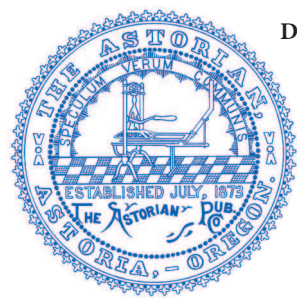


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OUR VIEW

Solar eclipse a reminder of the wonder around us

As a small group of office workers stood outside their downtown Astoria business Monday, quietly watching the moon eclipse the sun, the overture from the movie “2001: A Space Odyssey” began playing in the background. For listeners, the music and the images it conjured provided an appropriately funny and memorable moment. It also provided an immediate reminder of the wonder of the universe and the small role each of us have in it — just one of the many take-aways from an event not soon forgotten.

Across the state, Oregonians and the throngs of visitors who trekked here to watch the solar eclipse came together and experienced the awe as part of the state turned to darkness during midmorning. Stars came out and temperatures dropped throughout the “path of totality,” the 70-mile-wide swath across Oregon where the total eclipse was visible. For the rest of the state the eclipse was partial, with 97.4 percent coverage viewable in our region. Oregon was one of 14 states in the path of the total eclipse and the first to experience it.

Somewhat like Y2K, there were dire worries beforehand about the influx of traffic and visitors who would jam highways, cause gridlock and overload telecommunications, complicated by wildfires in the rural areas near and along the path of totality. But forest fires didn’t trap anyone, and telecommunications didn’t crash. Traffic jams weren’t as bad as expected. On the North Coast it was “just like a busy weekend,” said Oregon Department of Transportation spokesman Lou Torres. “We didn’t encounter anything we couldn’t handle.”

But because of the concerns, it gave the state and regional emergency planners a live opportunity to test preparations for worst-case scenarios, wisely using practice runs for a massive earthquake as a template. In the coming weeks they’ll evaluate the experience and tweak future plans. Total visitor counts aren’t in yet but will also be taken into consideration, planners said.

Closer to home, one of the thankful takeaways was that common sense prevailed. Watchers heeded warnings not to look at the sun directly and there were no local reports of eye damage or other problems.

For many who watched, the largest takeaways were individual and the reflections of wonder the eclipse spurred.

That wonder need not stop with the celestial event. Our universe is full of wonder on a daily basis, in and around us everywhere for those who take the time to notice and experience it.

One of the thankful takeaways was that common sense prevailed.

We know privatizing the BPA is a bad idea

Rick Perry, the former Texas governor with aspirations for the presidency and now head of the U.S. Department of Energy, recently visited Umatilla County in Eastern Oregon. He stopped at McNary Dam and toured the Bonneville Power Administration transmission facility operated by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

That tour was off-limits to reporters, but Perry was joined by Congressmen Greg Walden, R-Oregon, and Dan Newhouse, R-Washington, when they briefly addressed the press outside the dam. Perry said hydroelectricity will continue to play an important role in America’s energy strategy, even though the Trump administration has proposed selling off the BPA to private energy companies.

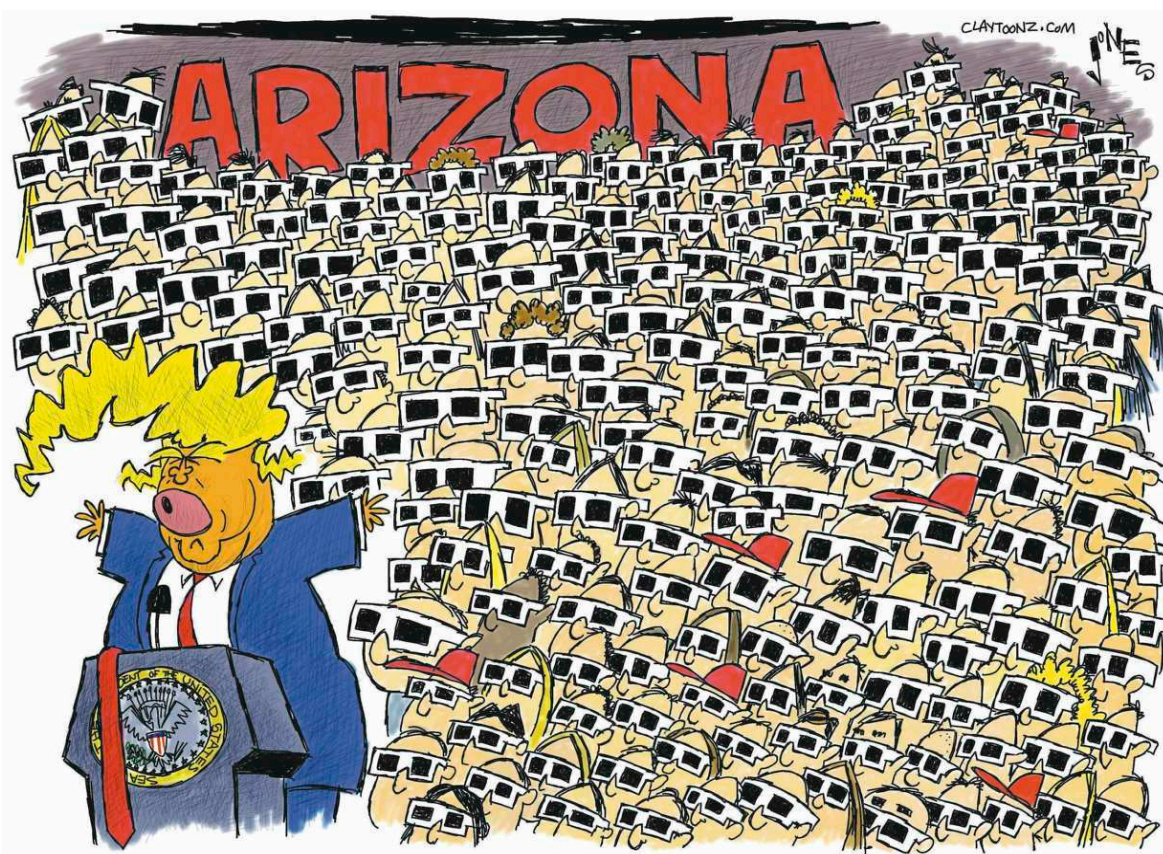
Northwest lawmakers — including Walden and Newhouse — have roundly criticized that plan, saying it will raise rates for consumers and affect reliability in rural areas.

