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Salmon's fan club should stay intact

In face of relentless opposition, Gov. Brown stuck by her nomination

When Gov. John Kitzhaber abruptly resigned in January, two pieces of unfinished business weighed on the lower Columbia River. Kitzhaber had alluded to the need for adaptive management of his gillnet plan.

Seine fishing appeared not to be working as planned. And the coastal seat on the state Fish and Wildlife Commission had been vacant for two years.

The new governor, Kate Brown, named Astoria fisherman Bruce Buckmaster to the commission. Because of Buckmaster's involvement with Salmon for All and his perceived closeness to the commercial fishing industry, he nomination drew fire from the sportfishing industry.

Over a matter of weeks, Buckmaster was vetted in interviews with an array of interest groups ranging from agriculture to hunters to sportfishers. Beneath and above that level of scrutiny, the sportfishing industry's negative campaigning went forward, culminating in rally on the steps of the Capitol. Through all of this, Gov.

Brown did not waver in her support for Buckmaster. State Sen. Betsy Johnson also deserves credit for giving credibility to the nomination.

At the end of the day, Buckmaster will be a valuable contributor to the Fish and Wildlife Commission. He knows its terrain of fishing and hunting well. He knows the complexity of the fish resource on the Columbia River.

Most of all, Buckmaster knows that fish mitigation, enhancement and allocation on the Columbia River involve a web of agreements among stakeholders over decades. The nature of those compromises, arrangements, federal court rulings and congressional acts have created a vast fan base for salmon. Thus, it is a misbegotten enterprise to select one stakeholder group for demonization.

No snow makes it hard for fish to go

'We're borrowing from the future'

Each spring much excitement naturally centers on returning salmon runs, but this also is a key time for outward-bound young salmon headed toward the saltwater of the Pacific Ocean.

This year offers a taste of what climate researchers tell us will become routine as the century moves forward: In-stream flows that are much affected by lack of snowpack in the mountains surrounding the Columbia-Snake watershed.

"Managers are running out of ways to add water to the river system in order to move the last of the juvenile salmon through the dams," Columbia Basin Bulletin reported last Friday.

There is no way to sugarcoat it: water storage in the form of snow is beginning to be an undependable way of moving fish up and down the river.

Last Friday, river managers began a 10-day drawdown of Grand Coulee Dam waters in order to boost river flows at McNary Dam. This is a cause for concern considering our low-snow winter and uncertain spring precipitation. If rainfall and runoff aren't adequate, the Grand Coulee drawdown won't leave water managers with much margin for error. "Yes, we know we're borrowing from the future," a National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration Fisheries official said during in-stream flow discussions.

This spring's maneuvering is an interesting look behind the scenes at how system operators

budget waters between different reservoirs and needs. In essence, stored water represents a saving account that can be spent to produce electricity, transport salmon, irrigate crops and other purposes.

When it comes to moving young salmon toward the ocean, logistics are complicated by differing time and requirements for salmon runs. With the juvenile run winding down in the Snake River and without more water available from a reservoir on the Lower Snake, the Bulletin reported the Technical Management Team that juggles fish and hydroelectricity generation is now concentrating on passing juveniles through the Lower Columbia River dams by calling on Grand Coulee water.

Unfortunately, the Pacific Northwest will become much more familiar with all these issues in coming decades. We will have to become increasingly adept at choreographing water releases, transporting young salmon around danger spots, and using water with maximum efficiency to have enough for everything. It will also be necessary to alter the West's water laws: A proposal in Washington state would allow the state Department of Ecology to lease water from private landowners who control it, in order to temporarily shift it to other priorities.

A long-term change to this year's conditions isn't expected until mid-century. But it is none too soon to start getting ready.

Restoring memoriam to Memorial Day

By CHARLES M. BLOW
New York Times News Service

This Memorial Day, as we headed to the lake and the beach, grilled and drank, shopped and saved, laid out in the sun or sought shady places, we hopefully remained cognizant that the holiday didn't begin as a day of celebration or commerce but one of solemnity and, indeed, memoriam.



