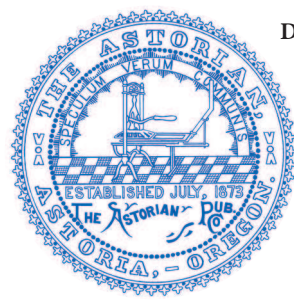


# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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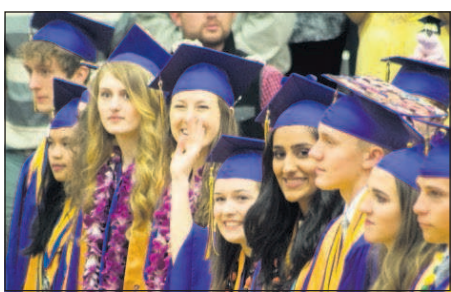
## OUR VIEW

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

• **Class of 2017** graduates from the region's five high schools who received their diplomas during commencement ceremonies during the past two weeks. At Astoria High School, more than 120 students donned caps and gowns during graduation last Saturday. Their commencement week activities included participating in the annual Grad Walk through the district's school buildings and then to cheers from onlookers along Commercial Street as they walked in a procession from Eighth Street to the Liberty Theater last Thursday.



Edward Stratton/The Daily Astorian  
**Astoria High School's nine valedictorians were the first to line up during graduation Saturday.**

At Seaside High School, 90 graduates received their diplomas during commencement on Monday at the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, while Warrenton High School graduated a class of 47 seniors last Friday. Knappa High School awarded 29 diplomas, while seven seniors received diplomas from Jewell High School.

• Organizers of last weekend's second annual **Astoria Pride**, which celebrated the LGBTQ community and featured events at the Liberty Theater, a parade along the Astoria Riverwalk and a block party. Businesses recognized Astoria Pride by hanging rainbow flags on buildings and downtown light poles, and the observance coincided with events across the country that supported the LGBTQ community with parades and festivals to celebrate equality.

• **The Assistance League of the Columbia Pacific**, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this week. The organization formed in the region with 36 volunteers in 2007 and is dedicated to promoting self esteem and emotional well being of children in the community. The organization now has 129 members and its charitable programs include Operation School Bell, which provides new clothing to children whose attendance and performance at school have been adversely affected by lack of adequate clothing. In this past school year its efforts provided clothing for 690 children.

• **North Coast Prevention Works**, which in conjunction with the Clatsop County Juvenile Department, recently conducted the 2017 Astoria and Warrenton Youth Recognition Awards Banquet that honored six youths for being an example to the community through their excellence and leadership. Prevention Works was founded in 2009 to promote community-level change in the prevention of substance abuse, and the stories of the youths' strength and perseverance were shared with the banquet's more than 50 attendees. Three adults, **Mike Davis**, **Carrie Kaull** and **Michael McClure**, were also honored with Asset Builder Awards for going above and beyond in making a difference in the lives of youths in the community.

• **Warrenton High School girls softball player Landree Miethe**, who was recently named the 2017 Player of the Year for the Lewis & Clark League. The senior catcher finished her final year as the Warriors' all-time leader in hits, stolen bases, triples and home runs. Warrenton missed the state playoffs, but had two players, Miethe and junior pitcher **Niqui Blodgett**, who were first team all-league selections.



## CALLOUTS

• **Whoever destroyed a military-style headstone** and dumped it at a boat launch in Carnahan Park near Cullaby Lake. The Clatsop County Sheriff's Department is trying determine the identity of the veteran it belonged to and the veteran's burial location, and Sheriff Tom Bergin said the headstone appeared to be intentionally damaged. The broken headstone was missing several pieces, including those with the name, the date of birth and date of death. Bergin said the letters "E and R" are discernible, and they are believed to be the last two letters of the veteran's name. Investigators also determined from pieces of the headstone that the veteran had been in the U.S. Air Force and served in both Korea and Vietnam. "Such blatant disrespect for the veteran's resting place is an outrage," Bergin said. He has asked for the public's help in finding out the identity of the veteran so the burial location can be determined and the headstone can be respectfully replaced.

