

## The Tide Of Compassion

By HUGH B. PRICE  
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"The interior of Kosovo is a wasteland of burned villages and wandering farm animals, empty of ethnic Albanians but swarming with Serbian forces..."

In the face of the wrenching descriptions of the bloodshed and misery in Central Europe, like these words from a recent New York Times dispatch, who among us has not felt the lure of just letting the mind go numb, of turning away from the horror of it?

How can one contemplate that human beings can do this?

How can one understand how it came to be that various ethnic groups who once lived literally side by side now seem to be intent on slaughtering each other or any other group who appears to stand in the way of their perverted goal of creating a national homeland?

How is it that so-called soldiers, who were once ordinary citizens living ordinary lives, have now become men who murder and rape unarmed civilians?

How is it that these countries, which once seemed to have both the governmental structure and the cultural commitment to resist a descent into the kind of barbarism that ravaged Europe a half century ago, have so easily become killing fields?

The lure to turn away from this horror is made all the more powerful by the unavoidable fact that it's not just the Balkans where such brutality has recently occurred or is occurring.

Five years ago the same sort of mass savagery happened in Rwanda, where the Hutu killed more than 500,000 Tutsis in less

than four months. Before that, it happened in Bosnia.

And one could go on: the list of places where ethnic- or religious-based outbreaks recur periodically these days is, gloomily, too long.

These tides of violence sweeping around the world are powerful evidence that, for all the progress we humans have made in many areas, the veneer of "civilization" at the end of the twentieth century is still as thin as an egg shell.

But those Americans who feel the numbness of apathy coming on ought to do two things.

For one, they ought to personalize the issue.

They ought to imagine themselves as one of the 315,000 ethnic Albanians who have been driven from Kosovo in the last three weeks—forced out of their homes, pushed out of their homeland, in many instances literally with a gun to their backs, often separated from others in their family, bereft of resources, with nothing but the clothes they are wearing.

If that were our situation, if that were our children's situation, how would we hope the rest of the world would respond?

Secondly, those Americans who feel the numbness of apathy coming on ought to look to what individual citizens in the nations of western Europe and Israel and Japan are doing.

In these places, where the experience of a war being waged on one's home soil and the memories of what it's like to be a refugee have not been forgotten, there has been an extraordinary outpouring of aid for the Kosovar refugees.

From these countries thousands of tons of foodstuffs and other

materials, from computers to water purification equipment, and millions of dollars have been donated. It's clear that this is not being given as "charity."

It is being given because those who give understand that this is what human beings owe to other human beings who find themselves in a crisis.

It is being given because those who are giving have refused to take refuge in the false idea that we are not our brother's keeper, our sister's keeper, wherever those brothers and sisters happen to be.

Of course, there are many in the United States who have rushed to donate foodstuffs and other material, too.

They understand the point Elie Wiesel made Monday evening during a White House symposium on the twentieth century and the "perils of indifference."

Wiesel, who survived the Holocaust and who ever since has been one of those individuals who speaks as humanity's conscience, told those gathered that indifference "is not a response...not a beginning, it is an end...indifference is always the friend of the enemy, for it benefits the aggressor—never his victim..."

This is why individuals around the world are offering help to the refugees of terror in central Europe.

They understand that the way to contain and beat back these periodic eruptions of the tide of violence and cruelty is with a tide of compassion and support for the afflicted.

They understand that the courage to feel compassion for the suffering of others and the discipline to act to relieve that suffering is the only way to affirm that we human beings have a future worth living for.

## Cascade Warehouse Company Bolsters Oregon's Economy

By SCOTT CANTONWINE

The Oregon economy benefits from a modern and efficient rail system that allows Oregon producers to ship the equivalent of 1.5 million truckloads without travelling the state's roads and highways, and provides service to thousands of passengers who are not driving cars.

Timber and paper products are the leading commodities shipped by rail from Oregon to other states. Steel, grain and processed foods are also big rail users. Inbound freight includes chemicals to support the computer chip, plastics and fertilizer industries. Nearly 20% of rail shipments are trailers or containers moving under contract with major trucking companies.

The main railroad lines in Oregon are privately owned businesses that pay property and other state taxes. Since Congress deregulated the American railroad industry in 1980, rail shipping rates have dropped, traffic volumes soared, accident rates plummeted and investments in modern locomotives, cars, tracks, computers and communication systems skyrocketed.

