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Oyster growers need shimp fix

Washington state shellfish growers have taken some good public-relations advice in recent months on the issue of spraying oyster beds with an insecticide to kill burrowing shrimp. The question will be whether telling a coherent story will be enough to overcome deep-seated worries about man-made chemicals in food and the environment.

Going to the epicenter of their problem, Willapa and Grays Harbor, Wash., oyster growers last week presented their case to Seattle news media, arguing that they face financial disaster if they aren't granted a permit to use the spray imidacloprid. In attendance were appealing young growers like Annie Herrold Brown, who were able to give a face and voice to the argument that commercial oystering faces an existential threat if shrimp are allowed to chew up oysterlands and smother oysters.

Growers swear they will go out of business this decade if shrimp continue to go unchecked.

The economic viability of oystering is a matter of importance for all who live on the Pacific Northwest coast. According to the industry's statistics, it supports 1,500 jobs and \$50 million in labor income, money that circulates throughout the coastal economy.

Though commercial-scale oystering has vocal detractors, there is no doubt the coast is better off with it than without it. Growers have a powerful incentive to maintain water quality and pay attention to land uses that might result in costly contamination of shellfish. As pragmatic environmentalists, they are aggrieved that a long process to find a relatively low-impact way to control mud shrimp spiraled into a major political black eye last year. They were forced

to back off from spraying when it became clear the public and Gov. Jay Inslee were highly uncomfortable with the plan.

There is no denying imidacloprid is controversial. It is banned in Europe. Though it is in more than 400 products for sale in the U.S. — ordinary consumers buy it all the time to control fleas on pets, and farmers routinely apply it to kill insects on crops — the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency said just last week it may kill bees.

On the other hand, the EPA's findings are disputed by the agriculture industry. Local research centering on imidacloprid on estuarine mudflats decided few bees were likely to come into contact with the chemical out on Willapa Bay and Grays Harbor. Tests show no chemical residue in oysters grown on imidacloprid-treated beds.

If the facts favor shrimp spraying — not all agree this is true — getting permission should be a breeze. But it is unlikely to be so easy. When it comes to chemical sprays and similar topics, such as genetically modified foods, the facts have a hard time overcoming emotion. Most coastal people sympathize with oyster growers and will advocate on their behalf. But the public, agency employees and politicians who need to be convinced don't live here.

Smart oyster growers will continue working very hard to find ways to prosper despite shrimp.

The spendy, bad joke needs to end

For the Bundys there is no logical winning strategy

In 2010 the Aryan Nation tried to gain a foothold in Grant County. Their idea was to make the area around John Day the new headquarters of this group which preaches that white people are imperiled.

Grant County's politics are dependably conservative. But no one out there had invited the Aryan Nation to come. And when our sister newspaper, the *Blue Mountain Eagle*, convened a community meeting the dominant message was for the men wearing khaki uniforms and armbands bearing swastikas to leave. And they did.

The protracted occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge is a lot like that. There has never been a groundswell to turn the renowned bird refuge, created by Theodore Roosevelt, into grazing land. The Bundys and their followers from the

Southwest have exported their game of confrontation to Harney County, which has grown tired of their menacing.

The *New York Times* report from inside the occupied federal buildings, published Wednesday, depicts a group of armed men playing war. This entire exercise has deep emotional meaning for the Bundys. They gain enormous ego feed from their armed followers and the media. The Bundys have put themselves and the community into a dangerous position, and they have no logical winning strategy.

But residents of Harney County and their sheriff have asked these guys to leave. So what we have is an intruder who is imposing his dangerous drama on the rest of us. For the people of Burns this has become an expensive bad joke.

Disruption in the age of protest

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN
New York Times News Service

If you go to *The Guardian's* website these days you can find a section that is just labeled "Protest."

So now, with your morning coffee, you can get your news, weather, sports — and protests.

I found stories there headlined, "Five Fresh Ideas for the Street Art Agitator in 2016," "Muslim Woman Ejected From Donald Trump Rally After Silent Protest" and, appropriately, "We Are Living in an Age of Protest."