Yet Perry was mum when asked where he stood on the issue, saying only that they should not be afraid to have that conversation.

Perry should have done more homework because the Northwest has been having that discussion for decades.

We’ve thought about it and argued about it, and lawmakers of both political parties now agree that privatizing the BPA is a bad idea.

To new minds in Washington, D.C., the short-term windfall of a sell-off has them salivating. But those of us who have to live with the result — not just for a political term — know that in the long run, the BPA must remain as is.



What moderates believe

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

Donald Trump is not the answer to this nation’s problems, so the great questions of the moment are: If not Trump, what? What does the reaction to Trump look like?



For some people, the warriors of the populist right must be replaced by warriors of the populist left. For these people, Trump has revealed an ugly authoritarian tendency in American society that has to be fought with relentless fervor and moral clarity.

For others, it’s Trump’s warrior mentality itself that must be replaced. Warriors on one side inevitably call forth warriors on the other, and that just means more culture war, more barbarism, more dishonesty and more dysfunction.

The people in this camp we will call moderates. Like most of you, I dislike the word moderate. It is too milquetoast. But I’ve been inspired by Aurelian Craiutu’s great book “Faces of Moderation” to stick with this word, at least until a better one comes along.

Moderates do not see politics as warfare. Instead, national politics is a voyage with a fractious fleet. Wisdom is finding the right formation of ships for each specific circumstance so the whole assembly can ride the waves forward for another day. Moderation is not an ideology; it’s a way of coping with the complexity of the world. Moderates tend to embrace certain ideas:

The truth is plural. There is no one and correct answer to the big political questions. Instead, politics is usually a tension between two or more views, each of which possesses a piece of the truth. Sometimes immigration restrictions should be loosened to bring in new people and new dynamism; sometimes they should be tightened to ensure national cohesion. Leadership is about determining which viewpoint is more needed at that moment. Politics is a dynamic unfolding, not a debate that can ever be settled once and for all.

Politics is a limited activity. Zealots look to the political realm for salvation and self-fulfillment. They turn politics into a secular religion and ultimately an apocalyptic war of religion because they try to impose one correct answer on all of life. Moderates believe that, at most, government can create a platform upon which the beautiful things in life can flourish. But it cannot itself provide those beautiful things. Government can create economic and physical security and a just order, but meaning, joy and the good life flow from loving relation-



AP Photo/Matt York
Phoenix police move protesters away after using tear gas outside the Phoenix Convention Center Tuesday. Protests were held against President Donald Trump as he hosted a rally inside the convention center.

ships, thick communities and wise friends. The moderate is prudent and temperate about political life because he is so passionate about emotional, spiritual and intellectual life.

Creativity is syncretistic. Voyagers don’t just pull their ideas from the center of the ideological spectrum. They believe creativity happens when you merge galaxies of belief that seem at first blush incompatible. They might combine left-wing ideas about labor unions with right-wing ideas about local community to come up with a new conception of labor law. Because they are syncretistic, they are careful to spend time in opposing camps,

Moderation is not an ideology; it’s a way of coping with the complexity of the world.

always opening lines of communication. The wise moderate can hold two or more opposing ideas together in her mind at the same time.

In politics, the lows are lower than the highs are high. The harm government does when it screws up — wars, depressions — is larger than the benefits government produces when it does well. Therefore the moderate operates from a politics of skepticism, not a politics of faith. He understands that most of the choices are among bad options (North Korea), so he prefers steady incremental reform to sudden revo-

lutionary change.

Truth before justice. All political movements must face inconvenient facts — thoughts and data that seem to aid their foes. If you try to suppress those facts, by banning a speaker or firing an employee, then you are putting the goals of your cause, no matter how noble, above the search for truth. This is the path to fanaticism, and it always backfires in the end.

Beware the danger of a single identity. Before they brutalize politics, warriors brutalize themselves. Instead of living out several identities — Latina/lesbian/gun-owning/Christian — that pull in different directions, they turn themselves into monads. They prioritize one identity, one narrative and one comforting distortion.

Partisanship is necessary but blinding. Partisan debate sharpens opinion, but partisans tend to justify their own sins by pointing to the other side’s sins. Moderates are problematic members of their party. They tend to be hard on their peers and sympathetic to their foes.

Humility is the fundamental virtue. Humility is a radical self-awareness from a position outside yourself — a form of radical honesty. The more the moderate grapples with reality the more she understands how much is beyond our understanding.

Moderation requires courage. Moderates don’t operate from the safety of their ideologically pure galleons. They are unafraid to face the cross currents, detached from clan, acknowledging how little they know.

If you have elected a man who is not awed by the complexity of the world, but who filters the world to suit his own narcissism, then woe to you, because such a man is the opposite of the moderate voyager type. He will reap a whirlwind.

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