

Quick takes

Pendleton teacher wins \$100K for food truck

I am so excited for this! It is an amazing opportunity for the high school students. In a few years I will have high school students and I am so glad they will have the chance to be a part of something that will teach them valuable life skills.

— Jennifer Bush

ODFW looks to raise revenue

At the price of tags, apps, license fees — it's soon to be sport of kings. Hunting camps already look like old folks home.

— Terry McKern

Task force — you mean tax force. Nothing says “trying to find ways to generate revenue” than by having a taxpayer-funded task force that wants to increase taxes.

— Nick Ritzer

Hermiston School District considers \$100 million bond

My boys don't even go to public schools but yet I have to pay taxes like they are.

— Stacey Thurman

So sad, huge new schools, but overcrowded. New taxes are not the answer.

— Jeanne Perkins

Trump tweets

Fidel Castro is dead!

—@RealDonaldTrump

In addition to winning the Electoral College in a landslide, I won the popular vote if you deduct the millions of people who voted illegally.

—@RealDonaldTrump

@jeffzeleny just another generic CNN part time wannabe journalist! @CNN still doesn't get it. They will never learn!

— @realDonaldTrump

Nobody should be allowed to burn the American flag — if they do, there must be consequences — perhaps loss of citizenship or year in jail!

—@RealDonaldTrump

Look forward to going to Indiana tomorrow in order to be with the great workers of Carrier. They will sell many air conditioners!

—@RealDonaldTrump

A showdown at Standing Rock is coming

By GUNDARS RUDZITIS
Writer of the Range

The history of the West is strewn with the sad stories of leaders who signed unfair treaties with Native Americans in order to steal their land. They trampled Native cultures and environments in their greedy quest for wealth. Will this tradition of abuse continue in the waning days of the Obama administration?

Weeks have passed since President Obama spoke about the possibility of diverting the pipeline. But the hope that Obama will “ride to the rescue” and stop the pipeline is dissipating. Meanwhile, the “water protectors” are prepared to stay throughout the bone-cold Dakota winter even as the police pressure on them escalates.

The Sioux have asked for people, Indian and non-Indian, to come and join them in their vigil to prevent the probable contamination of the water that they and many others depend upon. They have also asked for food and clothing to help them through the winter.

Many, many communities have responded, including people in my community, recently described in *The New York Times* as the “small, quirky town of Port Townsend, Washington.” There was a march through downtown by more than 100 people in support of Standing Rock. A few days later, a benefit variety show attended by 400-500 locals raised \$20,000 to support security and medical teams at Standing Rock. Then a few days ago, about 50 Port Townsend representatives and members of the Klallam Tribe left for Standing Rock, loaded with supplies. They arrived safely at the Sacred Stone camp where thousands of people are already gathered, and thousands more are headed for the camp for what may turn out to be a major confrontation with federal officials on Dec. 5.

Meanwhile, people took a stand on Nov. 15 with nationwide demonstrations outside Army Corps of Engineers offices and the banks funding the pipeline. Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders spoke outside the White House in support of Standing Rock, asking Obama to stop the pipeline and consider declaring the land in question a national monument. The silence from elected officials in the West, however, is deafening. The pipeline has been “protected” by a multi-state police force acting as armed



Piece PIPE...

corporate security. They use military-grade anti-riot technology with drones and helicopters buzzing like mosquitoes in the air. The police force (\$8 million spent so far by North Dakota) has been supplemented by private security firms — “hired guns” — with dogs attacking nonviolent Native Americans. Cropdusters have sprayed Standing Rock encampments with pesticides. Police use rubber bullets and spray tear gas and Mace from large canisters. Most recently, water cannons caused hundreds of nonviolent protesters to seek medical attention for hypothermia.

The silence from elected officials in the West is deafening.

People are being arrested, processed, strip-searched, thrown into cells and dog kennels. Police block highways. Cars, trucks and buses bringing supplies are stopped, people detained, their possessions and goods confiscated.

These are tactics of warfare used to disrupt a dangerous enemy. This does not sound like the America I came to as a child, fleeing both fascism and a communist dictatorship.

It also brings back flashbacks and images of the American South, with civil rights advocates and black residents the targets of

police brutality until the National Guard was finally sent in to put a stop to it.

If, as people or communities, we just stand by, we will be like the Europeans who lived near prisons and concentration camps during World War II. These people simply closed their windows when they saw trainloads of prisoners arrive, heard their tortured screams, or smelled the stench from the gas chambers. Later, after the war, these residents claimed to know nothing of what was happening nearby.

Supporters going to Standing Rock now join representatives from over 300 tribal nations in what is said to be the largest gathering of tribes in our Western history. Leaders of 28 Indian nations in my state of Washington have written President Obama asking him to reroute the pipeline, saying that Native peoples have been repeatedly shoved aside for profit, and that this must stop.

The escalating police attacks, military tactics and techniques of constant light and loud noise only bring shame on the Obama administration in its waning days, and on us as a nation.

