

## Quick takes

### Happy Canyon turns 100

Happy Canyon is by far the most brilliant and riveting western shows I have ever seen. I was only ten when I watched it. It's sad I have not taken it in again. It's truly awesome beyond words.

— **Sandy McLemore**

### Swifts returns to Pendleton

It is quite a sight when they do their “tornado” formation while pouring into a chimney. In Eugene the best known is the Agate Hall chimney at the UO.

— **Alan Contreras**

### Hermiston PD releases timeline of August shootings

Thank you for the update. I understand the community feeling like they deserve to know as this tragedy has broke our community.

— **Magen Hollowell**

I think this puts a lot of rumors to rest.

— **Stephanie Baird Lloyd**

PTSD and mental illness are a major problem in today's world. This is incredibly sad.

— **Erin Purchase**

*One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim\_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.*

# 9/11: Remember the recovery

By **ANTHONY J. MACHCINSKI**  
*York (Pa.) Daily Record*

Everyone remembers Sept. 11, 2001, and the attacks that occurred that day — the destruction caused by a senseless act of terror against the United States.

But to be honest, that day is a blur for me. I grew up in Kearny, New Jersey, a town where the main drag sits on top of a ridge with a picturesque view of the Manhattan skyline. I can vividly remember the Twin Towers shining in the sun that morning as I walked to school and my mother trying to shield me from looking at the two plumes of dust that remained after the towers fell.

I can picture sitting in Mr. Policano's social studies class when he told us about the attacks, but ask me to remember other things from that day and it's all a blank memory. I don't remember the sense of confusion that everybody had about the attacks.

Until I spoke with my father recently on the subject, I don't remember the hours he was missing — stuck in New York City with no cell phone service like thousands of others that day. I can't remember the dozens of phone calls my mother took from concerned family members.

This was my generation's Pearl Harbor or John F. Kennedy assassination — the moment you are supposed to remember for the rest of your life.

I was 12 years old at the time of the attacks, so surely I should be able to remember more.

Why can I remember so little of it? The images and memories of that day didn't linger. I'm not struck by what happened or who we lost in New York City, Washington and in Shanksville.

What lingers, to me, are the memories of what happened after.

I'm still moved by Thomas E. Franklin's photograph of three firefighters raising a flag over Ground Zero. Video of Mike Piazza's post-9/11 home run or President George W. Bush's first pitch before Game 3 of the Yankees-Diamondbacks World Series will give me chills. Listening to Jon Stewart's opening segment from the first episode of “The Daily Show” after the attacks brings a tear to my eye.

It's not the destruction I remember most. It's the recovery.

I watched the World Trade Center go from two beautiful structures to a cloud of dust...

To a pile of rubble...

To a construction site...

And finally to a new tower and transportation hub.

That series of events I saw as a teenager taught me a lesson I couldn't learn in a history book. President Calvin Coolidge once said, “The slogan ‘Press On’ has solved and always will solve the problems of the human race.” And the events after Sept. 11,

2001, proved that. Life is never easy. When you think things are safe, calm or relaxed, some curveball will come to break up that peace. Sept. 11, 2001, was that curveball for the United States.

The fabric of this country was tested, but it did not buckle or cave, it instead grew stronger.

I'm proud to have witnessed what happened in the days, weeks, months and years after the attacks — how a nation bonded together to heal and recover from the attacks, whether it was donations to the Red Cross or placing lights in front of homes to show

solidarity. As a child, the New York City skyline was always a symbol of home for me. I knew that if I saw the skyline, I was only a few minutes from my house.

As I've grown older, that skyline has taken on a new meaning, one of resiliency. No matter what life throws my way, I can recover and grow stronger.

I'll never forget those who died, what we lost or the lives forever changed that day. But I certainly won't forget the moments after either.

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*Anthony J. Machcinski is the Food and Drink reporter for the York Daily Record and FlipSidePA.*

## Preview of the 2016 presidential debates ...



## Eastern Oregon's farmers are running out of water

By **DORYS C. GROVER**

Water, one day, may be the drink of choice.

We will be thirsty. One day we may find our high groundwater extraction has caused our aquifers to run out of water. There may come a day when our government will designate the amount of water that will be available to us due to a critical water shortage.

If we look at who is responsible for our water usage, we need to look directly at lawmakers, the Legislature, which has resisted limiting groundwater pumping because of political and public rejection. Our aquifers are running out of water because Oregon has and is giving away its underground water supply to large city populations, farmers and livestock owners. There is a critical need to curb new construction of irrigation wells.

We were warned in the 1980s, by the Oregon Water Resources Department, that farming dry land using well water had lowered the Umatilla Basin's water table dozens of feet in some areas. In other recent studies scientists have found that rivers and lakes are interconnected with underground water and a well can threaten nearby streams.

As a farmer, I can verify this. I live on Tutuilla Creek and used its water to irrigate six acres for two months each summer. This worked until about 1985 when Tutuilla Creek went dry.

I believe the drilling of several wells in my immediate area caused the creek to go dry. When it did, I began irrigating by pumping well water. From the 1920s through the 1970s, Tutuilla Creek, which runs through my land, had enough water for cattle, and ponds to swim and fish in.