We sure are. This week alone Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany faced huge protests after her justice minister declared that Arab immigrants — let in under Merkel's liberal refugee policy — were largely responsible for the mass sexual assaults on women in Cologne on New Year's Eve and used social networks to coordinate their attacks. President Barack Obama actually cried — that was his unique protest — while trying to channel his outrage, and many other people's, into fixing our nation's crazy gun laws.

In my view, this age of protest is driven, in part, by the fact that the three largest forces on the planet — globalization, Moore's law and Mother Nature — are all in acceleration, creating an engine of disruption that is stressing strong countries and middle classes and blowing up weak ones, while superempowering individuals and transforming the nature of work, leadership and government all at once.

When you get that much agitation in a world where everyone with a smartphone is now a reporter, news photographer and documentary filmmaker, it's a wonder that every newspaper doesn't have a "Protest" section.

I asked Dov Seidman, the author of the book "How" and CEO of LRN, which advises companies all over the world on leadership and how to build ethical cultures, for his take on this age of protest.

"People everywhere seem to be morally aroused," said Seidman. "The philosopher David Hume argued that 'the moral imagination diminishes with distance.' It would follow that the opposite is also true: As distance decreases, the moral imagination increases. Now that we have no distance — it's like we're all in a crowded the-



Thomas L. Friedman



Carolyn Kaster/AP Photo

President Barack Obama wipes tears from his face as he speaks in the East Room of the White House in Washington, Jan. 5, about steps his administration is taking to reduce gun violence. Also on stage are Vice President Joe Biden, right, and stakeholders, and individuals whose lives have been impacted by the gun violence.

ater, making everything personal — we are experiencing the aspirations, hopes, frustrations, plights of others in direct and visceral ways."

Indeed, we're being intimately exposed to footage of outrageous police brutality, terrorism victims jumping from the windows of a Paris theater and racially biased/sextist corporate emails revealed by hackers. Who wouldn't be aroused?

"Think about this," said Seidman: "A dentist from Minnesota shoots a cherished lion in Zimbabwe named Cecil, and days later everyone in the world knows about it, triggering a tsunami of moral outrage on Twitter and Facebook. As a result, some people try to shut down his dental practice by posting negative reviews on Yelp and spray paint 'Lion Killer' on his Florida vacation home. Almost 400,000 people then sign a petition in one day on Change.org demanding that Delta Air Lines change their policy of transporting trophy kills. Delta does so and other airlines follow. And then hunters who contribute to Zimbabwe's tourism industry protest the protest, claiming that they were being discriminated against."

That we are becoming more morally aroused "is generally a good thing," argued Seidman. Institutionalized racism in police departments, or in college fraternities, is real and had been tolerated for way too long. That it's being called out is a sign of a society's health "and re-engagement."

But when moral arousal manifests as moral outrage, he added, "it can either inspire or repress a serious conversation or the truth." There is surely a connection between the explosion

of political correctness on college campuses — including Yale students demanding the resignation of an administrator whose wife defended free speech norms that might make some students uncomfortable — and the ovations Donald Trump is getting for being crudely politically incorrect.

"If moral outrage, as justified as it may be, is followed immediately by demands for firings or resignations," argued Seidman, "it can result in a vicious cycle of moral outrage being met with equal outrage, as opposed to a virtuous cycle of dialogue and the hard work of forging real understanding and enduring agreements."

Furthermore, "when moral outrage skips over moral conversation, then the outcome is likely going to be acquiescence, not inspired solutions," Seidman added. It can also feed the current epidemic of inauthentic apologies, "since apologies extracted under pressure are like telling a child, 'Just say you're sorry,' to move past the issue without ever making amends."

With all of this moral arousal, it's as if "we're living in a never-ending storm," he said. Alas, though, resolving moral disputes "requires perspective, fuller context and the ability to make meaningful distinctions."

That requires leaders with the courage and empathy "to inspire people to pause to reflect, so that instead of reacting by yelling in 140 characters they can channel all this moral outrage into deep and honest conversations." If we can do that — a big if — Seidman concluded, "we can be truly great again because we'll be back on our journey towards a more perfect union."

It's a wonder that every newspaper doesn't have a 'Protest' section.

The pagan brutality of Ted Cruz

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

In 1997, Michael Wayne Haley was arrested after stealing a calculator from Wal-Mart.

