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OUR VIEW



Winter a time for good Samaritans

Some days weather makes for nice small talk. Whether it's hot, cold, rainy, windy or just perfect, you can always strike up a conversation with an acquaintance or even a total stranger. It's a shared experience.

Other days, especially days with snow, ice and sub-freezing temperatures, weather must be a shared experience. We must look out for one another, and especially the most vulnerable among us.

It starts on the roads, one of the most dangerous places to be when winter hits hardest. We always worry about the "other guy" on the roads, but remember you are the other guy to other motorists — take it slow, signal early and, as always, get rid of all distractions while you're behind the wheel.

And when that "other guy" loses control, or gets lost, or simply gets stuck, it's time to put on your good Samaritan boots and help out. We've seen many examples of this in the past week, and know the kindness of strangers is alive and well in Eastern

Oregon.

That's the obvious, but we implore our readers to consider the less obvious as well. Check in on your elderly or otherwise susceptible neighbors, maybe with a plate of cookies or thermos of hot chocolate. It can be hard to ask for help, but if a friendly face shows up to ask how you're doing you might be willing to express a personal need, if only for groceries, a shoveled sidewalk or an extra blanket.

The power failure in Pendleton on Sunday night was a reminder of how reliant we are on electricity, as many people were without heat.

It's a good thing warming shelters in Hermiston and Pendleton have settled into new locations and are able to accept homeless people with nowhere else to go. They quite literally are the difference between life and death in weeks like this, and rely on community support to stay open.

Buckle in, because this week is going to get nasty, and remember those around you.

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

Poaching and justice

La Grande Observer, Dec. 5

Those of us who live in our great corner of Oregon owe a big thanks to the Oregon State Police in the wake of the arrest of three individuals charged with poaching in mid-November.

Most readers are probably aware that in November two bull elk were shot and killed under cover of the night. The carcasses — left to rot — were discovered off a county road near Elgin.

Three people are charged in the poaching case — including one who is apparently not in the state — and police credited public assistance as a key reason the investigation was successful.

The help from the public was so key because many poaching cases go unpunished. Finding the culprits of such crimes — and that is what poaching is, a crime — is an often long and difficult process. The public helped make the first step toward justice in the case much easier than it could have been.

And while we can collectively pat ourselves on the back for helping, OSP should get a great deal of credit as well. Sure, finding these types of criminals is the job of the state's biggest agency, but that doesn't take anything away from the fact their tireless effort to find the culprits in this crime deserves praise.

What is troubling is that such wasteful, reckless and senseless acts continue. Poaching bull elk is a crime and, really, an attack, if you will, on one of Eastern Oregon's great institutions. Hunting is part of our culture. This means abiding by the rules should be a hallmark of how we, as a collective group, conduct ourselves. Fact is, the elk, deer and other game that inhabit our area are a resource that must be safeguarded.

When someone senselessly poaches an animal, it is really a crime against every law-abiding citizen who hunts in Eastern Oregon. It sends the message that all the time and effort — not to mention money put down for items such as tags — really doesn't mean much.

Those of us who are law abiding and follow game rules and regulations understand that our ability to do what we enjoy depends on ensuring that resource remains viable. That is why there are rules and laws.

Perhaps in the grand scheme of things two dead bull elk may not seem like a big deal. But for a rural area and for thousands of hunters who follow the rules to enjoy one of the great benefits of our area, two elk killed by poachers is a big deal.

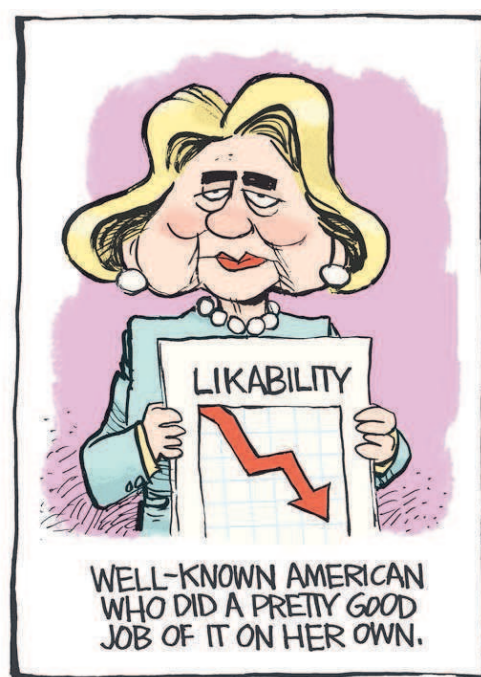
Hats off to the OSP for running this case down on the road to justice.

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 managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



MYSTERIOUS RUSSIAN WHO ALLEGEDLY TRIED TO KEEP HILLARY FROM WINNING THE ELECTION.



