

OPINION



THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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Founded in 1873

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OUR VIEW

Dwight Caswell  
Surfers and fishers at  
Short Sand Beach

OUR COAST

BRINGS EXCITEMENT TO OUR VISITORS

Wednesday is a special day for this newspaper. Our Coast magazine makes its annual appearance. In a word that has gone out of fashion in the digital age, this is a publishing event.

We invented Our Coast in 2012. Seven editions later, the magazine continues to be fresh and young. Look for inventive articles, by multiple authors, about attractions on U.S. Highway 101, the history of the Garden of Surging Waves and the resurgence of vinyl record shops.

And look especially for a set of Noel Thomas drawings. We have often published Thomas’ work in The Daily Astorian; they will appear especially vibrant on the magazine’s high-quality paper stock.

Boredom gave birth to Our Coast. After decades of producing a traditional visitors guide, the newspaper’s



James Kosharek

**Nehalem Music & Game**

editors and advertising manager were looking for two things. Instead of having the same staff writers produce articles about the same topics every year, they chose the kind of variety any high-quality magazine would strive for.

Secondly, the editors envisioned a magazine that would cover the larger zone that beckons visitors — from Oysterville in Washington state to



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Drew Smith prepares to launch his kayak near the Willapa National Wildlife Refuge.

Manzanita in Oregon.

In a nutshell, our team in 2012 sought to entertain our readers with visual and textual variety. Over the years, we beckoned a Seattle writer named Knute Berger to write about the Fisher Poets, something he had never attended. And we invited our editorial colleague Tim Trainor from Pendleton to fish the north fork of the Nehalem River.

Stunning imagery of landscapes and landmarks on Our Coast create a unique visual backdrop for each issue.

This will be Features Editor Erick Bengel’s first issue of Our Coast. Bengel was preceded by Rebecca Sedlak, who brought a heavy dose of magazine journalism training to the product. Kathleen Strecker took on the heroic task of establishing the magazine and dramatically moving up the learning curve with the second issue.

Over the years, readers in our market and far beyond have expressed their pleasure at seeing Our Coast. We look forward to hearing from you.

Trump, flush with power

WASHINGTON — This was the week Donald Trump became president.

Or at least the week he became the president we were always expecting. He ceased bothering to pretend that he was ever going to do the job in any normal sense of the word. He decided to totally own the whole, entire joke that he is.

He started hiring people right off TV. He extended his tiny fingers into his giant flat screen, “Purple Rose of Cairo”-style, and dragged cable conservatives directly into the administration.

We’ve always known Trump makes stuff up. But now he has stopped bothering to pretend he doesn’t. Truthful hyperbole is out. Outlandish fabrication is in.

Trump began bragging to Republicans at a private fundraiser in St. Louis on Wednesday: *Oh, get a load of this trade stuff I made up to outfox that fox, Justin Trudeau. I felt bad doing it to such a nice, good-looking guy. But it’s hilarious!*

He is no longer bothering to pretend that governing involves a learning curve. Now he finds it’s clever to be a fabulist, concocting phony facts about the trade deficit when talking to the Canadian prime minister — one of our closest allies — or inventing a story for donors about how Japanese officials test U.S. cars by dropping a bowling ball on their hoods from 20 feet up to see which ones dent.

The president thinks he’s navigating to his true north while the rest of the world thinks he’s headed due south.



MAUREEN DOWD

Trump & Friends presented this dizzying White House purge as a twisted version of him growing into the job, even as everyone else felt he was going in the opposite direction, behaving disgracefully by 86-ing Rex Tillerson in a tweet and tormenting other staffers he finds annoying or uppity. The Daily Beast reported that Tillerson learned his fate from John Kelly while on the toilet, which is apropos because Bill Maher likes to say Trump does his morning business while doing his morning business. (H.R. McMaster is probably afraid to hit the bathroom now.)

Trump got his next moment of gross exaltation when Jeff Sessions, frantically trying to save his own job, fired Andrew McCabe hours before he would have become eligible for his government pension and on his birthday weekend. John Brennan, the former director of the CIA, tweeted that Trump will take his “rightful place as a disgraced demagogue in the dustbin of history.” Then the president’s lawyer, John Dowd, issued a statement Saturday saying he will “pray” that Rod Rosenstein “will follow the brilliant and courageous example” of Sessions and end the Russia investigation entirely.

Trump is giddy about all the CHAOS — he capitalized it on Twitter — feeling that he’s ridding himself of any idiots who called him a moron or dumb as a rock and any economists who don’t understand what a great dealmaker he is.

Except the one thing his presidency has definitively proved is that he doesn’t have the foggiest idea how to prepare for a negotiation, let alone negotiate.

As if Omarosa filling a top White House job between reality shows was not weird enough, The Times’ Michael Grynbaum

described a “hall-of-mirrors moment” on Wednesday: Larry Kudlow, a chatterer plucked from CNBC to replace Gary Cohn as Trump’s chief economic adviser, went on TV to describe the president telling Kudlow how “very handsome” he looks on TV.

“So Trumpian!” Kudlow laughed.

It’s the final Foxification of politics. Trump spends all his time watching Fox News, basing his opinions and tweets on it, and now he’s simply becoming one with it. He is even willing to overlook his distaste for the yeti mustache of the warmongering John Bolton and consider the Fox News analyst as a replacement for McMaster.

Roger Ailes would be so proud, if he were still alive and harassing women.

Trump thinks he’s a fabulously devious manager creating “great energy,” with great ratings coming from his talent for theatrical twists and turns. But he’s really inhumane, playing people against one another and widely discussing successors for officials who haven’t even been officially informed that they’re walking the plank. And, far from the A-team he promised, he’s hired a bunch of pathetic, disgusting swamp schnorrers who can’t stop using taxpayer money to fund their office furniture or office redesign or luxury plane trips with their wives.

“I like conflict,” Trump said this month at a news conference with the Swedish prime minister, smacking his fists together and adding, “I like watching it, I like seeing it, and I think it’s the best way to go.”

Never mind that a lot of the country — and the world — craves stability.

While the president may appear unconstrained, intoxicated with escaping the net of those who displease him by telling him “No,”



AP Photo/Evan Vucci

President Donald Trump talks with reporters during a meeting with Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar in the Oval Office of the White House.

he is getting ever more enmeshed in another net — Robert Mueller’s.

“I think Trump is royally pissed about the Mueller subpoena of the Trump Organization records,” Trump biographer Michael D’Antonio says about the special counsel crossing the president’s red line. “He fears the nakedness of his true business activities being revealed far more than the shame of ‘Access Hollywood’ or Stormy Daniels. Unlike the show of blank paper in file folders conducted when he supposedly stepped away from his businesses, this will require real documents, and I doubt he can count on people lying for him.”

If you’ve ever had a narcissistic boss, you know that they hate to hear any criticism and love to whack the naysayers and replace them with more compliant types. The circle of sycophants, who do not care about the boss, often spurs the leader’s flameout.

President Trump is doing it his way now. But soon, he’ll be doing it Mueller’s way.

Maureen Dowd writes for the New York Times News Service.