

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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DAVID F. PERO, Publisher & Editor

LAURA SELLERS, Managing Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN, Circulation Manager

DEBRA BLOOM, Business Manager

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CARL EARL, Systems Manager

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



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian
Members of the U.S. Coast Guard spent Monday morning at Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton, volunteering their time to help mow and clear weeds from around headstones.

• Crew members of the U.S. Coast Guard cutter Alert who volunteered and tended to gravesites at Ocean View Cemetery in Warrenton earlier this week to help improve maintenance on the grounds. About 20 members of the crew worked most of the day Monday and Wednesday chopping down weeds between grave markers, removing trash and debris and cleaning up around markers and headstones. The city of Astoria owns the cemetery and the Parks and Recreation Department maintains it but has received complaints

from loved ones about the upkeep of the grounds. The Alert is currently in dry dock and crew members said they just wanted to give back to the community.

• Agnes Waliser and Harley Wait, who were honored last weekend in Kennewick, Washington, at the 99th annual convention of the Washington State American Legion. Waliser, from Pacific County Fire District 1, is a pioneering woman firefighter who will retire this fall and was named Washington Firefighter of the Year; and Wait, a Long Beach Peninsula pastor, serves with the South Pacific County Technical Rescue Team and was named state Emergency Rescue Technician of the Year. Both gave credit for the achievements to those who have trained, encouraged and supported them.

• Former Astoria Library director Bruce Berney, who will have an archive named in his honor. According to current library director Jimmy Pearson, the Astoriana Collection that contains “anything and everything you would want to know about the city of Astoria and its history” will now be called the Bruce Berney Archives. Berney was the library’s director for 30 years until his retirement in 1997 and was responsible for purchasing the library’s first edition Lewis and Clark Journals.

• Volunteers organized by the Lower Columbia Hispanic Council and the Astoria Parks and Recreation Department, who recently gathered and cleaned up debris around Tapiola Park and expanded the footprint of the playground. Jorge Gutierrez, the council’s executive director, said the effort is an outcome resulting from the Astoria City Council adopting an inclusivity resolution that recognizes the contributions of the Hispanic community.

• Organizers and participants at the recent 33rd annual Sandsations sand-sculpting event in Long Beach. Teams in divisions ranging from masters to families to novices spent six hours working on their creations while a throng of spectators enjoyed the beach and watching them sculpt their imaginative works. The creations included sculptures such as the “7 Wonders of the World” and “Submarine Sandwich,” which featured a great white shark pursuing the meal, a submarine, that had the body of a sandwich.



CALLOUTS

• Thieves in Grants Pass who ruined a wood bench honoring two Oregon teenagers who died in a plane crash last year. According to the Grants Pass Daily Courier, the bench is at the entrance to a field at Grants Pass High School, where Max Belnap and Ryan Merker competed at sports. The duo died in a plane crash off the Oregon Coast near Brookings on July 4, 2016. Belnap’s younger brother, Lucas, made the memorial bench as part of his Eagle Scout project. It was dedicated at the end of the school year. The thieves stole two large slabs of elm from the bench last weekend, leaving just a metal frame. Lucas’s mother, Cheryl Belnap, said the project was a labor of love for her son, and the vandalism is devastating.

• The Washington State Department of Health, which apologized after offending people with an anti-marijuana message that was targeted at Hispanic youth. The public health campaign included advertisements and at least one billboard in the Yakima area that says, “We don’t need pot to have fun” and “We’re Hispanics ... We’re cool by default.” Reaction on social media was harsh and a department spokeswoman said it was clear some were offended. The department intends on removing the billboard, the spokeswoman said.

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.



‘First they came for ...’

By CHARLES BLOW
New York Times News Service

It is no longer sufficient to brand Donald Trump as abnormal, a designation that is surely applicable but that falls significantly short in registering the magnitude of the menace.

The standard nomenclature of normal politics must be abandoned. What we are witnessing is nothing less than an assault on the fundamentals of the country itself: on our legacy institutions and our sense of protocol, decency and honesty.

In any other circumstance, we might likely write this off as the trite protestations of a man trapped in a toddler’s temperament, full of meltdowns, magical thinking and make believe. But this man’s vindictiveness and mendacity are undergirded by the unequalled power of the American president, and as such he has graduated on the scale of power from toddler to budding tyrant.

This threat Trump poses — to our morals, ethics, norms and collective sense of propriety — may be without equal from a domestic source.

Everything he is doing is an assault and matters on some level.

His desecration of the Boy Scouts’ national jamboree matters. Not only did he turn his appearance before the boys into a political rally in which they booed both former President Barack Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton, he seemed to be appealing to their basest instincts.

