

OPINIONS

River Right: Peeling the onion

BY TOM CARSTENS

After several years of kayaking, I've never heard any kayaker mention politics. Running white water can be dangerous and you never know when you're going to need a hand (or a rope). We all count on each other to be there in an emergency. Could politics get in the way? Better not to find out. There's lots of other stuff to talk about anyway.

Have you ever felt cross at someone who sees the world a bit differently? Have you ever seen someone respond foolishly when reacting to a political argument? Have you ever felt a friendship threatened over strongly held views? We've all experienced this. Often we choose the easier path: avoidance. Lots of other stuff to talk about.

When I was growing up, my parents had a lot of dinner parties. My dad was a college professor, and he enjoyed provocative, but respectful, dialogue with his fellow faculty and students. From the corner of the living room, I loved to listen to the lively, engaging, and rigorous debates. It always astonished me how cleverly my father could argue politics from any perspective. He was a teacher and loved to stimulate thoughtful discussion. That's when I learned how much fun it can be to investigate all sides of an issue. If we can understand the whole onion, it can be enlightening when we peel off the layers of nuance and perspective. This approach can lead us not only toward a more informed frame of reference, but it also might help us better understand where the other person is coming from.

I've been thinking about this as our legislature has been steamrolling the Democrat Party agenda this session. Even the Speaker has acknowledged that there's been virtually no compromise on anything. The Republicans have been shut out, even though they represent a viewpoint shared by half the population of Oregon (okay, slightly less than half). Virtually no dialogue, no amendments, no deals. The process is legal but seems flawed. Is there nothing to learn from the Republicans' perspective or the constituents they represent?

The antics in Salem basically mirror us, the electorate. We aren't much interested in compromise either. A Stanford-Princeton study last year pointed out that our political preferences trump every other difference, including even race and religion. According to the study (Google up "Iyengar-Westwood Report"), Americans are uncompromising

rascals when it comes to differences between liberals and conservatives—even in nonpolitical contexts. I've heard it called "political discrimination."

The study came up with some interesting stuff, including that a lot of us would rather our children didn't marry someone from "the other side." (Reminded me of my "future" father-in-law...but that's another story.)

We're not this ornery out here in the Applegate, are we?

Have you ever been involved in a so-called "open forum" that was explicitly hostile to participation from "the other side"? It happens more often than we realize. The combative controversy over the proposal to establish a Siskiyou Crest National Monument comes to mind. The whole idea was dreamed up without any community input, and when it was finally on the table, neither "side" wanted to offer a seat to the other. And nobody really learned much.

And how about the occasional political gatherings here? It's pretty rare to have a good political mix participating in these things. It's just assumed that we'll hear nothing of worth from those with different leanings. The onion goes unpeeled, and we don't learn much.

Have you ever seen a political stance affect an unrelated, nonpolitical event in the Applegate? I sure have. Uninformed assumptions made about propriety, knowledge, legality, motivation, and even intelligence have sometimes caused us to act in strange ways toward each other. Mining, logging, and land use are examples of topics that seem to bring out the worst in us. Compromise doesn't appear to be in the cards. My way or the highway.

I'm constantly humbled by the rich, eclectic character of this community. In the end, I believe most folks want a good outcome; they just see the way to get there differently.

I'm saddened to see politicians of either stripe denigrate and demean each other. They aren't listening, they aren't learning, and they aren't governing very well. Maybe we could set a better example for them. Peeling the onion doesn't have to make us cry.

Should I bring this up around the fire ring at my next river camp? If I do, I'll make sure all the paddles are stored well away.

See you on the river.

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Natural history of climate changes

BY ALAN VOETSCH

First let's address the 97 percent "scientific consensus" lie. This lie has been exposed for quite a while, and not even 97 percent of Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change climate scientists agree (<http://www.forbes.com/sites/alexepstein/2015/01/06/97-of-climate-scientists-agree-is-100-wrong/>).

