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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the gray wolf, the newest Oregon success story. For many, the canine hasn't been able to shake the big, bad wolf reputation.

That's especially true among ranchers wary of re-introducing an apex predator into the same hills and valleys where their sheep and cattle graze.

But the re-introduction has taken hold, the population has grown and now the wolf plan has entered its next phase. For both wolves and humans, that's a good thing.

It's good news for wolves because it means they're thriving in their old stomping grounds. Protections for the animals to do what they do — stalk around the woods, prey on deer and elk

and reproduce — have kept them from being slaughtered on sight and again extinguished from Oregon.

It's good news for people because we're gaining confidence in our ability to co-exist. While some would still argue for total removal and others would like to see permanent protections, those of us in the middle are pleased that as the population grows, so does our ability to manage it.

As the phases progress, wolves will soon be just another species that calls Oregon home — nothing to be scared of.

A kick in the pants, then, to government's coyote exterminators who accidentally killed a wild wolf last month in Wallowa County.

A cyanide-laced bait was left out on private land to kill coyotes, but was gobbled up by a wolf instead. Officials say they are investigating the matter, but have revealed little more than that.

With all the work Oregon is doing to make its woods a healthier place — and all the dollars taxpayers are throwing in to help — we should not have government-funded workers dropping government-funded poison across our hillsides. That practice should cease.

The accidental killing is additionally a bad look for an organization that has been working hard to protect wolves and prosecute poachers. The next person who offs one has a pretty good response to a government that may try to charge them with a crime.

A tip of the hat to the return of official meetings between the city of Pendleton and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for the first time in two years.

Elected leaders of the neighboring entities sat down Wednesday at the airport in Pendleton to discuss both big picture goals and specific issues. From housing (surprise, both have shortages) to industrial development to the future of historical artifacts with tribal significance owned by the city, they found plenty to talk about.

And we expect they will find much more, should meetings continue.

We're not big on meetings just for the sake of meeting. People are busy, and asking representatives to take time out of their busy

commitments can be counterproductive. But working together can benefit both of these boards if they use their time to raise and then solve problems, share best practices and combine forces when it makes sense. A tip to both for starting down that road.

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.

LETTERS POLICY

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Direct food aid undercuts local African farmers

Many thanks for the "Face of Starvation" editorial in the March 7 issue of the *East Oregonian* — the subject is of great importance.

There is, however, one very significant and well known downside to the proposed solution, that being if there is a great deal of food aid given directly there is a concurrent diminution of production by local farmers. If the wheat or maize or any other foodstuff is being given away free, why would anyone buy what is locally produced? And the result is that local farmers and local production are seriously damaged.

There is straightforward solution to this situation.

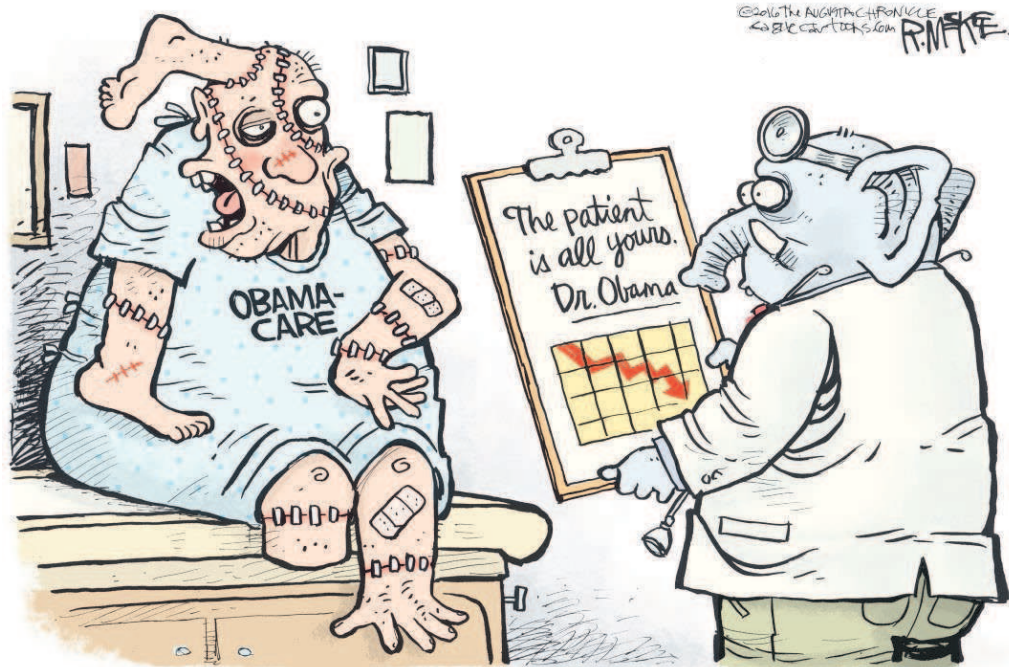
First, buy what is locally and/or regionally produced and immediately available. This has the advantage of being what people are accustomed to and what they know how to use. Obviously this is not sufficient or there would be no malnutrition or starvation, but the point is to do everything possible to support and stimulate local production of foodstuffs. If local farmers are driven out of business by the food aid, in the long term — even if provided with best intentions — direct food aid can have some destructive effects. The basic concept is to

