

OPINION

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OUR VIEW

Grownups must take power over tariffs

Even our small coastal economy is already paying the price

This past weekend brought news of a possible truce in President Donald Trump's trade war with China. At least there will be a pause before a new round of tit-for-tat tariffs.

Some think the president's style of chest-thumping ultimatums will ultimately bring economically useful concessions from our trade rivals — most of all China.

Early on in his administration, Trump critics feared inexperienced leadership might drive U.S. industries off a cliff. So far, our economy has proven resilient. Stock markets, however, are flashing warning signs. After briefly signaling enthusiasm about the truce, markets tanked on Tuesday, as traders starting asking President Ronald Reagan's classic rhetorical question: "Where's the beef?" They see that tariffs have been almost all pain and no gain.

While General Motors begins shuttering auto plants partly due to steel and aluminum prices driven by Trump tariffs, local news stories about products from timber to crab show we may pay a stiff price for international grandstanding.

Coast River Business Journal has devoted significant coverage of tariff impacts on the seafood industry, while The Daily Astorian recently described how logs produced here will suffer if the tariff truce doesn't hold. Astoria Forest Products leaders, workers and suppliers were holding their collective breath to see if Trump and China's President Xi would bury the hatchet. The answer was "maybe." As it stands, hiking tariffs to 25 percent each way between the two nations will be delayed 90 days. Ten percent tariffs already in place are unaffected by the Trump-Xi talks.

It also remains unclear whether seafood tariffs will be lowered in time to



AP Photo/Pablo Martinez Monsivais
President Donald Trump, second right, and China's President Xi Jinping, second left, attend their bilateral meeting at the G20 Summit in Buenos Aires, Argentina. A U.S.-Chinese cease fire on tariffs gives jittery companies a respite but does little to resolve a war over Beijing's technology ambitions that threatens to chill global economic growth.

'Responsible Republicans in the U.S. Senate must cooperate with Democrats in the U.S. House and wrest tariff power away from the White House. No president of either party should have the power to wreck decades of carefully wrought trade policies.'

preserve the lucrative Chinese market for Columbia River processors who sell fresh Pacific Northwest crab for Chinese New Year celebrations. A growing Chinese taste for chum salmon also may wiggle off the line.

Beyond short-term skirmishes and their consequences for local products, rising trade tensions in the past two years are a reminder that it takes a long time for industries and nations to build busi-

ness relationships, shipping networks and trust. For now, we can only hope that tariff spats quickly simmer down without doing permanent damage. Will Chinese companies immediately resume buying Northwest timber? Will Chinese consumers hold onto a grudge and quit eating our crab? Only time will tell.

The trade war taps into a vein of discontent among working Americans over stagnant wages and factories mov-

ing out of the country. We have legitimate gripes with the Chinese, some of whom are bullies when it comes to trade secrets and intellectual property.

However, imposing what amounts to a high tax on American businesses is not the way to rectify this situation. Tariffs were a key cause of the Great Depression in the 1930s. Instead of giving the U.S. trading advantages, those tariffs made everyone in the world poorer and contributed to starting World War II.

Responsible Republicans in the U.S. Senate must cooperate with Democrats in the U.S. House and wrest tariff power away from the White House. No president of either party should have the power to wreck decades of carefully wrought trade policies.

Water under the bridge

Compiled by Bob Duke

From the pages of Astoria's daily newspapers



10 years ago this week — 2008

For the last four weeks, the Knappa football team has heard a familiar tune from fans across the state: "Great job Loggers! Way to go Loggers! Congrats on getting there Loggers ..."

But when it came down to predicting a winner, week after week, the rest of the state just had a hard time in picking boys in Blue & Gold.

To their credit, the Loggers never listened. Or maybe they did.

Either way, they proved 'em all wrong, and now they have the hardware to prove it.

Knappa overcame an early 6-0 deficit and scored 20 straight points Saturday afternoon in the Class 2A title game as the Loggers defeated the Culver Bulldogs 20-6 at Hillsboro Stadium to win their first-ever state championship.

As the final days of November 2007 passed, climatologists at the National Weather Service warned about conditions that favored the first winter storm of the season. This year, the end of November is a reminder that the anniversary of possibly the worst storm to strike the North Coast in memory is upon us.

Today is the anniversary of the Great Coastal Gale.

Four people died on the North Coast as hurricane-force winds lashed the region for four days. The storm left a lasting mark on towns, and the way North Coast communities deal with disasters.

It was frightening and prolonged. And folks who weathered the Great Coastal Gale will probably never forget the



2008 — Knappa's Doug Montgomery holds the Class 2A state championship trophy up for the fans after the Loggers fought their way to a 20-6 victory over the Culver Bulldogs.

sound of the wind.

But what some people remember best about the storm is neighbors helping neighbors in the recovery effort.

Some commonalities emerged from stories about the storms. Waiting through the night as the constant wind rattled the windows. The bumping and thumping as trees fell and debris blew through.

Clatsop County Interim Manager Andy Anderson is putting together a committee of experts to analyze the Port of Astoria's planned purchase of North Tongue Point.

The committee's job will be to tell the Clatsop County Commission whether the Port's dream industrial property is a good investment of the county's video lottery funds.

50 years ago — 1968

Roman Catholic Star of the Sea High School in Astoria will probably be closed at the end of this school year, the Very Rev. Francis J. Maloney said.

The provincial superior of the Sisters of the Holy Name, Sister Rose Veronica, wrote members of St. Mary Catholic church last week that the order would withdraw the three sisters now teaching in the high school because of declining enrollment and increasing duties of the sisters.

The Seaside Signal's criticism of the Job Corps (that newspaper says it looks forward to the elimination of the corps under Richard Nixon "with considerable satisfaction") is valid only on the surface.

The Signal says it would be more efficient and less costly to give disadvantaged youth remedial education in their own school districts and vocational training in community colleges near their homes.

The ideas sound fine — much more practical than bringing girls from the Deep South and Chicago, Detroit and Los Angeles to Astoria for training.

The problem is that these young people in the rural South and in the cores of the cities are shackled by substandard schooling, poverty, racial discrimination (many of those in the Job Corps are, after all, Negro), and broken family structures. They are not getting the basic education, the job training or the social acceptance necessary to become self-sufficient, and it is necessary to get them out of those environments.

The Northwest Aluminum company project at Warrenton is "moving ahead," a spokesman for Bell International corporation said Wednesday in New York.

75 years ago — 1943

Enrollment of boys and girls in Oregon's vocational work program has more than doubled in recent years, Walter W. Morse, state supervisor of trade and industrial education, told members of the Astoria apprenticeship commission Monday night at the regular monthly meeting at the Imperial grill.

The war emergency has shown the need for vocational training and planned assistance for the youth of the state, Morse said, as he complimented the local commission on its work among Astoria boys and girls.

Barometer fans in Astoria were speculating today upon the meaning of a "high glass" which at noon showed extraordinary high readings of 30.41 at the North Head weather bureau station.

This is below the all-time high reached February 16, 1939, when the glass rocketed to 30.79 and was followed some days later by a southwest gale that swept into the low-pressure area created when the high atmospheric pressure rushed away.