

# OPINION



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## BOOK REVIEW

# Agitation often begets change

Providence must have been smiling when a trio of eminent Oregon authors agreed to collaborate on this immensely readable history of three incandescent figures who in their own day and way planted seeds from which modern Oregon grew.

Steve Forrester, the president and CEO of EO Media Group, conceived the book, recruited his talented co-authors and served as editor. His chapter on author-cum-U.S. Sen. Richard Neuberger captures the forward-looking environmentalism, liberalism and meteoric life of the visionary whose upset victory in 1954 tipped control of the U.S. Senate to the Democrats and made Lyndon B. Johnson



LES AuCOIN

majority leader.

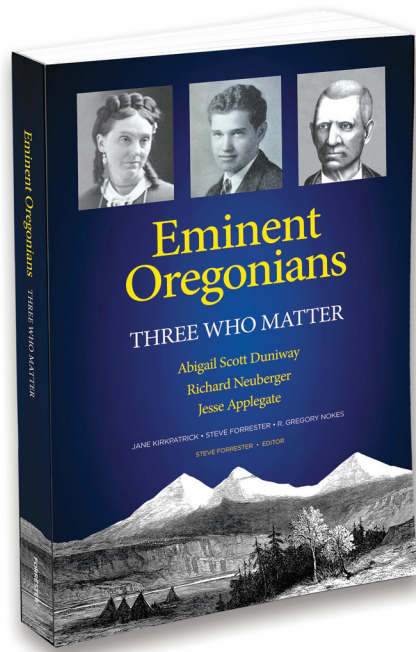
Novelist Jane Kirkpatrick examines the life of Abigail Scott Duniway, a woman of meager formal education who became a nationally known suffragette, abolitionist, newspaper publisher, orator, author of 22 novels and shopkeeper while mothering six children.

Author and journalist R. Gregory Nokes gives us Jesse Applegate, a mid-19th century surveyor, abolitionist and founder of the Applegate Trail who as a delegate in the state constitutional convention helped ensure that Oregon entered the Union as a free state.

Each history is a short chapter in this 186-page work. Based mainly on primary sources, the story of each three-dimensional life will astound, inspire and inform both the casual reader and the scholar.

### Neuberger

Neuberger's career was meteoric. Forrester reminds us that as a 21-year-old, Neuberger visited 1933 Germany and using shoe leather research produced one of the first American exposés about Adolf Hitler's rising grotesquery. That article in *The Nation* would be but one of many pieces Neuberger authored for national audiences both before and after his stunning election to the Senate.



Along the way, he attended the international conference that produced the United Nations, befriended Adlai Stevenson, talked with Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter and lunched with Eleanor Roosevelt.

Throughout his career, Neuberger's sunny liberalism challenged Oregon's prevailing conservatism. It was as if he understood what James Michener would write so many years later: A sailing boat excites and inspires when the wind is slightly athwart its bow, "for then tension can be maintained, and juices can flow, and ideas can germinate, for ships, like men, respond to challenge."

In 1960, the meteor vanished as quickly as it seemed to have emerged. Months before completing his first Senate term, cancer and a cerebral hemorrhage claimed Neuberger's life. He was 47. In death as in life, he was always in a hurry.

### Scott Duniway

Kirkpatrick transports readers into the world of Scott Duniway, the "Mother of Oregon Suffrage," who, beginning in 1880, shook off five election defeats until she helped Oregon women win the franchise in 1912. The cause of her life

**THESE THREE EMINENT OREGONIANS DID MATTER. THEIR AGITATION WAS AS IMPORTANT AS THEIR SUCCESS, FOR AGITATION OFTEN BEGETS CHANGE. FREDERICK DOUGLASS LIKENED IT TO GROWING CROPS — FIRST YOU MUST DISTURB THE SOIL.**



Richard Neuberger with his wife, Maurine, at the Oregon State Capitol.

### MORE ABOUT THE BOOK

Read excerpts from 'Eminent Oregonians' in Weekend Break • B1

rested on the belief that citizenship, not gender, granted an inherent right to vote and fully participate in democracy.

Following suit, Oregon female legislators formed a bipartisan caucus in 1973 to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment, making the Beaver State the 25th to do so.

Voters went further in 2014; they added the ERA to the state's constitution by a 2 to 1 margin. The measure guarantees that "equality of rights under the law shall not be denied or abridged by the state of Oregon or by any political subdivision in this state on account of sex."

Scott Duniway also can be seen as pioneering Oregon as fertile ground for literature. Abigail's 22 books of fiction presaged the careers of Ursula Le Guin, Molly Gloss, Jean Auel and Louise Bryant, among others.

### Applegate

The mercurial Applegate is best known as founder of the 1846 Applegate Trail, a route that forked southward off the Oregon Trail to allow westbound wagon trains to make it through without

fording the hazardous Columbia River.

Applegate, a surveyor, knew those hazards well, having captained one of two overland trains in The Great Migration of 1843 (then the largest group of wagons to make the trek from Independence, Missouri).

Applegate won a seat in Oregon's provisional legislature and in its constitutional convention. He strenuously opposed Oregon joining the Union as a slave state, and voters agreed with him at the polls. Despite Applegate's denunciations, however, they excluded Blacks from citizenship, even freed slaves. In protest, Applegate walked out of the assembly.

The Black exclusion act stood until it was repealed in 1920.

These three eminent Oregonians did matter. Their agitation was as important as their success, for agitation often begets change. Frederick Douglass likened it to growing crops — first you must disturb the soil.

