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OUR VIEW



Briana Sanchez/St. Cloud Times via AP

In this photo taken Sept. 25, owner of Sand Pine Pheasants Keith Sand goes pheasant hunting while wearing hunter orange, near St. Joseph, Minnesota.

Don't need a law to do the right thing

A tragedy occurred in the hills outside Meacham earlier this hunting season: A 76-year-old man shot and killed his own son in the dwindling evening light, probably mistaking him for a game animal.

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan said the victim had some blaze orange clothing with him, but did not appear to be wearing any. The investigation continues.

But what's not up for debate is the fact that it's dangerous to be trekking in the woods — especially during the rifle season — without wearing hunter orange. It's not, however, against the law in Oregon. Here, only hunters younger than 18 are required to wear it.

"We are one of the last holdout states that haven't made it mandatory," said James Read, hunter education coordinator for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.

It has made Oregon a more dangerous place to do what many of us love — track and take the state's bountiful game.

Oregon averages roughly one fatal hunting accident a year, outpacing most of our Western neighbors. The majority of fatalities in the last 20 years resulted from misidentifying targets — hunters killed accidentally by someone else in their party, or by a stranger a ridge and a half away. Twice as many are injured than killed from the same cause, according to ODFW records.

There is something we could do to reduce that number.

"The research is proven that hunter

orange does save lives," said Read.

But Oregon hunters don't want the government forcing them to do something, no matter the benefits. Read noted ODFW last tried to go down that road in 2012 and encountered plenty of pushback.

"It took a year — a whole year of meetings around the state and input from the public — and a pretty big fight," Read said. "Overwhelmingly, the hunting community is against anything for adults."

Many hunters take to the hills to get away from the endless laws that society has come to rely on. But there are simple ways to keep our freedom, and keep another government regulation out of the conversation.

First: remember the four rules of gun safety you learned from an older family member, or in your hunter education class. Assume all firearms are loaded. Control the muzzle. Keep your finger off the trigger until it's time to fire. And finally: identify the target, then what is in front and behind it.

"Of the four basic safety rules, that last one is being violated the most, and it's getting people killed or injured," Read said.

If that person on the next ridge is violating that fourth rule, make yourself safer by slipping on a blaze orange cap or vest each time you go out hunting. And do the same too, if you are just out hiking or foraging in the late summer or fall.

It's simple to do — easier than buckling your seat belt — and it too can save your 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

Other cities struggle with gas tax dollars, too

In the interest of providing factual information to our residents and in response to the comment in the editorial "Gas tax the best of bad options" (*East Oregonian*, Oct. 16): "But the fact that almost two of every three tax dollars earmarked for local roads don't make their way into pavement shows how inefficient and ineffectual Pendleton can be."

In a few minutes of research a person can find that in every city, a significantly smaller portion of their state and federal street tax revenue actually goes into asphalt maintenance because cities are required to provide street lighting, painting, sweeping, sanding, patching, signage, curbs and sidewalks.

"This year, the city of Coos Bay budgeted to receive \$880,000 in gas tax revenue. Of that amount nearly 32 percent (more than \$281,000) will be

spent just to keep the city's street lamps on at night, and to keep traffic signals in working order.

After subtracting the cost associated with routine street sweeping, striping, crosswalk maintenance, sign maintenance, vegetation maintenance, grading gravel roads, and personnel costs etc., Coos Bay is left with less than \$50,000 for street repair. We are left chasing pot holes — "a Band-Aid on a broken arm." (*Band-Aid on a Broken Arm*, Local Focus Magazine, pg. 22, November 2014).

"In fiscal year 2013-2014, the city's share of the state gas tax was \$91,869. Expenses for personnel services alone totaled \$94,985. The state gasoline tax is not enough to even fund our personnel services within the street fund budget, let alone materials and services." (*Street Needs in John Day*, Local Focus, pg. 21, November 2014).

Robb Corbett, city manager
Pendleton

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. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

THE NEW SHERIFF'S OATH OF OFFICE IN MANY OREGON COUNTIES...

DO YOU SOLEMNLY SWEAR TO INTERPRET THE U.S. CONSTITUTION AND ENFORCE STATE LAWS JUST AS YOU DAMN WELL PLEASE?



OTHER VIEWS

Lady Gaga and the life of passion

Earlier this week I watched some young musicians perform Lady Gaga songs in front of Lady Gaga. As India Carney's voice rose and swooped during the incredible anthemic versions of her dance hits, Gaga sat enraptured. Her eyes moistened. Occasionally her arms would fling up in amazement. Finally, she just stood up and cheered.

It was at a dinner hosted by Americans for the Arts, a leading nonprofit organization promoting the arts and arts education. Gaga received an award, along with Sophia Loren, Herbie Hancock and others. Her acceptance speech was as dramatic as the music. Tears flowing, she said that this blessing of respectability was "the best thing that's ever happened to me." And she remembered her childhood dreams this way: "I suppose that I didn't know what I would become, but I always wanted to be extremely brave and I wanted to be a constant reminder to the universe of what passion looks like. What it sounds like. What it feels like."