Gundars Rudzitis is a contributor to *Writers on the Range*, the opinion service of *High Country News* (hcn.org). He is professor emeritus of geography at the University of Idaho and lives in Washington.

Douglas Minthorn, landlord and good friend

His “Boston” name is Douglas Minthorn; his Indian name is Wiyaxtsaawxt with four diacritical marks somewhere on top. And he comes from a long line of Cayuse leaders and chiefs including Gilbert Minthorn, a co-founder of the Pendleton Round-Up and the last Cayuse headman. But when Dr. Manners answers the phone, he loudly grunts, “Who is this?” He likes to say that after I tell him one of his daughters is on the line.



TOM HEBERT
Comment

As I always say, Douglas is very honest, funny, smart, and mean. But I survived years of living in his house. (Ultimately, from 1999 to 2012.)

Anyway, from 7 to 8 a.m. we usually sit around over morning coffee and laugh.

Here's a typical story from just the other day. Perhaps you had to hear it, but he is telling about an old Indian drunk who went downtown to find that his favorite bar was closed for good and Douglas was commiserating with the old guy's heartbreak. Then I said something about Chief Dan George's public service advert with a tear running down his cheek at the environmental devastation of his homeland, saying that Dan George was probably speaking for his people, mourning their loss of old time saloons. And Douglas, without missing a beat says, “Yep, that's our Trail of Tears.”

Douglas, in his heyday, was the feistiest Indian saloon drunk in the Northwest known, as he says, “all over America and parts of Europe.” He also says that back then he could walk into a saloon anywhere in these parts and the barkeep would point his finger at the door and say, “Minthorn, out of here!” Several town sheriffs hereabouts automatically deported him with bus fare whenever they spotted him.

Now he is known as the Mayor of Tutuilla Flats, but then he was called the Chief of the Drunk Indian Nation. To know the rez is to know alcohol and worse. While it's hard to say, there is evil here. But Douglas has been clean for over 20 years when, after a structured family intervention involving the Tribal judge, his children gladly took him back.

Because I have a sense of workable public policy, for several years since I moved in Douglas and I have been trying to do something about the Confederated Tribes' Board of Trustees and its denial about the cost of alcoholism and drugs here on the rez. Oddly, no one will touch it. We live next to the Presbyterian Indian church. Everyone, each one who dies — and Indians die too young all the time — goes to the grave with alcoholism and/or drugs somewhere in their family's recent history of poverty, low life expectancy, all kinds of trouble, and a decline of traditional culture.

The tribal denial about the value today of their original Cayuse horse culture, once America's most powerful, is similar and connected. There's a real need here for modern warriors, those who will put community before self.

Because there is a great need for healing in Indian America. Here, the wounds go back to 1855 and the Treaty fixing upon these Americans an isolation and resulting powerlessness, which rarely gets addressed. That's about 150 years of unanswered sorrow, anger, and denial. Some say that hereabouts the only real Indian is one who abuses someone or something.

Nevertheless, I was honored to work intensively for several years with Douglas and his cousin Chief Bill Burke and the tribal A&D staff and a couple committees on research and policy development leading up to today's progressive program — in which both Bill and Douglas are now active volunteers.

