

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

• **Riki Irie**, owner of Malama Day Spa, who has been helping to raise money for **Daxton Olson**, a Seaside baby with an inoperable brain tumor. The 8-month-old boy began a chemotherapy plan in February, and as part of the fundraising awareness, Irie made a promise to shave her head, and did so last week. “I heard the story and I couldn’t not do something,” she said. Thus far, Irie has been able to raise \$3,300 for the child with a goal of topping \$5,000. She will continue to take donations for the youngster at her spa, and there is also a GoFundMe account set up for him at gofundme.com/olson-family-love.



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Riki Irie reacts as she sees her shaved head for the first time at the La Boheme salon in Astoria on Thursday as supporters look on behind her. Irie agreed to have her head shaved if a fundraising goal was met for a local infant diagnosed with brain cancer.

• **Amanda Gladics of Oregon Sea Grant**, who coordinated the first ever “**Shop the Dock**” tours last week that highlighted Warrenton’s seafood offerings. The tours helped show people what’s available and where and gave attendees an up-close look at fisheries and the Skipanon Brand Seafood processing facility. More tours are planned in September.

• **Lou Neubecker** and members of **Seaside’s Community Center and Senior Commission**, for raising needed money to help begin renovation of the city’s **Bob Chisholm Community Center**. Construction should begin on the project in the fall after a formal bid process is undertaken. The commission’s fundraising efforts brought in more than \$51,000 that will be combined with money from the city to refurbish the main hall and renovate the center’s entryway and classrooms.

• The nonprofit **Friends of the Astoria Column** group, who honored the late **Hal Snow** during a recent City Council meeting. Snow, a former city attorney who died in December, was a founding member of the group as well as Friends of the Liberty Theater and Astoria High School Scholarships Inc. **Jordan Schnitzer**, a Portland developer, philanthropist and president of Friends of the Astoria Column, called Snow “the conscience of the Column,” and credited him for where the nonprofit and the 91-year-old monument are today. Next year, the nonprofit group will celebrate its 30th anniversary.

• **U.S. Coast Guard Cmdr. Kristen Serumgard**, who recently passed command of the Coast Guard cutter **Fir** to **Lt. Cmdr. Jason Haag**. The cutter, known as The Bar Tender, maintains 117 buoys and other aids to navigation on the Columbia River and along the coastline. It also maintains weather buoys for the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. It is based at North Tongue Point. Serumgard took over the ship in 2014 and leaves to the East Coast to command the International Ice Patrol, which monitors the presence of icebergs in the Atlantic and Arctic oceans.

• **Clatsop County Clerk Valerie Crafard**, who retired from her position after three years. Crafard joined the county in 2006 as a human resources assistant and clerk of the Board of Commissioners, and filled in as the county clerk temporarily in 2014 before being hired into that position permanently in March 2015. The clerk’s duties include keeping and administering the county’s public records and archives as well as legal recordings, passports and marriage licenses. The clerk is also involved in overseeing elections and voter registration and coordinating property tax appeals.



CALLOUTS

• A **thief** who recently stole an 18-foot boat from the Skipanon Marina in Warrenton and then abandoned it after heading south on the river and found he couldn’t get past the Eight Street Dam. Warrenton Police found the 1993 Alumaweld boat submerged with the motors still attached near the dam along with items the thief apparently left behind. The boat’s owner and a group of friends were able to refloat the craft and remove it from the area, and officers say they have a suspect in the case and are also investigating how the boat sank.

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.



Is the news media an ‘existential’ threat?

By **BRET STEPHENS**
New York Times News Service

Dear Dennis,
To err is human. To tweet is to regret. When I decided last month to leave Twitter, it was in part because I knew that, while I couldn’t avoid the former, I could at least escape the latter. Not everything that pops into the heads of smart people is smart. Still less of it needs to be shared.

“Silence is better for the wise, and how much more so for fools.” I’m sure you know the proverb.

So it was with a grain of salt that I read your Bastille Day tweet:

“The news media in the West pose a far greater danger to Western civilization than Russia does,” Dennis Prager tweeted.

It sounded, frankly, like the kind of involuntary mental wet burp many of us have at moments of peak ideological irritation — for conservatives, often while reading the editorial pages of this newspaper.

I didn’t think you could possibly mean it. Turns out, you do.

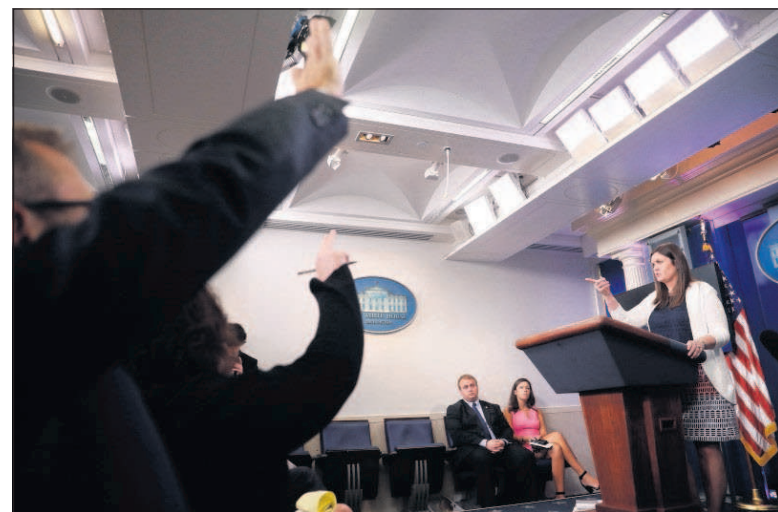
On Tuesday you doubled down with an online column for Townhall. “The real threat to Western civilization is Western civilization ceasing to believe in itself,” you write. “And, in that regard, Russia poses no danger, while the left-wing dominated media and universities pose an existential threat.”

