

**EAST OREGONIAN**  
Founded October 16, 1875

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**OUR VIEW**

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

**A tip of the hat to the Stanfield School District for seizing a once-in-a-generation opportunity Monday to connect students to the universe in an engaging way.**

The solar eclipse landed on the first day of school for Stanfield, which is usually a day where calm and order are emphasized to build productive habits for the year that follows. The schools decided to throw all that out the window and instead theme a day's worth of lessons around the eclipse.



There will be plenty of time for bringing order to the classroom, but experiencing the eclipse together with new classmates and teachers will be a memory that lasts all year and beyond.

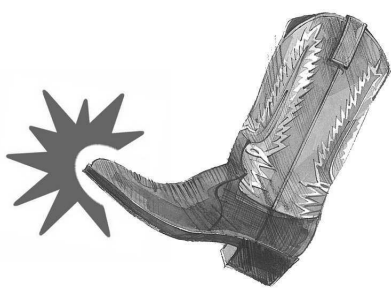
**A kick in the pants to the Stanfield School District for its mishandling of a very real tax problem for its district.**

Somehow between the time a \$5.4 million school bond was passed by voters in 1999 and the audits of the last few years, the levy began failing to bring in enough money to cover the amount due by 2019, when the bond will expire.

It's unclear, according to Superintendent Shelley Liscom, where the problem originated, though she did offer that it's an inherited problem from an unnamed previous administration.

Now that problem has come to a head, and Stanfield taxpayers will feel it in their pocketbooks. While they will essentially be making up missed tax payments on behalf of the district, it won't make shelling out double what they've been paying toward the district any easier. That's nearly \$150 extra for the average homeowner in Stanfield.

Liscom's note to taxpayers, a half sheet of paper with no return address, official letterhead, signature or financial details, could easily be mistaken as either a scam or invite to the PTA barbecue. The letter was an unacceptable and unprofessional way to own up to a serious mistake — no matter who's at fault — and provide information to correct it.



**A tip of the hat to the Oregon Education Association for naming John Larson as its new president.**

Larson has plenty of Eastern Oregon connections — he worked most recently in the Hermiston School District and before that in Morrow County. And he knows the issues out here better than educators who have spent their careers in urban districts.



It's also important that Larson is committed to making the OEA a welcome place for members of all political persuasions. We know plenty of conservative teachers and school staff who are deeply committed to public education, and it's important that they have a voice in the union.

Making the OEA a bipartisan group that reflects the diversity of their membership can make it a more powerful organization. And we hope a strong OEA means a strong Oregon education system.

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**

## Removing Montana's Confederate fountain was the right choice

Bozeman (Mont.) Daily Chronicle

Montanans should support Helena city officials' decision to remove a Civil War memorial in a city park there. The monument, a granite fountain donated in 1916 by the United Daughters of the Confederacy and placed in the city's Hill Park, was taken down last week on orders from the Helena City Commission.

Let's not oversimplify this. It was not an easy decision. The national controversy of removing Confederate Civil War monuments is fraught with passion. Advocates have been vocal in their calls for the removals. Critics decry this as an effort to rewrite history.

But the latter arguments ignore reality.

Literally miles of shelves in the libraries of our communities and universities are filled with tomes about the events leading up to, during and following the Civil War. Civil War histories continue to be hot sellers. Curious and thinking Americans continue to pore over those books to try to understand this most wrenching era of American history. Scholars have devoted entire careers to this war. And so they

should. The Civil War should never and will never be forgotten.

But the monument issue is wholly separate.

We erect statues and monuments to remember and to honor historic figures who acted selflessly and bravely for the greater good. Monuments erected in memory of members of the Confederacy invoke legitimate outrage from those whose ancestors the Confederates fought to keep in slavery.

Some have argued the monuments have artistic value. But to maintain Confederate war memorials on aesthetic grounds reduces them to the status of mere ornaments and glosses over the fate of millions of black Americans who suffered unspeakable wrongs at the hands of their oppressors.

This is not to say these artifacts should be destroyed. They are relics of a different era and should be preserved. But they should be preserved in a museum setting where the curious can seek them out to learn from them. They should not be on display in public parks.

Around the nation, decisions about the fate of Confederate war memorials will be made on a local basis. Helena city commissioners did that for their community and our state. And they made the right decision.

**These relics should not be on display in public parks.**



**OTHER VIEWS**

## Watching the eclipse in Oregon

**S**ALEM — It was a lovely August morning here in Salem, with a warm sun blazing from a blue sky, when the world began to end.

Or that's what it felt like. Imperceptibly the sky darkened, and instead of growing hotter, the air grew cool. It was as if dusk began at 9:30 a.m.

Then, abruptly, in just a few minutes, a bit after 10 a.m., night spread across Salem, where I was watching the eclipse with my family. (I'm originally from Oregon.) Cars were obliged to use their headlights, and I had to pull out my headlamp. The throngs of eclipse-watchers on the state Capitol grounds cheered and roared with approval.

Eclipse-mania has shadowed Oregon for many days. Flights have been jammed full, and some cars are said to be renting for many hundreds of dollars a day. Shops ran out of eclipse sunglasses, and customers began lining up before 4:30 a.m. in front of a coffee shop that gave away eclipse glasses with coffee (later it recalled the glasses as ineffective!).

With many hotels full, farmers rented their fields to campers. As we drove to Salem on back roads, we saw people setting up lawn chairs hours early to get prime eclipse-watching sites on farmers' fields.

