

FINICUM'S REFUGE

Snowy plover, greater sage grouse, short-eared owl and bobolink, white-faced ibis, heron, killdeer, sandhill crane and Siskin finch. The birds all pass through Malheur, even the cuckoo and the loon. And like all migratory species, they'll be leaving pretty soon.

The stillness of the winter morn gave way to a sound of men. And just like that the Malheur was stolen away again. White men; again, with god and guns, found the door unlocked and then, they seized that dinky building, proclaiming:

We are the best of men! Picked by God to free this land of governmental tyranny. And if you'all are true patriots you'll lock and load with me. We'll hold this wind-swept outpost, using every means at hand, until such time as said government meets all of our demands! Washington cut down the loggers and gave miners the shaft. Poor ranchers are bedeviled with no graze for cow nor calf. Farmers clear with fire no longer. Hey! Leave that trout there in the brook! Well, my name, by God, is Finicum. And I will not, by God, be took! Not so long as I draw breath! Not with the Lord and my gun at my side. For in them both I place my faith, and with them I shall abide. Here in this shack, with this Injun crap, until those arsonists are both set free. And public land, Or-E-Gone to El Rio Grande, is given back to good ol' boys like me!

And the migratory media flocked in from everywhere. Seducing confrontation to justify its presence there. Until Finicum finally took flight — like Icarus, fled for the sun. And the arms of his Lord, and the final reward, of his faith in his God and his gun.

And the silence returned to Malheur, no longer marred by men. And eternity spiraled ever onward for the birds alone again. Trumpeter swan and Brewers sparrow, chukar, creeper, cowbird, wren, cattle-egret, falcon, kestrel, sap-sucker, rail and sanderling.

David Perham
Eugene

NOT A DEMOCRACY

Library. Police station. City Hall. Civic Stadium. Capstone. EMX extension. Willamette bike lanes. None of these city-altering initiatives won voter approval (voting to staff the library isn't approval; it's resignation). In fact, the first two went down to multiple voter defeats over years. Our mayor and council members cynically decided to go it alone on the others, not risking certain defeat in the face of overwhelming opposition (polls so showing).

The architects proposing a Kesey Square redo won (not the first try!) the City Hall "competition." Does anyone doubt who will prevail in Kesey Square? And the unpopular Multi-unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPTE) — does anyone question that officials will extend it? Park Blocks plans: whereto the vagrants dominate during non-market hours?

Is there any city that pays greater lip service to inclusiveness? "Come, speak to us, participate in meetings, join advisory committees!" And be ignored.

Bend. Salem. Corvallis. None of these has the setting of our Eugene, with lofty Skinner Butte — and none of them allowed a Ya-Po-Ah obscenity. In a city boasting

resources of a respected architectural faculty, this continued despoiling is shameful. It is tragic. And, in its dismissal of the will of the citizenry, it is profoundly un-American.

Jayme Vasconcellos
Eugene

FAT AND CLIMATE

I never throw up — but I did when I read "In celebration of full-figured sex" in the same Feb. 11 issue that is complaining about free-range cattle over-grazing in Eastern Oregon? This is just absurd. Average Americans eat literally *one ton* of food per year — 85.5 pounds of fats and oils, 110 pounds of red meat, including 62.4 pounds of beef and 46.5 pounds of pork. Now we are supposed to be attracted to people whom eat three times this! People who eat *three tons* of food per year?

How many cheeseburgers, Doritos and super-extra-large Big Gulp drinks does it take to be sexy? How much of Oregon's wild lands need to be converted to grazing so fat people can have another cheeseburger taco at a food truck? Do we make no connection between overgrazing and fat people's meat addiction?

I am an average woman 5-foot 4-inches and weigh 110 pounds. I don't go to a gym or do any diets. I do run and stretch every day, I eat fresh food from my garden and home-grown poultry; however, it is now illegal for me to model in Paris because I am not fat enough. My BMI is 18 not 18.5 which is the legal limit.