You’re a smart guy, Dennis, and it’s not a dumb column. “Attacking what the media is doing is not the same as attacking the existence of the media,” you say. True. “Putin is indeed a murderous quasi-dictator,” you acknowledge. Delete “quasi”; otherwise correct. “Civilization connotes a body of ideas and a value system,” you add, making the point that Russia’s nukes can’t destroy it. Well, OK, that’s one way of defining civilization.

You end with a list of various things being done to Western civilization in the name of multiculturalism, anti-DWEMism and so on, none of it with the help of Putin. Much of it is indeed bad, though I’m not sure that Justin Trudeau declaring there is “no core identity, no mainstream in Canada” counts as a Spenglerian moment in the story of Western decline.

But, yes, there’s a lot that’s dumb about the academy and a lot that’s wrong with journalism. It should be criticized, not feared. Foolish conservatives often assume every instance of institutional malfunction is a symptom of civilizational cancer. Wiser conservatives know, as Adam Smith did, that “there is a great deal of ruin in a nation.”

Wiser conservatives — and I count you among them, Dennis



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais

Deputy White House press secretary Sarah Huckabee Sanders points as she answers questions during the daily press briefing at the White House Thursday.

— also know that when we speak of “the West,” what we’re talking about is a particular strain within it. Marx and Lenin, after all, are also part of the Western tradition, as are Heidegger and Hitler.

For us, on the other hand, “the West” is the liberal-democratic tradition; the one most succinctly expressed in the Declaration of Independence. “All men are created equal.” “The consent of the governed.” “The Laws of Nature and of Nature’s God.” “Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.” All the rest, from Exodus to Gettysburg, is commentary.

To be indifferent to every claim of truth or fact is the ultimate assertion of power.

That’s why the intelligent conservative has no time either for illiberalism, often of the right, or relativism, typically of the left. And that’s why wise conservatives take the threat from Vladimir Putin seriously. He is the champion and most insidious exponent of both.

Through the development of a crypto-fascist ideology that combines ferocious ethnic chauvinism and revanchism, economic corporatism, and a dash of religious traditionalism, and a personality cult, he is the model for aspiring autocrats everywhere, from Hungary to Turkey to the Philippines.

And through Russia Today and other direct or indirect arms of Kremlin propaganda, Putin makes common cause with his old comrades on the far left. In the main, the goal is to undermine the West every way they can, from exposing military and diplomatic secrets via WikiLeaks, to

intervening in and calling into question the legitimacy of the democratic process, to raising the bogus specter of a “deep state” that suppresses the popular will.

No wonder the best book yet written about Putin’s Russia, by Peter Pomerantsev, is titled “Nothing is True and Everything is Possible.” I’m sending it to you as a birthday present, Dennis. Relativism greases the skids for illiberalism. That’s why we NeverTrumpers believe there is a connection between Donald Trump’s compulsive lying and his undisguised personal affinity for Putin that goes beyond the question of who said what at last year’s Russia meeting in Trump Tower. The connection is philosophical.

To be indifferent to every claim of truth or fact is the ultimate assertion of power. It is to say: Nothing restrains me, not what I promised yesterday, not what I am saying to you now, not what I might do tomorrow. That’s how Putin operates in his sphere. That’s how Trump operates in ours. What’s worse is to see so many conservatives who should know better excuse one president and line up behind the other.

Dennis, you got your wish: Hillary Clinton isn’t president and never will be. But the responsibility of a public intellectual like you isn’t to spend the next several years justifying your vote. It’s to see things plain and in their true perspective. To suggest that Vladimir Putin is a distant nuisance but Maggie Haberman or David Sanger is an existential threat to our civilization isn’t seeing things plain, to put it mildly.

It used to be that conservatives thought liberals were wrong while liberals thought conservatives were evil. Among the other ways in which Trump has degraded the conservative movement is that he’s turned us into a mirror image of what we used to accuse liberals of being. He’s turned us into haters.

Don’t be a hater, Dennis. Disavow, delete and rethink that stupid tweet.

LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Daily Astorian.

Letters should be fewer than 350 words and must include the writer’s name, address and phone numbers. You will be contacted to confirm authorship.

All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two

letters per writer are printed each month.

Letters written in response to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and, rather than mentioning the writer by name, should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil and people should be referred to in a

respectful manner.

Submissions may be sent in any of these ways:

E-mail to editor@dailyastorian.com; online at www.dailyastorian.com; delivered to the Astorian offices at 949 Exchange St. and 1555 N. Roosevelt in Seaside or by mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR 97103.