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KATHRYN B. BROWN

Publisher

JANNA HEIMGARTNER

Business Office Manager

DANIEL WATTENBURGER

Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR

Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Wolves just fine without conservationists

You must forgive us if we feel a bit gobsmacked every time a pro-wolf group runs to the judiciary to complain that their favorite apex predator isn't getting enough love from wildlife managers.

It is an act aimed at getting publicity and raising money and has little or nothing to do with the welfare of gray wolves in the West.

The wolves are doing just fine. Really.

There is no shortage of gray wolves. Some 55,000 live in Canada, and 10,000 or so are in British Columbia alone. Up to 11,000 live in Alaska. An estimated 4,000 roam the Great Lakes region of the U.S. More than 1,200 more are in Montana and Idaho. The populations in Washington state and Oregon are growing at an annual rate of more than 30 percent, meaning they will double every few years. Wolves have even taken up residence in Southern Oregon and Northern California.

So what, exactly, is the problem? The pro-wolfers appear to have won the battle, and the war. Why are they pressing their case against wildlife managers for not providing "adequate" protection for wolves?

In our opinion, it's about money. Environmental and conservation groups can never declare victory and go home. They can never congratulate themselves for a "mission accomplished" and move on with their lives. That's not how it works.

How it works is the wolf cause is held up as a "matter of the life and death," and is usually accompanied by a plea for money.

If a conservation group were to tell supporters, "Yep, the gray wolf populations are now in good shape, thanks to us (and a poorly written Endangered Species Act). It's time to get back to our lives," that group would never be able to raise a penny. Instead, their money pleas will

continue, along with efforts to stop livestock grazing on public land. Because of poorly written federal laws and a judiciary that is easily swayed by fuzzy logic, these groups will continue.

The irony is the gray wolf would have succeeded even if radical conservation groups never existed. By reintroducing wolves to Idaho and Yellowstone National Park, and with protection from wildlife managers, the wolf population would have increased even without conservationists hollering from the back seat.

Wolves are robust, smart and have a survival instinct unsurpassed in nature. Because they live in packs and follow food sources, they spread naturally across the landscape. In fact, they were never reintroduced in Washington and Oregon; they dispersed from Idaho and British Columbia naturally. If they find food, they will stay. If they don't, they will move on.

A relatively small number of wolves have created problems by preying on livestock, killing sheep and cattle. If every one of those wolves had been killed immediately, the overall population would still be rapidly growing.

Yet in Oregon, wolf groups are again heading to court, arguing that wildlife managers are not providing adequate protection. Note: Wolves will not be killed anywhere in Oregon without the express permission of wildlife managers. In all phases of the state wolf plan, non-lethal methods of stopping wolves from attacking livestock must be undertaken before lethal removal will even be considered.

In our book, that's good protection for wolves.

So it goes: lawsuits, fundraising, even the occasional mindless threats against anyone who happens to get caught up in the issue. And all the while wolves are doing just fine.

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

EOTEC move saved fair for county

In a letter to the editor on Saturday, Pendleton wag Rick Rohde beefs about EOTEC. He claims it was a bad idea, has bad execution, and criticizes county commissioners for their roles. He whines that the commissioners should not have spent \$30,000 on containers to secure fair property during the move and calls for the county to sell its 50 percent interest to Hermiston. These comments bring to mind a recent New Yorker cartoon that had the caption "From great ignorance comes great confidence."

Mr. Rohde forgets that without EOTEC, the county would have had to pony up \$8 million to simply bring the old fairgrounds up to basic sewer, water, power, and building codes. He also forgets that when faced with the \$8 million bill, the county searched for a replacement fairgrounds in Milton-Freewater and Pendleton. There were no viable alternatives.

The county has supported building EOTEC because the alternatives were expending \$8 million — money the county did not have — or the disappearance of our county fair.

George L. Anderson
Hermiston

before they remove the dropping to try to cut down on these pests. Or at the very least put out like traps or pass out free fly traps to those of us who live near the rodeo grounds. Something must be done.