Wake up, America: You're eating the world out of food and grazing your great state to death to feed these fat people, and

now legislating that models be fat.

It's cool if you are big boned or whatever, but seriously! Please, fat people, you are causing climate change by requiring all this food.

Amanda França
Springfield

ARROGANT, RUDE COPS

When I moved to Eugene many years ago an attorney friend living here told me about the poor reputation of the Eugene Police Department. She was especially concerned about how they had treated her during a routine traffic stop. During my encounters with Eugene cops over the years, I learned several times that my friend was right.

While minding my own business Feb. 7, I learned again how arrogant and rude your cops can be. After pulling into the 76 Station on West 11th, I noticed numerous cop cars and fire trucks and wondered what was going on. I walked onto the path along Amazon Creek. There was no police tape between the parking lot and path and no tape across the path. Anyone coming along the path had open access to the large group of cops and others gathered about a quarter or half block away. I had no idea what they were doing. I was standing beside two women who might have been news reporters.

Suddenly a woman officer comes storming my way, waving her arms and yelling at me, "Get back! This is a crime scene!" She was in my face with a look that would freeze water. I asked her what the problem was and she said again, "This is a crime and you can't cross the police

NOTES FROM THE RIVERSIDE BY MARK HARRIS

Celebrating Excellence

LIMITS PERSIST ON WHAT BLACKS CAN ACCOMPLISH

Negro History Week started as an internal Negro Community Celebration, remembering the birthday and the difference between Frederick Douglass (my personal favorite Republican) and Lincoln (my least favorite Republican who edges out Ben Carson and Donald Trump). Douglass was part of a pre-Civil War meeting in which Lincoln suggested the solution to slavery was to ship all four million black people to Costa Rica. Douglass was one of the radical Republicans who felt the solution to slavery was full black citizenship, the vote, education, reparations, 40 acres and a mule, an end to white supremacy and the establishment of human equality.

Negro History Week was born as a response during the Harlem Renaissance, seven years after the Red Summer of 1919, an intense period of lynchings. Not that there's a mellow period of lynchings. Sandra Bland died in a county where eight lynchings had taken place, so some of us are not convinced her arrest and subsequent death were a suicide — as a court of law found that Martin Luther King Jr. was shot by an Army sniper, not James Earl Ray.

I make a distinction regarding black urban legends because, unlike their generic counterparts, black urban legends are true — like the details of lynching, but white people don't believe them. On the 50th anniversary, somebody actually believed I was making up Emmett Till. Mamie Till got death threats for wanting his body back to have a funeral in Chicago. His killers admitted doing it and were acquitted. People went to lynchings after Sunday church, brought children (held them up for a better view), brought picnic lunches, took pictures, sent the pictures through the mail (early 20th century social media). Wrote on said mail "Here's a Coon We Barbecued," certainly causing one to doubt whether "picnic" is from the French *pique-nique*, or the American picanig. And Trump wants us to worry about Muslims. The danger seems to be coming from people who look and speak like him.

Black History Month grew from our need to celebrate an excellence that was present but not shown in mainstream curriculum, which typically limited themselves to slavery and Martin Luther King Jr., astronauts (16), architects like DeNorval Unthank, doctors like Solomon Fuller, Charles Drew, Frantz

Fanon, Mae Jemison and Jocelyn Elders (OK, Ben Carson, but I'd still rather have him operating on your brain than in the White House).

We can even aspire to the White House, but there is a limit to what we can achieve there. We have a black president, but also more black men and women under correctional control than were in slavery in 1850 — and a new Jim Crow when they get out. Unarmed black men, women and children are killed at predictable rates by policemen, security guards, armed vigilantes, gang members or random shooters. Where Black Lives and Black History Matters is: What was once done to us because of race, is now being done to us because of money. It might be of benefit studying how we overcame, or will overcome. I don't think the Malheur occupiers learned anything from Martin Luther King Jr., the Black Panthers or MOVE. Or maybe they did.

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