

THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



STEPHEN A. FORRESTER, *Editor & Publisher*
 LAURA SELLERS, *Managing Editor*
 BETTY SMITH, *Advertising Manager*
 CARL EARL, *Systems Manager*
 JOHN D. BRUIJN, *Production Manager*
 DEBRA BLOOM, *Business Manager*
 HEATHER RAMSDELL, *Circulation Manager*

A time when great things were possible

It's important to remember the McCall era

Tom McCall was more than a governor. He led Oregon at a particularly fertile, combustible moment. He exploited that unique chemistry, embellishing Oregonians' environmental ethic and making Oregon a model for the nation.

On Wednesday, Gov. Kate Brown will sign Senate Bill 333, which declares next March 22 Tom McCall Day. This concept has been the goal of a group of Oregonians who call themselves the Tom McCall Legacy Project.

Many named days are empty gestures. But this one has possibilities.

On behalf of the Legacy Project, Bill Hall — a Lincoln County commissioner — wrote the legislation Gov. Brown is signing. The goal, says Hall, is that "So much time has passed since McCall's years and so many new Oregonians have moved here or been born that the memory of what was accomplished is fading away." The statute encourages school districts to use a curriculum which the Oregon Historical Society developed to teach children about those years.

Another place Oregonians can go to learn about the McCall legacy is the excellent documentary that Oregon Public Broadcasting produced (watch it at opb.org). The other place to look is Brent Walth's *Fire at Eden's Gate*,

the most complete work on McCall and one of the best Pacific Northwest political histories.

Occasionally a person and an era coincide. That's what happened with Tom McCall and the gigantic cultural shift that began in the 1960s and moved through the 1970s. Oregonians were ready to follow this immensely idiosyncratic leader who was one of the best communicators to hold the governor's office.

Out of this period came the Bottle Bill (1971), statewide land use planning (1973) and a declaration that Oregon's beaches were public. All three of these established Oregon as a place that was willing to take risks in the name of enhancing livability.

Our national attention span and memory has grown short. The population of Oregonians alive for the McCall era is dwindling. He was the best governor we may never see again.



Tom McCall

Unforeseen circumstances

Marijuana has a voracious appetite for electricity

For an activity that some of its fans still see as low-key hippie agriculture borrowed from the pages of the 1970s Whole Earth Catalog, marijuana growing comes with some surprisingly significant environmental downsides.

As our Capitol Bureau reported Monday, Oregon is about to become the latest state to overtly confront marijuana's voracious appetite for electricity. Colorado and Washington state are each already in the throes of adapting to sudden surging demand for power in places where expansion of service and supply is not easily achieved.

As first reported by the Chinook Observer about Pacific County — fast becoming a major location for large-scale legal marijuana growing — electricity wholesaler Bonneville Power Administration makes long-term supply contracts on a tiered basis, which allows smaller utilities to purchase power at lower rates. Those rates are a factor that attracts indoor growers. Additional electricity beyond Tier 1 must be purchased at a higher rate.

After lengthy discussions, Pacific County's public utility district decided last fall on a preference for existing, long-term customers, with most add-on electricity expenses going to the new large-load indoor marijuana farms. Even so, residential customers will see up to a \$4.70 additional annual charge per new large-load power user — a charge the PUD defends as valid support for a tremendous surge in economic development in the formerly struggling north half of the county.

Similar issues are playing out in Oregon, with publicly owned PUDs likely to also protect established ratepayers. It remains to be seen exactly how private power companies will dis-

tribute new costs. The issue is further complicated by federal restrictions on how energy-efficiency funds are spent.

Oregon's legalization law introduces one more big wrinkle into the debate by authorizing widespread home-growing of marijuana. While theoretically closer to the small-scale agrarian ideals of some marijuana users, these home grows could have a huge cumulative impact on power demand. One scientist puts this power draw as equal to running 29 new refrigerators per home-growing operation. Obviously, this will be self-limiting, as the power bills would be punishing. But it's easy to imagine some home growers becoming unofficial suppliers to recoup costs.

In addition to the carbon dioxide produced by some forms of power generation, marijuana plants also require additional levels of CO2 to grow at their best. Altogether, this comes to an estimated 4,600 kilograms (10,141 pounds) of CO2 for each kilo (2.2 pounds) of finished product.

Other impacts will certainly include everything from water usage to additional demands for municipal services in areas where production is concentrated.

To the extent that marijuana consumption remains essentially what it was, but supplied legally rather than illegally, these impacts may eventually balance out on a regional scale. For example, power previously used in Northern California for illegal grows may now be billed in Oregon for legal ones.

Utility bills and taxes must be carefully crafted and rebalanced to make certain costs are absorbed by those who profit from and appreciate marijuana. Groovy is one thing. Greedy is another.

