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OUR VIEW

Wolf plan hearing should be in northeast Oregon

The Oregon Fish and Wildlife Commission has scheduled two public hearings on an updated wolf management plan.

Many ranchers in wolf country would counter that state wildlife officials have in reality updated their plan to manage cattle producers. And it seems they're doing it a bit far from where wolves and people most often interact.

Oregon's wolf population has grown steadily in the decade since the first wolves migrated from Idaho into Northeast Oregon.

In 2011 there were only 23. The state visually documented 112 wolves at the end of 2016, according to ODFW's annual report. At the end of 2015, Oregon had 110 confirmed wolves.

ODFW officials have described Oregon's wolf population growth as a biological success story, and the state commission took wolves off the state endangered species list in 2015.

They remain protected under the federal Endangered Species Act in areas west of U.S. highways 395, 78 and 95. That's most of the state.

We have generally agreed that wolves have a place in Oregon's wild country. Oregon is a big place, with room for native wildlife and domestic livestock.

But we've been equally adamant that ranchers should have reasonable leeway to take action against wolves when non-lethal actions aimed at keeping them away from livestock don't work. That's not the case in the current plan, and less so in the proposed update.

Instead, ODFW has proposed raising the bar.

The commission plans hearings on the updated plan at its next two regularly scheduled meetings. The first is April 21 in Klamath Falls, an area of the state that only recently started to report some wolf activity. The second will be May 19 in Portland, where there have been no wolves for decades.

The commission has received quite a few letters from Portlanders who write passionately about their desire that wolves go completely unmolested in the state. They argue that the wolves, as property of the state, belong just as much to them as Eastern Oregon ranchers.

That's true. But while the Willamette River belongs to all Oregonians, discussions on its restoration are never held in Enterprise.

It seems to us that commissioners would want to make it easier to hear from people for whom wolves are not an abstract attraction. We can assure them that there is no lack of diversity of opinion on wolves, even in the far reaches of Wallowa County, where livestock depredation is common.

Paraphrasing a member of Oregon's wolf management team, the ultimate success of wolves in Oregon requires their widespread acceptance in those areas where they most come in contact with human activity. For now, that's ranching country.

That's where the wolves will be managed. Perhaps that's where the plan should get a hearing.

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.

Culture corner

"A Crow Looked at Me" is a musical work of devastating depth and sadness created by Northwest musician Phil Elverum as he copes with the death of his wife and tries to move on raising their 18-month-old daughter.

Recorded under the name Mount Eerie, Elverum reflects in specific detail on the last days of Genevieve Castrée's life and the days and months that followed her death. In the liner notes, each song is dated by how many days after her death it was written, from the incredibly raw 11 days of the opening track "Real Death" to the more sober "Crow," penned four months after.

Death touches us all, and Elverum doesn't take much time to describe the emotions. Instead, he chronicles the day-to-day over sparse instrumentation. Finding a package at the front door ordered by his wife before she died. Getting

rid of her clothes. Realizing it hasn't rained since she died as forest fires burn the forest near his Anacortes, Washington home. Emptying a bathroom garbage can filled with the last trash left of her life.

It also reckons with the idea that art is no match for mourning. When death comes, song and poetry are no help. When explaining loss to a child, clichés do no good. Whether creating the album helped Elverum is

unclear, and he establishes early that he is not looking to learn a lesson.

It's not a record anyone would set out to make, and truly absorbing all 41 minutes takes emotional endurance. The reward is an honest exploration of loss crafted by an artist with the ability to present a heartbreaking family story free of manipulation.

- Daniel Wattenburger is managing editor of the East Oregonian.



STAR TRIBUNE



OTHER VIEWS

Food, sex and silence

James Beard was large. His obituaries told you so. "Portly" was how The Associated Press put it. The Los Angeles Times said that he was nearly 300 pounds at his apogee, though The New York Times clarified that a diet at one point "divested him of some of his heft."



FRANK BRUNI
Comment

Nature divested him of his hair. He was bald, as all of those obituaries prominently noted.

He was also gay. Good luck finding a mention of that.

Oh, there were winks. "A lifelong bachelor." "An Oregon-bred bachelor." Oregon-bred? Makes him sound like a dairy cow. Or maybe a mushroom.

But there was nothing in those remembrances about his 30-year relationship — at first romantic, then less so — with Gino Cofacci, who was provided for in Beard's will. Nothing about Beard's expulsion from Reed College in the 1920s because of his involvements with other men. This newspaper's obituary simply called him a "college dropout."

It was published in 1985. The world has changed. And that progress is reflected in a new documentary, "James Beard: America's First Foodie," that PBS will air next month as part of its American Masters series.

Like Beard's obituaries, it shows how he towered over the country's culinary landscape, pioneering the kind of food television that Julia Child would later do and doling out advice in newspaper columns much like Craig Claiborne's. He towers still. One of the great honors that a chef can receive is an invitation to cook at Beard House in Greenwich Village, previously his home and now a shrine. The annual Academy Awards of the restaurant world are called the Beards.

The documentary also goes where the obituaries didn't, describing him as an exuberantly gay man. Anyone who knew him well knew him that way, but during his lifetime, there was typically a difference between what was privately understood and what was publicly said. A cloud hovered over gay people. And if we're honest about much of America and about many Americans today, that cloud hasn't entirely dispersed.