### 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 mortification of Sessions

By FRANK BRUNI

New York Times News Service

The appearance of Jeff Sessions before the Senate Intelligence Committee on Tuesday didn't bring us much closer to understanding what did or didn't happen between Donald Trump and the Russians, or what the president has or hasn't done to

cover it up. Sessions batted away many questions. His answers to others were gauzy and useless.

But as I watched him, a flustered Gump in the headlights, I saw a broader story, a dark parable of bets misplaced and souls under siege. This is what happens when you draw too close to Trump.

You're diminished at best, mortified at worst. You've either done work dirtier than you meant to or told fibs bigger than you ought to or been sullied by contact or been thrown to the wolves.

One day, you're riding high on the myth of Trump as a transformative figure and reasoning that some tweaking of norms and maybe even breaking of rules are an inevitable part of the unconventional equation.

The next, you're ensnared in his recklessness, at the mercy of his tempestuousness and quite possibly the butt of his rage: the case with Sessions, who sank low enough that he felt compelled last month to offer Trump his resignation. "It's just like through the looking glass: What is this?" Sessions said during his Senate testimony, and while he was alluding to the suggestion that he and the Russian ambassador had plotted together to steal a presidential election, he could just as easily have been referring to the warped topography of Trumplandia.

It's a reputation-savaging place. Ask Rod Rosenstein for sure. Herbert McMaster, too. Also James Mattis. Sean Spicer. Reince Priebus. Rex Tillerson. Dan Coats. All have been under pressure, undercut or contradicted. They've been asked to pledge their fidelity to — even proclaim their adoration for — a man who adores only himself.

My God, that video, the one of the Cabinet in full session at long last. I've never seen anything like it. It's the most chilling measure yet of Trump's narcissism, and it's a breathtaking glimpse into what that means for the people around him.

They don't volunteer purplish flattery like that because it's their wont. He wants it so badly that they cough it up. To buoy his ego, they debase themselves, and what you heard them doing in that meeting wasn't just swallowing their pride but choking on it. They looked like hostages — hostages in need of the Heimlich.



AP Photo/Jacquelyn Martin

**Attorney General Jeff Sessions gestures as he testifies on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C., Tuesday before the Senate Intelligence Committee hearing about his role in the firing of James Comey, his Russian contacts during the campaign and his decision to recuse himself from an investigation into possible ties between Moscow and associates of President Donald Trump.**

Well, most of them. Mike Pence has discovered a freaky talent for such freakish sycophancy, and called it "the greatest privilege of my life" to assist "the president who's keeping his word to the American people." (Which word is that?) He sounded like he believed it. The mysteries of faith, indeed. A few others in the meeting

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summoned less ardor. "It's an honor," Mattis said, but then continued, "to represent the men and women of the Department of Defense." Trump turned away just then, as if the absence of his name equaled the loss of his interest.

Mattis has suffered the humiliation of assuring allies of our commitment to NATO just before Trump, without warning him,

sowed doubts about precisely that. McMaster, whose book "Dereliction of Duty" is expressly about talking truth to power, found himself at a lectern doing damage control for his damage-prone boss. He vouched that Trump's divulgence of classified information to Russian officials at the White House was no big deal.

No one in Trump's administration was forced into this service and its compromises. Some hungered for power, in whatever bastard package delivered it. At least a few, like Sessions, had poisoned reputations already.

But there were those with higher motives, too, and they find themselves in a White House governed by dread. Who's next to be shamed? What tweet or tantrum awaits? They thought that they'd be bolstering a leader. They see now that they're holding a grenade.

You could sense the stress of that in Sessions, who endorsed Trump before any other senator did, won the prize of attorney general but on Tuesday was the prosecuted, not the prosecutor.

At times he had a hurt, helpless air. He cried foul at the "secret innuendo being leaked out there about me."

He called the suggestion that he'd conspired with Russia "an appalling and detestable lie."

"I did not recuse myself from defending my honor against scurrilous and false allegations," he declared. No, but he made it a hell of a lot harder the moment he took Trump's hand.

For all Trump's career and all his campaign, he played the part of Midas, claiming that everything he touched turned to gold. That was never true. This is: Almost everyone who touches him is tarnished, whether testifying or not.

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