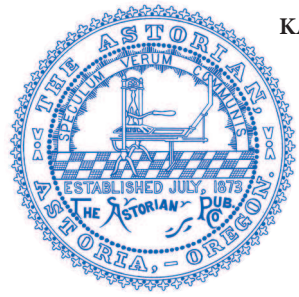


THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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OUR VIEW



AP Photo/Mark Wallheiser

Willie Taggart is introduced as Florida State's new football coach.

End the scam of college football

Oregonians love our college football, especially since the University of Oregon Ducks rose to prominence in recent decades.

We've created good-natured dividing lines between Ducks and Beavers, and some of us make treks to support our teams from the stands and the sidelines.

And it's not just our two big-time state schools that earn our allegiance. Plenty of us root for Washington State, Boise State, Eastern Washington and Eastern Oregon, too. A few even side with Alabama or Ohio State, UCLA or Notre Dame. The fandom gives us joy, something to believe in and hope for, as well as a way to pass cold Saturday mornings in the comfort of our warm couches. Some even have degrees from the schools they root for, and victories on the field give a sense of pride and accomplishment for the old alma mater.

But this week has cemented what many have long known to be true: College football is a morally repugnant scam that must be dismantled. A safer and more equitable system needs to be rebuilt in its place, somewhere far from America's higher education system.

Ducks coach Willie Taggart has flown the coop, just a year after he was wooed to Eugene with a big contract, a \$68 million athletic facility, and Phil Knight's unlimited pocketbook and jersey colors. Taggart lasted a year, having made promises to recruits, the local community and his own family that he did not keep.

Taggart will replace former Florida State coach Jimbo Fisher, who in turn took a job with Texas A&M, for which he will be paid \$75 million as a state employee. That is patently absurd on the face of it — then add in the fact that he will be coaching a bunch of teenagers who are the reason the stands are packed, in some cases bringing millions of dollars to the university and the athletic department.

The NCAA says they pay these athletes with a college degree, an expensive piece of paper nowadays. But even that is barely true when it comes to football players. About 55 percent of FBS (top level college football) players earn a degree, according to the NCAA. And many of the athletes that do graduate are clustered into "easier" majors that allow them to focus on their sport, but don't set them up to succeed later in life when the dream of the NFL disappears.

Even if they do graduate, that diploma is not free for many football players — many pay mightily in medical expenses, both in the short term and long term.

The NCAA allows schools to set their own policies when it comes to paying their players' medical expenses. While some schools do pay, it is not a requirement. Many small schools require athletes to shell out up to \$10,000 from their own pocket before the university steps in.

If we're not yet ready to blow up the system — and end college football for good and remake it as a for-profit, developmental league — then we have a few small changes that are the very least the NCAA can do for its football athletes.

Each student who secures an athletic scholarship should receive free tuition to that school until they earn a degree — even if it takes them an extra year or two or three due to their disrupted schedule.

