

# 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



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian

**Knappa High School junior Keenan Glebhart and senior Angeleen Somoza bus tables at the 20th annual Knappa Schools Foundation dinner and auction Saturday, which raised more than \$100,000.**

This week's Shoutouts go to:

- **The Knappa Schools Foundation and state Sen. Betsy Johnson** for raising more than \$100,000 at the foundation's 20th annual dinner and auction. The combination of ticket sales, raffles and the oral and silent auctions brought in \$69,000, while a special personal appeal by Sen. Johnson generated more than \$40,000. The money, which eclipsed the \$100,000 mark for the first time in the foundation's history, will be used to fund scholarships and school programs. Shawn Teevin, founder of Teevin Bros. Land & Timber was also honored during the event for his part in forming the foundation 20 years ago.

- **U.S. Bank**, which awarded more than \$95,000 to nonprofit organizations in six Oregon counties, including Clatsop County, in 2016. Twelve Clatsop County nonprofits received a total of \$35,000 in grants during the year, not including marketing and sponsorships across the region. The grants are made through the U.S. Bank Foundation and totaled more than \$26 million across the country last year.

- **Sam Roberts**, grand secretary of the Freemasons of Washington, who spoke about the need for public civility during a recent meeting of the Occident Lodge No. 48 in Ilwaco, Washington. Roberts issued a challenge for all members of Freemasons' lodges to set a high example for positive and civil public discourse, especially with people with whom they may disagree.

- **Cannon Beach Police Chief Jason Schermerhorn** and other officers who were honored at a recent ceremony for first responders at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. Schermerhorn, a former Seaside police officer, was among the many officers who assisted the Seaside Police in the aftermath of the death Sgt. Jason Gooding, who was shot and killed in the line of duty a year ago while trying to make an arrest. Schermerhorn and **Cannon Beach Lt. Chris Wilbur, Officer Josh Gregory, Officer Seth Collins and Cpl. Joseph Bowman** were honored for their "valued contribution after the loss of our beloved officer," Seaside Police Chief Dave Ham said at the ceremony.

- **The Seaside Rotary Foundation and the Sunset Park and Recreation Foundation**, which partnered to present the annual A Sweet Affaire fundraiser last weekend at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center. The event, which featured sweet treats and silent and live auctions, raised \$20,000 which will be used to support the scholarship programs and community projects of both foundations.

- **Ruth Johnson and Judy Shook**, who have been instrumental in the development and promotion of the Seaside Jazz Festival for more than 30 year apiece. This year's festival, scheduled later this month, will feature 12 bands from across the country and the Northwest performing at three different venues, the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, the Elks Lodge and the Best Western.



## CALLOUTS

This week's Callouts go to:

- Some of the just plain goofy ideas that are surfacing in the Legislature for new taxes on just about anything. The latest to surface and die last week was a proposed tax on cars more than 20 years old. The bill would have required the owners of old vehicles to pay \$1,000 every five years to help feed the state's Highway Fund. The tax, however, would have hit many of those least able to pay, since many are driving aged vehicles because they can't afford new ones. It's also hard to figure how the age of a car can make a difference to the road it's traveling on. Fortunately, many legislators voiced immediate objections and the proposal died a quick death.

### Suggestions?

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



# The case of a cover-up in search of a crime

By CHARLES KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — It's a Watergate-era cliché that the cover-up is always worse than the crime. In the Mike Flynn affair, we have the first recorded instance of a cover-up in the absence of a crime.



Being covered up were the Dec. 29 phone calls between Flynn and the Russian ambassador to Washington. The presumed violation was Flynn negotiating with a foreign adversary while the Obama administration was still in office and, even worse, discussing with Sergey Kislyak the sanctions then being imposed upon Russia (for meddling in the 2016 elections).

What's wrong with that? It is risible to invoke the Logan Act, passed during the John Adams administration, under which not a single American has been prosecuted in the intervening 218 years. It prohibits private citizens from negotiating with foreign powers. Flynn was hardly a private citizen. As Donald Trump's publicly designated incoming national security adviser, it was perfectly reasonable for him to be talking to foreign actors in preparation for assuming office within the month.

Worst case: He was telling Kislyak that the Trump administration might lift sanctions and therefore, comrade, no need for a spiral of retaliations. How different is this from Barack Obama telling Russian President Dmitry Medvedev, on an inadvertently open mic, during his 2012 re-election campaign, "This is my last election. After my election, I have more flexibility."

