

Hooray for Title 9

The picture of “Dynasty Days” on the front of The Daily Astorian, May 22 (“Dynasty Days’ for Lady Fishermen”), made an impact within this household. In my high school, in 1968, there was no Title 9. The federal act, which made public school girls and boys sports teams, across the board, equally funded, was enacted in 1973. Girls back then had field hockey, tennis and cheer leading, but no basketball, baseball, soccer or swim team, track, football or wrestling.

A year after I graduated from high school, Title 9 passed the U.S. House and Senate. It was a day of celebration for women in this country. Lessons learned within sports are necessary for women to break glass ceilings. Teamwork, strategy, perseverance and other skills boys had benefited from for decades, now were part of a young woman’s educational experience.

To see these strong, vibrant, young women holding their track and field trophy made me teary eyed. I’m deeply grateful for Title 9, for the benefits those girls and women after me won. Protect what you have. Call, email or write to your senators and congress people to continue to support Title 9.

PAMELA MATTSO
McDONALD
Astoria

Leaving girls out

As a parent in the Astoria School District, I had been looking forward to the spring band concert to hear the students’ progress with the new band director. Unfortunately, my husband and I left the May 25 concert disheartened. Many students dropped out of band in the 2015-16 school year, after a succession of interim band directors. Our daughter persisted, and was one of four girls in intermediate percussion at the start of this year. By mid-year, two of the four girls had quit band.

Anticipating hearing our daughter play the snare drum in a song honoring military veterans for Memorial Day, we were surprised when our daughter did not play. There were not enough drums, and the boys in percussion told my daughter she would have to “sit this one out.” The only other girl in percussion was already sitting out. My daughter would have enjoyed playing for her Navy veteran dad, if she had been allowed to play her assigned part.

Immediately following, we saw the debut of the Astoria High School percussion ensemble, which I had hoped would be an inspiration for my daughter. The percussion ensemble consisted of eight boys ... no girls.

It’s not my intention to discredit the band program, but to bring forward a situation that threatens girls’ access to education, in spite of Title IX. Title IX has been in place since 1972, providing kids at federally-funded schools with equal access to education, including sports and band, regardless of the child’s gender. I hadn’t prepared my daughter for a world in which she will have to fight harder in order to gain access to the same opportunities as boys. I was naïve to think that girls today no longer faced these inequities.

My daughter hasn’t decided if she’ll stay in band next year. I remember how proud she felt when her first band director complimented her on a drumming skills test, and she came home and started showing her little sister how to play. I

hope this letter reaches the parents and teachers in our community, who can make a difference by providing girls with opportunities and encouragement.

KIM CATTON
Astoria

Mental health help

May is Mental Illness Awareness Month. Oregon legislators observed it last week by unanimous votes on two bills in the Oregon House and Senate. HB 3090 requires hospitals to develop policies and procedures around the assessment and discharge of people who utilize emergency rooms during a behavioral health crisis. Its companion, HB 3091, explicitly states that insurance, both commercial and Medicaid, must pay for clinical assessments for people who present in emergency rooms with behavioral health crises. It removes any ambiguity of the issue of insurance parity.

Both bills were advocated by Oregon members of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), including the local affiliate, NAMI Clatsop, which meets on the second Tuesday of each month at the Seafood Center in Astoria. It welcomes families and friends of people suffering from brain diseases

JUANITA B. PRICE
NAMI Clatsop board member
emeritus
Astoria

Unsettling thoughts

I was thumbing through a pile of Daily Astorians recently, before putting them in the recycling, when my eyes landed on a letter to the editor in the May 12 edition, “Subhuman savages.”

The author doesn’t like the kind of people who protest against our unpopular president, and he feels that arrest is the least they should be made to suffer. He advises that the police “use their clubs on these creatures, but not below the neck. Cracked skulls ... broken jaws, smashed cheekbones and noses” are what he recommends. What?

When I was growing up the aftermath of World War II, a lot of people used to wonder out loud how the citizens of Germany could have gone along with fascism the way they did in the 1930s. Well, it doesn’t happen overnight, it happens step by step, and authoritarian dictatorships have historically evolved in a very predictable way.

