer **Greg Newenhof**, Christmas Food Basket coordinator **Myrle Bruner**, downtown Astoria advocate **Sara Meyer** and Warrenton businesswoman and volunteer **Darlene Warren**, who each received citizen of the year awards from the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce last Saturday evening at the Astoria Golf and Country Club. Newenhof, Bruner and Meyer joined more than 130 past recipients of Astoria's George Awards since 1960, while Warren became the 20th individual to receive Warrenton's Richard Ford Award since 2000. The chamber's President's Award went to the **Fred Meyer store** in Warrenton, while the **Fort George Brewery and Public House** was named Chamber Member of the Year.

- Seaside Chamber of Commerce members who received awards at the organization's annual meeting last week. During the meeting, Executive Director Brian Owen sent a shoutout to the **Seaside High School Seagulls** for the lift the undefeated No. 1 boys basketball and the high ranking girls teams are giving to the city. The chamber presented its vaunted Byron Award — named after longtime volunteer Byron Meek — to **Ed Rippet**, an organizer of the student athletic program Seaside Kids. **Fred Loser**, recipient of the 2015 award, presented the honor. The chamber also honored Seaside's **Bank of the Pacific** as Business of the Year and **Sadie Mercer** of Maggie's on the Prom as Board Member of the Year. **Chuck Miner** received the chamber's Ambassador of the Year honors and **Terry Lowenberg** of Beach Development received the Building Block Award for providing construction jobs and opportunities. **Cheryle Barker** received a Life Member Award and **Reita Fackerell** was named Volunteer of the Year.

- The **Sunset Empire Transportation District**, which dedicated and renamed its annual Ridership Appreciation Day for **Rae Goforth**, who served on the district's board of commissioners for 13 years and strongly supported public transportation prior to her death last year. The appreciation day was earlier this week with free bus service on all regular routes throughout Clatsop County.

- The **Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce**, **Martin Hospitality** and other businesses that contributed to the city recently earning a trio of national honors. National Geographic named Cannon Beach one of its Top 21 Beaches In The World, particularly in the dog-friendly category, while TravelerToday.com listed Cannon Beach as one of the Top 5 Coastal Towns in America. TripAdvisor.com also recently named the **Stephanie Inn** in its 2017 Traveler's Choice Awards as the No. 4 Best Hotel in America.

- Realtors and staff at **Windermere Stellar**, who raised money and supported 41 charitable organizations throughout Oregon and southwest Washington state in 2016. Through the Windermere Foundation, more than \$360,000 was given to charities supporting low-income children and families, with a portion of that benefiting nonprofit organizations based in our North Coast communities, such as St. Vincent de Paul Food Pantry in Seaside and the Autism Society of Oregon in Astoria.



