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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to Union Pacific Railroad — not just for the train crash earlier this month that dumped oil into the Columbia River and caught fire near Mosier — but for the poor management and maintenance that caused the crash and the speed with which the company resumed transporting dangerous crude.

In today's paper, we note the results of a damning federal investigation into the June 3 crash. Investigators said the company failed to properly maintain its track and used a "brake system that is from the Civil War era." The derailment released 42,000 gallons of crude oil and sparked a fire that burned for 14 hours. It's lucky that no lives were lost and no one was injured — and that the environmental damage was not worse.

Union Pacific's public relations response to the oil train crash and fire was widely panned — it was short on information and empathy. And their quick decision to resume oil train transport despite the pleas of Oregon and Washington officials smacked of bullheadedness and putting profit ahead of safety and responsibility.

And the June 3 crash isn't even the whole of it. It has not been a good month for Union Pacific.

On Friday night, another train leaked thousands of gallons of diesel into the water table and the Columbia River near Troutdale.

If Union Pacific wants to continue to have the ability to transport oil down the Columbia River Gorge, they better get their act together before state and federal officials find a way to bar them from doing any more damage than has already been done.

A kick in the pants to the fact that some of the country's best cowboys will not be competing in Eastern Oregon's best rodeos.

Some of those cowboys — including Pendleton Round-Up defending champion Trevor Brazile — decided to shoot off from the Professional Rodeo Cowboys Association, or PRCA. That means they won't compete in the Round-Up, Farm City or even in Chief Joseph Days.

The splinter reminds us of when open-wheel car racing split into two competing tours in 1996, which kept the best drivers and teams from competing in the best race, the Indianapolis 500. The split was disastrous for the sport and fandom of open-car racing is in serious decline.

The rodeo circuit both locally and nationwide isn't going anywhere, but not being able to see the best athletes compete sure isn't going to help it grow. The best cowboys and the best rodeos should work in tandem, not in opposition. That they were unable to reach a workable compromise will be to the detriment of our local events and the sport as a whole.

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.

OTHER VIEWS

Southern Oregon must learn to deal with wolves

The (Medford) Mail-Tribune

It was only a matter of time before Southern Oregon's growing wolf population came into conflict with domestic livestock. Now that a wolf has killed a sheep and at least one goat in Jackson County, it's important to keep the incident in perspective.

State wildlife biologists confirmed a wolf killed on goat on June 9 near Grizzly Peak and a second was probably injured. A third goat was killed the next day, but vultures had made it impossible to confirm the cause of death. A sheep was confirmed killed by a wolf the night of June 11.

Wildlife biologists believe the wolf labeled OR-33 was responsible. Signals from his radio collar placed him near the kills.

Wolves are now a part of the ecosystem in Oregon, as they were historically before eradication efforts wiped them out. Federal wildlife biologists captured wolves in Canada and released them in Yellowstone National Park and in Idaho in the 1990s. Some wolves migrated on their own into northeast Oregon from Idaho, but none were purposely introduced here.

Since the first wolves arrived, they have dispersed through the state. One wolf in particular, a young male named OR-7, became something of a celebrity as he migrated alone into Southern Oregon and then into Northern California in search of a mate. He eventually found one, and the pair

produced offspring.

While it's unfortunate that anyone has to lose livestock to predators, it is a fact of life in the rural West. It's important to remember that wolves are still few in number — the official minimum count was 110 wolves statewide at the end of 2015, a 36 percent increase over 2014. Most of those were in northeast Oregon, not in this area.

Furthermore, livestock are lost to cougars and coyotes much more frequently than to wolves.

Wolves in Western Oregon are still protected under the federal Endangered Species Act, and it is illegal to kill them unless they pose an immediate threat to human safety. Wolves rarely attack humans.

In Eastern Oregon, eight wolves have been killed by ODFW or authorized agents since 2009 because of livestock losses in Baker and Wallowa counties. In those cases, ranchers and wildlife managers tried non-lethal measures to limit conflict before taking the lethal action.