buy locally first and then use direct food aid as supplementary. The editorial mentions that this is being done to a limited extent, and that is good.

Second, the United States Agency for International Development is the arm or our government tasked with this sort of work, both food aid and development of improved agricultural production, and it is imperative that USAID be thoroughly funded and supported to do the development work necessary for improved, increased, and stabilized food production. The goal of self-reliance for African nations in particular is a critical issue and if attention is not paid to this issue the same recurring problem of food shortage will continue to be repeated and to grow worse.

Third, the basic issues of stabilized food security are going to be a long term, ongoing concern. According to UN population increase projections, by the end of this century the population of Africa will be increased by 3.7 times and the African continent will be the home of 39 percent of the world's population. With lack of food right now in 2017, what will that future hold in regard to food security? It seems very dim.

In my view, our greatest responsibility and our primary good is to provide enlightened development work that stimulates increase in local food production and leads to stabilized



OTHER VIEWS

Connecting Trump's dots to Russia

I enjoyed the show "House of Cards" but always felt that it went a bit too far, that its plot wasn't plausible. After seven weeks of President Donald Trump, I owe "House of Cards" an apology. Nothing seems impossible any more.

That includes the most towering suspicion of all: that Trump's team colluded in some way with Russia to interfere with the U.S. election. This is the central issue that we must remain focused on.

There are a lot of dots here, and the challenge is how to connect them. Be careful: Democrats should avoid descending into the kind of conspiratorial mindset that led some Republicans to assume Hillary Clinton was a criminal about to be indicted, or to conjure sex slaves belonging to her in a Washington pizza restaurant. Coincidences happen, and I think there has been too much focus on Attorney General Jeff Sessions, not enough on Paul Manafort, the former Trump campaign manager. Here are 10 crucial dots:

1. Trump and his aides have repeatedly and falsely denied ties to Russia. *USA Today* counted at least 20 denials. In fact, we now know that there were contacts by at least a half-dozen people in the Trump circle with senior Russian officials.

2. There's no obvious reason for all these contacts. When Vice President Mike Pence was asked on Jan. 15 if there had been contacts between the Trump campaign and Kremlin officials, he answered: "Of course not. Why would there be?" We don't know either, Mr. Vice President.

3. There were unexplained communications between a Trump Organization computer server and Russia's Alfa Bank, which has ties to President Vladimir Putin. These included 2,700 "look-up" messages to initiate communications, and some investigators found all this deeply suspicious. Others thought there might be an innocent explanation, such as spam. We still don't know.

4. "Repeated" and "constant" contacts between Trump officials and Russian intelligence, as reported by *The New York Times* and CNN, are underscored by intercepts of communications involving Russian officials, and by the British and Dutch governments monitoring meetings in Europe between Russians and members of the Trump team.

5. A well-regarded Russia expert formerly with MI6, Christopher Steele, produced a now-famous dossier alleging that Russia made compromising videos of Trump in 2013, and that members of the Trump team colluded with the Kremlin to interfere with the U.S. election.

