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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Cold enough for ya?

There are things to love about winter in Eastern Oregon. But there are certainly also things to hate.

There are toasty fireplaces in the family room, holiday meals, snowball fights and snow-covered landscapes. Coffee and hot chocolate never taste better. And of course the rugged individualist in all of us loves to scrape that windshield, shovel that driveway and brave the elements to pick up a latte to bring home to a loved one.

But there are also the unfortunate and sometimes tragic consequences of cold weather.

So as Old Man Winter gives us a little preview of what's to come in the next three months or so, keep safety in mind.

Dangerous roadways come with the territory in the cold months, and often they are much more than just an inconvenience.

The Oregon Department of Transportation has a great online tool at tripcheck.com that includes live road cams, updated weather conditions and forecasts, and maps showing where roads are closed for both weather and wrecks.

If you must be on the roads, patience is key. Even if your chained-up Subaru can handle the conditions, there are many others on the road that will not be able to react as quickly as you. So take it easy, and be ready to wait in backed-up traffic as wrecks are cleared. It happens every year.

Speaking of which, don't press your luck with the fuel tank. It's a good season to stay above the halfway point on your meter in case you are stuck. And keep some supplies on board, including water, snacks, extra clothes and a blanket and a flashlight.

But the danger isn't just outdoors and on the roads. As we bring fire and heat into our homes to combat the cold and create those beloved holiday meals, the risk also increases.

A couple of precautionary measures now could save real pain later. Check your smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, especially if you haven't in a while.

If you're building a fire indoors, do it safely. Don't burn plastics or other trash, and don't use lighter fluid or other fuels and never use charcoal. All of these elements can lead to toxic fumes inside your house. And don't overstuff the newspaper into the fireplace, because flames can ignite chimney soot.

On that note, make sure your chimney and flue are checked and cleaned each year.

Then there's the holiday meal. According to the state fire marshal, between 2010 through 2014 there were more than 3,900 cooking-related fires in Oregon causing seven deaths, 232 injuries, and more than $35 million in property loss.

Make sure to watch your pots (they will still boil) and set a timer when you're cooking. Forgetting about that turkey is easy to do when family and friends are around. With little ones around, it's also a good idea to create a kid-free zone in the kitchen, at least a few feet around the stove.

A little preparation and common sense are really all it takes to stay safe. Keep both in mind and enjoy the season.

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

Playing the race card

This is in response to the letter from David Burns that appeared in the *East Oregonian* Nov. 18. This is the second time I've had to slap his hand and, as I told him on Oct. 14, he should spend more time worrying about what Homer Simpson is up to in Springfield because every time Mr. Burns ventures beyond that, he exposes himself.

The murder of Jeremy Mardis (that's his correct name) and the shooting of his father, Christopher Few in Marksville, La., on Nov. 3 was not racially motivated. It was just good old dirty Louisiana politics and the races of the parties involved does not matter.

Mr. Burns complains about Ferguson, Mo.; Al Sharpton; Jesse Jackson; Black Lives Matter (it's not Only Black Lives Matter); President Obama; the media; Quentin Tarantino; and, by implication, me. He also complains that nobody on my side says "White Lives Matter." Well, Mr. Burns, I'm saying it. White lives matter, blue lives matter, brown lives matter, I will even go way out on a limb and say all lives matter.

If you look at history, you will see that a disproportionate number of young black people die at the hands of the police. I am white, but I am outraged and heartbroken by that fact. Until the problem is fixed, I will continue to yell about it whether Mr. Burns likes it or not.

Patrick J. Delaney
Hermiston

Cowboys, NFL protecting bad guy Hardy

A "Hardy" round of applause for Greg Hardy of the Dallas Cowboys for getting away with the beating of former girlfriend.

Hardy was found guilty by a North Carolina judge in 2014 of beating her. There were 48 graphic photos online on Deadspin showing the damage done to this poor girl. Hardy appealed, however, and the case was thrown out when the ex-girlfriend failed to show up for the second trial. Hardy paid her a substantial settlement to drop the case, and she took the money. Now he can say that he is "not guilty" of this beating and go on to play and accept his generous check each month.

