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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to emergency planning committees in both Morrow and Umatilla counties for working hard to prepare for a potential oil train derailment and crash.

The explosion and emergency response in Mosier this summer offered response crews up and down the gorge some lessons to learn from, and made clear some best practices.

It's good to know our local crews took it to heart.

"It may never happen in your area, but if it does, you're going to be ready for it," LEPC program coordinator Terry Wolfe said earlier this week.

On Tuesday, they met jointly in Hermiston and decided to collaborate on a rail safety plan, as well as a response plan should a similar accident happen in the region.

State and regional officials were on hand, too, offering their expertise.

And the planning session was done at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston, which likely would be needed in an emergency situation too.

That's the all hands-on-deck, all-possible-actions-considered attitude its going to take if — God forbid — the next terrible train accident is along our tracks.

A tip of the hat to allowing Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution inmates outside the prison to do manual labor and community projects.

Pendleton's nearly three decade-long ban on inmates doing such work was overturned this year by city council. It was the only city to have such a ban, and we think it's high time it was removed.

Crews from Two Rivers Correctional Institution in Umatilla are hoping to train both inmates and supervisors. We believe once that training is done, and inmate crews start to work, the inmates and the prison and the city will benefit.

We think outside work programs are a good way for inmates to learn the importance of good behavior and following rules, allows them to be productive to the outside world, and help a cash-strapped city receive cut-rate labor.

There are public safety risks, and the prison will be responsible for choosing only the safest inmates to go outside its barbed wire

fence. The prison will also be responsible that they find their way back to their cell at the end of a day's work. But both can be done, and we're excited that it will soon be the case.

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.

Be heard!

Send us a letter or comment online.



OTHER VIEWS



The best news you don't know

The world is a mess, with billions of people locked in inescapable cycles of war, famine and poverty, with more children than ever perishing from hunger, disease and violence.

That's about the only thing Americans agree on; we're polarized about all else. But several polls have found that about 9 out of 10 Americans believe that global poverty has worsened or stayed the same over the last 20 years.

Fortunately, the one point Americans agree on is dead wrong.

As world leaders gather for the U.N. General Assembly this week, all the evidence suggests that we are at an inflection point for the ages. The number of people living in extreme poverty (\$1.90 per person per day) has tumbled by half in two decades, and the number of small children dying has dropped by a similar proportion — that's 6 million lives a year saved by vaccines, breast-feeding promotion, pneumonia medicine and diarrhea treatments!

Historians may conclude that the most important thing going on in the world in the early 21st century was a stunning decline in human suffering.

OK, you're thinking that I've finally cracked up after spending too much time in desperate places. So a few data points:

— As recently as 1981, when I was finishing college, 44 percent of the world's population lived in extreme poverty, according to the World Bank. Now the share is believed to be less than 10 percent and falling. "This is the best story in the world today," says Jim Yong Kim, the president of the World Bank.

— For the entire history of the human species until the 1960s, a majority of adults were illiterate. Now 85 percent of adults worldwide are literate and the share is rising.

— Although inequality has risen in America, the global trend is more encouraging: Internationally, inequality is on the decline because of gains by the poor in places like China and India.

The U.N. aims to eradicate extreme poverty by 2030, and experts believe it is possible to get quite close. In short, on our watch, we have a decent chance of virtually wiping out ills that have plagued humanity for thousands of generations, from illiteracy to the most devastating kind of hand-to-mouth poverty.

Yet the public thinks the opposite, that poverty is getting worse. A poll to be released Thursday by Motivaction, a Dutch firm, finds that only 1 percent of Americans surveyed realized that global extreme poverty had fallen by half over 20 years.

I wonder if those of us in journalism



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

and the humanitarian worlds don't err by focusing so much on human misery that we leave the public with the misperception that everything is always getting worse.

I've covered massacres in South Sudan, concentration camps in Myanmar and widespread stunting in India, but it's also important to acknowledge the backdrop of global progress. Otherwise, the public may perceive poverty as hopeless and see no point in carrying on the fight — at just the point when we're making the most rapid gains ever recorded.

The one point Americans agree on is dead wrong.

When I first made the acquaintance of the developing world, as a backpacking law student in the 1980s — sometimes riding on tops of trains or buses and writing articles to pay my expenses — the most gut-wrenching aspect of poverty I encountered was ubiquitous blind beggars, robbed of dignity and any chance to be productive.

This is much less common today, partly because humanitarian aid — despite real shortcomings — has made a profound difference in health. The heroic work of former President Jimmy Carter and pharmaceutical donations from Merck have made river blindness less common. Vitamin A capsules costing 2 cents a dose have reduced blindness as well. Antibiotics have helped curb blinding trachoma. And a simple \$25 surgery developed by a Nepali ophthalmologist, Dr. Sanduk Ruit, lets people suffering from cataracts see again.

The scenes of blind beggars on every street corner will soon be gone forever.