CALLOUTS

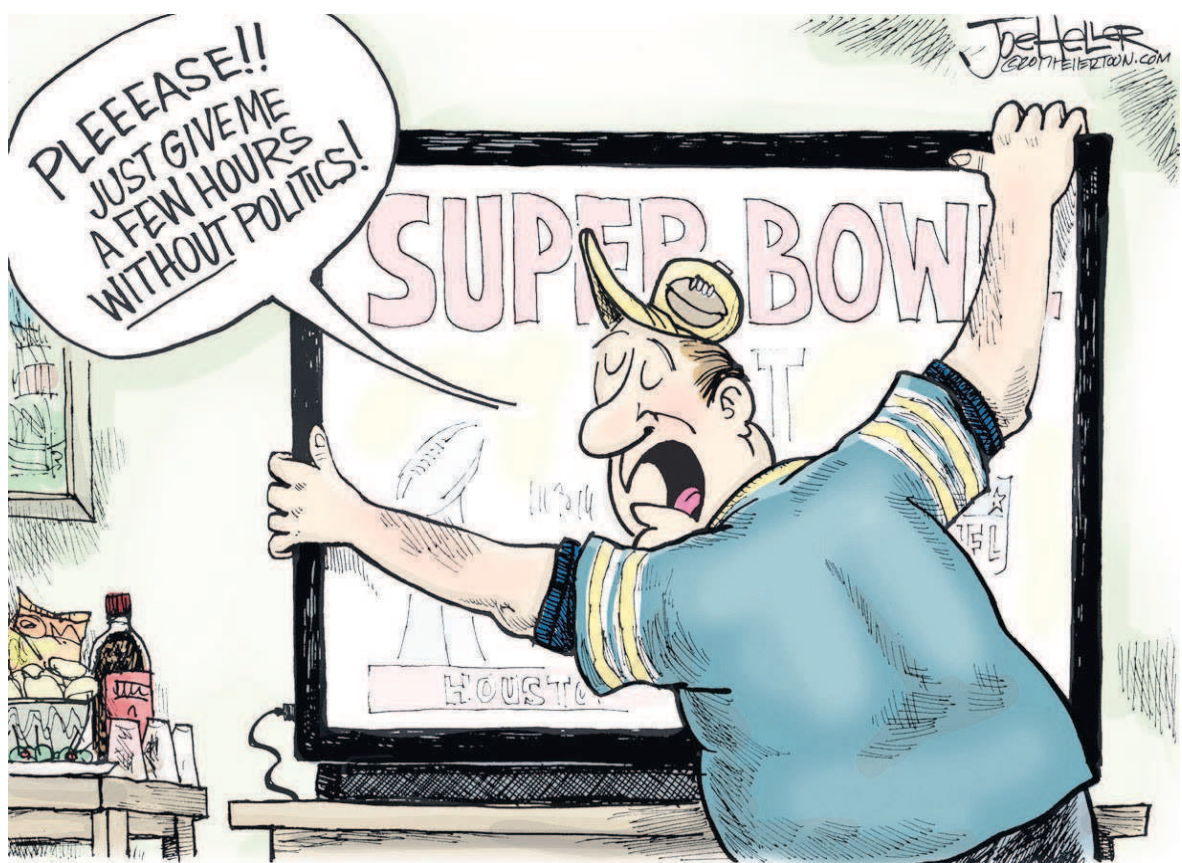
Callouts

This week's Callouts go to:

- **Drivers** who don't turn on their headlights during dark afternoons, especially on rainy days. Oregon law requires headlights to be used anytime visibility is less than 1,000 feet, and both the state Department of Transportation and AAA recommend headlights should always be turned on for safety purposes while driving in the rain, fog or low-light situations. The law also prohibits motorists using their fog lights during conditions that don't warrant their use.

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.



Thank God for Harry Reid

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER
Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — There are many people to thank for the coming accession of Neil Gorsuch to the Supreme Court. Donald Trump for winning the election. Hillary Clinton for losing it. Mitch McConnell for holding open the high court seat through 2016, resolute and immovable against furious (and hypocritical) opposition from Democrats and media. And, of course, Harry Reid.

God bless Harry Reid. It's because of him that Gorsuch is guaranteed elevation to the court. In 2013, as then-Senate majority leader, Reid blew up the joint. He abolished the filibuster for federal appointments both executive (such as Cabinet) and judicial, for all district and circuit court judgeships (excluding only the Supreme Court). Thus unencumbered, the Democratic-controlled Senate packed the lower courts with Obama nominees.

Reid was warned that the day would come when Republicans would be in the majority and would exploit the new rules to equal and opposite effect. That day is here.

The result is striking. Trump's Cabinet appointments are essentially unstoppable because Republicans need only 51 votes and they have 52. They have no need to reach 60, the number required to overcome a filibuster. Democrats are powerless to stop anyone on their own.

And equally powerless to stop Gorsuch. But isn't the filibuster for Supreme Court nominees still standing? Yes, but if the Democrats dare try it, everyone knows that Majority Leader McConnell will do exactly what Reid did and invoke the nuclear option — filibuster abolition — for the Supreme Court, too.

Reid never fully appreciated the magnitude of his crime against the Senate. As I wrote at the time, the offense was not abolishing the filibuster — you can argue that issue either way — but that he did it by simple majority. In a serious body, a serious rule change requires a serious supermajority. (Amending the U.S. Constitution, for example, requires two-thirds of both houses plus three-quarters of all the states.) Otherwise you have rendered the place lawless. If in any given session you can summon up the day's



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

President Donald Trump speaks in the East Room of the White House on Tuesday to announce Judge Neil Gorsuch as his nominee for the Supreme Court. Gorsuch kisses his wife, Louise.

majority to change the institution's fundamental rules, there are no rules.

