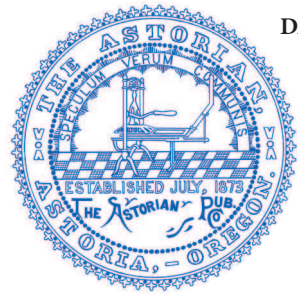


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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OUR VIEW

Seniors should snap up passes to national parks

Seniors 62 and older have less than a week left to take advantage of a great deal — a lifetime pass to national parks and recreation for only \$10. On Aug. 28, the price jumps to \$80, a seven-fold increase.

The price hike was approved during the final year of President Barack Obama's term, and the National Park Service announced last month that it would become effective this month. The \$10 pass, known as the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Senior Pass, has been available since 1994. It was free before that. The National Park Service says money generated from the increase will be used for badly needed deferred maintenance and to enhance programs and services.

While the increase is hefty, especially for those on fixed incomes, it's still a great deal for anyone who misses out on the \$10 deal or doesn't yet qualify for a pass. Seniors can also opt to purchase an annual pass rather than a lifetime pass for \$20. Four annual senior passes purchased in prior years can be traded for a lifetime pass.

Both passes provide free access to more than 2,000 recreation sites managed by six federal agencies: the National Park Service; the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service; the Bureau of Land Management; the Bureau of Reclamation; the U.S. Forest Service; and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. While the lifetime pass favors frequent visitors, both types of passes cover entrance and standard day-use recreation fees and provide discounts on other fees.

Of the nation's 417 national parks, 118 — including the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park — have an entrance fee. But either pass grants its holder and up to three other adults in a non-commercial vehicle free admittance. At the Lewis and Clark park, that alone would represent a savings of \$20, the cost of an annual pass, and at many sites it provides the pass owner with additional discounts on fees for amenities such as camping, swimming, boat launching and guided tours.

At Lewis and Clark, Superintendent Jon Burpee says the demand for the passes has been "incredibly high," and that while the park is currently out of passes, it is issuing rain checks to those who purchase them before the deadline. They can be purchased at the Fort Clatsop Visitors Center.

The passes are a great deal now, and despite the cost, it's still a good deal after Aug. 28 for those who qualify.

Port of Astoria should think of progress when making appointment

Astoria Port commissioners will make a choice Tuesday that will directly impact the board's makeup after interviewing seven candidates who seek to fill an opening created by Robert Mushen's recent resignation.

The interviews begin at 4 p.m. and commissioners will make the appointment afterward. While interviewing, the candidates need to clearly articulate their vision for the Port, and in making their selection, commissioners must seek leadership qualities that will help reverse the Port's problems of the past.

That past has been plagued by divisiveness and a lack of direction, but the May election put the Port on a new heading. In the election, the seats of commissioners James Campbell, Stephen Fulton and John Raichl were up for grabs. Raichl didn't seek re-election, and Fulton ran against Campbell rather than try to retain his seat. Campbell soundly defeated Fulton, and voters decidedly chose Frank Spence and Dirk Rohne over opponents Pat O'Grady and Dick Hellberg, whose platforms aligned with Fulton's. Spence, Rohne and Campbell are joined on the commission with Bill Hunsinger, who was also an ally of Fulton.

O'Grady, a longshoreman, farmer and mechanic, is seeking the appointment. Others are: John Lansing, a former longtime Port budget committee member whose background is financial services; Robert Johnston, advocacy coordinator for NorthWest Senior & Disability Services in Astoria, who has served as a McMinnville city councilor and Yamhill County commissioner; Robert Stevens, a retired U.S. Coast Guard captain and former commander of the cutter Resolute when it was stationed in Astoria; Pamela Wev, a land use planner and economic development consultant who moved to Astoria in 2014; Russ Earl, a land developer and former Clatsop County commissioner and Seaside planning commissioner; and Ronald Meyer, 87, a retired machinist, inventor and designer of lighting and hospital equipment.

The Port is poised for progress, and commissioners should use the opportunity to take another step toward it with the choice they make.



A real American heritage



AP Photo/Matt Slocum

In this photograph taken with a long exposure, protesters march down North Broad Street in Philadelphia Wednesday in response to a white nationalist rally held in Charlottesville, Va.