Crushing dissent with brutal assault is right out of that playbook, as is blaming the country’s economic woes on a particular class of people defined by race or religion, as is demonizing and eventually suppressing the press, and the list goes on. Whether fascist or communist or military or monarchistic, this is how regimes that rule the many for the benefit of the few operate.

As for how you get masses of people to think, believe and behave this way, the first step is that you stir up fear — Be afraid! Be very afraid! “They” are coming to get you! — and then comes rage, and then comes violence.

I am unsettled not only by the thought that some of my neighbors are beginning to think this way, but that the newspaper I subscribe to thinks that thoughts like this are fit to print.

JOSEPH STEVENSON
Astoria

Nuclear voting

The National Popular Vote (NPV) will ensure that the winner of the presidential vote wins the elec-

tion. Five times now, a loser has been elected president, like in 2000 and 2016.

Recently 26 Oregon senators, including Betsy Johnson and Senate president Peter Courtney, voted in favor of SB 990 that essentially overturns ORS 469, silencing Oregon voters, and ignoring their 1980 law enacted by ballot Measure 7. ORS 469 requires new nuclear plants to be preceded by a licensed nuclear waste repository, and a majority vote of Oregon voters in favor of a building site.

Strangely, Courtney has expressed his desire to refer NPV to the costly barrier of a ballot initiative, without any petition calling for it. Having opposed the NPV three times before, using political subterfuge to prevent it from being voted on, Courtney clearly appears to still be opposing Oregon voters, who overwhelmingly believe that the winner of a ballot should be the winner of the election.

The only likely reason why he has changed his position from open opposition of NPV to maneuvering for a costly delay of a referral, without a single signature, is because, led by Clatsop County, 23 other Central Committees have passed a resolution for the NPV before the state Democratic Party passed the resolution, itself, last March.

How do Democrats reconcile their vote to silence voters over citing freaking nuclear reactors in our back yards without our consent, when they insist on the obstacle of an initiative for the simple rule change of the NPV? What makes protecting the presidency from the winner of the popular vote more important than protecting us from another Chernobyl?

And what is to prevent them from voting to overturn such an initiative, like Courtney just voted to do with Measure 7? Must we go nuclear? Shall the fallout of such conduct end in 74-year-old Courtney’s recall petition?

Stop it, Peter. It is over, just stop it already. Enact the simple rules change of the NPV, and help prevent the national nightmare of having to endure another unpopular president ever again.

TED THOMAS
Astoria

Relax with mindfulness

According to the National Network of Depression Centers: One in five people will experience a mental illness; we lose about as many people each year in America to suicide as we do to breast cancer; and suicide is the No. 2 cause of death for people ages 15 to 44.

Mindfulness is a tool that can help with this problem. Mindfulness is not a religious practice. It is not a hocus pocus fix to a deeply serious problem in our society. It is a scientifically proven way to calm and relieve anxiety.

Mindfulness is the ability to allow your mind and your body to exist in the same moment at the same time. Mindfulness leads you to accepting yourself, your past and your emotions.

Mindfulness uses different techniques to bring your attention away from your anxiety and allows you to live in the present moment by acknowledging your breath and your surroundings. When you focus on your breath, you are no longer focused on the pain of the past or the fear of the future; your mind can rest in the present moment, this is when the anxiety starts to ease.

Thich Nath Hanh, a Buddhist monk from Vietnam, says “the true miracle is the moment when you

stop thinking.” One of his techniques when teaching mindfulness is to say to yourself, “this is my in breath, this is my out breath.” Do this as many times as you need to until you have gained control of your mind.

Another techniques is square breathing. This is when you breathe in to the count of four, breathe out to the count of four, then you do that four times.

These techniques may seem simple, but that is the point. Life is complicated enough; practicing ways to simplify life counteracts the chaos around us and brings peace when we need it most.

AMANDA ZINN
Seaside

Commission needs a plan

The headline in the May 26 edition of The Daily Astorian asked this question about the Clatsop County Commission: “Who’s in charge?” (“Who’s in charge? County commissioners split over role”). The reporter cites that commissioners are split on understanding their personal role in researching and making decisions.

