

# EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

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## OUR VIEW

# What to read while waiting on eclipse

By this point — one week from the big day — you are likely at the boiling point for excitement for the Aug. 21 total solar eclipse. Or maybe you've evaded the bug somehow and don't get what the fuss is about.

We'll take one more opportunity to enlighten and excite you before the lights go out next week. And who better to stoke the eclipse fire than some wonderful writers?

First try Annie Dillard's seminal 1982 essay in *The Atlantic*, which the magazine republished last week due to popular demand.

Dillard is the Pulitzer-prize winning author of "Pilgrim at Tinker Creek" as well as a plethora of fiction, nonfiction and poetry. But the essay she penned after witnessing a total eclipse from Yakima, Wash., more than 30 years ago remains one of her most beloved works.

And she has advice for those of you who have decided to stay home and not travel to the zone of totality: "Seeing a partial eclipse bears the same relation to seeing a total eclipse as kissing a man does to marrying him." Find the story by searching "Annie Dillard + eclipse."

For something more of-the-moment, try Helen Macdonald's

superb essay in the August 6 *New York Times* special eclipse section. Macdonald is the author of the tremendous memoir "H is For Hawk," in which she describes going a bit mad tending to her trained, winged killing machine.

But Macdonald, a Brit, is also a dedicated eclipse chaser.

"The sight of a hole above us that was once the sun reduced me to tears; I fell to my knees," she wrote of the first of three eclipses she has seen. "It felt like the end of the world, and when the sun reappeared, the world seemed reborn."

If short essays aren't enough to whet your appetite, try the book "American Eclipse: A Nation's Epic Race to Catch the Shadow of the Moon and Win the Glory of the World."

Author David Baron tells the tale of the eclipse of 1878, which also arced across the American West, and helped move science, understanding and the women's movement forward into a new age. A young Thomas Edison is one of three protagonists, and 19th century Oregon gets plenty of mentions.

— *Tim Trainor is opinion page editor of the East Oregonian. He will watch the eclipse outside of Baker City.*

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

### Welcome, Mr. Perry — take a look around

Tri-City Herald

To Department of Energy Secretary Rick Perry: Welcome to the Tri-Cities — we are pleased you could visit.

From the itinerary we received, you will start today by touring our community gem — the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory — and end your day touring what's considered to be the nation's most toxic quagmire — the Hanford nuclear site.

Perhaps during the tour they and key Tri-City leaders can help convince you of the critical work being done at PNNL and the Hanford site, and how imperative it is that DOE funding is not slashed — as was recommended by President Donald Trump's administration.

Last May, the president's team proposed cutting \$3.5 billion from DOE's budget for the next fiscal year. A month later, we understand you defended those cuts at a Congressional hearing.

Since then, both the U.S. House and the U.S. Senate have produced budgets much more favorable to PNNL and the cleanup mission at Hanford.

The House approved a package of appropriation bills before members left for the summer recess. It added \$54 million to the Trump administration's proposal, which is helpful, but still leaves Hanford spending next year about \$60 million below the current spending of about \$2.4 billion.

Proposed cuts to PNNL and Hanford cleanup were significantly restored by the Senate Appropriations Committee.

The Senate version adds \$196 million to the budget the Trump administration had proposed for the nuclear reservation, and would increase it to close to \$2.5 billion for the next fiscal year, if money for security and cybersecurity is included — which we believe it should be.

The Senate budget also helps protect key research programs at PNNL. If those numbers hold, the money would save hundreds of jobs the community thought might be lost.