The dossier quoted a Russian as saying that a deal had been arranged "with the full knowledge and support of Trump" and that in exchange for Russian help, "the Trump team agreed to sideline Russian intervention in Ukraine as a campaign issue." James Clapper, the U.S. former national intelligence director,

says he saw no evidence of such collusion but favors an investigation to get to the bottom of it.

6. Trump has expressed a bewilderingly benign view of Russia and appointed officials also friendly to Moscow. He did not make an issue of Russia's invasion of Ukraine during the campaign.

7. A Trump associate, Roger Stone, appeared to have had advance knowledge of Russia's disclosures through WikiLeaks of Hillary Clinton campaign emails. As early as August, two months before her campaign chairman John Podesta's emails were released, Stone tweeted: "Trust me, it will soon [be] Podesta's time in the barrel." In October, six days before a dump of Clinton campaign emails, Stone tweeted: "HillaryClinton is done. #WikiLeaks."

8. Sessions seems a red herring, in that he wasn't a secret conduit to the Kremlin.

The more interesting dot is Manafort, whom investigators have focused on because of his long-standing ties to Russia.

9. "We see a lot of money pouring in from Russia," Donald Trump Jr. was quoted as saying in 2008. Russia may have gained leverage over President Trump through loans to his organization or other

business dealings. The way to ease these suspicions would be to examine Trump's tax returns: Any government investigation that doesn't obtain Trump's tax returns simply isn't a thorough investigation.

10. Even many Republicans acknowledge, as President George W. Bush put it, "We all need answers." The House and Senate Intelligence Committees mostly operate behind closed doors, while we yearn for transparency. What is desperately needed is an independent inquiry modeled on the 9/11 Commission.

When friends press me about what I think happened, I tell them that my best guess is that there wasn't a clear-cut quid pro quo between Trump and Putin to cooperate in stealing the election, but rather something more ambiguous and less transactional — partly because Putin intended to wound Clinton and didn't imagine that Trump could actually win. Yet I wouldn't be surprised if the Trump team engaged in secret contacts and surreptitious messages, and had advance knowledge of Russia's efforts to attack the American political process. And that would be a momentous scandal.

One reason I'm increasingly suspicious is Trump's furious denunciations of the press and of Barack Obama, to the point that he sometimes seems unhinged. Journalists have learned that when a leader goes berserk and unleashes tirades and threats at investigators, that's when you're getting close.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof, a columnist for The New York Times since 2001, writes op-ed columns that appear twice a week. He won the Pulitzer Prize two times, in 1990 and 2006.

There are a lot of dots here, and the challenge is how to connect them.



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

YOUR VIEWS

food security. "Stability" is the magic word of development work and a most worthy goal not only for food but additionally for work and safety and peace.

Many thanks to you for airing the issue and giving us all a reason to consider these very important issues that affect so many lives. Surely, as Americans of good will, we can and must continue to be involved in the creation of solutions — long-term, stabilizing solutions.

Andrew A. Clark
Pendleton/Kenya

ACA has expanded health programs in Eastern Oregon

The Affordable Care Act clearly needs fixing, but there are parts of it that benefit us here in Eastern Oregon. The ACA greatly expanded health insurance to low income people, and in Oregon much of that money comes to our part of the state. Because more of our people now have insurance, Eastern Oregon can support more health services. In Umatilla and Morrow counties alone, the Medicaid expansion has produced benefits such as more health care providers and health-related programs.

Currently our public mental health programs are the best they have been in years. Expanded health care in our

community also helps our local economy because providers and their families spend their money here. If these services are important to you, let your representatives in Congress know about it.

Terry Templeman
Pendleton

School safety will improve with Hermiston school bond

I'm grateful for the schools and services we have here in Hermiston. One of the many reasons we moved here 20 years ago was because of the schools, teachers and community.

Over the years our community has risen to the needs of the children. Safety and security at Rocky Heights and Highland Hills elementary schools are two current needs identified by an independent safety audit conducted by our own Hermiston Police Department. The audit found the design, age, and lack of life-safety alert systems at these schools are inadequate to meet the current safety standards.

For these reasons, among a host of other reasons, I hope the school bond is passed. When it comes to safety, can we be too prepared?

Jeff Snell
Hermiston