Charles Blow

As David W. Blight, a professor of history and the director of the Gilder Lehrman Center for the Study of Slavery, Resistance and Abolition at Yale wrote in *The New York Times* in 2011, during the final year of the Civil War, a racetrack was converted to an outdoor prison for Union captives; "at least 257 died of disease and were hastily buried in a mass grave behind the grandstand."

Blight wrote: "After the Confederate evacuation of Charleston, black workmen went to the site, reburied the Union dead properly, and built a high fence around the cemetery" and the freed people, "in cooperation with white missionaries and teachers, staged a parade of 10,000 on the track."

He continued: "After the dedication, the crowd dispersed into the infield and did what many of us do on Memorial Day: enjoyed picnics, listened to speeches and watched soldiers drill."

Blight concluded: "The war was over, and Memorial Day had been founded by African-Americans in a ritual of remembrance and consecration. The war, they had boldly announced, had been about the triumph of their emancipation over a slaveholders' republic. They were themselves the true patriots."

This is the history from which this holiday springs: honoring sacrifice. And honoring sacrifices can exist apart from endorsing missions. Many of our veterans have given life, and



AP Photo/Jose Luis Magana

The Washington Monument is reflected in part of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington, D.C.

increasingly, limb for this country, and that must be saluted.

Some of our wars are those of disastrous execution, others of deceptive inception, some a bit of both, but they are all ours.

Yet we are drifting away from this tradition of honoring sacrifice. The public in general and the elected officials who have sanctioned and sustained our wars, sometimes over substantial public objection, have a diminishing personal stake on the battlefields — few of their own lives and the lives of their children, siblings and spouses.

President Barack Obama isn't a military veteran, nor are many of the presidential hopefuls who have declared or might declare a run for the White House in 2016.

Hillary Clinton, Martin O'Malley and Bernie Sanders have never served. Jeb Bush, Ted Cruz, Rand Paul, Marco Rubio, Scott Walker, Chris Christie, Ben Carson, Mike Huckabee, Rick Santorum, Carly Fiorina and Bobby Jindal have not either. Only Rick Perry, Lindsey Graham and Jim Webb have.

As USA Today reported in 2012: "In 2013, just 19 percent of the 535 combined members in the U.S. House and Senate will have active-duty military service on their résumé, down from a peak in 1977 when 80 percent of lawmakers boasted military service."

The newspaper explained: "The transition from the draft to an all-volunteer military in 1973 is a driving force of the decline, but veterans and their advocates say they face more challenges running for office

in the modern era of political campaigns."

As for the current Congress, as the *PBS NewsHour* noted in November: "In all, 97 members of the next session of Congress will have served in the U.S. military. That means less than 18 percent of the new congressional delegation served in the armed forces. (Note: This number includes one nonvoting delegate from the Northern Marianas.)"

And, as FiveThirtyEight pointed out in March:

"As of Jan. 31, there were close to 1.4 million people serving in the U.S. armed forces, according to the latest numbers from the Defense Manpower Data Center, a body of the Department of Defense. That means that 0.4 percent of the American population is active military personnel."

Furthermore, we are moving toward a society in which the rich and powerful avoid service while those of fewer means sometimes see it as one of only a few options.

As Karl W. Eikenberry and David M. Kennedy wrote in *The Times* in 2013, "So many officers have sons and daughters serving that they speak, with pride and anxiety, about war as a 'family business.'" The authors continued: "Here are the makings of a self-perpetuating military caste, sharply segregated from the larger society and with its enlisted ranks disproportionately recruited from the disadvantaged. History suggests that such scenarios don't end well."

In a way, Memorial Day may be a time for us to consider the evolution of this day: a day established by a disadvantaged population to honor war heroes who now belong to a military whose members are increasingly being drawn from a disadvantaged population.

