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OTHER VIEWS

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

Editor's note: Eight-year-old Virginia O'Hanlon wrote a letter to the editor of New York's Sun, and the quick response was printed as an unsigned editorial Sept. 21, 1897. The work of veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church has since become history's most reprinted newspaper editorial, appearing in part or whole in dozens of languages in books, movies, and other editorials, and on posters and stamps. It is reprinted here courtesy of the Newseum in Washington, D.C.

DEAR EDITOR: I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.' Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

**VIRGINIA O'HANLON,
115 WEST NINETY-FIFTH STREET**

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, **VIRGINIA,** there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus. It would be as dreary as if there were no **VIRGINIAS.** There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You may tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, **VIRGINIA,** in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! he lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.

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

B2H line will be obsolete by the time it is completed

BLM approval of the Boardman to Hemingway Transmission line is only one step among many before Idaho Power hopes to begin construction of the B2H line.

The company has permission to cross BLM land. That is less than half the length of the line. Next they face the U.S. Forest Service, Public Utility Commissions in both Idaho and Oregon, the Oregon Facilities Siting Council and, if all those bureaucratic hurdles are cleared, then likely lawsuits by the Oregon California Trail Association, the STOP B2H Coalition, agricultural interests and residential property owners. That is why completion of the B2H, initially planned in 2006, has continuously been pushed back and why many transmission line projects are fraught with cost overruns or canceled before construction ever begins.

The projected line will gouge a 250-foot-wide clear-cut across 300 miles of Eastern Oregon and southwest Idaho. BLM has made no provision to protect views from the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center. There will be 180-foot transmission towers marring the view, and the line will cross the ruts of the Oregon Trail in at least eight locations. This is Oregon's history. We can't see it sacrificed for an unnecessary transmission line.

More than 100 pages of substantial comments have already been filed with the Oregon PUC, highlighting Idaho Power's flawed risk analysis structure, and projections of energy needs biased towards greater consumption, even though across the nation and in Idaho energy consumption has decreased for the past ten years.

The Stop B2H Coalition maintains that Idaho Power has not adequately addressed the uncertainty of future coal, gas, and renewable energy prices and transmission costs. Data has been selected to support building a transmission line. That's how utilities make money — building things.

A guaranteed 6.7 percent profit based on the company's share of the

\$1.2 billion B2H will benefit Idaho Power shareholders at the expense of Oregon and Idaho ratepayers. The line will be obsolete before it's completed. It must be stopped before construction begins.

**Fuji Kreider
La Grande**

Federal one-party rule more dangerous than Oregon's

This is my response your editorial on one-party rule in Oregon government. Sounds like you have a strong opinion against a one-sided party for our state, but I would rather hear your opinion on our one-sided party that is in control of our government in Washington, DC.

Let's get real here. Sure it's not healthy on the state level, but it's absolutely dangerous on the national level.

Somehow the people have to take back common sense into our government instead of this one-sided insanity. Governor Kate Brown isn't perfect. That's an unreal expectation to have on anyone who runs for office. But I do expect them to be educated and work for the best solutions for the people. Mostly for those that need it most: children, disabled, elderly, vets, and the hopeless.

And it's up to us regular people to try and keep things on the right track. Our responsibility doesn't stop when we cast our vote. It continues with staying involved with what's happening.

Do your own research and come up with your own opinions and ideas. Read the news but think for yourself. Join a committee or a group that wants to work on solutions. Stay involved, speak your mind, talk, share, do whatever you are able to do, no matter how big or how small.

We are a country united by states, united by counties, united by towns, united by neighborhoods, united by people, united by you and me. Will we agree on everything? I hope not! But we can talk and when we agree to disagree we can respect that and go our separate ways. Maybe this is what "Oregon is for, its improbable moment."

**Bernie Sanderson
Hermiston**



OTHER VIEWS

Comeback words for 2018

You can call a slimehead by the better-known name of orange roughly, but it's still an ugly fish. The same goes for President Donald Trump's attempt to euphemize a first year in office that was historic for all the wrong reasons.

A regime that gave the world "alternative facts" has been working overtime at year's end to banish words it doesn't like or believe in, and to take credit for, or reframe, good things that it had very little to do with.

Our 71-year-old president is a slow learner and creature of bad habits. But he does seem to understand the authoritarian axiom that repetitive political language can make "lies sound truthful," as George Orwell wrote in the definitive essay on the subject.

Thus, "climate change" is forbidden for the American public servants working to protect the natural world from a changing climate. Law enforcement, under the special counsel Robert Mueller, is now "a coup," in the favored word of state-run television, Fox News. And a "so-called judge" is the president's term for a real federal authority with years of courtroom experience, not the monumentally ill-qualified people he's been stuffing into said positions.