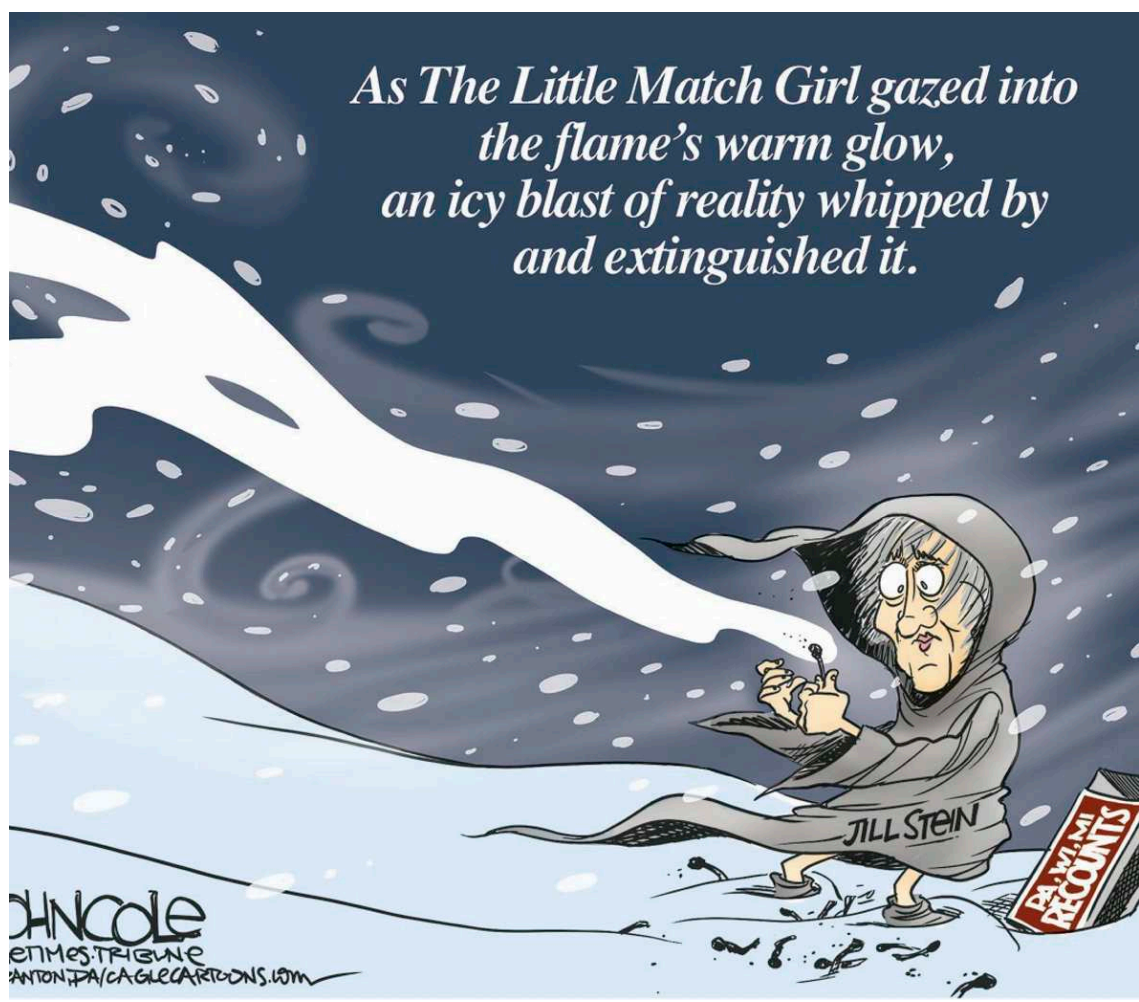
Yet, it's Indian humor and irony that keeps the rez afloat in a sea of problems resulting from that forced creation of reservations. You know, Indians are generally good folks who are also truly funny and laugh much. And it can be wicked. I have had it aimed at me a time or two. If you don't give it back, you are in trouble.

For example, of a morning I will walk into the kitchen for coffee and Douglas might bark, “LBM [Little Big Man], go back to your hole and change your shorts!”

John, I better respond, “Did you sleep well? Did you take your meds? Should I adjust your drip?”

And then it was off to the tribal Long House for Bill Burke's annual community Thanksgiving dinner where an abundance of laughter was dished up.

Tom Hebert is a writer and public policy consultant living on the Umatilla Indian Reservation outside Pendleton.



As The Little Match Girl gazed into the flame's warm glow, an icy blast of reality whipped by and extinguished it.

Looking back on how Oregon voted

The (Corvallis) Gazette-Times

As we continue to sort through the results from the Nov. 8 election, some curious trends have emerged.

You know already that about 2.02 million ballots were returned in Oregon during the election, marking the first time that more than 2 million ballots have been returned in the state.

But that number comes with an asterisk: The overall turnout percentage in Oregon fell below 80 percent for the first time in at least four presidential elections.

Although the numbers aren't official yet, the Oregon Secretary of State's office is reporting that state turnout was 78.72 percent. Turnout in the last three presidential elections before this — in 2012, 2008 and 2004 — was above 80 percent. (The turnout in 2004 was a remarkable 86.48 percent, and the number has been slipping downward since then.)

To be fair, Oregon's voter turnout traditionally ranks among the best in the nation, and this year was no different. In part, that's because the state makes it

incredibly easy to register to vote (as it should be), and the state's vote-by-mail process is easy to use and mercifully free of the problems that have plagued the voting process in other states.

Oregon turnout also likely gets a boost from the fact that the statewide ballot typically includes hot issues above and beyond the presidential race: This year's ballot, for example, included the controversial Measure 97 tax issue.

A closer look at some of the state registration data might offer a clue or two to what pushed state turnout below 80 percent in this year's election.

This was the first general election in which the Oregon electorate included voters who had been registered in the state's “motor-voter” program, which has been in place only since the start of the year. This program, in essence, automatically registers people to vote when they get or renew a driver's license.

It's been an open question since the program started whether the voters it's added to the rolls would have much of an impact on the election results.

That question remains open, but now we know this much: About 230,000 voters registered through the program. The Secretary of State's office says 97,184 of them returned a ballot in November, for a turnout of about 42.73 percent.

That number, however, also comes with an asterisk: Motor voters who affiliated with a political party were almost twice as likely to return a ballot as their nonaffiliated counterparts. It remains to enterprising political scientists to chart out what this all means for the state's politics, but our hunch is that the motor voter program generally would appear to give a slight edge to Democrats, if only because Oregon has more registered Democrats than Republicans.

The relatively low rate at which motor voters returned ballots is one of the factors that tended to depress the Oregon turnout this November. These unaffiliated motor voters in Oregon have the potential to change the course of the state's politics — if only a candidate or issue can figure out how to connect with them.