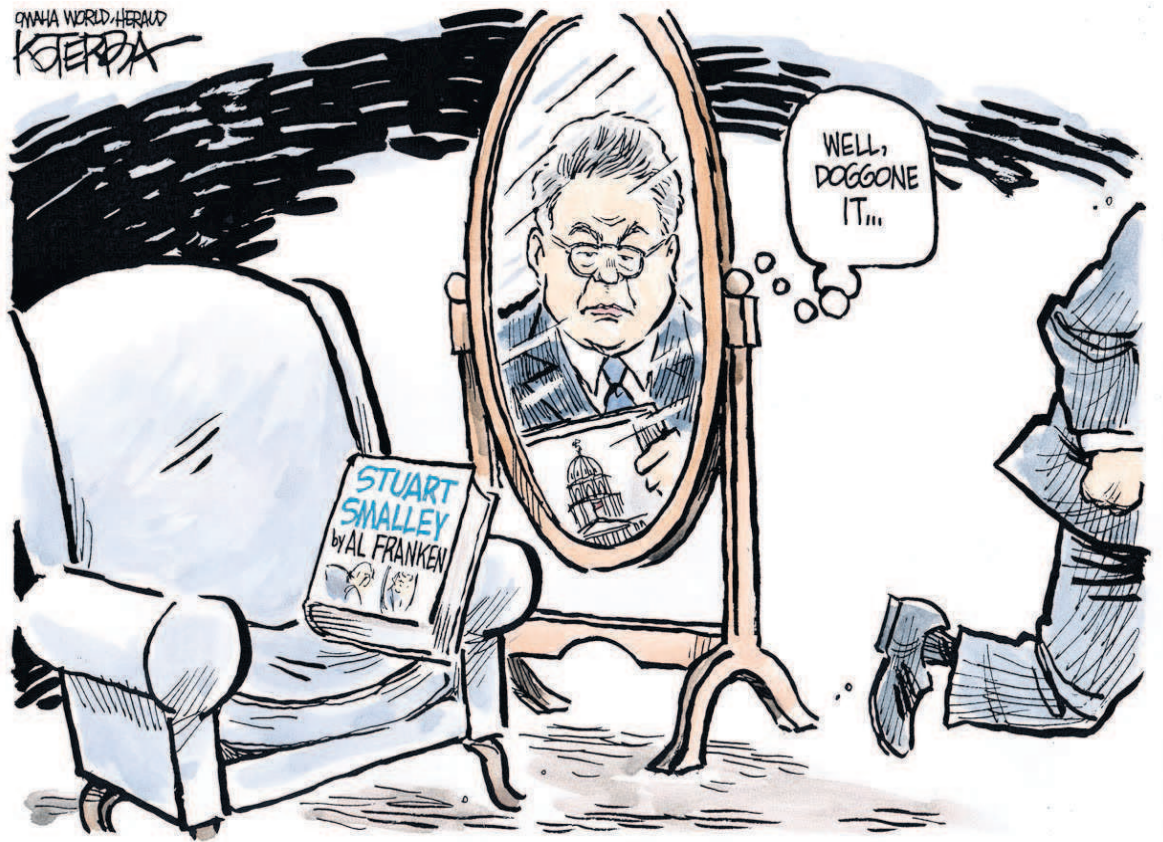
And secondly, each should have full-coverage medical insurance paid for by the school. If these young men are putting their bodies on the line, universities should be on the hook for the cost of injuries that occur in the line of duty, whenever those injuries manifest themselves.

Perhaps that will make college football too expensive. So be it. Let the best players make a buck in another league, and let colleges concentrate on what they should be doing: educating our nation's young people.

Football is a dangerous sport, but all societies have had gladiator games and likely always will.

The NFL must do what it can to make the game safer, but in the end its athletes are paid handsomely for the risks they take. That is not the case in the NCAA. Its athletes are treated like chattel while its coaches and athletic directors accept millions and millions in taxpayer dollars.

End it. Rework the NCAA soon, but end college football now.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Big tax scam

The new tax "cut" that morphs into a tax increase for the poor and the middle class, passed by the Republican Congress, contains some logic that is puzzling. The great recession is over: if the permanent corporate tax cuts and temporary personal tax cuts for the middle class work as planned, they will overstimulate the economy and set up the next recession.

If we have full employment (defined as 4 percent or less unemployment), then stimulating the economy to produce jobs will require our country to import hundreds of thousands of immigrants to fill the jobs, or companies will have to send the jobs overseas. Is this what the fake president and the GOP planned on? However, CEOs of major companies, when polled, said they did not plan on expansion, but rather buying back stock and taking care of stockholders. Forecasted expansion from this tax "cut" will be a meager 0.6 percent. But wait, I'm just getting started.

President Donald Trump announced that he would not personally make any money on the tax cut, but an independent analyst calculated that in 2018 (based on his 2005 tax return), Trump would pay \$22 million less in taxes. Pants on fire again.

We know that trickle down economics has never worked. We also know that tax cuts do not pay for themselves, so most of the \$1 trillion dollars the tax cut costs will be added to the national debt. This is a scam of biblical proportions to benefit the wealthy, and Republicans are counting on voters' memories to be short, and they will use their increased donations to buy and lie their way into power to keep the new status quo.

DAVID FITCH
Astoria

Trump's tax gains

This is for all those Joe and Mary "sixpacks" who voted President Donald Trump into office. I can see why you continue to show support for him, since he has not been brought down by any of the multiple accusations of sex abuse, unlike so many in today's climate.

