

# OPINION



# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

editor@dailyastorian.com

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## WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

# Neuberger was 'amazingly ahead of his times'

In every era the new generation of historians and readers reconsiders the prominent figures of the past. America's oldest universities have been going through this process.

One of the most prominent revisions occurred at Yale University, where the name of John C. Calhoun — who left the U.S. Senate for the Confederacy — was removed from one of its colleges and renamed for a woman who was a pioneering admiral in the U.S. Navy.



**STEVE FORRESTER**

Portland State University does not have that challenge, because it is such a young institution. Nevertheless, last week it corrected a lesser injustice and

redeemed itself by naming its administration building, which houses the president's office, for U.S. Sen. Richard (Dick) Neuberger and his wife, Maurine.

Another building at the university had been named in 1972 for Dick Neuberger, but later renamed for a major donor.

I was invited to speak at last week's dedication. Retirement from daily journalism has allowed me to resume the research on Dick Neuberger that I began in 1978. "Eminent Oregonians" will be the title of a book I am assembling with four other writers. One of the five chapters will be dedicated to him.

Dick Neuberger was one of the most exciting Oregon personalities of the first half of the 20th Century. When he died in 1960 at the age of 47, he was one of America's most prolific freelance writers and the author or co-author of six books.

In 1954, he became the first Democrat Oregon had elected to the U.S. Senate in 40 years. In 1940, when he was elected to the Oregon House of Representatives, the state's Democratic party was a stagnant and inarticulate backwater. He became the voice of a new party that was articulate about an array of concerns ranging from the environment to



**Maurine and Richard Neuberger.**

The Oregonian

human welfare and government structure. In essence, he created the intellectual foundation for Oregon's postwar, modern Democratic party. The likes of Ron Wyden, Earl Blumenauer and Vera Katz are his political descendants.

Neuberger's sister, Jane Goodsell, captured the significance of her brother's iconoclastic public career. "He was amazingly ahead of his times," she told me in a 1978 interview.

Dick's legislative partnership with Maurine in the Oregon Legislature — he as a state senator, she as a representative — is without peer in Oregon history

or, to my knowledge, in any other state legislature.

The word environmentalist was not in our lexicon during his lifetime, but he was one, referred to as a conservationist. Two of his legislative achievements were the Highway Beautification Act and his sponsorship of what would become the National Wilderness Act of 1964.

A history buff, one of Neuberger's books was the Landmark book for children titled "The Lewis and Clark Expedition." He channeled his enthusiasm for the Lewis and Clark story into the 1956

**DICK NEUBERGER**  
AUTHORED THE  
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LEGISLATION THAT  
CREATED THE FORT  
CLATSOP NATIONAL  
MEMORIAL

federal enabling legislation that created the Fort Clatsop National Memorial.

My fascination with Neuberger began when I was about 8 years old. My father had known Dick since the 1930s when they met as writers at The Oregonian. Following his Senate election, the Neuberger family came to our home in Pendleton. Over lunch Neuberger spoke as he ate, about the falcon he had seen at an Air Force Academy football game with one of the Oregon universities. Following that game, Dick had read everything he could find about falcons and proceeded to share his newfound knowledge with us. I had never seen someone with such an enthusiastic, voracious intellect.

My research has been an adventure — taking me primarily to the University of Oregon Special Collections in the Knight Library. My wife joined me for a research trip to the Franklin D. Roosevelt Library at Hyde Park. I drove across Kansas to the Eisenhower Library and also mined the Harry Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri. In March I will be combing a collection of publications in the New York Public Library.

Research on a long-deceased public person becomes a bit like an Easter Egg hunt. I recently shared one of my discoveries with a historian friend. He shared my elation, describing the thrill one feels at opening a box of papers that no one has seen in decades.

*Steve Forrester, the former editor and publisher of The Daily Astorian, is the president and CEO of EO Media Group.*

## OTHER VIEWS

Editorials from  
Oregon newspapers

### Mail Tribune, on audit finding weakness in opioid tracking

For all the talk about opioid addiction and the need to address it, an audit by the Oregon Secretary of State's Office shows the state lags far behind others in preventing abuse.

Secretary of State Dennis Richardson on Tuesday released the audit report, saying he was "heartbroken" by some of the findings.

