

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

The weak argument for newsprint tariffs

American newspapers are under attack — from a Pacific Northwest paper company and the U.S. government. It’s an odd and unfortunate situation that will drive up costs for newspapers, including this one, unless the government reverses itself. As you probably know, newspapers already face strong economic headwinds. Online shopping via big-name websites has hurt local merchants, whose advertising is the financial foundation of this newspaper and others. Meanwhile, many readers have shifted from print newspapers to online versions, although both versions have their attributes. Like other newspapers, it’s our job to adapt to changing readership habits and advertising opportunities. We have no desire to reduce our services and our local community coverage. But a paper mill in Longview,

Washington, is taking a different tack: It’s crying foul, claiming foreign competitors don’t play fairly. North Pacific Paper Co., which produces newsprint and other paper, claims the Canadian government subsidizes Canadian paper manufacturers, enabling them to “dump” — that is, sell — their products at below-market prices in the U.S. The U.S. Department of Commerce bought that argument and has imposed substantial newsprint tariffs on newsprint imported from Canada. The result has been a 20 to 30 percent jump in newsprint prices around the U.S. Newsprint already is the second-largest cost, next to personnel, for publishers. You can see that the price hike will have a big impact. It’s not only the economics that concern us. It’s mind-boggling that the Commerce Department accepted such



EO file photo
Newspapers come off the East Oregonian press.

a weak argument. Yes, paper mills have closed in Oregon and around the U.S. But Canadian competition is not the reason. The reality is that newsprint demand throughout North America has dropped 75 percent since 2000 as technology has replaced paper. Most folks understand that. The tariffs, or duties, are opposed

by the majority of U.S. newsprint manufacturers; by their trade association, the American Forest and Paper Association; and by newspapers and their trade groups, including the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. The opponents also include a wide range of other groups, such as the Heritage Foundation, religious publications, book companies and chambers of commerce. By boosting costs, these tariffs will harm local businesses, including commercial printers, bookstores, directory publishers and newspapers. Unlike Wall Street and the hedge fund that owns North Pacific Paper, most local businesses survive on thin operating margins. Forced to spend more in one area, they must trim elsewhere — and the local economy suffers. That’s why we’d like your help. We’d be most appreciative if you could take a moment to contact members of Oregon’s congressional delegation, asking them to overturn the “countervailing” and “antidumping” duties being imposed by the Commerce Department on Canadian newsprint and similar paper. Your voice matters. So does the voice of community newspapers across this great nation.



YOUR VIEWS

Community colleges support communities

April is National Community College Awareness Month, and on behalf of the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education, I would like to take a moment to remind the community of the many opportunities BMCC has to offer. Remember, “community” is BMCC’s middle name. That means the college makes every effort to tailor its programs and services to the unique needs of our Eastern Oregon community. That’s why you’ll find one of the best agriculture programs in the country at BMCC, which has the largest on-campus working farm in the state. It’s also why you’ll find a nine-month certificate program for data center technicians, of which 100 percent of graduates have landed jobs that pay more than \$50,000 per year to start right in our local area. And it’s why students from anywhere across our 18,000-square-mile district can earn an entire associate’s degree online or in one of our convenient regional centers. BMCC takes extreme pride in being an integral part of our Eastern Oregon community. The college has strong partnerships with local K-12 schools, industry partners, government entities and others to support the region’s efforts to thrive and grow. BMCC is honored to host a wide variety of speakers, presentations and cultural exhibits throughout the year, including the upcoming annual Arts and Culture Festival the week of April 16 in Pendleton and Hermiston. To top it all off, BMCC has very talented faculty and staff who work every day to put students first. Our students are the heart of BMCC, and are the reason the college exists. Our employees are committed to student success and to helping students achieve their goals. So stop by a BMCC location to see what Blue can do for you.

**Chris Brown, chair
BMCC Board of Education**

Vote for new Hermiston-area livestock district

In a few days, residents of Hat Rock and Salmon Point will receive ballots for a special election to change the designation of this area from “open range” to “livestock district.” With

the passage of this ballot, livestock would be contained within the livestock owner’s land and could no longer graze on other properties within the proposed district. With the development of housing in the Salmon Point area, open range is no longer a viable option. We are asking Hat Rock and Salmon Point residents to consider voting for this proposed change.