But guess who's going to prevail when the White House word police go up against the real police? The so-called law. And what happens when a disgusted majority finally gets a chance to exercise the most powerful tool in a democracy? A so-called election.

That's why I'm optimistic, as we crawl out of the darkest days of the year, that the words Trump has tried to erase, or change the meaning of, will come roaring back to haunt him next year. You can ridicule "the resistance," as Trump did while urging people to vote for an alleged child predator this month. But that only makes it stronger.

You can suggest, as a Trump-inspired bureaucrat at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention did in a recent memo, that words such as "science-based" and "vulnerable" not be used. But it won't make the Trump enablers in Congress any less vulnerable when voters get their say in November.

As president, Trump employs the same charlatan's gibberish that served him well as the owner of a failed casino and a fraudulent "university." He says "terrific," "phenomenal" and "incredible" to describe a routine meeting, or someone he just met. His favorite words for those who cross him are "loser," "moron" and "lightweight." As he explained last year, "I know words — I have the best words."

Of late, Trump is down to a single best word to describe himself — "I."

He puts it in quotes, just like that. From a tweet in which he was trying to make down into up, on the loss he suffered with the



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

Alabama Senate race, Trump wrote: 'I also predicted "I" would win.' Oh, I, me, mine!

Now let's look at the words the public uses for him. When Americans were asked in a recent survey by Quinnipiac to describe, without prodding, the first word that comes to mind when thinking of Trump, the most common reply was "idiot." That was followed closely by "liar," "incompetent" and "moron." That last word, of course, is the one that Secretary of State Rex Tillerson uttered to describe his boss, and he employed an unprintable modifier in front of it.

"Liar," as applied to Trump, is something that can be quantifiably proven. A mere 4 percent of the president's public statements — 4 in 100! — have been rated true by PolitiFact. His first year may also be evidence enough to verify the description from Nicholas Soames, a British member of Parliament and a grandson of Winston Churchill. He called the president a "daft twerp."

The National Park Service, the good soldiers of our best places, has come in for more than its share of lashing from Trump's thought police. It started with the inauguration, when Trump was enraged by a Park Service photo comparing the size of the crowd at his swearing-in with that at President Barack Obama's.

Now Trump is trying to scrub "climate change" from ranger tweets about the threat of biological death in some of our most loved parks. This, after he took away 2 million acres of national monument designation — the largest rollback of federal land protection in the nation's history — and described it as a win for the people.

The words of the year, as put forth by various dictionaries, are reactions to Trump's awful effect on the culture. "Complicit" was the favored expression from dictionary.com, and also the perfume used in a terrific "Saturday Night Live" sendup of Ivanka Trump. "Youthquake" was Oxford Dictionaries' nominee. Merriam-Webster chose "feminism."

The popularity of these vigorous expressions would seem to disprove the great line (and title of a coming film) from the Republican strategist Rick Wilson: "Everything Trump touches dies." For in 2018, the youthquake, aided by the roused forces of feminism, are going to have a reckoning at the ballot box for those who are complicit with the tyranny of this president. All the best words, deployed.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for The New York Times, first as the Pacific Northwest correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.

OTHER VIEWS

Domestic violence too often a holiday tradition

The Valdosta (Georgia) Times

Sadly, during the holidays law enforcement typically responds to the most incidents of domestic violence.

This should be a joyous time, when people spend special days and create memories with family and friends.

In many cases, however, the memories will not be pleasant ones.

According to the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence:

- Every nine seconds, a woman is assaulted or beaten in the United States.
- An average of 20 people are physically abused by intimate partners every minute in the U.S.
- There are more than 10 million abuse victims across the U.S. annually.
- One in three women and one in four men have been physically abused by an intimate partner.
- One in seven women and one in 18 men have been stalked. Stalking causes targets to fear they or someone close to them will be harmed or killed.
- On a typical day, domestic-violence hotlines nationwide receive approximately 20,800 calls.

- The presence of a gun in a domestic violence situation increases the risk of homicide by 500 percent.
- Domestic violence accounts for 15 percent of all violent crime.
- Domestic violence is most common among women between the ages of 18-24.
- Nineteen percent of domestic violence involves a weapon.
- Domestic victimization is correlated with a higher rate of depression and suicidal behavior.
- Only 34 percent of people who are injured by intimate partners receive medical care for their injuries.

Domestic violence knows no socio-economic, racial or geographical boundaries. It exists among all social groups and in every community.

We encourage more public dialogue and more conversations among families, especially children, to make it clear that violence is not a solution to problems in relationships and is never the right way to express frustrations or anger.

Finally, we urge all of our readers to protect women and children and err on the side of caution by reporting suspected violence and abuse to law enforcement.