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OUR VIEW

Record fish numbers won't last in this heat

The record salmon and steelhead runs in the Columbia may give the impression that everything is fine and dandy in our river, but warm water and low stream flows in the basin at large are creating serious problems.

The latest edition of *Columbia Basin Bulletin* is a litany of worrisome news about impacted rivers and harmful effects on fish. So while coastal residents of the Pacific Northwest rejoice in experiencing a genuine summer — unlike the extended drizzly mid-year months that plague us some years — the news is not all good.

Here are some of the *Bulletin's* troubling stories:

- “The water temperature at the Willamette Falls counting station hit 80 degrees Fahrenheit ... July 3, and continued to hover around 81 degrees (last) week. As a result, hundreds of salmon and steelhead have succumbed to a bacteria exacerbated by warmer than normal water in the Willamette River, as well as in other Northwest rivers.”

- “Salmon and river managers of the regional Technical Management Team briefly lost their battle to keep Snake River temperatures in the Lower Granite Dam tailrace below 68 degrees Fahrenheit (last) week as low water, higher river temperatures from upstream and warmer than normal weather continues to plague the Northwest.”

- “Dead and distressed sockeye salmon found this past weekend (July 4-5) in the Deschutes River appear to have been fish from the Columbia River bound for other upriver locations that likely swam into the Deschutes in search of cooler water. Early pathology results suggest the sockeye salmon died from columnaris, a bacterial

infection typically associated with high water temperatures and/or low levels of dissolved oxygen.”

- “Rivers and streams throughout the Columbia Basin, to varying degrees, are now flowing at levels normally seen in late summer. ‘Everything pretty much south of the Canadian border is looking pretty pathetic, actually,’” a senior federal hydrologist said.

All this is happening in the context of salmon returns that remain very strong, at least on the Columbia. But we should be prepared for delayed impacts on salmon from current conditions. Three years from now, we may be looking at fishing seasons more like those of a decade or two ago, when some spoke of the end of commercial and recreational harvests. Even this year, state fisheries managers have discussed but so far resisted imposing fishing restrictions in the afternoons on some rivers, when warming water begins to stress fish.

These conditions are, for now, an anomaly that is expected to run its course, but perhaps not until after ongoing El Niño conditions dissipate in a year or so. But what we are experiencing now is a strong foretaste of what it will be like more or less every year by mid-century.

What can we do? Increasingly, we'll need to find ways to mitigate temperatures in rivers and reservoirs, maintaining shade and in-stream flows. As snow packs become a less reliable method of natural water storage, we will need to contemplate trying to hold back more winter rainfall for use in the summer and autumn. As the climate we know comes to an end, only fast adaptive action stands much chance of preserving vestiges of familiar life.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

YOUR VIEWS

Drugs a bad way to deal with reality

There was much publicity about the legalization of marijuana recently. What is not reported is that marijuana impairs learning, judgment and memory, all vital attributes for adolescents. It disrupts normal development of the white matter that brain cells need to communicate with each other, thus hampering the user's ability to reason. It can also damage the heart and lungs, increase the incidence of anxiety and depression, and trigger psychotic episodes.

Opioids are a class of drugs made from opium. Some common prescription opioids are oxycodone, morphine, methadone, and so on. They work by reducing the perception of pain and stimulating the brain's "reward center."

As time has gone on I am addicted to pain pills and I have to deal with the side effects which include constipation. The emphasis on the projected increase in use of marijuana brings on the need to carefully administer these drugs with competent medical administrators, such as doctors.

There has been a dramatic rise in the number of children and adults taking prescribed psychotropic medications. These drugs are prescribed to ameliorate symptoms of schizophrenia, depression, hyperactivity and other psychiatric disorders, and they alter the chemistry of the brain. After a long period of time of using these drugs, they ultimately end up with a different brain and thus a different mind, and there has been an astounding rise in the number of disabled mentally ill in American society.

The use of the drugs listed here are an example of how young and old are looking for utopia. It is important to realize that there are good and bad moments and these are all natural events. The use of drugs will not bring

utopia but make it more difficult to deal with normal events. By allowing the Holy Spirit to work it will help us. May the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost be with you all.

**Donald Peterson
Pendleton**

Even animal kingdom understands God's plan

From the beginning animals have chosen their mate, and why? To breed and have offspring. To this day it is still the way the world will survive.

Look at any other animal on this Earth. There is not one that would agree with the gay lifestyle if they could communicate. The rest of the animals on this earth know because they are God's creatures and do not even go in this direction.

It was not right for many lawmakers and few judges to twist and turn the laws of God in your favor.

As for ministers of God's word, I can only suggest that if I was in your shoes and the law dictated to me when two of these people come to get what they call married and you are forced by that law, let me please recommend: All church symbols are covered and all books are removed and let all words spoken not be in the name of the lord.

I suggest you say: "In the name of the lawmakers and the judges of the country I pronounce you man and man or woman and woman."

Now remember, when you two people are lawfully together, at retirement one of you will have to give up half your pension.

I am wishing you no luck in a no-go future. I do feel sorry for all the children that have to bear this. One good thing out of this mess is that when I get to heaven there will be a lot more room without you all.

**Larry Long
Irrigon**

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

The laziness dogma

Americans work longer hours than their counterparts in just about every other wealthy country; we are known, among those who study such things, as the “no-vacation nation.” According to a 2009 study, full-time U.S. workers put in almost 30 percent more hours over the course of a year than their German counterparts, largely because they had only half as many weeks of paid leave. Not surprisingly, work-life balance is a big problem for many people.

But Jeb Bush — who is still attempting to justify his ludicrous claim that he can double our rate of economic growth — says that Americans “need to work longer hours and through their productivity gain more income for their families.”

