

# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873



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## What is Kate Brown afraid of?

*Herself*

Barely a week passes when Kate Brown refuses to be a leader. The governor's latest profile in timidity is her backing out of the longstanding tradition of debating her challenger in front of the audience of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association during its July convention. That quadrennial encounter between the Democratic and Republican candidates has sparked the beginning of the campaign season.

Paris Achen of our state-house bureau reported in Monday's edition that Brown's aides were anxious about what questions would be asked during the debate. Who would do the asking, they wondered.

Those questions befit a first-time candidate, not someone who's been to the polls as many times as Brown.

And what is Brown afraid of?

Herself. Following an impressive beginning in the wake of Gov. John Kitzhaber's sudden resignation, Brown has receded from view and become nonrespon-

sive on an array of issues.

Brown can afford this game of "find the governor" because Oregon has become a one-party state. When the Republican Party became the captive of religious conservatives more than a decade ago, it ceased to develop a bench of younger, strong mainstream candidates.

Dr. Bud Pierce, the GOP's nominee for governor, is a first-time candidate. That Gov. Brown is so afraid of Pierce (and apparently of the news media) that she won't appear at the ONPA convention tells us more about her frailties than Pierce.

## Just say 'no' to gun ownership

Among the many sad ironies surrounding the U.S. cultural wars about firearms is the vast growth in gun numbers during the Obama administration, whose detractors routinely accuse of conspiring to end private gun ownership. Fear of this nonexistent threat has resulted in enough firearm sales to fight off an outer-space invasion.

Data on federal criminal background checks show a continuing surge in gun buying in Oregon and around the nation.

In the first five months of 2016, Oregonians bought at least 126,738 firearms, based on statistics from the National Instant Criminal Background Check System (NICS), nearly double the 66,665 sold in the same months in 2006. The NICS does not include sales between private individuals and certain other exceptions that may add tens of thousands of additional sales to the actual total.

Since Obama's inauguration in January 2009,

Oregonians have purchased nearly 1.8 million firearms covered by the NICS system. In 2016, there were only 1.5 million occupied homes in Oregon.

Do all these weapons make us safer? Far more Americans use our weapons to commit suicide than to commit murder. "In the U.S., more than 10,000 Americans will likely be killed in gun murders this year. Another 20,000 will likely be lost to gun suicide. The total number of gun deaths and violent injuries will be close to 100,000," *The Guardian* newspaper reported this week. "In absolute terms, around 33,500 lives are lost each year. That's roughly one every 15 minutes — about the same number of people as are killed on America's roads."

Leaving all the politics aside, the facts tell us we are safer not having firearms at home. If you are contemplating buying one, take Nancy Reagan's famous advice to heart: Just say no.

## GUEST COLUMN

# Time to fix broken federal coal system

By BOB REES

*For The Daily Astorian*

This week in Seattle, the Department of the Interior is providing the public with the opportunity to provide input on the federal coal program.

Most people don't know that publicly owned coal makes up 40 percent of all coal burned in the U.S. each year — but the rules governing the federal coal program haven't been updated in three decades.

Because of this, the current law is outdated and environmentally irresponsible, and contains gaping loopholes that have allowed coal companies to cheat taxpayers out of revenue and avoid government accountability. Studies have estimated at least \$1 billion in lost revenue per year for the last 30 years; funds that could have been put to good use in our communities, rather than lining the pockets of coal company CEOs.

Science is clear that coal pollution is driving the increasingly hot ocean and river temperatures and their acidification to lethal levels for our salmon and countless other species. We've already seen our Pacific shellfish industry take a hit: in 2007 we began to see the first large-scale die-offs that have been proven to

be caused by ocean acidification driven by coal pollution.

More recently, the Whiskey Creek Shellfish hatchery on the shores of Oregon's cleanest estuary was losing up to 80 percent of their juveniles due to ocean acidification caused by the uptake of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, threatening a multi-million dollar industry.

Strip mines and failed mine reclamation sites cause irreparable damage to our pristine, fishable waterways, not to mention the contribution to climate change that's affecting our oceans and snowpack.

