

Opinion

Finland doesn't rake

We were recently informed by President Donald J. Trump, who far too regularly comes up short of accuracy and eschews truth, that Finland knows how to prevent forest fires. Trump came out to share his opinion on this subject and once again failed to provide information that would help with the problem in California—and elsewhere among forests still standing—and the Americans in them that are threatened with annihilation by conflagrations.

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h.
mcintyre

Regarding Finland, it turns out that the problem is actually not enough wildfires. In fact, from nature's point of view, the diversity of species and habitats suffer when there are too few fires. Our forest experts also know this to be a fact but have ineffectively practiced it here.

But let's get right to what Trump advocated from what he didn't get straight about Finland. Stifling his guffaws, Finnish President Sauli Niinisto came forward to inform Trump and his never-questioning-him staff that Finland's strategy on wildfires does not entail raking their forests floors to prevent fires.

Niinisto informed one and all that Finland does carry out controlled burns of their forest floors to clear away underbrush because that promotes new growth of saplings. However, researchers are not at all sure Finland's approach can serve to instruct California as parts of Finland are inside the Arctic Circle with prolonged periods of rain and snow while our neighbor to the south is into a new normal: ongoing below average precipitation.

California's susceptibility to fires has a lot to do with its weather. Finnish scientists expect their wildfires to increase by 10 percent by 2100 but

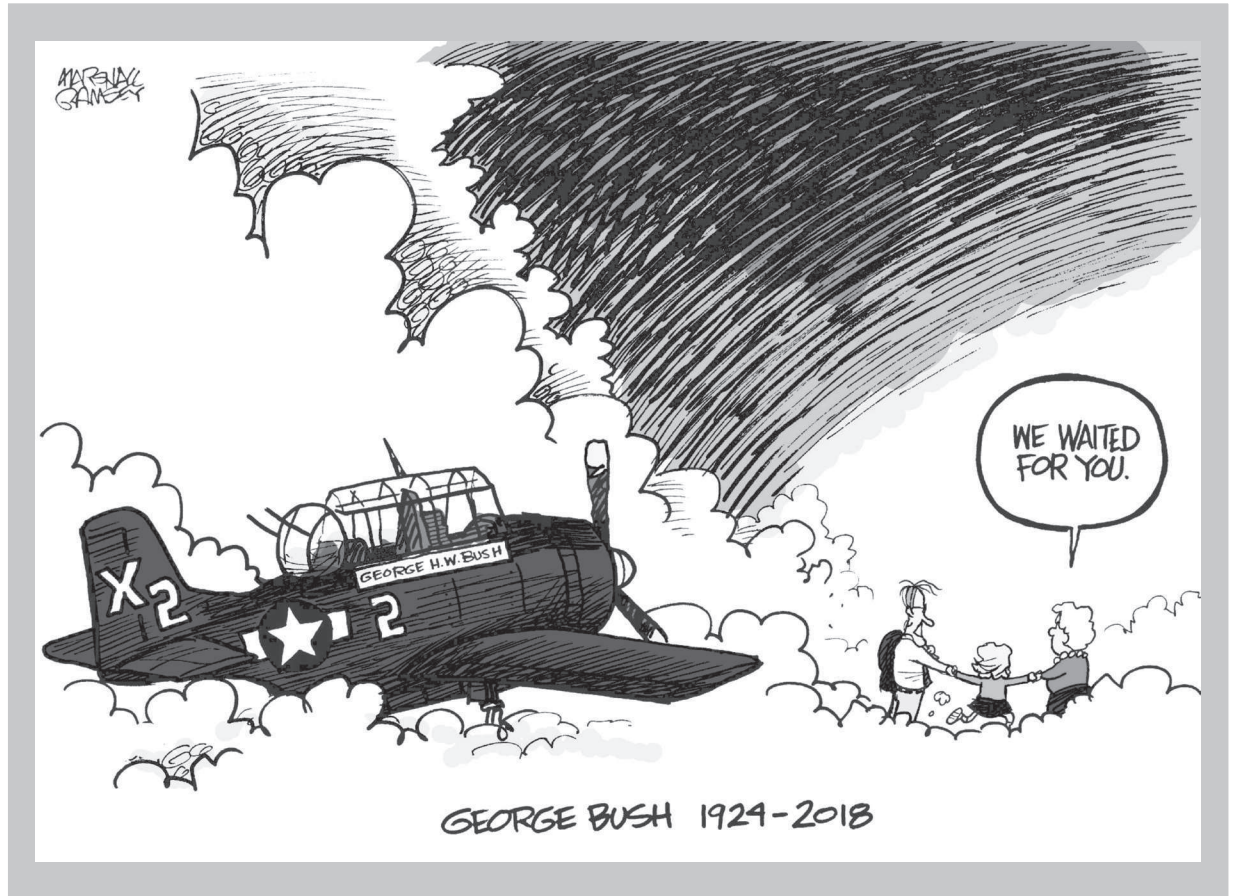
estimates in California anticipate 80 percent at risk much sooner—2050. Meanwhile, Finland's advantage—besides its hemispheric location—has most to do with differences in infrastructure and forest management. That is, Finland has a far denser road network which creates barriers to blazes with lakes and rivers handy when blazes do occur.