Flynn would have been giving the Russians useful information that might well have contributed to Russia's decision not to retaliate. I'm no Russophile. But again: What's wrong with that? Turns out, the Trump administration has not lifted those sanctions. It's all a tempest in an empty teapot.

### Echoing Nixon

The accusations of misbehavior by Flynn carry a subliminal echo of a long-standing charge against Richard Nixon that he interfered in the



Ruply via AP

**U.S. President Donald Trump's former National Security Adviser Michael Flynn, right, shakes hands with Russian President Vladimir Putin, in Moscow in this video still taken Dec. 10, 2015.**

Paris peace talks in October 1968 to prevent his Democratic opponent from claiming a major foreign policy success on the eve of the presidential election.

But that kind of alleged diplomatic freelancing would have prolonged a war in which Americans were dying daily. The Flynn conversation was nothing remotely of the sort. Where's the harm?

The harm was not the calls but Flynn's lying about them. And most especially lying to the vice president who then went out and told the world Flynn had never discussed sanctions. You can't leave your vice president undercut and exposed. Flynn had to go.

### Why the cover-up

Up to this point, the story makes sense. Except for one thing: Why the cover-up if there is no crime? Why lie about talking about sanctions? It's inexplicable. Did Flynn want to head off lines of inquiry about other contacts with Russians that might not have been so innocent? Massive new leaks suggest numerous contacts during the campaign between Trump associates and Russian officials, some of whom were intelligence agents. Up till now, however, reports The New York Times, there is "no evidence" of any Trump campaign collusion or cooperation with Russian hacking and other interference in the U.S. election.

Thus far. Which is why there will be investigations. Speculation

ranges from the wildly malevolent to the rather loopily innocent.

At one end of the spectrum is the scenario wherein these campaign officials — including perhaps Flynn, perhaps even Trump — are compromised because of tainted business or political activities known to the Russians, to whom they are now captive. A fevered conspiracy in my view, but there are non-certifiable people who consider it possible.

At the benign end of the spectrum is that the easily flattered Trump imagines himself the great dealmaker who overnight becomes a great statesman by charming Vladimir Putin into a Nixon-to-China grand bargain — we jointly call off the new Cold War, join forces to destroy the Islamic State and reach a new accommodation for Europe that relieves us of some of the burden of parasitic allies.

To me, the idea is nuts, a narcissistic fantasy grounded in neither strategy nor history. But that doesn't mean Trump might not imagine it — after all, he maintains that if we had only stayed in Iraq to steal its oil, we wouldn't have the Islamic State. And if this has indeed been his thinking about Russia, it would make sense to surround himself with advisers who had extensive dealings there.

I believe neither of these scenarios but I'm hard put to come up with alternatives. The puzzle remains. Why did Flynn lie? Until we answer that, the case of the cover-up in search of a crime remains unsolved.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Coretta King's letter

This is Black History Month. Martin Luther King's wife, Coretta Scott King, wrote an eloquent, informative and poignant letter to the U.S. Senate in 1986 concerning the actions of Jefferson Sessions in her home state. You can find it at <http://bit.ly/2kntiYn>

This letter influenced the U.S. Senate at that time to deny Sessions the federal judge appointment. This letter was all but lost when Sen. Strom Thurmond failed to put the letter in the record, as she specifically requested. It was his job to put it in the record.

This same letter was almost lost, but recovered from news archives. Sen. Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts tried to read it into the U.S. Senate record for the second time during Sessions' hear-

ing for appointment to the position of U.S. Attorney General. It must have struck a nerve, because the GOP Senate leader became outraged and said she was impugning Sen. Sessions. Sessions had already impugned himself by his actions back in 1986.

The letter is eloquent, informative and poignant. If only all could read it. Obviously, the GOP leaders were trying to hide it.

MONICA TAYLOR  
Astoria

### 'Unbelievable' president

There is a rhetorical or logical tool called Occam's or Okham's Razor, which says that for any problem or question, the hypothesis that explains most of the known or observed facts in the simplest way, with the fewest caveats, ifs, or leaps

of faith, is extremely likely to be the correct answer.

What explains the president's total lack of expressed surprise, anger or even interest in the Russians' hacking and interfering in our election, according to Occam's Razor, is that none of it did surprise him because he knew about and colluded in it all along.

That was Paul Manafort's job, I think, and getting rid of him and stirring up a storm about "fake news" reporting is all getting us ready for the facts of the matter to eventually come to light. Trump has even said he'd be an "unbelievable" president. It's one of his three or four adjectives.

But who took it this literally? He lies every day, in almost every utterance. The emperor is naked, folks.

JOSEPH WEBB  
Astoria