Denise Null-Whaley
Pendleton

Bundy trial moving fast, skipping facts

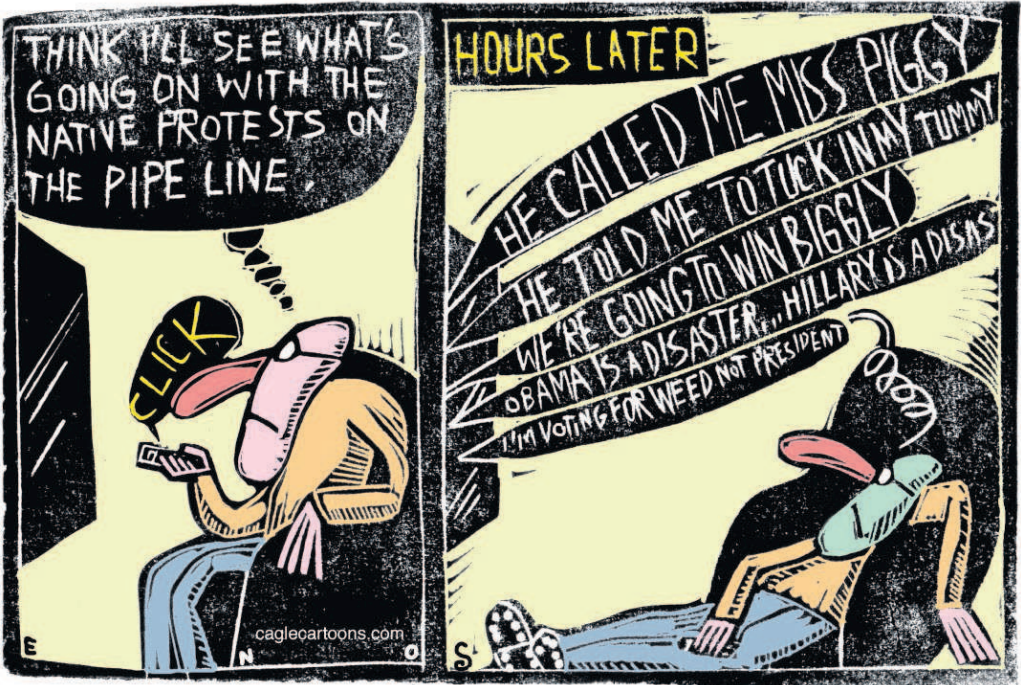
The trial of USA v. Ammon Bundy et al is progressing much faster than Judge Anna Brown first estimated. The prosecution has finished making their case and the defendants are now testifying to make their case. Jeff Banta, one of the last four defendants to leave the refuge, testified last Thursday. His description of the last night and morning at the refuge was riveting even with the constant objections of the prosecution, many of which were sustained by the judge.

Judge Anna Brown has insisted that testimony involving the conduct of the FBI, the Hammonds' court case, property rights, the U.S. Constitution, title of the refuge, and adverse possession not be brought into the present case. With those restrictions, it has been very difficult for the defense to make their case. It also is making it hard for the judge to make it seem that she is allowing "the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth."

Brown is suggesting that the trial will probably be finished and the jury will be ready to go into their deliberations by October 12.

The Bundy supporters meet daily in Chapman Park, starting at about 7:30 a.m., just across the street from the Hatfield Federal District Court in downtown Portland. Some prefer to hold signs in support of the defendants on the street, but many of the supporters are now watching the trial in the observation room on the 13th floor of the courthouse. The lunch hour finds many of the supporters and defendants across the street in Chapman Park for their lunch break.

Terry Noonkester
Myrtle Creek



OTHER VIEWS

Trump's fellow travelers

Donald Trump has just had an extraordinarily bad week, and Hillary Clinton an extraordinarily good one; betting markets now put Clinton's odds of winning almost as high as they were just after the Democratic convention. But both Clinton's virtues and Trump's vices have been obvious all along. How, then, did the race manage to get so close on the eve of the debate?

A lot of the answer, I've argued, lies in the behavior of the media, which spent the month before the first debate jeering at Clinton, portraying minor missteps as major sins and inventing fake scandals out of thin air. But let us not let everyone else off the hook. Trump couldn't have gotten as far as he has without the support, active or de facto, of many people who understand perfectly well what he is and what his election would mean, but have chosen not to take a stand.

Let's start with the Republican political establishment, which is supporting Trump just as if he were a normal presidential nominee.

I've had a lot of critical things to say about Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority leader, and Paul Ryan, the speaker of the House. One thing of which I would never accuse them, however, is stupidity. They know what kind of man they're dealing with — but they are spending this election pretending that we're having a serious discussion about policy, that a vote for Trump is simply a vote for lower marginal tax rates. And they should not be allowed to flush the fact of their Trump support down the memory hole when the election is behind us.

This goes in particular for Ryan, who has received extraordinarily favorable press treatment over the years — portrayed as an honest, serious policy wonk with a sincere concern for fiscal probity. This reputation was never deserved; his policy proposals have always been obvious flimflam. But in the past, criticisms of Ryan depended on pointing out hard stuff, like the fact that his numbers didn't add up. Now it can be made much simpler: Every time he's held up as an example of seriousness, remember that when it mattered, he backed Trump.