*Les AuCoin, a Democrat, represented Oregon's 1st Congressional District for 18 years. He is the author of "Catch and Release: An Oregon Life in Politics."*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Patronizing

The complaints from the community regarding Consejo Hispano Executive Director Jenny Pool Radway and Board President Rosa Gilbert began months ago.

A letter detailing the executive director's cruel treatment of an employee, submitted in October 2020, was ignored and never investigated by the board. Concerns from the community continued to mount. In early February, a letter detailing complaints about the executive director was signed by about 118 members of the Latino community.

Because the board never made itself available to the community, in early March, the complainants were forced to request a mediator. After six months, the mediation hasn't begun and has been watered down to facilitation.

A mediator renders a binding decision that the community was willing to abide by, but apparently the board didn't want to run the risk. You can hear the trickle of contempt they have for the community because "it isn't clear to them that all the people who signed the petition fully knew what they were signing." (*The Astorian*, Sept. 23). Patronizing.

The board never talked with the petitioners, so yes, the investigation turned up "nothing." The board is beholden to the community it serves, not the other way around. When a nonprof is unwilling to listen to the people, it becomes a platform for personal ambitions.

The board, led by Gilbert, has failed to perform its fiduciary duties. Pool Radway has divided and offended many in the community and I am glad she is leaving. I hear the Causa Board performs its duties to

protect the organization and the people it serves.

EILEEN PURCELL  
Warrenton

### Sick of power politics

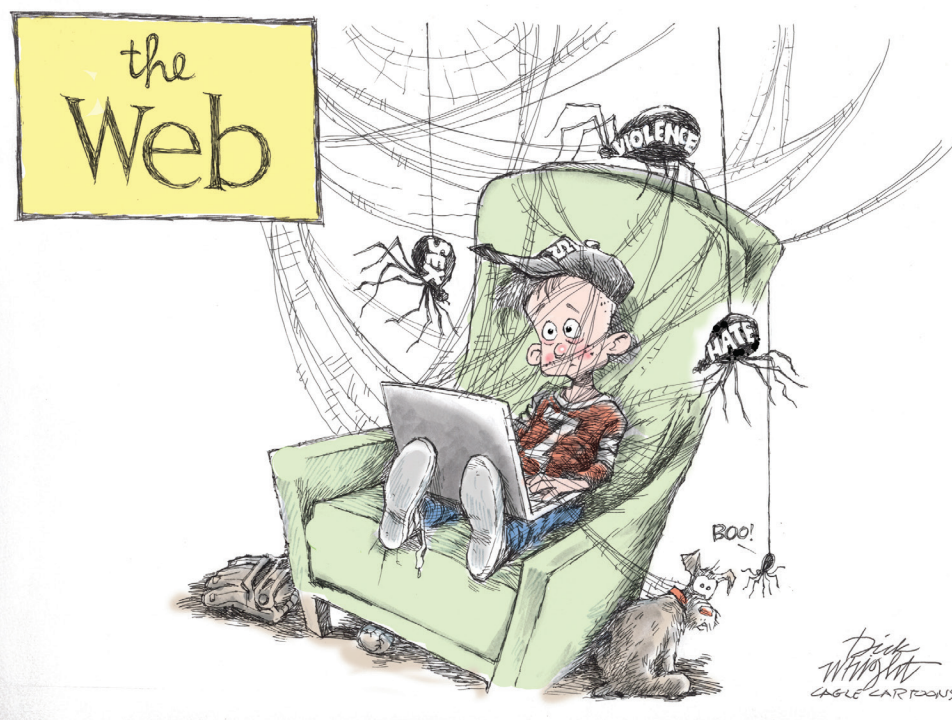
Democratic and Republican politicians offend me in every way as "win at all costs" is all that seems to matter. The more I read about politics as practiced today, the more I become convinced that permanent incumbency is a terminal disease that will ultimately destroy what little trust remains in government to solve the most pressing problems facing government today.

Viewing state House Speaker Tina Kotek's power politics is like watching an instant replay of U.S. House Speaker Nancy Pelosi in Washington, D.C. Nothing matters to these people other than forcing their political will on everyone else, no matter the size of their majority. No-compromise politics has a deadly effect on oppressed minorities.

I feel term limits should be forced on our elected representatives. Additionally, their office staffs should also be forced out of power as this appears to be the only possible hope minority voters can ever hope for equal consideration.

The longer the system continues to perpetuate itself under current rules, the worse the public mood becomes and the more public confrontation becomes inevitable. The Democrats currently have a supermajority where they can do as they wish.

At some point, the control of government will switch to the minority party of today because history has shown pow-



er-people inevitably overplay their power and the former minority gain power and will seek revenge for all the laws forced upon them in the past.

SCOTT WIDDICOMBE  
Warrenton

### Giving thanks

That people have short, if not selective, memories is a given.

The quality of life and long life spans Americans now enjoy didn't exist 100 years ago. Back then, drinking water was often contaminated, the air was full of toxins, the beef supply tainted, rivers and lakes fouled with raw sewage.

There was no workplace safety. Worse yet, diphtheria, smallpox, tuberculosis, influenza and polio sent many to an early grave.

Over time, numerous federal programs were developed. The short list includes the Safe Drinking Water Act, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, the Food and Drug Administration and the Environmental Protection Agency. In addition, vaccines were introduced to control and even eliminate horrible diseases.

People feel they have the right to brand these actions as government overreach or fascist. Wouldn't giving thanks be a better use of free speech?

TIMOTHY J. BISH  
Lewis and Clark