When a local governmental question like this occurs, the first place one goes for an answer is the organization’s charter. Unfortunately, the defining of council or commissioner qualification and duties in charters is rather unspecific.

County and city manager duties are pretty clearly defined as “responsible for the day-to-day operation” of the organization, per the ordinances adopted by the council or commission. When pressed, the duties of a commissioner or council member is to ensure that “the real concerns of the people are being addressed by the council.”

Well, the top concern of the people should be pretty obvious: The Clatsop County Commission has gone through nine county managers in 16 years. This can only be a reflection on the lack of capable commissioners who can run an organization. The only way to fix this is to have an independent, impartial, and intelligent interviewer talk to the departed county managers and assemble a set of recommendations on how to rationally run this county.

I would hazard a guess that in prioritizing the concerns to be addressed, it will soon become obvious that what the commission has been missing is any rational plan to address “it’s the economy, stupid.”

The county is transitioning from having family-wage jobs to minimum-wage jobs. The county does not have a source of housing for minimum-wage job earners. You won’t get that plan sitting in your chair with a rubber stamp.

JOHN DUNZER
Seaside

Alarming display

I was disappointed to see the flagrant display of religious symbols at Astoria’s Maritime Memorial over the Memorial Day weekend. The memorial is public property and, as such, should be designed and managed in such a way that everyone will feel welcome there. I found the exclusive display of more than 60 Christian crosses extremely offensive and threatening.

What was more troubling was the thought that someone in our city government would approve such a blatantly sectarian use of a public park at such a time. Do they think there are no Jews, Muslims and God knows what else here? Our parks are for everyone.

If a family installs a plaque at the memorial in memory of a departed

loved one, they certainly can include on that plaque whatever religious symbol pleases them. Even a religious group should be allowed to use the park for a special occasion, assuming they have a permit and the event does not conflict with something more transcendent such as a national holiday in which the park plays a prominent role.

However, for the city of Astoria to sanction using the entire park for just one religion, and on a national and nonreligious holiday that commemorates the sacrifice of all who gave their life to defend this country, no matter their faith or nationality, is unconscionable and, I suspect, illegal.

The city of Astoria owes the people of Astoria an explanation and an apology.

PAUL HAIST
Astoria

See where money goes

June is a very busy month: high school and college graduations, weddings, and, for Astoria, the consideration of a budget for the fiscal year 2017-18. There is a budget committee composed of the mayor, the other four council members and five citizen members appointed by the mayor. All the city departments, various outside agencies who contribute to the good of the community, and the Warrenton-Astoria Area Chamber of Commerce seek funding from the property tax base and lodging taxes.

The total allocated to the agencies who provide musical and artistic programs and others who provide safety nets for needy and troubled citizens is only \$50,000. The total allocated to the Chamber of Commerce is close to \$300,000. Not satisfied with that amount, the Chamber has requested that in the future its funding should be a percentage of the lodging taxes collected.

Needless to say, as it has been for the past two years, there was serious discussion about how this large amount is utilized, and how much it really benefits the city. It is undisputed that the number of visitors to our fair city has steadily increased over the past few years; but there is not a scintilla of substantial evidence that this has been due to the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce.

At one point in this discussion, the Budget Committee chairman forbade further debate. The chairman is also on the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce.

Apart from the large discrepancy in funds provided to various agencies compared with what is provided to the Chamber, under the proposed budget, the Parks and Recreation Department will have a \$100,000 shortfall. This will result in limiting recreation programs, neglecting maintenance of our many parks, the scenic Riverwalk and possible closure of the Astoria Aquatic Center.

Good people of Astoria, something is out of whack in this budget. You may review the budget by going to www.astoria.or.us; on the left side of the page under “Information Links,” click on “Finance Budget Information.”

On Monday, June 5, at 7 p.m., in the Council Chambers at City Hall, there will be a public hearing regarding the budget. The total to be distributed is over \$37 million.

Good people, this is your money. Hopefully you will attend this hearing, even if you have to forfeit a bit of your evening and leisure time. Come and let the City Council know that you are concerned about how and where your money is spent.