Second, here are some excellent informative reading/video materials you must check out if you have a real interest in climate truth. Read *The Real Global Warming Disaster* by Christopher Booker—tons of terrific info. Watch these videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tPzpPXuASY8>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JpfMM3bVbhQ>, and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D-m09IKtYT4>.

These will show why today's climate is perfectly normal and in line with historical averages. You will also learn that sea levels have risen over 400 feet since the last glacial maximum. Also, our sun is by far the biggest driver of climate, and the peaks and valleys of solar activity explain almost all the climate change we've witnessed. There will always be localized effects of climate that may change more or less than global averages. There can be no doubt that civilization impacts our local environments, and we all need to keep our houses in order. But globally, we really don't matter much, at least as far as temperature increase or decrease is concerned. The sun is in charge.

Five to nine thousand years ago earth enjoyed the Holocene Climate Optimum with warmer temperatures than today. Then there was the Pre-Roman cooling lasting from 750 BC to 200 BC before the Roman Warming, which began in 200 BC and lasted until 500 AD. Climatic cooling then ushered in the Dark Ages, which ended about 1,100 years ago with the Medieval Warming and temperatures again higher than today. That warming ended with the Little Ice Age beginning about 1450 and lasting until 1850. We are now in the Modern Warming, which should last for several hundred years. Of course there will be some up and down bumps because climate is always changing due to natural variability. But the trends and patterns have repeated many, many times. This is established science and history that climate "scientists" do not seem to be aware of.

Let's talk about CO₂ emissions. We've all been told that CO₂ increases global temperatures. It's actually the other way around. Did you know that rising temperatures precede CO₂ increases by 800 years? And that 95 percent of greenhouse gas is water vapor? Why don't we legislate *that*? CO₂ makes up 3.5 percent of greenhouse gas, almost all of it natural. Only 0.117 percent is from man. Bacteria and animals produce 150 gigatons; humans produce 6.5 gigatons. Volcanoes produce more CO₂ than all human activities. Did you know that climate-related deaths have dropped 95 percent in the last 80 years while emissions have gone up? Did you know that life expectancy, agricultural production, gross domestic product and population have spiked sharply upwards along with CO₂ emissions?

Alarmists have said that when CO₂ emissions rise, temperatures will also rise. Over the last 16 years, while CO₂ emissions have continued to climb, temperatures have remained fairly steady. It also brings into question the global cooling from 1940 to the mid-1970s. What does this mean? It means that the science used for their predictions is wrong. Here's why: the algorithm they use on their computer modeling assumes that rising CO₂ emissions will force higher temperatures. Under that assumption, *all* of their models predict rising temps. Recent and past trends prove that wrong. CO₂ is most effective as a warming agent at or under 20 parts per million (PPM). We are near 400 PPM. Above 20 PPM, CO₂ has a diminishing effect.

I simply must address the crazed alarms I see several times each day about how 2014 was the warmest year ever. Fact is, it may be 0.01 C warmer than 2005 and 2010, but by much less than the margin of uncertainty (0.05 C). These temps are averaged with ocean temps, so 2014 was actually in about fourth place for land temperatures. Earth's average temperature for the last decade has changed very little. The key issue remains the growing discrepancy between climate model projections and actual observations—2014 just made the discrepancy between the two larger, continuing to prove the climate models wrong.

Remember, do your own research.
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Maple tapping season a bust

Several people have asked me how the maple-tapping season went this year. The short answer: there was no tapping season this year. We had only four or five days with the proper freezing nights and warm days required for sap to run. The flow per tree was very much reduced also. Due to the lack of rain again, taps in trees that normally would provide two or three liters per day gave only a couple of cups before ceasing to flow.

I think that future years will probably provide good tapping seasons, but with climate change clearly affecting our area, we can never know if the weather will be right for tapping.

Keep your fingers crossed, and pray for good old wet and freezing winter weather.

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