The "totality" of the eclipse lasted almost two minutes. Venus and Jupiter appeared in the "night" sky, and confused birds reportedly began to sing their evening songs. I understood why the ancient Chinese thought that an eclipse reflected dragons eating the sun. Or why the Arapaho Indians thought that darkness came because the sun and the moon were having sex in the sky.

"It was incredible!" said Zoey Castillo, a 9-year-old who was part of a group of Girl Scouts invited to watch the eclipse from the balcony of Gov. Kate Brown's office. "I'm so glad I got to watch it one time in my life!"

Miranda Trentzsch, also 9, said the Girl Scouts had been told that the next total solar eclipse in Salem would come in 2108 and added: "If I live to be 100, then my kids can watch the next solar eclipse with me!"

The greatest drama only lasted about five minutes — the sudden darkening, the disappearance of the sun behind the moon, and then its reappearance and what seemed the breaking of a new day — but the crowds of watchers oohed and aahed and roared their approval.

After viewing my first total solar eclipse, a couple of reflections:

First, the appeal of the solar eclipse is not just its rarity, but the way it puts us in our place. It disrupts the routines we rely on and reminds us of the vastness, beauty and rigor of the solar system.

One moment we are the masters of the universe. The next, the moon occludes the sun and we have to wait for light to reappear. Yet there's also a majesty in the way scientists predict eclipses with such precision. We may not be masters of the universe, but our



**NICHOLAS KRISTOF**  
Comment

astronomers are masterful at taking apart the celestial clocks.

Scientists know to the minute when eclipses will happen many years from now. This scientific precision diminishes the sense of superstitious fear and awe that accompanied such past events. In Shakespeare's "Macbeth," the murder of King Duncan seems to lead to a solar eclipse that turns the day dark and reflects the horror and evil of human misconduct; today, the punctual arrival of an eclipse

seems a tribute less to superstition than to mathematical exactitude.

Second, there was no controversy about the arrival of this eclipse; we all accepted the scientific consensus about its timing and swarmed to the best viewpoints. So why

is there such resistance to the similar scientific consensus about other foretold events — such as climate change?

My *Times* colleague Justin Gillis made this point in a notable article: We as a society clearly trust scientists in their predictions about eclipses but ignore the scientific warnings about the far more dire consequences of our cooking the planet. As Gillis notes, it's not as if such cautions are new, for scientists have been discussing global warming since 1897. Nor is the problem that the climate warnings have not been verified,

for global average temperatures have indeed risen almost 2 degrees Fahrenheit since then.

"The scientists told us that the Arctic would warm especially fast," Gillis noted. "They told us to expect heavier rainstorms. They told us heat waves would soar. They told us that the oceans would rise. All of those things have come to pass."

I chatted with Brown during the eclipse, and she dryly made the point: "In Oregon, we actually make public policy based on science and data." It would be nice if Congress did the same.

Obviously, there remains a range of climate possibilities ahead, partly because feedback loops are difficult to predict and uncertainty is inevitable. There's also a legitimate debate about the best policy responses to climate change — but our national response so far has been little more than a shrug, and that's difficult to reconcile with the scientific consensus about the risks ahead.

It's a new day in Salem again. We now understand that a solar eclipse isn't an apocalypse, and our confidence that the world isn't ending is a reminder of our increasing understanding of the vast universe around us.

As the light returns and the sky warms, I'll be celebrating not just the majesty of the heavens but also the wisdom of the scientists. I wish I had similar confidence in the rest of us to recognize other atmospheric risks that will be far more consequential for our planet.

*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.*

**"In Oregon, we actually make public policy based on science and data."**

— **Kate Brown**, Oregon governor

**YOUR VIEWS**

### REACH has good goals, but keep it way from city facilities

There has been a lot of speculation about the reasons for transferring the McCune Recreation Center to a private organization called REACH, ranging from social to religious to financial. I understand from meetings I've attended that the program is designed to help "at risk" children and young adults, an honorable program.

It sounds much like the YMCA, a program historically separate from city functions, and that's my point. It sounds to me like Pendleton's city manager is attempting to cross that boundary using a financial justification. He claims the terms of the proposed lease contract, no actual price made public, will require REACH to cover all maintenance and operation expenses of the building, relieving the city of the burden. With no visible means of funding, I just don't see this as a viable proposition even with the requested six months of free rent and probably a rental rate well below market value.

The city recently gave away a \$300,000 piece of rental property to a local nonprofit, and they have other empty and unused facilities available without dismantling the program Parks and Recreation have worked

so hard to implement. Let's put a stop to this now.

**Rick Rohde Pendleton**

### Sick to see Walden raise funds in Portland after health vote

Ain't that just peachy. Greg Walden and Paul Ryan, the primary architects of the effort to shaft millions of Americans out of health care coverage, are going to have a fundraiser. Guess where? Walden's district? Of course not. They will be doing their thing in the oft-despised city of Portland. Why, one would ask; is the local district money not good enough? Perhaps because there is not enough of it. So we go to the big money city to find our rich friends who are also interested in dis-advantaging the middle class Americans. After all, if we can't gut health insurance — Obamacare, if you remember — how can we shift billions of tax dollars to the super-wealthy?

Also note that the location of the fundraiser is a secret. We surely don't want a bunch of those dopey middle class Americans showing up to express their opinion in this matter. No, public wish be damned. We'll take care of our own and no one else.

**Fred Brown Dallas**