And let's not forget:

our salmon are the heart and soul of the northwest. As a healthy food source, and as an icon, they connect us personally to our rivers and our oceans, and their sustainable harvest supports our economy, from our biggest cities to our smallest towns, with hundreds of millions of recreational dollars every year.

A comprehensive review of the federal coal program is the common-sense next step in mitigating this damage. The program has not been overhauled since the Reagan administration, and is greatly overdue for



Bob Rees

**We can no longer afford to play the ignorance card.**

We can no longer afford to play the ignorance card when it comes to fossil fuels here in Oregon, or on our public lands. There are better ways to meet our needs socially, environmentally and economically. Let it be our nation's citizens that continue to drive this conversation. It may be our best investment for the future of our children.

*Bob Rees is a sixth generation Oregonian, professional fishing guide and executive director for the Association of Northwest Steelheaders.*

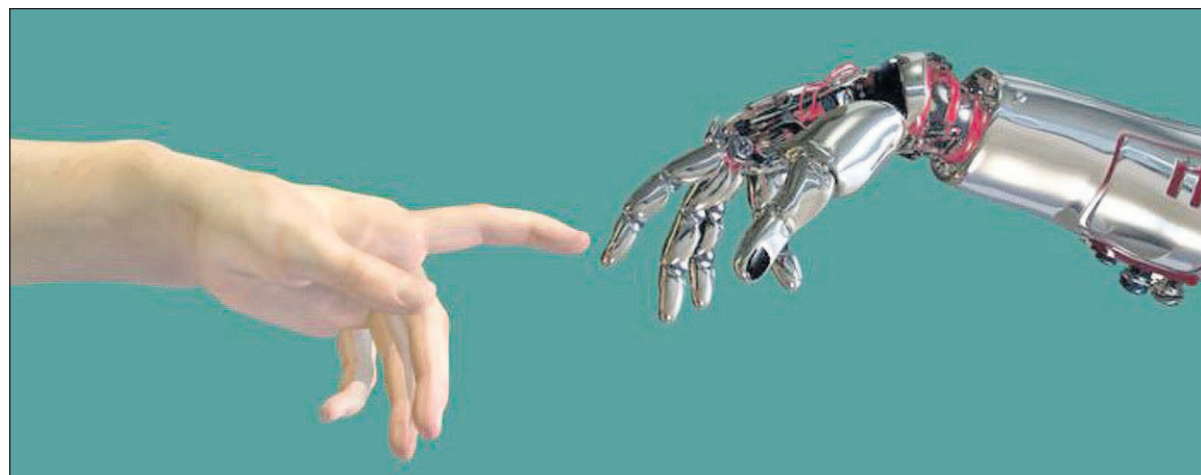


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## We are in another age of discovery

By THOMAS L. FRIEDMAN  
*New York Times News Service*

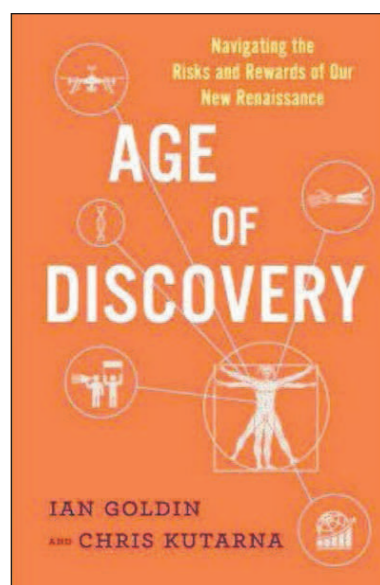
Have we been here before? I know — it feels as if the internet, virtual reality, Donald Trump, Facebook, sequencing of the human genome and machines that can reason better than people constitute a change in the pace of change without precedent.

But we've actually been through an extraordinarily rapid transition like this before in history — a transition we can learn a lot from.

