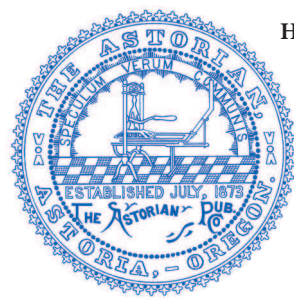


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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OUR VIEW

Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Dave Strickland repairs fishing equipment, a task many new crew members are unwilling or unable to perform.

New generation of fishermen key to local culture, economy

Getting to know the fishermen and crabbers of the Columbia-Pacific region is a lesson in respect for tradition, the environment and the future. No one has a better sense for how humanity's wellbeing is bound up with that of the natural world. This is a major reason why we all should advocate for success in the efforts described in our Thursday story about bringing up the next generation of fishermen.

This is a vital and often lucrative occupation — one deeply ingrained in local culture and history — in which job openings have become difficult to fill. Our story about the “graying of the fleet” described many of the key reasons for this trend:

- In a time of near full employment on the coast, fishing competes with industries that offer safer, more comfortable, less seasonal work.
- Most commercial fishing boats are, in effect, small businesses in a time of tighter financing and regulations.
- The costs of gear, permitting, insurance and regulatory compliance all have increased faster than the ex-vessel price of most fisheries products.
- Though still regarded locally as an honorable — in some ways even prestigious — career, commercial fishing gets much bad press. The whole industry is tarnished when word spreads about indiscriminate overfishing by foreign vessels, whale entanglements, and resource-allocation fights like the one that resulted in banning gillnets from the Columbia's main stem.
- Being a fisherman can entail long hours and sacrifices of family time that a younger generation may be unwilling to accommodate.

Weighted against these factors is fishing's timeless appeal to independent-minded entrepreneurs and adventurers. Those who get fishing into their souls and blood can't imagine a better life than working in close harmony with the ocean and river.

An October 2017 article by John Cappetta in the online magazine Hakai (tinyurl.com/Teach-Kids-to-Fish) provides an eloquent statement about why we all should care about whether fishing survives as a career: The “ultimate goal is to restore and protect coastal ecosystems so people can live off them again. Ethical and engaged fishers are integral to that vision — they're potential allies in taking the ocean's pulse.”

In other words, smart fishermen take good care of the resources on which they depend, and can help lead all of us on a path toward wise ocean stewardship.

The industry is right to participate in job fairs and start taking other active steps to recruit new fishermen and women. A new state task force on maritime sector workforce development is a good move, along with normalizing the status of maritime jobs with a formal classification in Oregon's employment division. Forming community fishing associations like one now getting off the ground in Ilwaco and Chinook is another good way to clear a path for younger fishermen.

Our communities will be wise to support all of this. We must work together with the industry to specifically address each of the factors that discourage a new generation from going to sea.

Fishing has been key to our economy and culture. It will take our full attention to ensure it remains so in the future.

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Billionaires desperately need our help!

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Service

It is so hard to be a billionaire these days!
A new yacht can cost \$300 million. And you wouldn't believe what a pastry chef earns — and if you hire just one, to work weekdays, how can you possibly survive on weekends?

The investment income on, say, a \$4 billion fortune is a mere \$1 million a day, which makes it tough to scrounge by with today's rising prices. Why, some wealthy folks don't even have a home in the Caribbean and on vacation are stuck brooding in hotel suites: They're practically homeless!

Fortunately, President Donald Trump and the Republicans are coming along with some desperately needed tax relief for billionaires.

Thank God for this lifeline to struggling tycoons. And it's carefully crafted to focus the benefits on the truly deserving — the affluent who earn their tax breaks with savvy investments in politicians.

For example, eliminating the estate tax would help the roughly 5,500 Americans who now owe this tax each year, one-fifth of 1 percent of all Americans who die annually. Ending the tax would help upstanding people like the Trumps who owe their financial success to brilliant life choices, such as picking the uterus in which they were conceived.

Now it's fair to complain that the tax plan overall doesn't give needy billionaires quite as much as they deserve. For example, the top 1 percent receive only a bit more than 25 percent of the total tax cuts in the Senate bill, according to the Institute on Taxation and Economic Policy.

Really? Only 25 times their share of the population? After all those dreary \$5,000-a-plate dinners supporting politicians? If politicians had any guts, they'd just slash services

for low-income families so as to finance tax breaks for billionaires.

Oh, wait, that's exactly what's happening!

Trump understands, for example, that health insurance isn't all that important for the ruffraff. So he and the Senate GOP have again targeted Obamacare, this time by trying to repeal the insurance mandate. The Congressional Budget Office says this will result in 13 million fewer people having health insurance.

But what's the big deal? The United States already has an infant mortality rate twice that of Austria and South Korea. American women are already five times as likely to die in pregnancy or childbirth as women in Britain. So who'll notice if things get a bit worse?

The tax bill underscores a political truth: There's nothing wrong with redistribution when it's done right.