He was going to "drain the swamp" of those Wall Street fat cats and bazillionaires who were ruining our country. Hmm, I guess that meant to clean them out of Wall Street, and move them into cabinet positions and other federal agency department heads.

No need for Joe or Mary to apply unless they contributed \$10 million or more to his campaign. But it seems as if he's going to get his biggest tax plan through, just in time to save Donald Trump, among other billionaires, at least \$30 million on his own tax bill. He does this by getting rid of something known as the alternative minimum tax, which made sure that no matter how many exemptions your very expensive lawyers could find, you had to pay this tax.

Don't worry Joe and Mary, he has

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.

not forgotten about you folks. Oh no, he's raising yours, because someone has to make up for all those taxes the richest .01 percent are no longer paying.

They also took another stab at the affordable health plan by eliminating the requirement for all Americans to have health care. This will take millions of Americans off health insurance, and raise premiums for others to where they will not be able to buy any insurance.

But, all is not lost, you no longer will have to worry about the "death tax," so your estate will be able to be passed on to your kids. Under the nasty old tax plan, you had to pay taxes on anything left after your individual \$5.49 million estate. Doesn't that make you feel good about Mr. Trump and his fellow Republicans removing this absurd limit on how much you pass along, without paying any taxes to help support our country?

Trump kept claiming that he was going to make America great again. When did we become not great? When he came into office, the U.S. had the lowest unemployment in decades, a record Dow Jones, probably the best, if not most expensive, military in the world, and the cleanest air and water. What wasn't great about this?

CHUCK MEYER
Astoria

A time of lights, and other thoughts

With winter days and early darkness, we journey into the holiday and winter season. At dusk in Astoria, which is as far north in Oregon as one can get, we see the evening lights and colorful decorations of this time of year.

I look over the hills and see the dotted lights of houses. These are houses of different shapes and colors. They are homes to many — all with a different story of life.

I travel down Commercial Street, then up Marine Drive toward the bridge. The seasonal lights and decorations glisten. It's hard not to feel some joy, even with the burdens of life.

Most of us are involved in the holiday season. There are so many things to do, and time seems to go so quickly. We rush to get things together for family and friends. We are excited. There can also be a craziness to these days.

Perhaps it's time to relax a little, and enjoy, before the season is gone. I'm thinking there is something that connects the months gone by with the end of the year. This is a reflection on what I have done, or didn't do, or didn't do right.

People make New Year's resolutions, but that isn't it. This is a reflection on life, and how to make it better for me and others. We are small in this universe, yet so important. It is significant that we all live together in harmony. To me this is a simple truth that seems hard to do.

Of course this isn't the only time, but the season of winter lights and the end of the year can offer a period to perhaps heal, and be more complete as a human, for myself and others.

NORM HOOGE
Astoria

WGS thanks Roby's

We at Warrenton Grade School would like to thank Roby's Furniture in Astoria for their generous donation of furniture to our Warrior Family Room. The Warrior Family Room has been established in the grade school building as a place of refuge and resources for families in the Warrenton school community.

The addition of the beautiful furniture from Roby's allows families to feel more comfortable and welcome as they enter the space. It is this kindness and commitment to the community and school from organizations and people, like those at Roby's Furniture, which allows our school to go above and beyond for our students and families.

TRISH JANZEN
Warrenton

No mail delivery

I wonder where Warrenton's rural mail delivery was on Monday, Dec. 4. It certainly wasn't in our mailboxes. My neighbor and I had outgoing mail that wasn't picked up. Well after dark we brought our mail back into our houses. She left the flag up, and lo and behold, the flag was still erect in the morning. So, can someone please tell me where the mail carrier was?

My neighbor is an 89-year-old widow who has to walk down her long, steep driveway to get the mail that wasn't there.

JOYCE HOFFMAN
Warrenton

WHERE TO WRITE

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- U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D):** 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Web: www.merkley.senate.gov
- U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden (D):**

221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Web: www.wyden.senate.gov

- State Rep. Brad Witt (D):** State Capitol, 900 Court Street N.E., H-373, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1431. Web: www.leg.state.or.us/witt/Email: rep.bradwitt@state.or.us

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