The biggest problem appears to be weaknesses in Oregon's prescription drug monitoring program, operated by the Oregon Health Authority. Created in 2009, the program, known by its initials, PDMP, should allow the state to share information about potential abuse with health licensing boards and law enforcement, but state laws prevent the OHA from doing that. Auditors found 148 people who received controlled substance prescriptions from 30 or more different prescribers. One person had 290 opioid prescriptions filled by 75 pharmacies.

Oregon also is one of only nine states that does not require prescribing physicians and pharmacies to check the PDMP database before writing or filling prescriptions. And Oregon law does not require the state's PDMP to collect some data that could help prevent abuse, including prescriptions filled by other than retail pharmacies, and prescriptions written by veterinarians that may be diverted to human use.

In one case, an individual obtained prescriptions for 242 tablets of oxycodone and 87 tablets of clonazepam by two different doctors, and filled them at a long-term care pharmacy that is exempt from reporting to the PDMP, so those prescriptions were not included in that patient's prescription history. The same patient saw a third physician in the same month and obtained a prescription for 112 oxycodone tablets and 84 clonazepam, and filled it at a retail pharmacy. The third doctor and the retail pharmacist would have had no way of knowing about the other prescriptions by checking the PDMP database.

Deaths from opioid overdoses have declined in Oregon, unlike other states, but the number of deaths remains above the rate in 2000. An Oregonian dies from prescription opioids every three days on



average. Auditors noted that the decline in overdose deaths may be the result of more widespread availability and use of naloxone, which reverses the effects of overdose.

In a letter responding to the audit, OHA Deputy Director Kris Kautz said her agency agrees with the findings, but state law limits OHA's ability to comply with the recommended changes. Lawmakers should make it a priority to change the laws to allow the monitoring program to operate the way it should.

This is more than just a bureaucratic problem. Lives are at stake.

The Oregonian, on testing the waters for a new bridge

The mere mention of the phrase "Columbia River Crossing" can conjure up frightening flashbacks of the failed effort to build a new bridge to Washington. From massive consulting costs to flawed tolling estimates to scrapped bridge designs, the CRC provided one exasperating headline after another until Oregon leaders killed it in 2014, soon after Washington lawmakers refused to authorize that state's share of the costs.

But even more exasperating is this: None of those scandals change the fact that Washington and Oregon still need a new bridge to replace the aging I-5 crossing, provide better public transit options and help relieve the congestion that serves as both a commuter and economic chokepoint in the region. Legislators met Tuesday to once again broach the topic of

replacing the bridge.

Certainly, meeting to talk about the possibility of resurrecting a replacement bridge project is a tiny step in a process that can go awry in any number of ways. The comments of legislators reflect their wariness. And assuming they continue to meet, there remain the thorny political questions of tolling and public transit that will require far more than cautious collaboration to resolve.

But time, necessity and the deadline to show progress — or repay some \$140 million in federal funds — have at least helped cement a replacement bridge in leaders' minds as a priority.

This is progress, albeit modest. But as anyone stuck in I-5 traffic can attest, forward progress at low speed beats sitting at a standstill any day of the year.

### The Bend Bulletin, on needing a senator who puts Oregon first

Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Portland, really, really wants to be president. He's enough of a realist, however, to recognize that his chances of winning are slim, and he'd like to hold on to his Senate seat as well, in case things don't work out.

Winning a third term in the Senate might be nice for Merkley, but in those circumstances it's far from nice for Ore-

gon voters. We deserve a senator who wants the Senate seat as much as Merkley wants to be president.

There have been hints about Merkley's ambition for over a year now, and he's done nothing to squelch them. Rather, he's ramped them up in a variety of ways, from visiting New Hampshire to creating political action committees.

Among the most important, he's talked with Oregon lawmakers to see if they're willing to change a state law barring a candidate from running for more than one "lucrative" office at a time. Both the Senate and the presidency are considered lucrative. Unfortunately for Merkley, change is unlikely. That doesn't prevent him from running in presidential primaries in other states, however, and running for the Senate in Oregon. It's an idea he has yet to dismiss.

Oregonians should expect more from a U.S. senator. We may be a relatively small state, but surely we deserve a candidate whose interest in Oregon and Oregonians goes beyond our value as a stepping stone to higher office or as a safety net if presidential ambitions don't pan out.

If Merkley wants to be president, fine. He should do everything in his power to get the job. First on his list, however, must be a public announcement that he won't seek re-election to the Senate. That way Democrats, Republicans and others can look for candidates who really want the job.