Finland was settled before North America was extensively explored by Europeans. Such a settled condition meant that medieval and industrial revolution-era need for wood turned forests into grasslands, especially in southern Finland. Yet, when the Finns went about reforestation in times closer to our own, they split up future forests into small compartments. One side effect was fewer wildfires as blazes don't spread beyond a single compartment with borders usually marked by wide paths and trees of different heights.

Back here in California, Oregon, Washington and wider, we know that Trump withdrew us from the 2015 Paris Deal to combat climate change. He has also rolled back Obama-era environmental and climate protections in order to boost production of domestic fossil fuels and has been an enemy of renewables. Most recently he said, "I don't believe it," in reaction to the congressionally-mandated climate change report through contributions by more than 300 scientists and let all of us know again that he's not interested in anything unless it can contribute to more personal wealth.

There's an old myth that read, "Nero fiddled while Rome burned." A future after the current POTUS will predictably proclaim, "Trump made money while Earth burned."

(Gene H. McIntyre shares his opinion frequently in the *Keizertimes*.)



Bush: sometimes things go right

By MICHAEL GERSON

All the talk about the attributes of this or that generation is usually overblown. But there is an exception when a cohort of young Americans shares a massive, overwhelming experience of depression or war. A certain view of their country is often formed and fixed.

This can be said of John F. Kennedy, the commanding officer of PT-109. And Lt. Cmdr. Richard Nixon, who ran the South Pacific Combat Air Transport Command. And Navy aviator George H.W. Bush. Serving in the Pacific theater of World War II, these young men had few traits of temperament or character in common. But the war shaped their conception of America's global role, and their view of the necessity and capability of government in general.

People who fought in World War II were marinated in the ideas that evil is real and that American power is an essential, irreplaceable force for good. They intuitively understood the moral narrative of Munich, Buchenwald, D-Day, Hiroshima, NATO and the twilight struggle. And they generally shared the notion that America could do anything that power, wealth, will and courage could accomplish.

This presented the temptation of overreach, as in Vietnam. JFK's inaugural pledge to "pay any price, bear any burden" should be taken seriously, but not literally. But the children of World War II really did believe that a torch was passing from Dwight Eisenhower's generation—the generation of their commanding officers—to a group of Americans who had rescued the world and fully intended to lead it. Given the other paths America might have taken, they did an extraordinary job. They twice saved humanity from well-armed, aggressive, totalitarian ideologies—first as soldiers, sailors and airmen, then as statesmen. America and the world owe them a great deal.

Being one of the youngest Navy pilots in World War II, and blessed with longevity, George H.W. Bush

was among the last of his cohort to leave us. As intelligence chief, diplomat and president, he brought to his calling a set of values that might be called patrician. He was less New Frontier and more old school. He rose up in government on the impulse of service. He lived by high standards of decency, fair play, humility, love of family and love of country. He was relentlessly moderate in temperament and political instinct.