By TIMOTHY EGAN
New York Times News Service

Before they die, before they disappear into the opaque mist of history, the last Americans to fight Nazi Germany have to face one more blast of something they thought they'd eliminated in the bloodiest war of all time.



Every day we lose an average of 362 World War II veterans — the boys from the Bronx, the farmers from Nebraska, the kids yanked from late-adolescent langour to fight a monster. I asked one of them, Caesar Civitella, Nazi-killer and son of an Italian immigrant, how it felt to see Hitler's flags paraded over our soil last weekend.

And make no mistake, those were the flags of a genocidal force in the Charlottesville, Virginia, rally last weekend, the one in which some "very fine people," in President Donald Trump's infamous words, participated. The polo-shirt fascists were brandishing Othala rune and Black Sun symbols — both used by the SS, the paramilitary muscle behind the slaughter of 6 million Jews.

"These neo-Nazis, whatever you call them — I thought we'd ended all that," Civitella said, sounding both mournful and feisty. "These people have nothing to do with American values."

I found this soldier of World War II at his home in St. Petersburg, Florida, where he is a local hero for living a life that deserves a movie. He will be 94 on Aug. 21, the day of the total solar eclipse — "Jesus Christ's way of saying happy birthday," he said.

Within a generation's time, nearly all of the 16 million American veterans who served in World War II will be gone. And the biggest insult, the gravest disservice of Trump's giving comfort to Hitler sympathizers, is to those who fought to save the world from evil more than 70 years ago.

"Because I'm old, now 94, I

recognize these omens of doom," wrote Harry Leslie Smith, a Royal Air Force veteran, in an essay this week in the Guardian. "Chilling signs are everywhere, perhaps the biggest being that the U.S. allows itself to be led by Donald Trump, a man deficient in honor, wisdom and just simple human kindness."

To those grave deficiencies, you can add one more: historical illiteracy. In his grievance-burst of a news conference this week, Trump had this to say about those who showed up to protest the neo-Nazis and neo-Confederates: "You are changing history, you're changing culture."

'These neo-Nazis, whatever you call them — I thought we'd ended all that. These people have nothing to do with American values.'

Caesar Civitella
World War II veteran

In truth, it was the raising of statues in the early 20th century — when the Lost Cause whitewash of the confederacy of slaveholders was in full swing — that tried to change both culture and history. George Washington will be next, Trump said, using a line that neo-Nazis throw around at their hate fests.

The founders, flawed but brilliant men, put their lives at risk to create a nation built on principles that took a long time to realize. Robert E. Lee was a traitor, the best general of a war that killed more Americans than any other. His statue no more

belongs on a pedestal than does that of Hitler's most proficient military man.

History and culture are what Civitella embodies, for his story is the American story. His father, an immigrant from Italy, died when Caesar was young. With the call of war, he volunteered for jump school at Fort Benning, Georgia. Then the Office of Strategic Services, a spy service that did much more than snoop and decode, selected him for especially dangerous duty. Civitella jumped into occupied France.

Working with the French Resistance, he killed his share of Nazis, he said, and helped capture 4,000 of them.

Next up was a mission to go after Mussolini. But as the son of an Italian immigrant, his loyalty was challenged. "I was asked if I would hesitate to kill an Italian who worked with the Nazis. I said, nope."

His generation includes George H.W. Bush, another war hero, the exact age as Civitella. This week Bush, with his son George W., released a simple, decent statement on the toxicity of racial hatred.

No such message came from the empty shell of Donald Trump, a man who once said his own personal Vietnam was avoiding sexually transmitted diseases in the wilds of Manhattan. Warming the hearts of the little Hitlers this week, Trump claimed to have looked carefully at the hatemongers in Charlottesville and found many good citizens.

He must have missed the chants of "Jews will not replace us!" and "blood and soil," a favorite of Hitler's murderous legions. Or he must have overlooked the thugs brandishing semi-automatic rifles and chanting "siege heil" outside the Congregation Beth Israel synagogue in Charlottesville.

It doesn't take much to find the sources of the best American culture and history. You won't find them in the "beautiful statues and monuments" — Trump's words this week — of slaveholders and traitors. Look instead to those like Civitella, who are not yet cast in bronze but deserve to be — the living memory.

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.