Congress in 1992 designated high-speed rail corridors, including the Pacific Northwest Rail Cor-

ridor stretching from Eugene northward to Vancouver, Canada. These corridors are intended to focus federal, state and private rail investments to improve rail safety and speed to benefit passenger and freight movements.

Oregon initiated enhanced passenger train and motorcoach service between Eugene and Portland in October, 1994. Ridership has continued to grow in almost every month since the service began. More than 143,000 passengers rode the Oregon train and motorcoach services last year, up 15% over 1997. If these passengers had driven cars, they would have added up to 5.5 million vehicle miles of travel on already congested state highways.

The Oregon passenger rail program is great for the state's economy, supporting over 20 family wage jobs and directly contributing more than \$1 million annually to local businesses for goods and services.

Oregon has received more than \$25 million in federal dollars to upgrade railroad tracks and make signal improvements that enhance safety and move passenger trains more efficiently. The State of Washington has committed over \$120 million to de-

velop its portion of the Pacific Northwest Rail Corridor.

Oregon must now do its part to help the region compete against other parts of the nation for federal rail funds. A legislative budget proposal by the Oregon Department of Transportation seeks \$14 million during the next two years.

These funds are needed to keep current trains running. Without those funds, all trains except the long distance Coast Starlight stop service at the end of June. Funds also will be used to acquire passenger rail equipment and add one more round-trip train between Portland and Eugene. Buses from Eastern, Central and Southern Oregon would connect with trains in the Willamette Valley. The funds would help secure \$20 million in federal funds available during the same budget period for safety and speed improvements to the rail line.

Rail is a proven, cost effective technology for safely moving passengers and large volumes of freight. The importance of rail's role of transporting the commerce of Oregon and the region is continuing to expand. If the Oregon economy is to continue to prosper, it is essential that the state supports a healthy passenger and freight rail system.

## Changes In Vista Ridge Tunnel Due to Safety Project

Driving down the Sunset Highway (U.S. 26) into Portland is about to become a safer trip, thanks to the completion of a safety project in the eastbound Vista ridge Tunnel, according to Oregon Department of Transportation officials.

The last, and most noticeable, change is a new restriction against changing lanes from just before the tunnel to where the highway splits into the three different exit ramps for I-405 northbound and southbound, plus the City Center / S.W. Market Street ramp. This restriction is set to become effective this Friday (April 23), when regulatory signs go up just prior to the tunnel.

"We have a history of wrecks occurring in the eastbound tunnel," said ODOT traffic engineer Merle Hill, "often caused when drivers make quick last-minute lane changes, after realizing they're in the wrong lane for their intended destination." Even taking into account the unique character of this part of the Sunset Highway, accident statistics show this section has an accident rate several times higher than the typical urban primary freeway.

The restriction on lane changes aims to eliminate this type of driving behavior, and get motorists to plan ahead so that they get into the proper lane well before entering the tunnel, Hill added.

Other parts of the safety project include a modernized lighting system, and lane striping prior to and in the tunnel itself to discourage

lane changes. Both of these changes were completed last summer.

With the addition of regulatory signs at the tunnel entrance, stating "no lane changes next 1/2 mile," police can cite drivers for crossing over the solid white lane markings in the tunnel. "Failure to obey a traffic control device" is a class B traffic infraction, bearing a maximum fine of \$170.

## Statement By State Schools Superintendent On Colorado Shootings

I wish to extend my sympathy to those in Colorado affected by April 20, 1999's school shooting tragedy. Oregon's experience of last May has given us empathy for how deeply these kinds of events affect students, families and communities.

We contacted the Colorado Department of Education and told them we stand ready to help and provided resource contacts.

This incident also resonates with Oregonians. We will continue to promote school safety and strengthen connections between

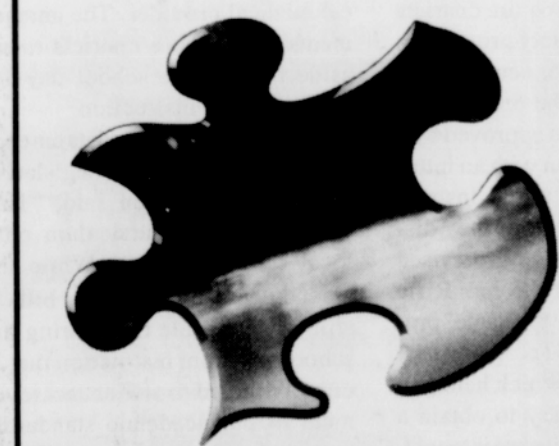
schools and communities.