Bush's aides have tried to spin away his remark, claiming that he was only referring to workers trying to find full-time jobs who remain stuck in part-time employment. It's obvious from the context, however, that this wasn't what he was talking about. The real source of his remark was the “nation of takers” dogma that has taken over conservative circles in recent years — the insistence that a large number of Americans, white as well as black, are choosing not to work, because they can live lives of leisure thanks to government programs.

You see this laziness dogma everywhere on the right. It was the hidden background to Mitt Romney's infamous 47 percent remark. It underlay the furious attacks on unemployment benefits at a time of mass unemployment and on food stamps when they provided a vital lifeline for tens of millions of Americans. It drives claims that many, if not most, workers receiving disability payments are malingerers — “Over half of the people on disability are either anxious or their back hurts,” says Sen. Rand Paul.

It all adds up to a vision of the world in which the biggest problem facing America is that we're too nice to fellow citizens facing hardship. And the appeal of this vision to conservatives is obvious: It gives them another reason to do what they want to do anyway, namely slash aid to the less fortunate while cutting taxes on the rich.

Given how attractive the right finds the image of laziness run wild, you wouldn't expect contrary evidence to make much, if any, dent in the dogma. Federal spending on “income security” — food stamps, unemployment benefits, and pretty much everything else you might call “welfare” except Medicaid — has shown no upward trend as a share of GDP; it surged during the Great Recession and aftermath but quickly dropped back to historical levels. Paul's



PAUL KRUGMAN
Comment

numbers are all wrong, and more broadly disability claims have risen no more than you would expect, given the aging of the population. But no matter, an epidemic of laziness is their story and they're sticking with it.

Where does Jeb Bush fit into this story? Well before his “longer hours” gaffe, he had professed himself a great admirer of the work of Charles Murray, a conservative social analyst most famous for his 1994 book “The Bell Curve,” which claimed that

blacks are genetically inferior to whites. What Bush seems to admire most, however, is a more recent book, “Coming Apart,” which notes that over the past few decades working-class white families have been changing in much the same way that African-American families changed in the 1950s and 1960s, with declining rates of marriage and labor force participation.

Some of us look at these changes and see them as consequences of an economy that no longer offers good jobs to ordinary workers. This happened to African-Americans first, as blue-collar jobs disappeared from inner cities, but has now become a much wider phenomenon thanks to soaring income inequality. Murray, however, sees the changes as the consequence of a mysterious decline in traditional values, enabled by government programs which mean that men no longer “need to work to survive.” And Bush presumably shares that view.

The point is that Bush's clumsy call for longer work hours wasn't a mere verbal stumble. It was, instead, an indication that he stands firmly on the right side of the great divide over what working American families need.

There's now an effective consensus among Democrats — on display in Hillary Clinton's planned Monday speech on the economy — that workers need more help, in the form of guaranteed health insurance, higher minimum wages, enhanced bargaining power, and more. Republicans, however, believe that American workers just aren't trying hard enough to improve their situation, and that the way to change that is to strip away the safety net while cutting taxes on wealthy “job creators.”

And while Jeb Bush may sometimes sound like a moderate, he's very much in line with the party consensus. If he makes it to the White House, the laziness dogma will rule public policy.

Paul Krugman joined The New York Times in 1999 as a columnist on the Op-Ed Page and continues as professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

A step forward against food stamp fraud

The (Albany) Democrat-Herald, July 13

As citizens and lawmakers alike continue to take stock of the 2015 legislative session, which ended last week, it's not unusual to run across legislation that didn't attract much controversy or news coverage at the time but likely still represents a step forward.

Into that broad category add House Bill 2392. Rep. Andy Olson (R-Albany) was one of the primary sponsors of the bill, which involves the Oregon Trail EBT cards used mostly to provide food benefits through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program — food stamps, in other words.

The amended version of the bill, which passed both houses of the Legislature by wide margins and now awaits the signature of Gov. Kate Brown, comes into play any time an Oregon Trail recipient reports that a card has been lost or stolen. Under the terms of the amended bill, any replacement card issued must display the name of the individual to whom the card is issued.

This seems like a small bit of business, and in fact, the bill that passed the Legislature is watered down somewhat from the original intent, which was to require printed names on all Oregon Trail cards.

But even the watered-down version seems likely to have a real impact on cutting down on Oregon Trail card fraud and abuse.

The vast majority of Oregon Trail card users, of course, follow state laws and regulations to the letter. And the services provided are obviously essential: In fact, as we have noted before, better than one in four

residents of Linn County uses these services to some extent.

The state has estimated in the past that fraud in the program amounts to just about half of 1 percent, so cutting back on fraud may not seem like a big deal. That is, until you realize that the state pays out roughly \$1.2 billion a year in benefits. (The program is administered by the state, but the federal government provides the money.) The math suggests that fraud could amount to \$5 million to \$6 million each year in Oregon.

At least some of the fraud involves trafficking in food stamp benefits. A recent case in Klamath Falls resulted in charges being filed against 65 people. Most of the charges accused defendants of illegally taking cash instead of food by selling their Oregon Trail cards to a Klamath Falls meat market for 50 cents on the dollar. Defendants presumably were able to sell cards more than once because every time they reported a card missing, a replacement card would be issued.

Under the terms of House Bill 2392, the replacement cards now will include the name of the recipient — which will make the cards much less attractive to anyone interested in committing fraud. It's a common-sense type of reform, as evidenced by the big margins by which the bill passed the Legislature. This wasn't the sort of bill that got hung up in the partisan squabbling that dominated the headlines during the course of the session.

And, best of all, House Bill 2392 won't take even one dollar of benefits away from anyone who legitimately needs a bit of help to feed their families.