GEORGE MCCARTIN
Astoria

With deterrence so delicate, Trump misfires on NATO

By CHARLES
KRAUTHAMMER

Washington Post Writers Group

WASHINGTON — So what if, in his speech last week to NATO, Donald Trump didn’t explicitly reaffirm the provision that an attack on one is an attack on all?



What’s the big deal? Didn’t he affirm a general commitment

to NATO during his visit? Hadn’t he earlier sent his vice president and secretaries of state and defense to pledge allegiance to Article 5?

And anyway, who believes that the United States would really go to war with Russia — and risk nuclear annihilation — over Estonia?

Ah, but that’s precisely the point. It is because deterrence is so delicate, so problematic, so literally unbelievable that it is not to be trifled with. And why for an American president to gratuitously undermine

what little credibility deterrence already has, by ostentatiously refusing to recommit to Article 5, is so shocking.

Deterrence is inherently a barely believable bluff. Even at the height of the Cold War, when highly resolute presidents, such as Eisenhower and Kennedy, threatened Russia with “massive retaliation” (i.e., all-out nuclear war), would we really have sacrificed New York for Berlin?

No one knew for sure. Not Eisenhower, not Kennedy, not the Soviets, not anyone. Yet that very uncertainty was enough to stay the hand of any aggressor and keep the peace of the world for 70 years.

Deterrence does not depend on 100 percent certainty that the other guy will go to war if you cross a red line. Given the stakes, merely a chance of that happening can be enough. For 70 years, it was enough.

Leaders therefore do everything they can to bolster it. Install tripwires, for example. During the Cold War, we stationed troops in Germany to face the massive tank

armies of Soviet Russia. Today we have 28,000 troops in South Korea, 12,000 near the demilitarized zone.

Why? Not to repel invasion. They couldn’t. They’re not strong enough. To put it very coldly, they’re there to die. They’re a deliberate message to the enemy that if you invade our ally, you will have to kill a lot of Americans first. Which will galvanize us into full-scale war against you.

Tripwires are risky, dangerous and cynical. Yet we resort to them because parchment promises are problematic and tripwires imply automaticity. We do what we can to strengthen deterrence.

Rhetorically as well. Which is why presidents from Truman on have regularly and powerfully reaffirmed our deterrent pledge to NATO. Until Trump.

His omission was all the more damaging because of his personal history. This is a man chronically disdainful of NATO. He campaigned on its obsolescence. His inaugural address denounced American allies as cunning parasites living off Amer-

ican wealth and generosity. One of Trump’s top outside advisers, Newt Gingrich, says that “Estonia is in the suburbs of St. Petersburg,” as if Russian designs on the Baltic states are not at all unreasonable.

Moreover, Trump devoted much of that very same speech, the highlight of his first presidential trip to NATO, to berating the allies for not paying their fair share. Nothing particularly wrong with that, or new — half a century ago Senate Majority Leader Mike Mansfield was so offended by NATO free riding that he called for major reductions of U.S. troops in Europe.

That’s an American perennial. But if you’re going to berate, at least reassure as well. Especially given rising Russian threats and aggression. Especially given that Trump’s speech was teed up precisely for such reassurance. An administration official had spread the word that he would use the speech to endorse Article 5. And it was delivered at a ceremony honoring the first and only invocation of Article 5 — ironically

enough, by the allies in support of America after 9/11.

And yet Trump deliberately, defiantly refused to simply say it: *America will always honor its commitment under Article 5.*

It’s not that, had Trump said the magic words, everyone would have 100 percent confidence we would strike back if Russia were to infiltrate little green men into Estonia, as it did in Crimea. But Trump’s refusal to utter those words does lower whatever probability Vladimir Putin might attach to America responding with any seriousness to Russian aggression against a NATO ally.

Angela Merkel said Sunday (without mentioning his name) that after Trump’s visit it is clear that Europe can no longer rely on others. It’s not that yesterday Europe could fully rely — and today it cannot rely at all. It’s simply that the American deterrent has been weakened. And deterrence weakened is an invitation to instability, miscalculation, provocation and worse.

And for what?