Since the Thurston tragedy, the Department of Education has linked with school districts, community and police agencies and many other organizations to improve student safety and prepare for crisis intervention.

For instance, we have worked with University of Oregon's Institute on Violence and Destructive Behavior to provide a teacher training institute. Many partners helped us with a violence prevention institute which will be repeated in

July at Oregon State University. In addition, we have worked with several partners to develop the capacity of school districts to deal with crises.

School districts across the state have developed model plans to promote safety. We must learn from each other. That's why the Department will promote the best practices across the state. These practices will be posted on the Department's web page and featured in workshops at the violence prevention summer institute at OSU.



## Helping Our Environment

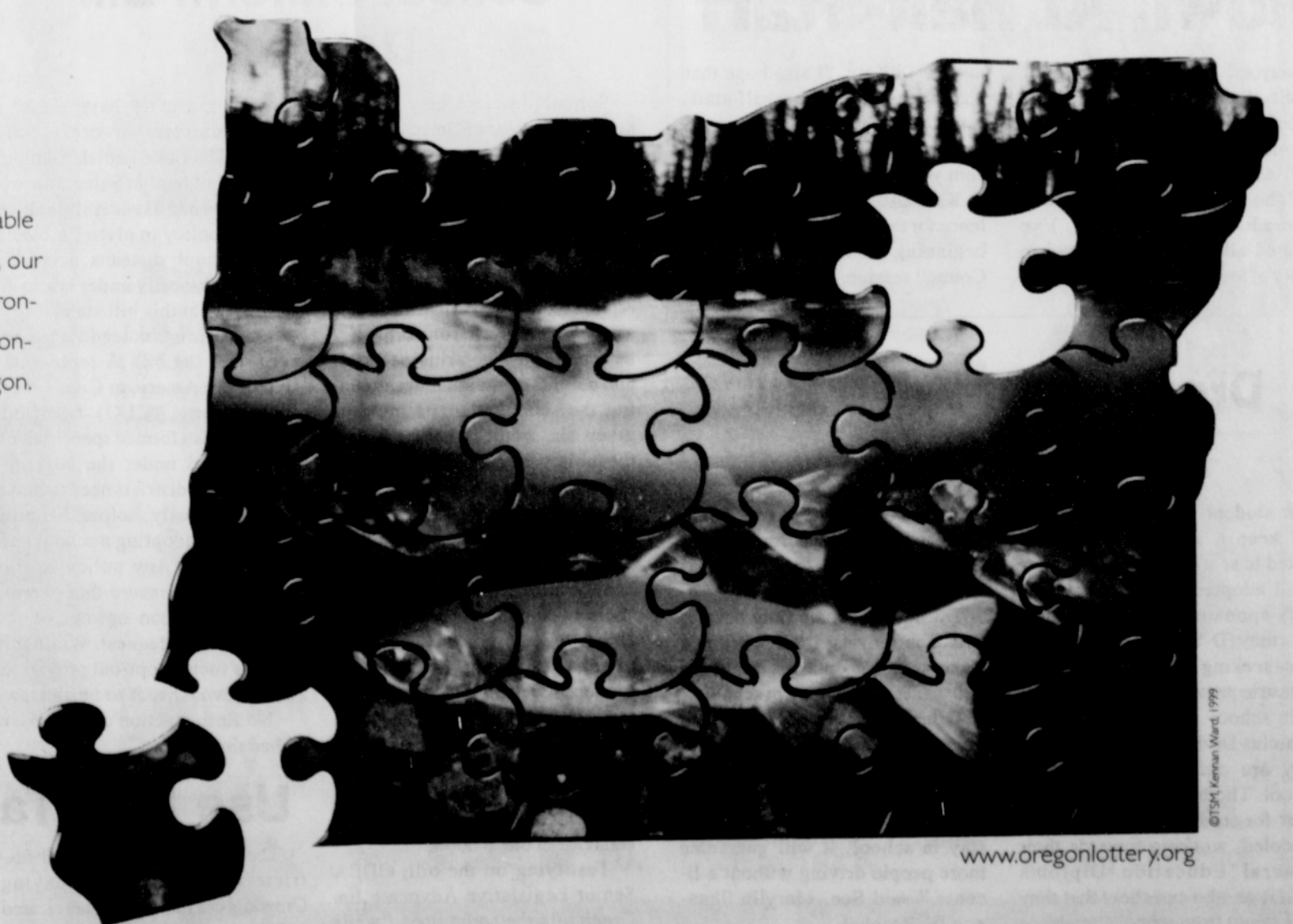
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