McConnell can at any moment finish Reid's work by extending filibuster abolition to the Supreme Court. But he hasn't. He has neither invoked the nuclear option nor even threatened to. And he's been asked often enough. His simple and unwavering response is that Gorsuch will be confirmed. Translation: If necessary, he will drop the big one.

Reid never fully appreciated the magnitude of his crime against the Senate

It's obvious that he prefers not to. No one wants to again devalue and destabilize the Senate by changing a major norm by simple majority vote. But Reid set the precedent.

Note that the issue is not the filibuster itself. There's nothing sacred about it. Its routine use is a modern development — with effects both contradictory and unpredictable. The need for 60 votes can contribute to moderation and compromise because to achieve a supermajority you need to get a buy-in from at least some of the opposition. On the other hand, in a hyper-partisan atmosphere (like today's), a 60-vote

threshold can ensure that everything gets stopped and nothing gets done.

Filibuster abolition is good for conservatives today. It will be good for liberals tomorrow when they have regained power. There's no great principle at stake, though as a practical matter, in this era of widespread frustration with congressional gridlock, the new norm may be salutary.

What is not salutary is the Reid precedent of changing the old norm using something so transient and capricious as the majority of the day. As I argued in 2015, eventually the two parties will need to work out a permanent arrangement under which major rule changes will require a supermajority (say, of two-thirds) to ensure substantial bipartisan support.

There are conflicting schools of thought as to whether even such a grand bargain could not itself be overturned by some future Congress — by simple majority led by the next Harry Reid. Nonetheless, even a problematic entente is better than the free-for-all that governs today.

The operative word, however, is "eventually." Such an agreement is for the future. Not yet, not today. Republicans are no fools. They are not about to forfeit the advantage bequeathed to them by Harry Reid's shortsighted willfulness. They will zealously retain the nuclear option for Supreme Court nominees through the current Republican tenure of Congress and the presidency.

After which, they should be ready to parlay and press the reset button. But only then. As the young Augustine famously beseeched the Lord, "Give me chastity and continence, only not yet."

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Flummoxed by facts

Even a cursory examination reveals that the Trump inauguration was a sparsely-attended get-together. Yet Trump's sycophantic spinmeisters, Kellyanne Conway and Sean Spicer, insisted there were "alternative facts" that proved that Trump's audience was the largest ever to witness an inauguration. Aerial photographs and public transportation statistics proved otherwise.

Yes, Kellyanne, there are many ways to "really quantify crowds." And no, Kellyanne, the Germans did not bomb Pearl Harbor. Clinging to whatever they passionately believe or imagine, fact-free Americans make their "truths" a matter of personal opinion, oozing confidence in the existence of things that can't be proven to exist.

While they may acknowledge that there are 100 U.S. senators

and 45 U.S. presidents, and agree that the sun doesn't revolve around the earth, those same flummoxed-by-facts folks balk about whether ex-President Obama was born in America, or whether global warming is real.

Remember that Prevaricator-in-Chief Donald Trump insists that 3 million to 5 million illegals voted last November, a corrosive lie. Yet, with a wink and a nod, Trump fans continue to cheer the Donald, who once admitted that he enjoyed being compared to P. T. Barnum.

Some imaginative fact foes would probably relish a visit to the Creation Museum in Petersburg, Kentucky, marveling at the fiberglass dinosaurs with saddles, available for children or child-like adults. Others might enthusiastically agree that the creation occurred on Oct.

23, at 9 a.m. in 4004 B.C. Isn't that what scholarly Bishop Usher alleged in the play, "Inherit the Wind?" So it must be true, though I'm not sure if it was Pacific Standard or Daylight Savings Time.

Alas, I wonder how otherwise-intelligent people end up the willing slaves of claptrap? How do they manage to convince themselves and others that they are the rational, reasonable ones, and everyone else is deluded? I'm gobsmacked.

Fact-free Americans continue to deny sometimes-incontrovertible proofs, relishing their willful stupidity and their freedom to be led astray. How sad. But at least it boosts employment, especially for all those fact-checkers dispensing Pinocchio awards and struggling to keep up with a tsunami of tall tales.

DR. ROBERT BRAKE
 Ocean Park, Washington