'Lynch Mob': Misuse of language

By CHARLES M. BLOW
New York Times News Service

Last week, the Baltimore police union president, Gene Ryan, compared those protesting the death of Freddie Gray to a "lynch mob."

Freddie Gray was the 25-year-old Baltimore man who died of grave, mysterious injuries after being taken into police custody.

Gray's family, citizens of Baltimore and indeed those of the nation have questions. And yes, there is a palpable frustration and fatigue that yet another young person of color has died after an encounter with police officers.

So, there have been protests. But protests are not the same as a lynch mob, and to conflate the two diminishes the painful history of this country and unfairly slanders the citizens who have taken to the streets. Maybe Ryan is unaware not only of the history of lynching and lynch mobs in America overall, but also in Maryland itself.

For instance, according to the Maryland Historical Society Library: "Mary Denston, the elderly wife of a Somerset County farmer, was returning to her home in Princess Anne on the morning of October 17, 1933 when she was attacked by an assailant. A manhunt quickly began for the alleged perpetrator, 22-year-old African-American George Armwood. He was soon arrested and charged with felonious assault. By 5:00 pm, an angry mob of local white residents had gathered outside the Salisbury jail where the suspect had been taken. In order to protect Armwood from the increasingly hostile crowd, state police transferred him to Baltimore. But just as quickly he was returned to

Somerset County. After assuring Maryland Governor Albert Ritchie that Armwood's safety would be guaranteed, Somerset County officials transferred Armwood to the jail house in Princess Anne, with tragic consequences."

The report continued: "Sources are conflicting regarding many of the details of the assault on Denston and the subsequent murder of George Armwood, but what is certain is that on the evening of October 18 a mob of a thousand or more people stormed into the Princess Anne jail house and hauled Armwood from his cell down to the street below. Before he was hung from a tree some distance away, Armwood was dragged through the streets, beaten, stabbed, and had one ear hacked off. Armwood's lifeless body was then paraded through the town, finally ending up near the town's courthouse, where the mob doused the

There were 32 lynchings in Maryland between 1882 and 1931.

corpse with gasoline and set it on fire." As Baltimore's Afro-American newspaper reported at the time, in addition to Armwood's blackened skin, mutilated face and missing ear, his tongue was "clenched between his teeth," giving "evidence of his great agony before death." It continued: "There is no adequate description of the mute evidence of gloating on the part of whites who gathered to watch the effect upon our people."

Additionally, according to the historical society, there were 32 lynchings in Maryland between 1882 and 1931.

Perhaps Ryan had never heard the haunting rendition of *Strange Fruit* recorded in 1939 by Billie Holiday, with its plaintive lyrics shining light on the depravity of lynchings:

"Southern trees bear a strange fruit / Blood on the leaves and blood



Charles Blow

at the root / Black bodies swingin' in the Southern breeze / Strange fruit hangin' from the poplar trees."

Maybe Ryan does not appreciate the irony that it was not the officers' bodies that video showed being dragged limp and screaming through the street, but that of Gray. Maybe Ryan does not register coincidence that actual lynching often damages or cuts the spinal cord, and according to a statement by the Gray family's attorney, Gray's spine was "80 percent severed at his neck."

And this is not the first protest of the killing of people of color where "lynch mobs" have been invoked.

Fox News' Howard Kurtz accused "some liberal outlets" of "creating almost a lynch mob mentality" in Ferguson.

Possible presidential candidate Mike Huckabee also compared Ferguson protesters to lynch mobs, as did Laura Ingraham, *FrontPage* magazine and an opinion piece on *The Daily Caller*.

In 2013, after almost completely peaceful protests the weekend after George Zimmerman was found not guilty in the shooting death of Trayvon Martin, Newt Gingrich said that protesters were "prepared, basically, to be a lynch mob."

These "lynch mob" invocations are an incredible misuse of language, in which the lexicon of slaughter, subjugation and suffering are reduced to mere colloquialism, and therefore bleached of the blood in which it was originally written and used against the people who were historically victims of the atrocities.

"Lynch mob" is the same ghastly rhetorical overreach that is often banded about in political discussions — including in this column I wrote seven years ago. It was a too-extreme comparison then, and it's a too-extreme comparison now.

Nothing that political partisans or protesters have done — nothing! — comes remotely close to the barbarism executed by the lynch mobs that stain this country's history.

Are you smarter than an 8th-grader?

By NICHOLAS KRISTOF
New York Times News Service

I am afraid you're eligible to read this column only if you can answer this question faced by eighth-graders around the world:

What is the sum of the three consecutive whole numbers with 2n as the middle number?

