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OUR VIEW

The sighting that shook the world

Today's front page story describes one of this newspaper's claims to fame, and surely one of our most indelible impacts on popular culture.

Without that reporting 70 years ago, the UFO you imagine when you close your eyes would probably look pretty different than it does. So too would "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "E.T." and countless other movies and television shows, comics and cartoons.

Admit it: Even though we have no blueprints or specs of what an alien spacecraft looks like, we all likely imagine it saucer-shaped and gray, moving horizontally, fast as can be and just too darn fast for our eyes and brains to make sense of it. Popular culture based much of that description on Kenneth Arnold's sightings near Mt. Rainier in 1947.

Arnold landed in Pendleton and told an *East Oregonian* reporter about what he saw, the Associated Press picked it up and lent it credibility and the immortal phrase "flying saucer." Arnold's sighting helped spur supposed sightings across the Northwest and the world, and the idea of unidentifiable flying objects hasn't left the human imagination since.

You can believe Arnold witnessed something out of this world, or you can believe it was some trick of the eye or secret government experiment. But there is no dancing

around the fact that the explosion of UFO culture helped prove that humans love to believe in mystery, that we relish it and build on it, and that we love to debate it and make art about it and tell stories about it.

Think back on 1947. It was much closer to the Wright Brothers' first flight than to today's era of unmanned drones.

Sure, Da Vinci had sketched flying machines in his journal hundreds of years prior, but human beings had only recently figured out how to take to the sky safely, and very few people had actually done it. It was still mysterious and strange and a marvel beyond the comprehension of many.

Add to that another World War, which had also taught us about other kinds of marvels — planes that bomb and shoot. It introduced us to weapons so terrible and destructive that they too were hard to comprehend, though they proved there was technology out there so powerful and so complex that nearly anything was possible.

It was in this moment of technological advancement and aviation experimentation that Kenneth Arnold touched down in Pendleton and touched off the modern UFO craze. The sky was a tinderbox of mystery and hope and fear — and we were all looking up. We were flying, by god. Which begs the question, was someone else flying, too?

Arnold's sighting wasn't that far removed from the Wright Brothers — many still considered flight a marvel beyond comprehension.

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

Don't rag on Oregon's excellent state flag

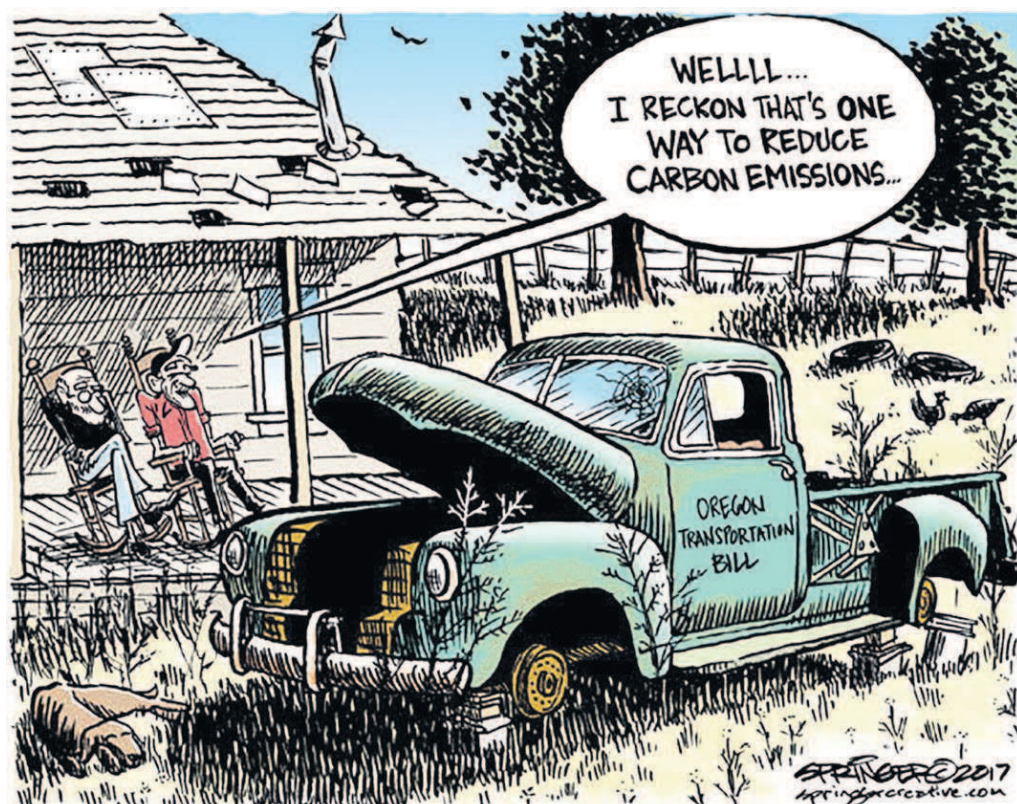
Your editorial of June 14 "A flag worth celebrating" about the U.S. flag was very good, except for its dig at the state of Oregon flag.

I love the Oregon flag. If you cannot see the symbols on the Oregon flag, get a bigger flag. Each symbol has a rich history. Even the Oregon Blue Book does

a very poor job of explaining them. Being distinctive on two sides is great. Costing more than other flags is a "so what."

When I was a young lieutenant in Vietnam, I wrote to Governor Tom McCall and asked for an Oregon flag. I received a flag along with a letter from him and a letter from Secretary of State Clay Myers. I still have all three.

Rodney Thompson
Pendleton



OTHER VIEWS

Why fathers leave their children

Millions of poor children and teenagers grow up without their biological father, and often when you ask them about it, you hear a litany of male barbarism. You hear teens describe how their dad used to beat up their mom, how an absent father had five kids with different women and abandoned them all.