This was a crime that merited a maximum two-year prison term.

But prosecutors incorrectly applied a habitual offender law. Neither the judge nor the defense lawyer caught the error and Haley was sentenced to 16 years.

Eventually, the mistake came to light and Haley tried to fix it. Ted Cruz was solicitor general of Texas at the time. Instead of just letting Haley go for time served, Cruz took the case to the Supreme Court to keep Haley in prison for the full 16 years.

Some justices were skeptical. "Is there some rule that you can't confess error in your state?" Justice Anthony Kennedy asked. The court system did finally let Haley out of prison, after six years.

The case reveals something interesting about Cruz's character. He is now running strongly among evangelical voters, especially in Iowa. But in his career and public presentation Cruz is a stranger to most of what would generally be considered the Christian virtues: humility, mercy, compassion and grace. Cruz's behavior in the Haley case is almost the dictionary definition of pharisaism: an overzealous application of the letter of the law in a way that violates the spirit of the law, as well as fairness and mercy.

Traditionally, candidates who have attracted strong evangelical support have in part emphasized the need to lend a helping hand to the economically stressed and the least fortunate among us. Such candidates include George W. Bush, Mike Huckabee and Rick Santorum.

But Cruz's speeches are marked

by what you might call pagan brutality. There is not a hint of compassion, gentleness and mercy. Instead, his speeches are marked by a long list of enemies, and vows to crush, shred, destroy, bomb them. When he is speaking in a church the contrast between the setting and the emotional tone he sets is jarring.

Cruz lays down an atmosphere of apocalyptic fear. America is heading off "the cliff to oblivion." After one Democratic debate he said, "We're seeing our freedoms taken away every day, and last night was an audition for who would wear the jackboot most vigorously."

As Republican strategist Curt Anderson observed in Politico, there's no variation in Cruz's rhetorical tone. As is the wont of inauthentic speakers, everything is described as a maximum existential threat.

The fact is this apocalyptic diagnosis is ridiculous. The Obama administration has done things people like me strongly disagree with. But America is in better economic shape than any other major nation on earth. Crime is down. Abortion rates are down. Fourteen million new jobs have been created in five years.

President Barack Obama has championed a liberal agenda, but he hasn't made the country unrecognizable. In 2008, federal spending accounted for about 20.3 percent of gross domestic product. In 2015, it accounted for about 20.9 percent.

But Cruz manufactures an atmosphere of menace in which there is no room for compassion, for moderation, for anything but dismantling and counterattack. And that is what he offers. Cruz's programmatic agenda, to the extent that it exists in his speeches, is to destroy things: destroy



David Brooks

the IRS, crush the "jackals" of the EPA, end funding for Planned Parenthood, reverse Obama's executive orders, make the desert glow in Syria, destroy the Iran nuclear accord.

Some of these positions I agree with, but the lack of any positive emphasis, any hint of reform conservatism, any aid for the working class, or even any

humane gesture toward cooperation is striking.

Cruz didn't come up with this hard, combative and gladiatorial campaign approach in isolation. He's always demonstrated a tendency to bend his position — whether immigration or trade — to what suits him politically. This approach works because in the wake of the Obergefell v. Hodges court decision on same-sex marriage, many evangelicals feel they are being turned into pariahs in their own nation.

Cruz exploits and exaggerates that fear. But he reacts to Obergefell in exactly the alienating and combative manner that is destined to further marginalize evangelicals, that is guaranteed to bring out fear-driven reactions and not the movement's highest ideals.

The best conservatism balances support for free markets with a Judeo-Christian spirit of charity, compassion and solidarity. Cruz replaces this spirit with spartan belligerence. He sows bitterness, influences his followers to lose all sense of proportion and teaches them to answer hate with hate. This Trump-Cruz conservatism looks more like tribal, blood and soil European conservatism than the pluralistic American kind.

Evangelicals and other conservatives have had their best influence on American politics when they have proceeded in a spirit of personalism — when they have answered hostility with service and emphasized the infinite dignity of each person. They have won elections as happy and hopeful warriors. Cruz's brutal, fear-driven, apocalypse-based approach is the antithesis of that.

Cruz's speeches are marked by what you might call pagan brutality.