What exactly did Trump mean when he regaled the boys with the story of the real estate developer William Levitt, who, as Trump put it:

“Sold his company for a tremendous amount of money. And he went out and bought a big yacht, and he had a very interesting life. I won’t go any more than that, because you’re Boy Scouts so I’m not going to tell you what he did.”

As the boys start to make noise, Trump responds, “Should I tell you? Should I tell you?” and then proceeds to say:

“You’re Boy Scouts, but you know life. You know life.”

Is this a version of Trump’s “locker room talk,” that phrase he used to excuse his genital-grabbing comments on the “Access Hollywood” tape? This may seem like a small thing in the grand scheme, but it matters. The fact that its shelf life felt like only a few hours before the next outrage underscores the degree to which our national consciousness is being barraged by the man’s violations.

But yes, it matters too, just as Trump’s obsession with Obama and Clinton matters.

Also, his public trolling of Attorney General Jeff Sessions matters. The fact that he’s enraged at Sessions for taking the appropriate ethical step and recusing himself from the Russia investigation matters. The fact that Trump essentially told The New York Times on the record that he would not have chosen Sessions if he’d known Sessions wouldn’t have stood firm in protection of him, matters.

Trump’s continuous attacks on the media matter.

His pushing of the Republicans’ callous Obamacare repeal-and-replace plan — a plan that would strip health insurance coverage from tens of millions of Americans, and



AP Photo/Carolyn Kaster

President Donald Trump waves to the crowd after speaking at the 2017 National Scout Jamboree in Glen Jean, W.Va., on Monday. On Thursday, Chief Scout Executive Michael Surbaugh released a statement apologizing to members of the scouting community who were offended by the aggressive political rhetoric in the president’s speech three days earlier.

a plan that Trump has demonstrated no particular policy knowledge of — matters.

Trump’s tweet on Wednesday — on the 69th anniversary of President Harry Truman desegregating the armed forces, no less — that “the United States government will not accept or allow transgender individuals to serve in any capacity in the U.S. military,” matters. There are thousands of trans people already serving in the military. The idea that

Multiple populations are being assaulted at once, across race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual identity.

a man with five draft deferments would dictate that people who volunteer to serve should not be allowed to be beyond outrageous — and it matters.

Trump’s pushing us closer to international military conflict matters.

And yes, the plodding Russia investigation, which to Trump is an agitation and threat, like an irremovable thorn in his flesh, matters.

This has come as a great shock and demoralizer to many Americans, not necessarily because they didn’t think Trump was capable of such depravity, but because they simply were unprepared for the daily reality of living a nightmare.

There is an enduring expectation, particularly among American liberals, that progress in this society should move inexorably toward more openness, honesty and equality. But even the historical record doesn’t support that expectation.

In reality, America regularly experiences bouts of regression, but fortunately, it is in those regressive periods that some of our greatest movements and greatest voices had found their footing.

President Andrew Jackson’s atrocious American Indian removal program gave us the powerful

Cherokee memorial letters. The standoff at Standing Rock gave us what the BBC called “the largest gathering of Native Americans in more than 100 years.”

Crackdowns on gay bars gave us the Stonewall uprising. America’s inept response to the AIDS epidemic gave us Act Up and Larry Kramer. California’s Proposition 8 breathed new life into the fight for marriage equality and led to a victory in the Supreme Court.

The racial terror that followed the Emancipation Proclamation gave us the anti-lynching movement, the NAACP, W.E.B. Du Bois, Ida B. Wells and James Weldon Johnson.

Jim Crow gave us the civil rights movement, and the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks, Rep. John Lewis, Fannie Lou Hamer and James Baldwin.

The latest rash of extrajudicial killing of black people gave us Black Lives Matter.

The financial crisis and the government’s completely inadequate response to it gave us Occupy Wall Street and the 99 percent.

A renewed assault on women’s rights, particularly a woman’s right to choose, gave us, at least in part, the Women’s March, likely the largest march in American history.

This is not an exhaustive list, but just some notable examples.

It is a way of illustrating that the fiery crucible is where the weapons of resistance are forged; it is where the mettle of those crusading for justice, equality and progress are tested.

Unlike the examples listed above, Trump’s assault is intersectional and nearly universal. Multiple populations are being assaulted at once, across race, ethnicity, religion, gender and sexual identity.

So, in this moment of regression, all the targets of Trump’s ire must push back with a united front, before it is too late.

As Martin Niemöller so famously put it:

First they came for the Socialists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a Socialist.

Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out — because I was not a trade unionist.

Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out — because I was not a Jew.

Then they came for me — and there was no one left to speak for me.