

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*

Climate change is real in the ocean

Green Energy Institute prods Oregon state government

While Congress does little and while the Republican presidential field is rife with climate change deniers, the states are not waiting. And world powers have just reached an extraordinary agreement.

Chances are that you have never heard of the Green Energy Institute. It is an ad hoc organization at Lewis & Clark Law School. "Countdown to 2050: Sharpening Oregon's Climate Action Tools," issued in November, is the Green Energy Institute's prod to the Oregon Legislature.

Coming one month before the historic Paris Accord on climate change, the Oregon call to action is especially timely.

"Oregon isn't doing enough to address climate change," says co-author Amelia Schlessler. "In order for countries to achieve reductions, states are going to have to take action."

What few of us realize is that the West Coast states and Hawaii are in the forefront of response to climate change. "For about 20 years, the Western states initiative has percolated," says Lyndon "Tuck" Wilson, who helped start the institute. "Its most recent iteration is the Pacific Coast Climate Plan, signed by four West Coast entities — California, Oregon, Washington and British Columbia. It is a significant document."

Wilson notes that, "In 2016

Washington will go to the ballot to establish a carbon tax." He also notes that, "Hawaii said that by 2040 they will be at zero carbon."

Few voters name the environment as a top-tier issue. That is unlikely to change, even in the face of massive wildfires, drought and clear evidence of ocean acidification. And there are high-profile climate deniers. They include *The Wall Street Journal*, which on Monday said: "... if climate change really does imperil the Earth, *and we doubt it does.*" (italics added).

The best response to the threat of climate change is systemic, and the ultimate system is global. Now we have an encouraging attempt at global response in the Paris climate agreement. But initiatives such as on the Pacific Coast, including British Columbia, matter. We who border oceans see most clearly the early evidence of climate change's effects on marine life. Right now, we observe real world economic impact from changes in ocean chemistry and temperature.

The Green Energy Institute is right to prod Oregon state government.

A tide of blood begs for a response

Gun deaths are, first and foremost, a personal and societal tragedy. Beyond this, they are the source of spiraling political controversy and animosity. A report (www.tinyurl.com/GuardianGunDeaths) this week provides an interesting analysis of 2015 deaths by gun violence, broken down by congressional district.

• Oregon's 1st Congressional District, which includes Clatsop County, has the lowest incidence of violent gun deaths in the state: 12 this year. It is represented by Suzanne Bonamici who has an "F" approval rating from the National Rifle Association, has received no gun-lobby donations since 2014 and voted no on the one gun-related bill to make it through the recent stalled legislative process. She voted no on the bill, which expanded gun ownership within Washington, D.C.

• Elsewhere in Oregon, the 4th Congressional District represented by Peter DeFazio had the most gun deaths: 33. This includes the murders at Umpqua Community College. DeFazio gets an "F" from the NRA, received no gun money and voted no on the D.C. gun rights expansion. Oregon's 3rd district, represented by Earl Blumenauer

has 31 gun deaths this year. Blumenauer also gets an "F," received no gun money and voted against the D.C. gun measure. Rep. Greg Walden, the Oregon delegation's only Republican, gets an "A" from the NRA, has received \$15,550 in gun money since 2014 and voted to expand D.C. gun rights. The state's remaining congressman, Kurt Schrader, got an "A-" from the NRA, received \$2,000 in gun money in 2014 and voted for the D.C. gun bill. There have been 13 gun deaths in Schrader's district and 18 in Walden's. Statewide, violent gun deaths have reached 112 in 2015.

With an average of more than 30 gun deaths per day in the U.S., we exceed the death toll of the Paris terrorist attacks every 4 1/2 days. Many of the same national politicians who are angrily urging a war in Syria are even more angrily against doing anything to try to address the daily toll of gun violence here at home.

The complexity of gun-violence patterns makes it clear there aren't easy answers. But it's impossible to avoid the conclusion that a rational nation would address this issue.

There is a tide of blood in our country. That we choose to do so little about it is shocking.

Cruz blusters, Trump sulks

By FRANK BRUNI

New York Times News Service

Someone needs to explain Scarpets to Ted Cruz.

They're continuous stretches of material, usually rectangular, sometimes round.