Next year, think about that between the barbecue and beers.

Is the tech revolution overhyped?

By PAUL KRUGMAN
New York Times News Service

Remember Douglas Adams' 1979 novel *The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*?

It began with some technology snark, dismissing Earth as a planet whose life-forms "are so amazingly primitive that they still think digital watches are a pretty neat idea."

But that was then, in the early stages of the information technology revolution.

Since then we've moved on to much more significant things, so much so that the big technology idea of 2015, so far, is a digital watch. But this one tells you to stand up if you've been sitting too long!

OK, I'm snarking, too. But there is a real question here. Everyone knows that we live in an era of incredibly rapid technological change, which is changing everything. But what if what everyone knows is wrong? And I'm not being wildly contrarian here. A growing number of economists, looking at the data on productivity and incomes, are wondering if the technological revolution has been greatly overhyped — and some technologists share their concern.

We've been here before. *The Hitchhiker's Guide* was published during the era of the "productivity paradox," a two-decade-long period during which technology seemed to be advancing rapidly — personal computing, cellphones, local area networks and the early stages of the Internet — yet economic growth was sluggish and incomes stagnant. Many hypotheses were advanced to explain that paradox, with the most popular probably being that inventing a technology and learning to use

it effectively aren't the same thing. Give it time, said economic historians, and computers will eventually deliver the goods (and services).

This optimism seemed vindicated when productivity growth finally took off circa 1995. Progress was back — and so was America, which seemed to be at the cutting edge of the revolution.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the techno-revolution. We did not, it turned out, get a sustained return to rapid economic progress. Instead, it was more of a one-time spurt, which sputtered out around a decade ago. Since then, we've been living in an era of iPhones and iPads and iDontKnows, but even if you adjust for the effects of financial crisis, growth and trends in income have reverted to the sluggishness that characterized the 1970s and 1980s.

In other words, at this point, the whole digital era, spanning more than four decades, is looking like a disappointment. New technologies have yielded great headlines, but modest economic results. Why?

One possibility is that the numbers are missing the reality, especially the benefits of new products and services. I get a lot of pleasure from technology that lets me watch streamed performances by my favorite musicians, but that doesn't get counted in GDP. Still, new technology is supposed to serve businesses as well as consumers, and should be boosting the production of traditional as well as new goods. The big productivity gains of the period from 1995 to 2005 came largely in things like inventory control, and showed up as much or more in non-technology businesses like retail as in high-technology industries them-



Paul Krugman

selves. Nothing like that is happening now.

Another possibility is that new technologies are more fun than fundamental. Peter Thiel, one of the founders of PayPal, famously remarked that we wanted flying cars but got 140 characters instead. And he's not alone in suggesting that information technology that excites

the Twittering classes may not be a big deal for the economy as a whole.

So what do I think is going on with technology? The answer is that I don't know — but neither does anyone else. Maybe my friends at Google are right, and Big Data will soon transform everything. Maybe 3-D printing will bring the information revolution into the material world. Or maybe we're on track for another big meh.

What I'm pretty sure about, however, is that we ought to scale back the hype.

You see, writing and talking breathlessly about how technology changes everything might seem harmless, but, in practice, it acts as a distraction from more mundane issues — and an excuse for handling those issues badly. If you go back to the 1930s, you find many influential people saying the same kinds of things such people say nowadays: This isn't really about the business cycle, never mind debates about macroeconomic policy; it's about radical technological change and a workforce that lacks the skills to deal with the new era.

And then, thanks to World War II, we finally got the demand boost we needed, and all those supposedly unqualified workers — not to mention Rosie the Riveter — turned out to be quite useful in the modern economy, if given a chance.

Of course, there I go, invoking history. Don't I understand that everything is different now? Well, I understand why people like to say that. But that doesn't make it true.

We've been living in an era of iPhones and iPads and iDontKnows.