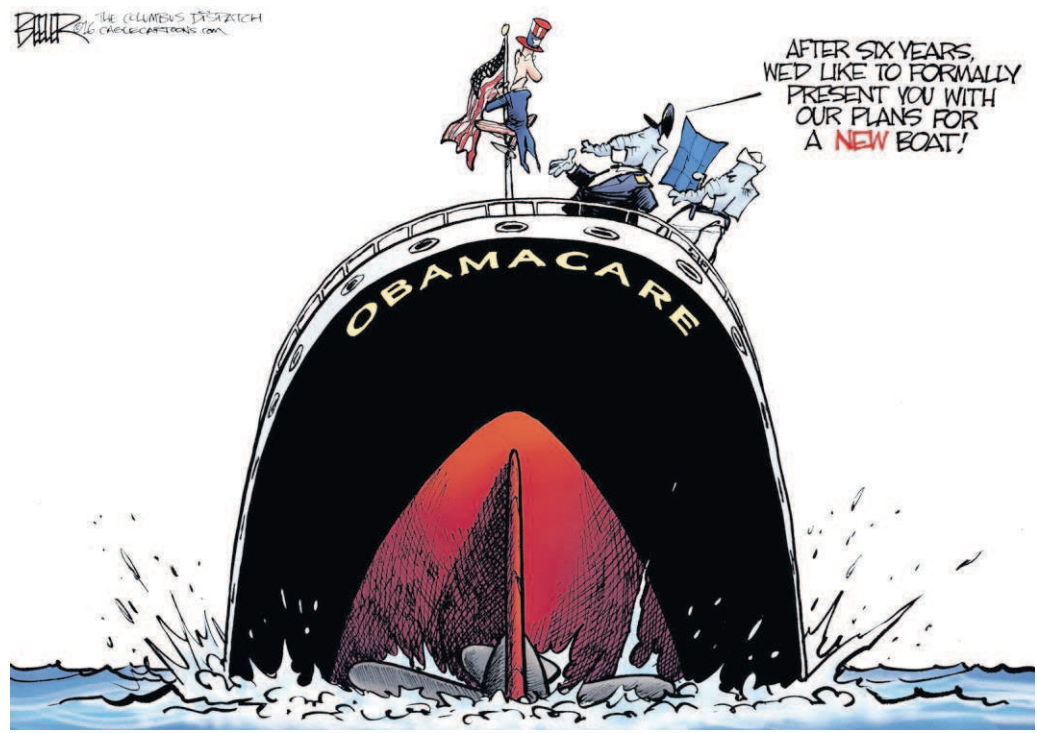
Wildlife officials recommend a variety of non-lethal measures, including guard dogs, flags on fences, special boxes that give off a noise when a radio-collared wolf approaches, and removing carcasses or bone piles that can attract wolves.

Oregonians take pride in the natural beauty of our state, but nature is not always benign. Wolves are another beautiful but potentially damaging part of the natural world, and living with them is a learning process.

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 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

THE COLUMBIAN RIVER
BY JOHN W. HARRIS



OTHER VIEWS

Another age of discovery

Have we been here before? I know — it feels as if the internet, virtual reality, Donald Trump, Facebook, sequencing of the human genome and machines that can reason better than people constitute a change in the pace of change without precedent. But we've actually been through an extraordinarily rapid transition like this before in history — a transition we can learn a lot from.

Ian Goldin, director of the Oxford Martin School at Oxford University, and Chris Kutarna, also of Oxford Martin, have just published a book — "Age of Discovery: Navigating the Risks and Rewards of Our New Renaissance" — about lessons we can draw from the period 1450 to 1550, known as the Age of Discovery. It was when the world made a series of great leaps forward, propelled by da Vinci, Michelangelo, Copernicus and Columbus, that produced the Renaissance and reshaped science, education, manufacturing, communications, politics and geopolitics.

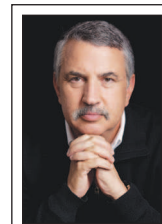
"Gutenberg's printing press provided the trigger," Goldin told me by email, "by flipping knowledge production and exchange from tight scarcity to radical abundance. Before that, the Catholic churches monopolized knowledge, with their handwritten Latin manuscripts locked up in monasteries. The Gutenberg press democratized information, and provided the incentive to be literate. Within 50 years, not only had scribes lost their jobs, but the Catholic Church's millennia-old monopoly of power had been torn apart as the printing of Martin Luther's sermons ignited a century of religious wars."

Meanwhile, Goldin added, Copernicus upended the prevailing God-given notions of heaven and earth "by finding that far from the sun revolving around the Earth, the Earth rotated around the sun," and "voyages of discovery by Columbus, da Gama and Magellan tore up millennia-old maps of the 'known' world."

Those were the mother of all disruptions and led to the parallels with today.