This type of "establishment" code is easier to lampoon than replace. So much that a graceless age dismisses as repression is actually politeness, compassion and dignity.

And Bush's moral sensibilities turned out to be exactly what was needed at a decisive historical moment. As the Soviet Union collapsed under the weight of its economic and moral failure, what was needed from America was patience, wisdom, steady purpose and the generosity of true power. In presiding over the breaking of nations, an excess of vision or ambition might have been dangerously disruptive. Crowing would have led to bitterness and unpredictable anger. And Bush was incapable of crowing.

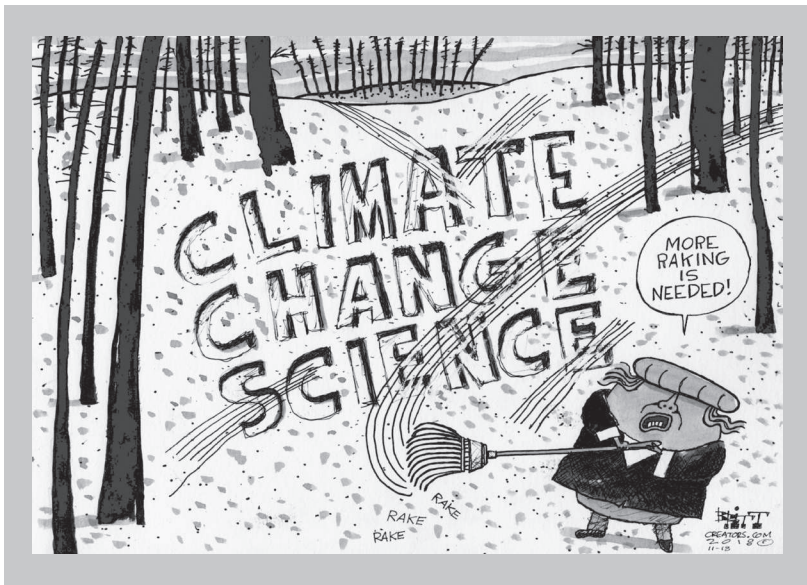
On closer exposure to Bush, there was something more at work than a moral code. I generally saw the elder Bush through the eyes of his son, George W. Bush, for whom I worked.

And he could hardly mention his father's name without welling up in tears of affection. During George W.'s first Republican National Convention speech, we had to cut short the section praising his father, because the son could not get through the words without breaking down. There was a sweetness to their relationship that is a tribute to both men. George H.W. Bush loved deeply, and was deeply loved. He was sentimental without being fragile. And those who saw weakness in his manner know nothing about true strength—the victory over ego, over impulse, over hatred.

Dying can be cruel and unfair. But there was a profound and encouraging sense of rightness, of fittingness, at Bush's death. He left few things unaccomplished, and none that mattered. He was only briefly parted from the love of his life. His strength failed before his spirit. Bush died as well as a man could manage—full of years, full of honors, surrounded by affection, confident in his faith, knowing that his work on earth was done.

Bush's life provides assurance that sometimes things go gloriously right. Sometimes Americans vote for a decent and honest leader. Sometimes a president finds his calling and his moment. Sometimes a good man meets a good end.

And still. It is a sad and solemn task to dig the graves of giants. (Washington Post Writers Group)



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 - 56 Kahn-Donaldson hit of '28
 - 59 Hien lead-in
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 - 61 "Today ___ man"
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 - 63 Alan or Norman
 - 64 Hyde Park sight
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 - 4 Bull or Miss
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 - 6 *Shane* star
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 - 9 Feather's partner
 - 10 *The Surrey With the ___ on Top*
 - 11 Ranch, in "Giant"
 - 12 Broadway backer
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 - 18 " . . . and he made him ___ of many colors"
 - 19 Nasal
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 - 28 Marry in haste
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 - 32 Arles assent
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 - 34 Jungle swingers
 - 35 Bible or Sun
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 - 38 Do museum work
 - 40 Kind of pole
 - 41 Persona non ___
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- By Charles Preston