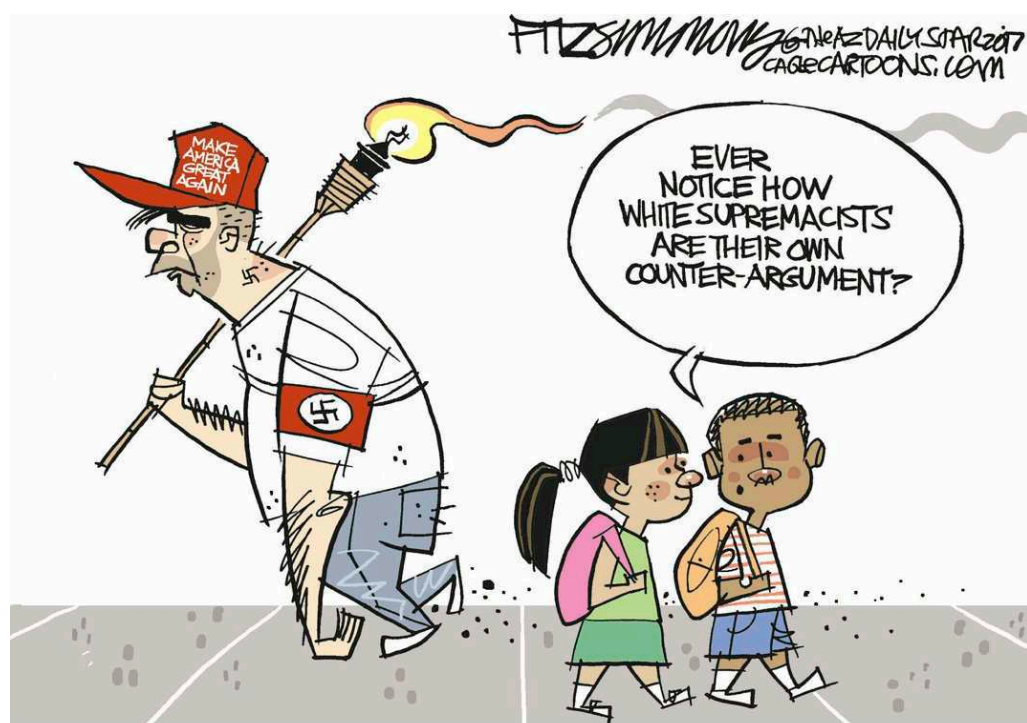
The scare we had last May when a tunnel used to enclose radioactive materials left from the Cold War unexpectedly collapsed in central Hanford was a shocking reminder that we live very close to potential disaster.

Fortunately, no workers were hurt or are known to be contaminated, and efforts have been made to contain the breached tunnel.

In the wake of the panic that ensued from the tunnel collapse, we thought the Trump administration would see the crucial need to keep waste cleanup funding as level as possible. Needless to say, we were extremely disappointed when the opposite turned out to be true.

The Hanford site is dangerous. Washington state was there for the entire country when it produced the plutonium used during World War II. Now, we need the federal government's help to clean up the toxic waste left behind.

Mr. Perry, we are pleased you decided to visit. We need your support, which by the way, you pledged during your confirmation hearing.



## OTHER VIEWS

# Heaven with blisters

ON THE PACIFIC CREST TRAIL, NORTHWEST OF TRUCKEE, Calif. — This will make me sound grouchy and misanthropic, but I sometimes wonder if what makes America great isn't so much its people as its trees and mountains.

In contrast to many advanced countries, we have a vast and spectacular publicly owned wilderness, mostly free and available to all. In an age of inequality, the affluent have gated neighborhoods, private schools, backup generators and greater influence on elected officials. But our most awe-inspiring wild places have remained largely a public good to be shared by all, a bastion of equality.

My family and I have been backpacking on the Pacific Crest Trail through the Sierras north of Donner Pass, enjoying magnificent splendor that no billionaire is allowed to fence off. We all have equal access, at no charge: If you can hold your own against mosquitoes and bears, the spot is yours for the night.

Yet these public lands are at risk today. More on that in a moment, but first let me tell you about the Kristofs' grand vacation. As we do each summer, we ran away from home to the mountains. We escaped the tether of email and cellphones, the tyranny of the inbox, and fled with everything we needed on our backs.

We're yanked back to a simple life. We sleep under the stars rather than in a tent; if it rains we pull out a tarp to keep dry. Dawn wakes us up, we roll up our sleeping bags and plastic ground sheet, wolf down trail mix or granola bars and start down the path. We fill our water bottles at passing streams, stop for rest and meals wherever we fancy, chat as we walk, and when dusk comes we look for a flat spot, kick aside any rocks and branches and unroll our ground sheet and sleeping bags again.

Granted, we also moan about blisters. And marauding mosquitoes. And the heat — or, sometimes, the cold. We whine a lot, but that builds family solidarity.

This is also a spiritual experience: It's a chance to share a reverence for the ethereal scenery of America's wild places. The wilderness is nature's cathedral, and it's a thrill to worship here.

The march of civilization has been about distancing ourselves from the raw power of nature. At home, we move the thermostat up or down by a degree, and we absorb the idea that we are lords of the universe. On the trail, we are either sweating or freezing, and it always feels as if the path is mainly uphill. Nature mocks us, usefully reminding us who's boss.

If your kids are suffering from what writer Richard Louv calls nature-deficit disorder, I recommend that you all run away from home together. Flee to the mountains. It's heaven with blisters.

There are often charges to enter much-



NICHOLAS KRISTOF  
Comment

trafficked spots like Yellowstone or Yosemite, but the wilderness is mostly free to hikers.

This is our collective patrimony, a tribute to the wisdom of Theodore Roosevelt, Gifford Pinchot and other visionaries who preserved our wild places for the future. Thank God for them. Otherwise, these lands might have been carved up and sold off as ranches for the rich.