"Now, like then, new media have democratized information exchange, amplifying the voices of those who feel they have been injured in the upheaval," said Goldin. "Now, like then, public leaders and public institutions have failed to keep up with rapid change, and popular trust has been deeply eroded." Now, like then, "this is the best moment in history to be alive" — human health, literacy, aggregate wealth and education are flourishing — and "there are more scientists alive today than in all previous generations."

And, yet many people feel worse off. Because, as in the Renaissance, key anchors in people's lives — like the workplace and community — are being fundamentally dislocated. The pace of technological change is outstripping the average person's ability



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

to adapt. Now, like then, said Goldin, "sizable parts of the population found their skills were no longer needed, or they lived in places left behind, so inequality grew." At the same time, "new planetary scale systems of commerce and information exchange led to immense improvements in choices and accelerating innovations which made some people fabulously rich."

Was there a Donald Trump back then?

"Michelangelo and Machiavelli's Florence suffered a shocking popular power-taking when Girolamo Savonarola, a midlevel friar from Ferrara, who lived from 1452 to 1498, exploded from obscurity in the 1490s to enthral Florentines, who felt left behind economically or culturally, with sermons that laid blame upon the misguided policies and moral corruption of their leaders," said Goldin. "He and his zealous supporters, though a small minority, swept away the Medici establishment and seized control of the city's councils."

"From there, Savonarola launched an ugly campaign of public purification, introducing radical laws including against homosexuality, and attacked public intellectuals in an act of intimidation that history still remembers as the Bonfire of the Vanities. Savonarola was amongst the first to tap into the information revolution of the time, and while others produced long sermons and treatises, Savonarola disseminated short pamphlets, in what may be thought of as the equivalent of political tweets."

The establishment politicians of the day, who were low energy, "underestimated the power of that new information revolution to move beyond scientific and cultural ideas" to amplify populist voices challenging authority.

Yikes! How do we blunt that? "More risk-taking is required when things change more rapidly, both for workers who have to change jobs and for businesses who have to constantly innovate to stay ahead," Goldin argued. Government's job is to strengthen the safety nets and infrastructure so individuals and companies can be as daring — in terms of learning, adapting and investing in themselves — as they need to be. At the same time, when the world gets this tightly woven, America "needs to be more, not less, engaged, with the rest of the world," because "the threats posed by climate change, pandemics, cyberattacks or terror will not be reduced by America withdrawing."

Then, as now, walls stopped working. "Cannons and gunpowder came to Europe that could penetrate or go over walls and books could bring ideas around them," he said. Then, like now, walls only made you poorer, dumber and more insecure.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*.

YOUR VIEWS

Reporters should have to take test to write about a subject

The Associated Press story on the Orlando gunman in the June 21 *East Oregonian* contained the following statement: "No background checks are required for anyone buying guns privately online or at gun shows."

There is no polite way to put it: That is an outright lie. Gun sales at gun shows or anywhere else must obey federal, state and local laws. Online sales must be shipped to a local gun dealer and picked up there, background checks must be passed, all pertinent laws must be conformed to.

This shows a crying need for one more law in this country: Reporters wishing to write or talk about a subject must take and pass a test on said subject, to prove that they have some slight notion of what they're yapping about. No pass, no write or speak.

Against the First Amendment? Not at all, if you accept the gun-control lobby's take on the Second Amendment. They insist that it only covers muskets, i.e. 18th century firearm technology. By that logic, the First would cover only face-to-face speech and the muscle-powered printing press. It is possible that steam-powered presses might be allowed, but only with wood or coal-fired boilers. Broadcast "journalism" would certainly not be covered by the First Amendment.

This could be a "good first step" for the

various media to regain some tiny shred of credibility, something they haven't had in decades.

John Kaufman
Pendleton

Editor's note: Neither federal nor Florida law require private sellers to initiate a background check when transferring a firearm, including online and at gun shows. The Associated Press story is accurate.

Civilians should not have access to assault weapons

As an advisor in Vietnam, I carried an M-16 — the military equivalent of the AR15 assault rifle. It and similar assault rifles are the instruments of choice in America's mass murders. These are deadly weapons with only one real use — killing people.

As I have followed the massacres with these guns, I have silently asked myself one question: why weren't more killed? Then Orlando happened. Forty nine killed and fifty wounded. That's what these guns can do.

Get ready for the body counts America. Fly our flags permanently at half mast. The mass killings are just beginning.

Only the military and law enforcement should have these deadly weapons.

George Anderson
Hermiston