The children's tales often reinforce the standard image we have of the deadbeat dad — the selfish cad who spreads his seed and leaves generations of wreckage in his wake.

Yet when you ask absent fathers themselves, you get a different picture. You meet guys who desperately did not want to leave their children, who swear they have tried to be with them, who may feel unworthy of fatherhood but who don't want to be the missing dad their own father was.

In truth, when fathers abandon their own children, it's not a momentary decision; it's a long, tragic process. A number of researchers have tried to understand how father abandonment happens, most importantly Kathryn Edin and Timothy J. Nelson, who moved to Philadelphia and Camden, New Jersey, immersed themselves in the neighborhoods there and produced an amazing account, "Doing the Best I Can."

Pregnancy is rarely planned among the populations they studied. Typically the parents are in a semirelationship that is somewhere between a one-night stand and an actual boyfriend-girlfriend bond. The couple use contraception at the beginning, but when it becomes understood they are "together," they stop. They don't really talk about pregnancy, but they sort of make it possible.

When the men learn that their partner is pregnant, they don't panic, or lament all the freedom they are going to miss. On the contrary, three-quarters of the men in Edin and Nelson's research were joyous at the news. The men are less likely than the women to want to end the pregnancy with an abortion.

These guys have often had a lot of negativity in their lives. The child is a chance to turn things around and live a disciplined life. The child is a chance to have a respected role, to find love and purpose.

The men at this stage are filled with earnest resolve. They begin to take the relationship more seriously and commit to the kid during infancy. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, black single fathers are more involved in their kids' lives than white single fathers at this stage.

The key weakness is not the father's bond to the child; it's the parents' bond with each other. They usually went into this without much love or sense of commitment. The



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

fathers often retain a traditional and idealistic "Leave It to Beaver" view of marriage. They dream of the perfect soul mate. They know this woman isn't it, so they are still looking.

Buried in the rigors of motherhood, the women, meanwhile, take a very practical view of what they need in a man: Will this guy provide the financial stability I need, and if not, can I trade up to someone who will?

The father begins to perceive the mother as bossy, just another authority figure to be skirted. Run-ins with drugs, the law and other women begin to make him look even more disreputable in her eyes.

By the time the child is 1, half these couples have split up, and many of the rest will part ways soon after. Suddenly there's a new guy living in the house, a man who resents the old one. The father redefines his role. He no longer aims to be the provider and caregiver, just the occasional "best friend" who can drop by and provide a little love. This is a role he has a shot at fulfilling, but it destroys parental responsibility.

He believes in fatherhood and tries it again with other women, with the same high hopes, but he's really only taking care of the child he happens to be living with at any given moment. The rest are abandoned.

The good news, especially from the Edin-Nelson research, is that the so-called deadbeat dads want to succeed as fathers. Their goals and values point them in the right direction, but they're stuck in a formless romantic anarchy. They need help finding the practical bridges to help them get where they want to go.

People are rising up to provide that help. In Chicago, the poet Harold Green has been championing fatherhood.

Mayor Rahm Emanuel, a vocal leader in this cause, had Green recite his poem "Something to Live For" at his inaugural in 2015, and this Sunday the two of them will be appearing together to honor role model fathers on the South Side.

It would be great if society could rally around the six or seven key bridges on the path to fatherhood. For example, find someone you love before you have intercourse. Or, make sure you want to spend years with this partner before you get off the pill. Or, create a couple's budget to make sure you can afford this.

The stable two-parent family is what we want. A few economic support programs and a confident social script could make an enormous difference in getting us there.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in 2003.

It's not a momentary decision; it's a long tragic process.

OTHER VIEWS

Airbus arrival signals growth at Pendleton test range

On June 10, Senator Ron Wyden and A³ by Airbus executive Herve Hilaire cut a ceremonial ribbon to open a new hangar at the Eastern Oregon Regional Airport.

The result is a strong new relationship between the world's second-largest commercial aircraft manufacturer and the airport's Unmanned Aerial Systems Range.

This means an expansion of range operations that could last for years and comes with significant new revenues to help strengthen our local economy.

In spite of this, my conversations with several well-informed citizens lead me to believe that many of them don't yet understand the positive benefits of the transformation that has been taking place at Pendleton's airport for more than a year. Pendleton is becoming well known among the manufacturers and testers of UAS (drones) as a place that is easy to work with, knowledgeable about flight operations, flexible in scheduling, and safety conscious.

Consider the growth in revenue over just the past couple of years. In fiscal year 2015-2016 the UAS test range only generated a few thousand dollars. We have contracts for the coming fiscal year of 2017-2018 for



JOHN TURNER
Comment

nearly a half-million dollars and the actual amount of revenue will probably exceed that.

This does not include the benefits from having flight test teams from around the world coming to Pendleton year round, staying for weeks and often months, dining, shopping, and staying in our hotels.

Because of this new source of income, our airport is finally operating with a profit, after years of running in the red. We will soon be at a point where the test range revenues will allow us to start modernizing our airport's infrastructure and begin paying back its debt to the city.

For example, using state grant dollars, we are in the process of transforming a recently purchased empty building into a state-of-the-art mission control and innovation center with office spaces for UAS test teams to use.

All of the airport hangars are rented and Boutique Airlines is booking hundreds of enplanements every month. Boutique even brought back the rental car business.

Keep an eye on our airport and its UAS test range. It is going to be fun to watch operations and the corresponding dollars grow in the coming years.

John Turner is the mayor of Pendleton.



Senator Ron Wyden, center, helped open the new hangar at the Pendleton UAS range with Pendleton Mayor John Turner, far right, and other dignitaries on June 10. The hangar will be used to test an experimental Airbus drone.

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