It seems no one in the Cowboy organization, including owner Jerry Jones, coach Jason Garrett (assigned to do damage control for Hardy's actions lately), or even players have been willing to stand up and admit what a jerk this guy is. There have been four incidents caused by Hardy just this month alone — including a tirade with teammates and coaches on the sidelines of the New York Giants game and sexist remarks about Tom Brady's wife. Jason Garrett has been busy.

Even worse, fellow Cowboy Jason Witten, who has set up a foundation to assist and support those suffering from domestic violence, has been unwilling to abide by his own beliefs.

The entire Cowboy organization has chosen to ignore this obvious violent behavior, providing exactly no incentive for Hardy to change.

So far Hall of Fame quarterback Roger Staubauch has been the only one gutsy enough to at least say he is still a Cowboy fan but not a Hardy fan. The NFL has already suspended Hardy once. If Goodell tried this again the players' association would be in court inside of an hour challenging the ruling. This would prove yet again the NFL only cares about the athletic ability of the player and disregards how they act as a person.

What a great role model this guy is for our young fans. Is it too far a stretch to suggest this behavior flows over into the general population as we see more and more defiance, refusal to comply to a cop's orders, and the senseless murders of police going on today? I think not. We remember when the corruption of the big banks was excused because they were "Too Big To Fail." Well, now we have our sports stars being "Too Good To Punish."

David Burns
Pendleton

Another city study that leads nowhere

Here we go again.

My city friends have asked me to tell Chuck Wood, chair of the Pendleton Development Commission and his associate director, Charles Denight, that they don't need a $25,000 feasibility study to determine whether any developments (plans?) are realistic when they cannot use those funds to fix the streets.

They wonder how the city can keep purchasing what they call G2 properties and ask for utility fees when they cannot fix the streets. They feel the city is only interested in money for their favorite projects and not in the best interests of the citizens. These friends tell me a hotel at the proposed G2 site would disadvantage present hotel owners.

Personally, I would like to know what is sexy about Webb's Cold Storage Building, but I agree with my city friends it would make an excellent site for the farmers market and parking. I think they need more transparency about a festival and the1825 S.W. Byers Avenue property. They tell me it looks like a rock pile!

Dr. Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton

OTHER VIEWS

Anti-Muslim is anti-American

CHARLES BLOW
Comment

There seems to be no bottom to the cesspool of Islamophobic rhetoric coming from Republican candidates.

The tone of anti-Muslim musings post-Paris attack has become so poisonous that it cannot portend anything positive.

In the latest, the Republican front-runner said the United States would have "absolutely no choice" but to close some mosques. And, when asked by a reporter, he seemed to suggest he wouldn't have a problem registering Muslims, which many have condemned, comparing it to the way Jews were once treated. (After heavy bipartisan criticism, he tried to walk back his remarks about the registry.)

And then Dr. Ben Carson drew a tortured parallel between Syrian refugees, who are mostly Muslim, and "a rabid dog running around your neighborhood."

Robert McCaw, spokesman for the Council on American-Islamic Relations, told Al-Jazeera that Carson's remarks were "unthinkable," saying, "There is only one thing you do with a rabid dog — and that's put it down."

Indeed, this is the problem with reckless, racist rhetoric: Each utterance tosses one more log onto the bonfire that can burn out a space for the unimaginable.

The Rev. Martin Luther King Jr. warned in his 1967 "The Other America" speech: "Racism is evil because its ultimate logic is genocide." As King put it:

"If one says that I am not good enough to live next door to him; if one says that I am not good enough to eat at a lunch counter, or to have a good, decent job, or to go to school with him merely because of my race, he is saying consciously or unconsciously that I do not deserve to exist."

Whereas these candidates may not be conscious of this "ultimate logic" or in any way approve of it, it doesn't make their language any less dangerous when it lands on the ears of the minorities on the margins, or those looking for a reason to gussy up their wrongheadedness with righteousness.

A 2013 Carnegie Mellon University study "found that in the most Republican states in the country, employers may be less likely to interview job candidates whose social networking profiles indicate that the applicants are Muslim," according to Pew.