While almost all Republican officeholders have endorsed Trump, the same isn't true of what we might call the GOP intelligentsia — actual or at least self-proclaimed policy experts, opinion writers, and so on. For the most part, the members of this group haven't spoken up in support of this year's Republican nominee. For example, not a single former member of the Council of Economic Advisers



PAUL KRUGMAN
Comment

has endorsed Trump. If you look at who has endorsed Trump — say, at the signatories of the statement of support from "Scholars and Writers for America" — it's actually a fairly pathetic group.

But if you think that electing Trump would be a disaster, shouldn't you be urging your fellow Americans to vote for his opponent, even if you don't like her? After all, not voting for Clinton — whether you don't vote at all, or make a purely symbolic vote for a third-party candidate — is, in effect, giving half a vote to Trump.

To be fair, quite a few conservative intellectuals have accepted that logic, especially among foreign-policy types; you have to give people like, say, Paul Wolfowitz some credit for political courage. But there have also been many who balked at doing the right thing; when Henry Kissinger and George Schultz piously declared that they were not going to endorse anyone, it was a profile in cowardice.

And the response from sane Republican economists has been especially disappointing. Only charlatans and cranks have endorsed Trump, but only a handful have risen to the occasion and been willing to say that if keeping him out of the White House is important, you need to vote for Clinton.

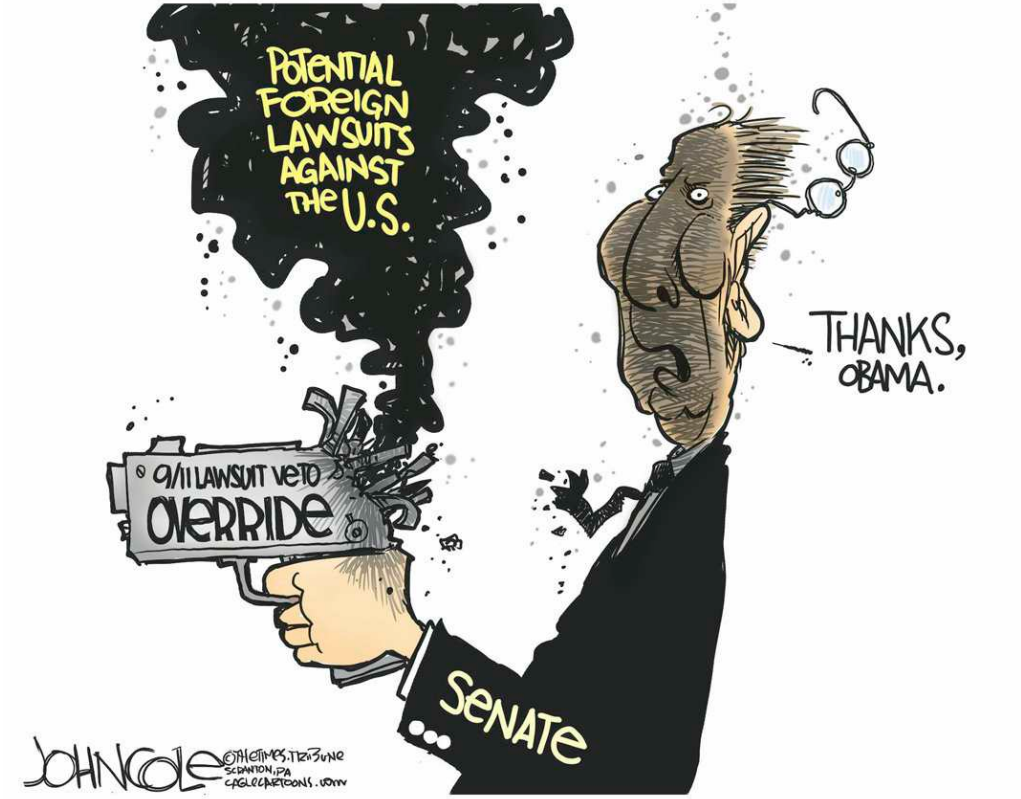
Finally, it's dismaying to see the fecklessness of those on the left supporting third-party candidates. A few seem to believe in the old doctrine of social fascism — better to see the center-left defeated by the hard right, because that sets the stage for a true progressive revolution. That worked out wonderfully in 1930s Germany.

But for most it seems to be about politics as personal expression: they dislike Clinton — partly because they've bought into a misleading media image — and plan to express that dislike by staying at home or voting for someone like Gary Johnson, the Libertarian candidate. If polls are to be believed, something like a third of young voters intend to, in effect, opt out of this election. If they do, Trump might yet win.

In fact, the biggest danger from Trump's terrible week is that it might encourage complacency and self-indulgence among voters who really, really wouldn't want to see him in the White House. So remember: Your vote only counts if you cast it in a meaningful way.

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Paul Krugman joined The New York Times in 1999 as a columnist on the Op-Ed Page and continues as professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University.



LETTERS POLICY

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