- A. 6n+3
- B. 6n
- C. 6n-1
- D. 6n-3

More than three-quarters of South Korean kids answered correctly (it is B). Only 37 percent of American kids were correct, lagging their peers from Iran, Indonesia and Ghana.

We know Johnny can't read; it appears that Johnny is even worse at counting.

The Educational Testing Service released a global report finding that young adults from the United States rank poorly in reading but are even worse in math — the worst of all countries tested. This is the generation that will be in the labor force for the next half-century, struggling to compete with citizens of other countries.

It's not just that U.S. results are dragged down by poverty. Even U.S. millennials with graduate degrees score near the bottom of international ranks in numeracy.

We interrupt this column for another problem:

How many degrees does a minute hand of a clock turn through from 6:20 a.m. to 8 a.m. on the same day?

- A. 680 degrees
- B. 600 degrees
- C. 540 degrees
- D. 420 degrees

Only 22 percent of American

eighth-graders correctly answered B, below Palestinians, Turks and Armenians.

In a recent column, I offered a paean to the humanities. But it's also true, as a professor notes in a letter to the editor, that science majors do take humanities courses. In contrast, humanities majors often desperately avoid any semblance of math or science (except for classes like "Physics for Poets").

Numeracy isn't a sign of geekiness, but a basic requirement for intelligent discussions of public policy. Without it, politicians routinely get away with using statistics, as Mark Twain supposedly observed, the way a drunk uses a lamppost: for support rather than illumination.

(I believe U.S. high schools and colleges overemphasize calculus and don't sufficiently teach statistics. Statistical literacy should be part of every citizen's tool kit.)

Public debates often dance around basic statistical concepts, like standard deviation, because too few Americans understand them. And people assume far too much of "averages."

After all, American adults have, on average, one ovary and one testicle. But try finding such an "average person."

Another pop quiz:

A piece of wood was 40 centimeters long. It was cut into 3 pieces. The lengths in centimeters are 2x - 5, x + 7 and x + 6. What is the length of the longest piece?

Only 7 percent of American eighth-graders got that one right (the answer is 15 centimeters). In contrast, 53 percent of Singaporean eighth-graders answered correctly.

I know many readers will grum-



Nicholas Kristof

blingly protest that they're just not good at math! True, there are math prodigies who are different from you and me. When the great mathematician Carl Gauss was a young boy, his teacher is said to have asked his class to calculate the sum of all the numbers from 1 to 100. Gauss supposedly supplied the answer almost instantly: 5,050.

The teacher, flabbergasted, asked how he knew. Gauss explained that he had added 1 and 100, 2 and 99, and realized that there would be 50 such pairs each summing 101. So 50 times 101 equals 5,050.

So I agree: Let's resent the Gausses of the world for being annoyingly smart. But let's not use that as an excuse to hide from the rigor of numbers. Countries like Singapore manage to impart extraordinary math skills in ordinary children because they work at it.

Numeracy isn't just about numbers, of course. It's also about logic. Let me leave you with a logical puzzle — a family favorite, one that I first heard as a little kid — that isn't mathematical at all. Yet people with math training seem better at thinking it through and solving it:

You're in a dungeon with two doors. One leads to escape, the other to execution. There are only two other people in the room, one of whom always tells the truth, while the other always lies. You don't know which is which, but they know that the other always lies or tells the truth. You can ask one of them one question, but, of course, you don't know whether you'll be speaking to the truth-teller or the liar. So what single question can you ask one of them that will enable you to figure out which door is which and make your escape?

It's not a trick question. When you hear the answer, you'll see it's straightforward. I've posted the answer on my blog, nytimes.com/on-the-ground, but you won't need the help, will you?

Where to write

• **State Rep. Brad Witt (D):** State Capitol, 900 Court Street N.E., H-373, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1431. Web: www.leg.state.or.us/witt/ Email: rep.bradwitt@state.or.us

• **State Rep. Deborah Boone (D):** 900 Court St. N.E., H-481, Salem, OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-

1432. Email: rep.deborah.boone@state.or.us District office: P.O. Box 928, Cannon Beach, OR 97110. Phone: 503-986-1432. Web: www.leg.state.or.us/boone/

• **State Sen. Betsy Johnson (D):** State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., S-314, Salem, OR 97301. Telephone: 503-986-1716. Email: sen.betsy.john-

son@state.or.us Web: www.betsyjohnson.com District Office: P.O. Box R, Scappoose, OR 97056. Phone: 503-543-4046. Fax: 503-543-5296. Astoria office phone: 503-338-1280.

• **Port of Astoria:** Executive Director, 10 Pier 1 Suite 308, Astoria, OR 97103. Phone: 503-741-3300. Email: admin@portofastoria.com