WELL-KNOWN AMERICAN WHO DID A PRETTY GOOD JOB OF IT ON HER OWN.

OTHER VIEWS

The dangers of echo chambers on campus

After Donald Trump's election, some universities echoed with primal howls. Faculty members canceled classes for weeping, terrified students who asked: How could this possibly be happening?

I share apprehensions about President-elect Trump, but I also fear the reaction was evidence of how insular universities have become. When students inhabit liberal bubbles, they're not learning much about their own country. To be fully educated, students should encounter not only Plato, but also Republicans.

We liberals are adept at pointing out the hypocrisies of Trump, but we should also address our own hypocrisy in terrain we govern, such as most universities: Too often, we embrace diversity of all kinds except for ideological. Repeated studies have found that about 10 percent of professors in the social sciences or the humanities are Republicans.

We champion tolerance, except for conservatives and evangelical Christians. We want to be inclusive of people who don't look like us — so long as they think like us.

I fear that liberal outrage at Trump's presidency will exacerbate the problem of liberal echo chambers, by creating a more hostile environment for conservatives and evangelicals. Already, the lack of ideological diversity on campuses is a disservice to the students and to liberalism itself, with liberalism collapsing on some campuses into self-parody.

At Oberlin College soon after the election, students erupted in protests after a local bakery was accused of racial profiling of a black student in a shoplifting case. The student senate endorsed a boycott of the bakery, and demonstrators carried signs calling the owner a racist.

But allegations of a pattern of racist behavior were undermined by police records showing the overwhelming share of people detained for shoplifting at the bakery were white. This may actually have been a case of liberal hysteria.

Some of you are saying that it's OK to be intolerant of intolerance, to discriminate against bigots who acquiesce in Trump's record of racism and misogyny. By all means, stand up to the bigots. But do we really want to caricature half of Americans, some of whom voted for President Barack Obama twice, as racist bigots? Maybe if we knew more Trump voters we'd be less inclined to stereotype them.

Whatever our politics, inhabiting a bubble makes us more shrill. Cass Sunstein, a Harvard professor, conducted a fascinating study of how groupthink shapes federal judges when they are randomly assigned to three-judge panels.

When liberal judges happened to be temporarily put on a panel with other liberals, they usually swung leftward. Conversely, conservative judges usually moved rightward when randomly grouped with other conservatives.

It's the judicial equivalent of a mob mentality. And if this happens to judges, imagine what happens to you and me.



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

Sunstein, a liberal and a Democrat who worked in the Obama administration, concluded that the best judicial decisions arose from divided panels, where judges had to confront counterarguments.

Yet universities are often the equivalent of three-judge liberal panels, and the traditional Democratic dominance has greatly increased since the mid-1990s — apparently because of a combination of discrimination and self-selection.

Half of academics in some fields said in a survey that they would discriminate in hiring decisions against an evangelical.

The weakest argument against intellectual diversity is that conservatives or evangelicals have nothing to add to the conversation. "The idea that conservative ideas are dumb is so preposterous that you have to live in an echo chamber to think of it," Sunstein told me.

When students inhabit liberal bubbles, they're not learning much about their own country.

Of course, we shouldn't empower racists and misogynists on campuses. But whatever some liberals think, "conservative" and "bigot" are not synonyms.

One of America's most eminent scientists is Francis Collins, an evangelical Christian who is director of the National Institutes of Health. Few scholars had as

much impact on modern thought as Gary Becker, the conservative University of Chicago economist. Condoleezza Rice, a secretary of state for George W. Bush, would add value to any campus.

I'm not arguing for affirmative action for conservatives — partly because conservative academics say they don't want preferences. But I do think we can try harder to recruit job applicants who represent diverse views, to bring conservative speakers to campuses and to avoid a hostile work environment for conservatives and evangelicals.

We're seeing an uptick in hate crimes in society tied to Trump's rise, and the last thing we need on campuses is reciprocal illiberalism, this time led by liberals.

As individuals, we can also follow smart people on social media whom we disagree with. In my latest email newsletter, I suggest some conservatives to follow.

I fear the damage a Trump administration will do, from health care to foreign policy. But this election also underscores that we were out of touch with much of America, and we will fight back more effectively if we are less isolated.

When universities are echo chambers, they become conservative punch lines, and liberal hand-wringing may be one reason Trump's popularity has jumped since his election.

It's ineffably sad that today "that's academic" often means "that's irrelevant." One step to correcting that is for us liberals to embrace the diversity we supposedly champion.

Nicholas Kristof has been a columnist for The New York Times since 2001. He grew up on a farm in Yamhill, Oregon, graduated from Harvard, studied law at Oxford University as a Rhodes Scholar, and then studied Arabic in Cairo.