Perhaps that sounds harsh. But the blunt reality is that we risk soul-sucking dependency if we're always setting kids' broken arms. Maybe that's why congressional Republicans haven't bothered to renew funding for CHIP, the child health insurance program serving almost 9 million American kids. Ditto for the maternal and home visiting programs that are the gold standard for breaking cycles of poverty and that also haven't been renewed. We mustn't coddle American toddlers.

Hey, if American infants really want health care, they'll pick themselves up by their bootie straps and Uber over to an emergency room.

Congressional Republicans

understand that we can't do everything for everybody. We have to make hard choices. Congress understands that kids are resilient and can look after themselves, so we must focus on the most urgent needs, such as those of hand-to-mouth billionaires.

In fairness, Congress has historically understood this mission. The tax code subsidizes moguls with private jets while the carried interest tax break gives a huge tax discount to striving private equity zillionaires. Meanwhile, a \$13 billion annual subsidy for corporate meals and entertainment gives ditch diggers the satisfaction of buying Champagne for financiers.

Our political leaders are so understanding because we appear to have the wealthiest Congress we've ever had, with a majority of members now millionaires, so they understand the importance of cutting health for the poor to show support for the crème de la crème.

Granted, the GOP tax plan will add to the deficit, forcing additional borrowing. But if the tax cut passes, automatic “pay as you go” rules may helpfully cut \$25 billion from Medicare spending next year, thus saving money on elderly people who are practically dead anyway. If poor kids have to suffer, we may as well make poor seniors suffer as well. That's called a balanced policy.

More broadly, you have to look at the reason for deficits. Yes, it's problematic to borrow to pay for, say, higher education or cancer screenings. But what's the problem with borrowing \$1.5 trillion to invest in urgent tax relief for billionaires?

Anyway, at some point down the road we'll find a way to pay back the debt by cutting a wasteful program for runny-nose kids who aren't smart enough to hire lobbyists.

There must be some kids' program that still isn't on the chopping block.

The tax bill underscores a political truth: There's nothing wrong with redistribution when it's done right.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No docs available

Recently my husband and I moved to the Seaside area to retire. We love our new home, neighbors and the city. We have unfortunately run into a big problem that I believe many retirees have experienced: We cannot find a health care provider who will take us as new patients.

No reason to list the obvious problem this causes, but what are we to do if we are sick? Drive two hours to our old physician? This is a sad commentary not only on physicians who refuse Medicare patients, but also Medicare for reimbursing at such a low percentage.

Something must give, as the largest percentage of Americans on Medicare need access to local health care. Shame on the government for seeing no value in the elderly, and on physicians for their greed.

LINDSEY MORRISON
Seaside

Gimme shelter

I wake at 4 a.m. Monday morning. No electricity. I feel my way down the stairs to the phone, and call in the outage. I'm told there are outages all over the county, and that 35 of my neighbors in Brownsmead have also reported in. Just 35. Not good. We've probably been placed at the end of the line.

I go back to bed, but can't sleep knowing that when I do get up for the day, I won't be able to have my

toast and coffee fix, and I won't be able to turn on the telly to watch the morning news.

It's the fourth outage here since August, and I'm well on the way to feeling sorry for myself when ... I suddenly imagine myself on the other side of these bedroom walls, out in that driving rain, with no bed or roof to shelter me.

In two days, if the weather dictates, I'll be volunteering at the Astoria Warming Center on its first night of the shelter's winter season. I'll do my best not to feel embarrassed by those coming in to shelter for the night — men and women who were probably out there Monday morning in that driving rain, while I was at home feeling sorry for myself and cursing Pacific Power.

JULIE SNYDER
Brownsmead

Giving thanks

The American day of thanksgiving is even older than the nation itself. Various dates have been suggested for being the first, but credit is usually given to the feast of thanksgiving celebrated by the Mayflower Pilgrims and Wampanoag Indians in 1621 at the Plymouth Colony in what is now Massachusetts.

In a sense, it became a unique American holiday when George Washington and Congress proclaimed a national day of thanksgiving in 1789. Their document of

proclamation states:

“Whereas it is the duty of all Nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey his will, to be grateful for his benefits, and humbly implore his protection and favor (we) recommend to the People of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many signal favors of Almighty God.”

President Washington was right. God has blessed this nation, and we should pause and give him thanks for his generosity and goodness. Thanks for this wonderful land with its freedoms and opportunities. Thanks for the food and other necessities we so often take for granted. Thanks for our military and military veterans, who serve and sacrifice so that we may be free.

Thanks for the police and fire personnel, and their efforts to protect us and our property. For the doctors and nurses and other professionals who serve us in our health needs. I personally need to thank him for my wife, family, friends, church family, health, and a nice house that is warm in the winter and cool in the summer. Also, thanks for more material things than I'll ever use.

Make your own list — the blessings are almost endless. Thank you Lord.

“Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving” Psalms 95:2

KEN TIPPS
Scappoose