The discrepancy between accounts of Beard up until his death and posthumous assessments like "America's First Foodie" remind me of how often oppression is an act of omission rather than commission: not letting people give voice and vent to much of what moves them and to all of what defines them; not recognizing and honoring that ourselves.

I'm struck, too, by the nature of lies. They're not just statements. They're silences that fail to confront bad as well as beautiful things, often with grievous consequences.

We once turned a blind eye to child sexual abuse and rape, so we believed they rarely happened and weren't adequately on guard. We once didn't acknowledge the loving, nurturing relationships between two men or two women, so we deemed them freakish and weren't sufficiently accepting. Our denial and ignorance kept bigotry in business.

One of the many arguments — no, imperatives — for recognizing same-sex marriage is that it's the only telling of the full truth. Otherwise we erase whole chunks

of people's existences, and that's as cruel and mistaken "as it would be to leave out someone's life work or what country they lived in," said Nathaniel Frank, the author of "Awakening," a history of the marriage-equality movement that will be published this month.

The erasing of Beard's sexual orientation was first brought to my attention by Ted Allen, an alumnus of the TV show "Queer Eye for the Straight Guy" and the current host of "Chopped," on the Food Network. In 2012, when he won two Beard Awards, he looked into Beard's background, and was surprised and enraged that the gay part wasn't accurately told in real time.

Allen thought about all the LGBT kids back then who were denied a role model. He thought about how the editing of Beard's life shortchanged a minority group's major contribution to U.S. gastronomy. Claiborne, too, was in this minority, as writer John Birdsall pointed out in a 2014 essay for the magazine Lucky Peach that was titled "America, Your Food Is So Gay."

But Allen said that he thought in particular about all "the well-known people whose homosexuality was buried along with them," and how that distorted and continues to distort our sense of the contributions that LGBT Americans have made.

Some obituaries of Claiborne in 2000 — though not The Times' — left out his gayness. Some obituaries of writer Susan Sontag in 2004 failed to mention her romantic relationships with women, including photographer Annie Liebovitz. Some obituaries of trailblazing astronaut Sally Ride in 2012 made scant, ambiguous reference to the fact that she was lesbian.

The list goes on. The reasons vary. Maybe a person's survivors gave signals to obituary writers that they didn't want this subject broached. Maybe those writers were in the dark. Maybe they couldn't ascertain by deadline what the deceased person would have wanted, and they erred on the side of saying nothing, a decision born of courtesy but steeped in prejudice.

All of this adds up to an incomplete picture of our society and who shaped it. It adds up to a lie.

When Beard died at the age of 81, he was working on a memoir in which he planned to make his sexual orientation abundantly clear to his fans. He tape-recorded reminiscences, used in 1990's "The James Beard Celebration Cookbook," that included the statement: "By the time I was 7, I knew that I was gay. I think it's time to talk about that now."

Beard wasn't especially troubled by his sexual orientation, either, according to Birdsall, who is finishing a comprehensive new biography of him. But the mores of his day — the mores for so long — purged that part of many people's lives from the official record.

He received tributes galore. They took ample stock of his dimensions. But they didn't come close to rounding him out.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times since 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995.

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. 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. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Coalition the real owner of the Rivoli

I write to respond to the recent letter to the editor regarding the Rivoli Theater project. The letter was incorrect in a variety of ways.

Perhaps the most important error was the passage referring to the "owner" of the Rivoli Theater and "his" efforts to raise funds for the project. Who is this owner?

Well, in fact, the Rivoli Theater is not owned by an individual; rather, the property is owned by the Rivoli Restoration Coalition, an Oregon 501(c)3 non profit corporation.

The Rivoli Coalition Mission is "To restore the historic Rivoli Theater while transforming it

into a regional, contemporary performing arts and cultural center, to create a point of destination which contributes to the economic viability of the area."

The coalition is grateful for the community's ongoing support for the project.

Andrew Picken, board president Rivoli Coalition, Pendleton

Support Hermiston school bond

I support the Hermiston School District's bond to build/replace three elementary schools, add to the high school and update Sandstone Middle School.

I was a member of the School District's facility master planning

committee and later a member of the citizen review committee. We spent months and months reviewing reports, data, and opinions from experts before making recommendations to the Hermiston School Board.

Therefore, I fully understand the immediate need of our school district and how this bond levy will positively affect our community.

There has been much said by others about why this levy is needed: the district's large student enrollment growth, fixing student safety issues, and need to repair/update aging infrastructure. Hermiston also gets a large positive economic impact, not only during the time of building but a lasting benefit from use of these facilities

through activities in the future. Any combination of these would likely justify what is being requested but when all are combined, from my perspective, the decision to support this bond levy becomes easy.

My support is not only based on the above, but what I learned from my 90-year-old mother in 2008 when the Hermiston School District last requested funding. I asked if she was supportive and with no hesitation, she said yes. She went on to say others had supported and provided facilities used by her kids and now it was her turn to support those who had children in school.

She obviously was on a fixed income but clearly understood her obligation as well as the value of

having adequate facilities to support education. While all of my children have long since graduated from the Hermiston High School, I like and agree with what my mother said.

Let's be honest, a \$100-plus million bond is a lot of money, but understand if we do not approve this bond next month, there still will be an immediate need that continues to grow. Either way we will have to provide these schools. Will it be today or tomorrow? The longer we put this off the more expensive these projects become and the further behind we get in providing the facilities needed for Oregon's second-fastest-growing school district.

Phil Hamm
Hermiston