Ian Goldin, director of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University, and Chris Kutarna, also of Oxford Martin, have just published a book — *Age of Discovery: Navigating the Risks and Rewards of Our New Renaissance* — about lessons we can draw from the period 1450 to 1550, known as the Age of Discovery. It was when the world made a series of great leaps forward, propelled by da Vinci, Michelangelo, Copernicus and Columbus, that produced the Renaissance and reshaped science, education, manufacturing, communications, politics and geopolitics.

"Gutenberg's printing press provided the trigger," Goldin told me by email, "by flipping knowledge production and exchange from tight scarcity to radical abundance. Before that, the Catholic churches monopolized knowledge, with their handwritten Latin manuscripts locked up in monasteries. The Gutenberg press democratized information, and provided the incentive to be literate. Within 50 years, not only had scribes lost their jobs, but the Catholic Church's millennia-old monopoly of power had been torn apart as the printing of Martin Luther's sermons ignited a century of religious wars."

Meanwhile, Goldin added, Copernicus upended the prevailing God-given notions of heaven and earth "by finding that far from the sun revolving around the Earth, the Earth rotated around the sun," and "voyages of discovery by Colum-



**Was there a Donald Trump back then?**

bus, da Gama and Magellan tore up millennia-old maps of the 'known' world."

Those were the mother of all disruptions and led to the parallels with today.

"Now, like then, new media have democratized information exchange, amplifying the voices of those who feel they have been injured in the upheaval," said Goldin. "Now, like then, public leaders and public institutions have failed to keep up with rapid change, and popular trust has been deeply eroded." Now, like then, "this is the best moment in history to be alive" — human health, literacy, aggregate wealth and education are flourishing — and "there are more scientists alive today than in all previous generations."

And, yet many people feel worse off.

Because, as in the Renaissance, key anchors in people's lives — like the workplace and community — are being fundamentally dislocated. The pace of technological change is outstripping the average person's ability to adapt. Now, like then, said Goldin, "sizable parts of the population found their skills were no longer needed, or they lived in places left behind, so inequality grew." At the same time, "new planetary scale systems of commerce and information exchange led to immense improvements in choices and accelerating innovations which made some people fabulously rich."

Was there a Donald Trump back then?

"Michelangelo and Machiavelli's Florence suffered a shocking popular power-taking when Girolamo Savonarola, a midlevel friar from Ferrara, who lived from 1452 to 1498, exploded from obscurity in the 1490s to enthrall Florentines, who felt left behind economically or culturally, with sermons that laid blame upon the misguided policies and moral corruption of their leaders," said Goldin. "He and his zealous supporters, though a small minority, swept away the Medici establishment and seized control of the city's councils."

"From there, Savonarola launched an ugly campaign of public purification, introducing radical laws including against homosexuality, and attacked public intellectuals in an act of intimidation that history still remembers as the Bonfire of the Vanities. Savonarola was amongst the first to tap into the information revolution of the time, and while others produced long sermons and treatises, Savonarola disseminated short pamphlets, in what may be thought of as the equivalent of political tweets."

The establishment politicians of the day, who were low energy, "underestimated the power of that new information revolution to move beyond scientific and cultural ideas" to amplify populist voices challenging authority.

Yikes! How do we blunt that?

"More risk-taking is required when things change more rapidly, both for workers who have to change jobs and for businesses who have to constantly innovate to stay ahead," Goldin argued. Government's job is to strengthen the safety nets and infrastructure so individuals and companies can be as daring — in terms of learning, adapting and investing in themselves — as they need to be. At the same time, when the world gets this tightly woven, America "needs to be more, not less, engaged, with the rest of the world," because "the threats posed by climate change, pandemics, cyberattacks or terror will not be reduced by America withdrawing."

Then, as now, walls stopped working. "Cannons and gunpowder came to Europe that could penetrate or go over walls and books could bring ideas around them," he said. Then, like now, walls only made you poorer, dumber and more insecure.

Editorials that appear on this page are written by Publisher Steve Forrester and Matt Winters, editor of the *Chinook Observer* and *Coast River Business Journal*, or staff members from the EO Media Group's sister newspapers.