This proved to me that we had to replace the groundwater for the creek to flow again, so I began limiting well water usage in the hope of bringing back surface water. So far it has not worked, which means the water table has lowered. I know this because my well was once artesian, but is no longer.

It seems obvious to me we must stop new well construction because we know the aquifers are being lowered and we don't know how much underground water we have left.

Local farmers and ranchers in most of Oregon's eastern counties have profited from irrigation. Driving across the state one can view great irrigation equipment providing water to the land. Scientists say pumping in these areas has lowered the water table and weakened surface springs. One can no longer drill a well and expect to protect surface water.

I read somewhere that ranchers fear bureaucratic regulation more than they do about their wells going dry.

As a farmer, curtailment of my water usage has affected my lifestyle, but I realize the importance of just having enough drinking water is reason enough for us to conserve underground water and stop issuing well permits. The depletion of Oregon's aquifers is due mainly to extensive irrigation, but most farmers lack any financial incentive to change because water has been and is free.

Irrigators have protested any change in water usage, particularly in drought-ridden agricultural regions but Oregon's leading resources issue is climate change. Most farmers rely on well water because they have few or no other options. Their water usage is based on an honor system that they will not pump more water than permitted.

There is no doubt that restricting well permits and underground water pumping will create economic upheaval because water regulators face enormous public and political pressure.

Many times the Oregon Water Resources Department's attempts to limit groundwater use have ended in physical threats, Legislature maneuvers to thwart regulations, and failed lawsuits.

Most of us do not realize how overuse of Oregon's groundwater harms people, plants and animals, especially fish and wildlife.

Today, Oregon's legislators have the water usage issue under study hoping to generate funds to determine the extent of underground water available. We don't have five, let alone 50, years to determine this issue. Lawmakers need to have a solution by the 2017 legislative session.

It is obvious Oregon needs better water management. We are running out of water.

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*Dorys Grover of Pendleton is a writer, former college professor and member of the International Wine and Food Society.*

## Sneaky rider is inappropriate and damaging to the West

By **GARETT REPPENHAGEN**  
*Writers on the Range*

Late summer has come to the American West, and across the sagebrush sea that extends over multiple states from Wyoming to New Mexico, greater sage grouse have moved on from their spring courtship rituals and are now raising their young.

These unique American birds face an uncertain future, even as they begin tending to the next generation. That's because the National Defense Authorization Act is advancing in the House and Senate, and an amendment to that bill threatens the birds' survival. A rider tacked on to the House bill not only overturns a public planning process that involved multiple stakeholders, it also blocks protection for sage grouse under the Endangered Species Act for at least a decade. It's a repeat of similar legislation that the House Natural Resources Chairman, Utah Republican Rob Bishop, tried to sneak into the defense bill last year.

I've served my country in both Kosovo and Iraq, and I understand that the defense bill has serious implications for military preparedness and national security. The national defense bill authorizes spending and programs for our troops, covering everything from food to fuel and ammunition. So what do sage grouse have to do with national defense? Quite simply, nothing.

The Department of Defense didn't ask for this amendment; a few Western lawmakers did. These elected officials seek to run their own agenda by inserting amendments onto the defense authorization bill and insulting the men and women serving our country. Why are we again wasting everyone's time with debates that don't belong in the defense bill?

Already a great deal of time has gone into creating conservation solutions for the sage grouse. Partnerships have been created among ranchers, energy developers and federal, state and local governments across 11 states to save sagebrush habitat in the West. Additionally, the U.S. military has a strong track record of working with federal agencies and local communities to protect open space and wildlife habitat.

These anti-wildlife lawmakers are saying there's a problem on sagebrush lands where none exists. We already have done

the hard work to put in place a framework that conserves this iconic species and the landscapes of the West without hindering military training exercises. Thriving sage grouse populations indicate the overall health of their sagebrush habitat, which harbors 350 other species.

We've seen this shameful strategy of adding anti-environment riders to must-pass legislation time and time again in appropriations funding bills, and this year is no different: The 2017 Interior appropriations bill is chock-full of riders from lawmakers with an agenda that block or strip away endangered species protections for native wildlife. It's embarrassing to the citizens these lawmakers represent that this trend has now spread to the military, especially when the military itself clearly states that sage grouse conservation efforts have no impact on military readiness.

That's right: The Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense for Readiness stated in an April letter that they “do not believe these (sage-grouse management) plans will affect military training, operations, or readiness to any significant degree.” The Army, the Navy and the Air Force all have resources management plans for military installations, and none of them need any new greater sage grouse legislation in order to carry out their missions. It doesn't get much clearer than that.

I'm proud to call the Rocky Mountains my home, and the sage grouse is a true icon of the West I love. The sagebrush sea needs to be protected for future generations. If it isn't, the sage grouse, and along with the many other species that depend on this unique landscape, could vanish forever.

Let's get back to the business of protecting our country from real threats. To the few politicians and special interests pushing these damaging provisions, I say: Leave our natural heritage and our defense bill alone. Our wide-open spaces and wildlife are a big part of what we love and cherish about the United States. They are one of the reasons why so many brave men and women are glad to serve their country.

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*Garrett Reppenhagen is a contributor to Writers on the Range. He served as a Cavalry Scout Sniper with the 1st Infantry Division in the U.S. Army and is now regional director for Vet Voice Foundation.*