Cynics scoff that if more children's lives are saved, they will just grow up to have more babies and cause new famines and cycles of poverty. Not so! In fact, when parents are assured that their children will survive, they choose to have fewer of them. As girls are educated and contraception becomes available, birthrates tumble — just as they did in the West. Indian women now average just 2.4 births, Indonesian women 2.5, and Mexican women just 2.2.

So in a moment we can return to urgent needs worldwide, from war to climate change to refugees. But first, let's pause for a nanosecond of silence to acknowledge the greatest gains in human well-being in the history of our species — not to inspire complacency, but rather to spur our efforts to accelerate what may be the most important trend in the world today.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill.

YOUR VIEWS

Parade announcers not hospitable to Dems

I had the privilege to attend the Westward Ho! Parade last Friday. What a terrific parade. I loved seeing all the beautiful Native Americans showing well-deserved pride for their heritage. The horses were awesome.

We were fortunate to have seats right below the announcers so we heard all about every entry. Well ... not every entry. There was silence when the governor of our state rode by on her horse. The governor of the great state of Oregon! Another huge silence when Senator Ron Wyden came by the announcers. Our governor and one of two of our state senators are in Pendleton for this great event, and not one word of welcome could be uttered? Sad.

I did hear a welcome and many good comments when Representative Greg Walden came by the announcers.

Hmmm, could it be that you only get mentioned in this parade if you are Republican? I was very disappointed.

Vesta Smith
The Dalles

Railroad honker taking Round-Up revenge

Is the Union Pacific playing childish games for Round-Up?

I can't help but notice when a train comes through Pendleton

during daytime hours, their horns seem to pick up a lot of energy, especially during show time. It makes me think of little boys getting revenge for obeying a request (I guess?) from upper management to not blow your horns (silence them) while blowing through Pendleton.

It seems to me that enough has been accomplished to protect pedestrians from these monoliths. Shame, Mr. Engineer, or should I say conductor?

Chuck R. McKee
Pendleton

Donald Trump a laughingstock

Amazing! It's the first word that comes to mind when I hear someone gush over the current Republican nominee. This cretin belongs nowhere near the Oval Office and the responsibility that comes with it.

This petulant, immature, bombastic blowhard who has never been so much as a dog catcher would bring irreparable harm and disgrace to this country and its standing in the world.

If one of his supporters ever cracked a history book in their miserable lives they would see the direct correlation of his rise to that of history's past despots and strongmen, who ran on fear and promises of immediate change for the better. His promises of restoring law and order in short

order can only be attained by calling out the National Guard. His declaration of knowing ISIS better than the generals, even though he had multiple draft deferments and was too cowardly to actually go to war, is ridiculous.

In an interview, when asked who he would confer with in the event of a national crisis, he stated he said he would confer with himself, because he has a good mind for these things. He had no clue what the nuclear triad is, he didn't know Russia had already gone into Ukraine, he cozies up to Putin and hasn't got the good sense to know when he's being played.

His race baiting, disrespect for women and penchant for name calling when he doesn't get his way only implies that if elected, he would be the first openly spoiled brat to become president. He is playing to the dark side of our souls, and only those without the backbone to investigate this charlatan further will vote for him. Once again, amazing!

David Gracia
Hermiston

If Oregon is booming, why Measure 97?

The state of Oregon is said to have a booming economy. Why, then, are most of its agencies hoping to cash in on the corporate windfall if Measure 97 passes? Voters should carefully read the voter's pamphlet on Measure

97 because the information is factually incorrect and misleading and the Legislature can alter any non-constitutional ballot measure, including Measure 97. That caveat has rarely been included in statutory changes and if passed has the capability of hurting all Oregonians and to slow economic growth.

Originally called Initiative Petition 28, Measure 97 proposes to charge a 2.5 percent tax on certain Oregon corporations' annual gross sales exceeding \$25 million. The measure would raise approximately \$3 billion a year. This fund was to provide better public schools, better health care, and better services for senior citizens. It has become apparent every department in Oregon is expecting a handout from Measure 97, if it passes.

State agencies have been asked (by the governor?) to submit proposed budgets based on the passage of Measure 97 and budget cuts if it fails. It is inevitable that state expenses will rise — they do every year.

This measure, however, is an indirect sales tax on Oregon consumers, you and me. Large

corporations such as Pacific Power, Wal-Mart and CenturyLink have said they will be forced to raise their costs — and who pays? The consumer. A question has been raised that corporations do not pay a fair share of their profits. Proof is needed to determine whether or not this is true.

The state should maintain current tax rates and spending on services. Public employees favor the measure because it might benefit them but they too would pay more for food, clothing and other services, estimated at about \$600 a year per household.

This is a sales tax and a sales tax is going to cost you more than it's worth. Oregonians already pay a personal income tax and this tax reeks of double taxation, illegal under the law. Voters need to understand this is a gross receipts tax and how it does not act in their favor.

The outcome of the election will depend on whether the voters understand who will actually bear the costs of Measure 97. The Legislature needs to find other options to raise funds for Oregon's agencies.

Dorys C. Grover, Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

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