As Pew explained:

"In the 10 states with the highest proportion of Republican presidential candidate Mitt Romney voters in the 2012 election, 17 percent of Christian applicants received interview calls, compared with 2 percent of the Muslim job candidates. There were no differences in callbacks received by the Christian and Muslim candidates in the 10 states with the lowest proportion of Romney voters."

Late last month, Lawrence Downes reported on a poll in a red state with this caveat:

"It's just one poll in one Southern state, North Carolina, by one polling outfit (Public Policy Polling, or PPP) with Democratic Party ties, asking questions of a few hundred Republican primary voters."

"But still," Downes continued, these were the results: 72 percent believed a Muslim should not be allowed to be president of the United States, and 40 percent believed that Islam should be illegal in this country.

It is no wonder, then, that a 2011 Pew Research Center Muslim American survey found that just 11 percent of Muslims identify with or lean toward Republicans, while 70 percent do likewise for Democrats.

Furthermore, a 2013 paper co-published by the Center for American Progress and the New York University School of Law's Brennan Center for Justice found:

"A troubling trend is quickly developing in state legislatures across the country: In a thinly concealed attempt to inflame anti-Muslim attitudes, lawmakers in 32 states have moved to ban foreign or international law. The bans are based on model legislation designed by anti-Muslim activist David Yerushalmi and promoted by activists who have stirred up fears that Islamic laws and customs — commonly referred to as 'Sharia' — are taking over American courts. Although proponents of these bans have failed to cite a single instance where a U.S. court has relied on Sharia to resolve a dispute, foreign law bans have been enacted in Oklahoma, Kansas, Louisiana, Tennessee, and Arizona, while a related ban on religious law has been enacted in South Dakota."

As the ACLU has written of these laws:

"Efforts to single out Muslims and to advance the ugly idea that anything Islamic is un-American are unjust and discriminatory and should be rejected. Laws that single out Sharia violate the First Amendment by treating one belief system as suspect."

This demonizing a single religious faith is a slippery slope. It feeds something that is at odds with the most noble ambition of this country's better angels: equality.

We must put a lid on this corrosive language. Simply put, being specifically anti-Muslim is, in a way, anti-American.

■

Charles M. Blow is The New York Times's visual Op-Ed columnist. His column appears in The Times on Saturday.

Is Oregon ready for another million?

The (Eugene) Register-Guard, Nov. 18

Earlier this year, someone became the 4 millionth Oregonian. The odds are 4 in 5 that the person who pushed Oregon's head count to that milestone arrived from another state, probably California or Washington.

If Oregonian No. 4,000,000 was a newborn baby, he or she is most likely to be a native of Multnomah County who will see Oregon's population pass the 5 million mark before graduating from high school.

The announcement that Oregon's population has exceeded 4 million came from Portland State University's Center for Population Research, which prepares annual reports based on census data, hospital records, driver's license applications, housing surveys and other information.

The prediction that Oregon's population will surpass 5 million in about the year 2035 comes from long-range forecasts for the state and its counties prepared by the state Office of Economic Analysis.

One year after Oregon was admitted to the union in 1859, the U.S. Census Bureau counted 52,000 people in the state — white people, that is. Native Americans were not included. It took until 1940 for the state's population to pass the 1 million mark.

The second million was added by 1968, and the third by 1993. The intervals at which each million was added are 28 years, 25 years and 22 years.

According to the projection by the Office of Economic Analysis, the next 1 million increase in population will take only 20 years. If the addition of each million people takes about two years fewer than the one before, Oregon will be adding 1 million people a year to a population of 15 million within about a century.

A near-quadrupling of Oregon's population seems inconceivable, even nightmarish, today. But a quadrupling already has occurred within the lifetime of any Oregonian older than 75. The state can feel crowded to longtime residents, especially when they're driving on Interstate 5 or trying to find a campsite, but Oregon's population density remains less than half the national average. With a population of 15 million sometime not long after the year 2100, the number of people per square mile in Oregon would be about the same as in South Carolina or Tennessee today.

The 4 millionth Oregonian is here, probably settling in after moving from another state. While the prospect of additional millions gives rise to apprehensions, all Oregonians — most of whom also came from somewhere else — should make the new arrival feel welcome.

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.