Because of the foresight of past generations, the federal government owns 1 million square miles, an area three times the size of California, Oregon and Washington combined. Much of this is unspoiled, our inheritance and our shared playground.

This is a chance to share a reverence for the ethereal scenery of America's wild places. The wilderness is nature's cathedral.

Yet today, President Donald Trump sees this heritage as an opportunity for development. More aggressively than past administrations, Trump is systematically handing over the United States' public lands for private exploitation in ways that will scar the land forever.

The Trump administration lifted a moratorium on new coal mining leases on public land, it is drawing up plans to reduce wilderness

protected as national monuments and it is rapidly opening up additional public lands to coal mining and oil and gas drilling.

A second challenge comes from our paralysis in the face of climate change, compounded by the Trump administration, and the risks this creates to our wilderness. A warmer climate has led to droughts and to the 20-year spread of the mountain pine beetle, and a result is the death of vast swaths of Western forests. Last year, 62 million trees died in California alone, the Forest Service says, and in Oregon and Washington I've watched forests turn brown and sickly. In parts of Wyoming and Colorado, the pine beetle has killed almost all the mature lodgepole pine trees, and it's arguably even worse in British Columbia.

The third risk is from gradual degradation and chronic underfunding. Even before Trump took office, wilderness trails and campgrounds were in embarrassing disrepair. How is it that we could afford to construct these trails 80 years ago in the Great Depression but cannot manage even to maintain them today?

When public lands are lost — or mined in ways that scar the landscape — something has been lost forever on our watch. A public good has been privatized, and our descendants have been robbed.

To promote an understanding of what is being lost, I encourage everyone to run away from home as well. Flee to the mountains, deserts and babbling brooks to get in touch with wild spaces, to find perspective and humility. The wilderness nourishes our souls, if we let it.

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. He won the Pulitzer Prize two times, in 1990 and 2006.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Not a breakfast of champions

My mother is 96 now but still likes to do some of the grocery shopping. Of course, she is like many women who consider shopping recreation instead of drudgery and punishment that many men consider it to be.

So while I do some of the shopping, I am done in a jiffy and have to find a way to take up the time so mother can meander through the aisles at Safeway as she searches for coupon items and things she really doesn't need.

I happened upon the cereal aisle and decided to take a closer look. There were about 32 different cereals on the top shelf alone, and there were four shelves of cereals going from one end of the store to the next. Mother wanted a breakfast cereal that "wasn't too sweet," so I began searching for a non-sugary cereal. To my shock, I could only find about four (this was boxed cereals not the hot variety). This would be about four out of approximately 120 different kinds offered by Safeway.

Some of the more interesting varieties included such nutritious and delicious wonders as Cinnamon Scary Apple

Clones, Chocolate Peanut Butter Corn Pops, Cinnamon Marshmallow Scooby Doo, and Double Chocolate Cookie Crisp. An interesting fact: The Environmental Working Group discovered that cereals with cartoon characters had the highest sugar content.

Is this really what we are feeding our children now? Can parents really justify calling these sugary products "breakfast?" Dr. Marion Nestle, professor of nutrition at New York University, states, "Kids should not be eating sugar for breakfast. They should be eating real food." One of the worst on the shelf is Kellogg's Honey Smacks, which is about 56 percent sugar. But there are literally dozens that are close behind. Five of the worst cereals for kids are from Kelloggs.

According to most nutritionists, kids need fuel in the mornings to get a good start. Sugary cereals spike the sugar in the blood, but once it is digested the blood sugar quickly drops again. This tells the brain more sugar is needed, thus making kids hungry again quickly, which then leads to other forms of sugar like candy or pop. Sugar that doesn't break down also eventually turns to fat. That is a good part of the reason our

population is so grossly (and unhealthily) overweight now.

I used to think the drug companies were the most corrupt in the nation, but I am beginning to think it might be the cereal companies now.

David Burns  
Pendleton

### Could Chamber manage EOTEC?

With the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce having to move from the Hermiston Conference Center by the end of 2017, why can't the chamber be the manager of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center? The chamber is very well managed by Debbie Pedro and her crew.

When business leaders or other groups want to hold an event in Hermiston, who do they call? The Hermiston Chamber of Commerce, to see what is available. The chamber has a very strong board of directors, comprised of citizens and business leaders from the community.

I realize that an intergovernmental agreement between the city and county would have to be negotiated for the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce to be the general manager of EOTEC. I do not know if the chamber would be willing to manage EOTEC. I do know if the Hermiston Chamber of Commerce were to be the general manager of EOTEC, it would be a win for both city and county.

Glenn Youngman  
Hermiston

## 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.