That passage stuck in the head and got me thinking. When we talk about living with passion, which is sort of a cliché, what exactly do we mean?

I suppose that people who live with passion start out with an especially intense desire to complete themselves. We are the only animals who are naturally unfinished. We have to bring ourselves to fulfillment, to integration and to coherence.

Some people are seized by this task with a fierce longing. Maybe they are propelled by wounds that need urgent healing or by a fear of loneliness or fragmentation. Maybe they are driven by some glorious fantasy to make a mark on the world. But they often have a fervent curiosity about their inner natures and an unquenchable thirst to find some activity that they can pursue wholeheartedly, without reservation.

They construct themselves inwardly by expressing themselves outwardly. Members of the clergy sometimes say they convert themselves from the pulpit. By speaking out their faith, they make themselves faithful. People who live with passion do that. By teaching or singing or writing or nursing or parenting they bring coherence to the scattered impulses we are all born with inside. By doing some outward activity they understand and define themselves. A life of passion happens when an emotional nature meets a consuming vocation.

Another trait that marks them is that they have high levels of both vulnerability and courage. As Martha Nussbaum wrote in her great book "Upheavals of Thought," to be

emotional is to attach yourself to something you value supremely but don't fully control. To be passionate is to put yourself in danger.

Living with this danger requires a courage that takes two forms. First, people with passion have the courage to dig down and play with their issues. We all have certain core concerns and tender spots that preoccupy us through life. Writers and artists may change styles over the course of their careers, but most of them are turning over the same few preoccupations in different ways. For Lady Gaga fame and body issues predominate — images of mutilation recur throughout her videos. She is always being hurt or thrown off balconies.

Passionate people often discover themselves through play. Whether scientists, entrepreneurs, cooks or artists, they explore their issues the way children explore the possibilities of Play-Doh. They use imagination to open up possibilities and understand their emotional histories. They delight in new ways to express themselves, expand their personalities and move toward their goals. Gaga, to continue with today's

example, has always had a sense of humor about her projects, about the things that frighten and delight her.

Second, people with passion have the courage to be themselves with abandon. We all care what others think about us. People with passion are just less willing to be ruled by the tyranny of public opinion.

As the saying goes, they somehow get on the other side of fear. They get beyond that fog that is scary to approach. Once through it they have more freedom to navigate. They opt out of things that are repetitive, routine and deadening. There's even sometimes a certain recklessness there, a willingness to throw their imperfect selves out into public view while not really thinking beforehand how people might react. Gaga is nothing if not permanently out there; the rare celebrity who is willing to portray herself as a monster, a witch or disturbing cyborg — someone prone to inflicting pain.

Lady Gaga is her own unique creature, whom no one could copy. But she is indisputably a person who lives an amplified life, who throws her contradictions out there, who makes herself a work of art. People like that confront the rest of us with the question a friend of mine perpetually asks: Who would be you and what would you do if you weren't afraid?

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in September 2003.

OTHER VIEWS

Guns on community college campuses?

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Suggestions for preventing mass shootings such as the one at Umpqua Community College in Roseburg on Oct. 1 fall into two familiar categories: Some call for fewer firearms, while others say there should be more of them. Community colleges in Oregon are legally constrained from pleasing either group.

The Legislature needs to bring greater clarity to the question of how far community colleges can go in allowing or prohibiting guns on their campuses.

The ambiguity stems from Oregon's law regarding concealed firearm permits. As of 2013, permits had been issued to 185,000 Oregonians — about 1 in 16 adults. Permit holders' right to carry guns in public places apparently trumps community colleges' right to ban them. A 2009 decision by the state Court of Appeals upheld school districts', and by extension community colleges', authority to prohibit employees from carrying firearms, but their power to require students, visitors and others to leave their guns at home is in doubt.

Lane Community College, for instance, prohibits anyone — students, employees, college patrons and vendors — from possessing a firearm, or even giving the appearance of possessing a gun, on college property or at college-sponsored events. But LCC has an exception for those with

concealed-carry permits, unless the permit holder is an employee engaged in work activities.

So a college such as UCC can declare itself a gun-free zone, but the declaration is meaningless for the many people who have permits to carry concealed weapons. The only people who are firmly bound by a community college's no-guns policy are the college's employees.

The situation is different on university campuses, where the Court of Appeals has found that administrators have broad authority to regulate the "conduct of visitors or members of the public on institutional properties." All seven of Oregon's public universities ban firearms. The universities also have campus police departments with armed officers — but state law does not allow community colleges to create their own police forces, so they rely on unarmed security guards and city or county law enforcement agencies.

The Legislature could provide consistency by allowing community colleges to extend their firearms bans to concealed weapon permit holders. It might also consider allowing police departments at community colleges, many of which have larger enrollments than universities. Whether one sees guns as the problem or as the solution, the status quo — which potentially allows everyone to be armed except school employees and security personnel — is illogical.