They're not staggered, interrupted, with stops, starts, holes and sharp jags so they smother and blot out only the evil bits of floor but leave adjacent, innocent ones untouched.



Frank Bruni

When you call for carpet bombing, as Cruz did again Tuesday night, you are not outlining a strategy of pinpoint targeting or of any discernment.

You are sounding big and bold and advocating something indiscriminate. That's the nature of a carpet. You can't pretend otherwise.

Unless you're Cruz, who can pretend just about anything.

"You would carpet bomb where ISIS is, not a city, but the location of the troops," he said, as if there's no mingling and the fighters of the Islamic State are somehow clustered apart from everyone they control, extinguished with the mere dropping of a rug.

"The object isn't to level a city," he added, never specifying how he would separate the good edifices and actors from the bad.

That's some magic carpet.

And it was a prime example of the bluster and oversimplification on vivid, infuriating display in this Republican presidential debate, the fifth.

It was dominated as none of the four before it by one word, one syllable — "safe," which was uttered so regularly that it was essentially the heartbeat of the debate.

In the wake of the Paris carnage, following the San Bernardino massacre, on a day when the country's second-largest school district told children to stay home so they wouldn't be victims of violence, Americans wanted to know when and how they'd ever feel unafraid again.

And each of the nine contenders on the stage had one goal above all others: to convince viewers that he or she could be the agent of that fiercely desired security. That he or she could bring back "safe."

But many of the aspirants had additional aims: to wound the rivals for



John Locher/AP Photo

Jeb Bush, right, makes a point as Ted Cruz looks on during the CNN Republican presidential debate at the Venetian Hotel & Casino on Tuesday in Las Vegas.

the nomination who stood most directly in their way. As the night wore on, it degenerated into tedious, often puerile quarrels: between Cruz and Marco Rubio; between Rubio and Rand Paul; between Jeb Bush and Donald Trump.

Actually, the Bush-Trump crossfire was welcome and satisfying, because Bush more than anyone in any of these debates effectively called Trump out for his galling recklessness, and Trump's responses were as naked a display of his adolescent narcissism as he's engaged in yet. That's saying something.

"He's a chaos candidate," Bush said when asked to elaborate on a tweet in which he'd called Trump "unhinged." "And he'll be a chaos president. He would not be the commander in chief we need to keep our country safe."

Trump shot back that Bush's whole candidacy had been a disaster.

Bush shook his head pityingly. "Donald, you're not going to be able to insult your way to the presidency," he said.

He twice derided Trump's comment a while back that he got his foreign policy advice from television shows, saying, "I don't know if that's Saturday morning or Sunday morning." Saturday morning is cartoon time.

Trump crowed about his poll numbers versus Bush's.

Did Trump help or hurt himself? I'm not foolish enough to continue guessing and being wrong. He keeps proving that the political laws of gravity don't apply to him. No, he floats egomaniacally through his own cosmos, where no one is richer, smarter or in better physical shape,

and where all other bodies orbit his. He's solar. Singular.

Bush had his best night — probably too late. Rubio and Cruz had slightly rough ones, their inconsistencies highlighted by their rivals and their positions as senators under fire from Chris Christie, who noted that they'd never been chief executives, and Carly Fiorina, who noted that they were political insiders.

Bush had his best night — probably too late.

Serious issues were discussed and serious disagreements surfaced: about government surveillance, about military spending, about immigration and how it factors into national security.

The candidates rightly observed that neither Barack Obama nor Hillary Clinton had articulated a strategy or found an answer for reassuring jittery Americans.

But their own attempts to do that also failed, eclipsed by their sparring and preening, by an emphasis on puffed chests and sound bites over nuanced policies and earnest reflection.

In that sense, Cruz was the night's defining figure, his certainty verging on cockiness, his ambitions transparent, his attempts to tap into some warmth a mesmerizing exercise in futility.

We indeed need a warrior right now. We need someone with preternatural poise and confidence.

But we also need someone with a capacity for subtlety, an instinct for true leadership and as much selflessness as can be hoped for in the arena of politics.

Was there anyone with all of those qualities on the stage Tuesday night?

Paris climate accord is a big, big deal

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN

New York Times News Service

PARIS — I had low expectations for the United Nation's climate meeting here and it met all of them — beautifully. I say that without cynicism.

Any global conference that includes so many countries can't be expected to agree on much more than the lowest common denominator.

But the fact that the lowest common denominator is now so high — a willingness by 188 countries to offer plans to steadily and verifiably reduce their carbon emissions — means we still have a chance to meet what scientists say is our key challenge: to avoid the worst impacts of global warming that we cannot possibly manage and to manage those impacts that we can no longer avoid. That is a big, big deal.

Many leaders had a hand in it, but it would not have happened without the diplomacy of President Barack Obama and Secretary of State John Kerry.

Hat's off, because this keeps alive the hope of capping the earth's warming to 2 degrees Celsius, or 3.6 Fahrenheit, above the level that existed at the dawn of the Industrial Revolution — the rough redline scientists have drawn beyond which "global weirding" will set in and the weather will most likely get really weird and unstable. We're already almost halfway to passing that redline.

The only important holdout in the world to this deal is the U.S. Republican Party. I wouldn't care about such cavemen — as one sign borne by a Paris demonstrator said, "Dinosaurs didn't believe in climate change either," and it didn't end well for them — except that one of these knuckleheads could be our next president and mess this up.

The GOP should take the wise counsel of Andy Karsner, who was George W. Bush's assistant energy secretary and

one of his climate negotiators, and use the Paris deal to build a bridge back to constructive engagement on the subject. Republicans can plausibly argue, said Karsner, that it was Bush who, in 2007, created the "major economies" strategy to address climate change through precisely the kind of market-enabled, voluntary national targets adopted in Paris.

"The price of getting this issue behind us may never again be this cheap," Karsner said of Republicans. "Congressional leaders need to evaluate the opportunity they have to reconnect with mainstream voters, scientific, civic and business leaders, geopolitical strategists and most anyone under 35 years old who's completed eighth-grade science."

With the earth on pace to add 2 billion more people by 2050, who will all want cars and homes, and with scientists saying the only way to stay below the 2 degrees C redline is to phase out all fossil fuels by roughly the same date, there is only one force big enough to do that — to take on Mother Nature at scale — and that's Father Greed, aka, the market.

What will make this deal epochal is if the United States and China now lead the world in imposing a price on carbon, because only that will take to scale the already significant technology breakthroughs that have happened with wind, solar, batteries, energy efficiency and nuclear power.

"In the last six years," said Hal Harvey, CEO of Energy Innovation, a policy research group, "solar prices have dropped by more than 80 percent, and now cost less than a new coal plant. Wind is down 60 percent, and LED lights more than 90 percent." With other new technologies near at hand "it becomes clear that a clean future costs no more than a dirty one," he said. "Texas now has the most wind installed of any U.S. state. Texas!"

Harvey's team has built a computer



Thomas L. Friedman

model to see which policies can decarbonize the economy at the lowest price. It lets a user test varying policy options on climate, pollution and the economy. If you pick the right blend, the results will have you grinning. Go online, at www.energypolicy.solutions, and try it for yourself.

The point, said Harvey, is that today's chief executive doesn't "have to be a hero anymore" to invest in clean power.

Indeed, José Manuel Entrecanales, chairman of Acciona, the giant Spanish renewables company, told me that he used to be sprinting alone in the race to install renewables "with the wind in my face." But now he finds the wind is at his back, and some of the biggest oil companies are trying to muscle into the race. That is not an accident, he said, considering that recent deals from Morocco to South Africa to Chile were struck for around 2.8 cents a kilowatt-hour of wind and 4.2 cents a kWh for solar, making them highly competitive with fossil fuel.

"In Chile," said Entrecanales, "there was (just) an auction which was technology agnostic, so the government was offering big bunches of energy to be supplied over the next 10 years, 20 years, and all the energy awarded was renewable. Not one single megawatt hour of conventional energy was supplied."

But, he stressed, leveraging the Paris consensus to get a price on carbon in the big emitting countries is the "Holy Grail," the thing that tips everything. Because while renewables can win against new fossil fuel plants, old fossil fuel plants built without any pollution control, and with all their capital expense amortized and still enjoying subsidies, can still run very cheaply — if you don't count their massive carbon impacts.

A price on carbon, said Entrecanales, "would drive technology, it would drive R&D, it would drive investment, it would drive consumer habits." So Paris was necessary. A price on carbon will make it sufficient.