**Bob and Sue Keys
Hermiston**

Mann Lake is in peril

Your story about Mann Lake (March 31, Page 6C), and the cutthroat trout interested me as I recall catching brown trout there in the 1960s. Mann Lake today is in peril. It is all that is left of the once great Alvord Lake. The history of Mann Lake dates from about 1871 when Philip Mann founded Mann Lake Ranch and in 1875 formed a partnership with Captain Andrew Smith as Smith & Mann and the Bar G Iron. Around 1880, John Devine and W.B. Todhunter (Devine & Todhunter) had purchased the holdings of Abbott & Whiteside, which by then included Mann Lake, lying in the foothills on the east side of Steens Mountain. Devine’s Alvord Ranch lay east in the Steens Mountain foothills and west of Alvord Desert. In 1885, Devine & Todhunter were running four ranches: Island, Juniper, Mann Lake and White Horse. Apparently Smith & Mann became indebted to John Catlow, a gold miner who struck it rich and invested in cattle (he knew miners had to eat). There is evidence Catlow purchased the Smith & Mann Bar G Iron as Catlow’s ranch manager, David Shirk, is reported to have driven Smith & Mann cattle to Catlow’s ranch on Trout Creek before Catlow sold out. In the last years of the cattle baron’s success, Henry Miller’s Pacific Livestock Company owned them all; however, Roaring Springs Ranch (once headquarters for Peter French in the 1890s) today is a producing livestock industry and lies west of Mann Lake. According to Mike Hanley of Jordan Valley, who brings his restored stagecoach to the annual Round-Up Westward Ho! Parade, and other historians, Mann Lake is all that is left of the once great Alvord Lake.

**Dr. Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton**

OTHER VIEWS

Rhythms of tragedy

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — As the California sun burned away the haze on Easter Eve, a few hundred people gathered at yet another rally for Stephon Clark at the picturesque Cesar E. Chavez Plaza across from City Hall. Clark is the unarmed black man, a young father of two boys, who was shot to death two weeks ago in his grandmother’s backyard. The police were investigating a vandalism complaint when they encountered Clark, firing 20 shots at him. According to an independent autopsy commissioned by Clark’s family, eight of the bullets found their mark, six of them entering his body through his back. No weapon was found on Clark — only his cellphone. People showed up with placards and optimism for change and justice, but dogged by the shadow of other such shootings where legal accountability has been thwarted. I try to come to each of these moments with a fresh perspective, but I am undermined and betrayed by having covered too many of them. I can’t escape the reality that there is a ritualization of these traumas in which the shootings serve as catalysts, a lancing of the boil, in which decades of oppression, neglect, desperation and hopelessness finds a venting valve. And what starts as white-hot rage slowly cools into a dispassionate disappointment in a system that, it is revealed, is operating as designed. Each protest is undoubtedly about the case at hand, but collectively they are also about communities that feel abused and betrayed in a country that sees them as expendable. It is not a “local matter,” as the White House suggested last week, but a national disgrace. Efforts at policy reform — better training, utilization of body cameras (which the officers in Clark’s case suspiciously muted after shooting him), changes in rules of pursuit — can have an effect, but they can’t fully remedy this problem. These shootings keep happening and officers are rarely charged with crimes — and even more rarely convicted — because what they are doing is legal. That is the true American tragedy. In the 1989 case of Graham v. Connor, the Supreme Court ruled that the Fourth Amendment’s “objective reasonableness” standard overrode the amendment’s protections “against unreasonable searches and seizures” and even the Fifth Amendment’s admonition that no person shall “be deprived of life, liberty, or property, without due process of law.” By ruling that an officer’s use of force must only meet the “objectively reasonable” standard while allowing that “police officers are often forced to make split-second judgments — in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving — about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation,” the



**CHARLES
BLOW
Comment**

court itself laid the groundwork for the extrajudicial killings by police officers that we keep seeing. This ruling has become scripture for law enforcement. As Police Magazine wrote in 2014: “A generation of officers has been trained in the case’s practical meaning and has spent decades applying it to every use-of-force decision. So it has become part of law enforcement DNA, often unnoticed as it works in the background to determine our actions.” What is “objectively reasonable” is clearly a subjective determination, and when the assessment interacts with race, class, gender and the stereotypical perception of criminality and propensity for violence surrounding those classifications, the “objectively reasonable” standard can easily become corrupted and used more as a badge of permission and a shield against liability. In a utopian society where people did not discriminate — consciously or subconsciously — “objective reasonableness” would be a perfectly serviceable standard. But we don’t live in that world; we live in this one. We live in a world in which, as *The New York Times* reported in 2016 about a study issued by the Center for Policing Equality: “African-Americans are far more likely than whites and other groups to be the victims of use of force by the police, even when racial disparities in crime are taken into account.” The courts have given police officers broad discretion, but they simply aren’t applying that discretion equitably. Certain people, in certain communities, are viewed as more of a threat more quickly. This ignoring of the racial realities on the ground is not only an issue of police officers. The police are merely articulating and enforcing American ideals. Not only do police actions demonstrate inequity on the ground, but policymakers, and therefore policies, ignore that inequity, and by extension we the public who elect those policymakers ignore it. These shootings keep happening because, on some level, America finds them acceptable, finds them unfortunate but unavoidable. We regard the dead as collateral damage in a quest for safety and civility, not registering that the countenancing of such killings exposes in us a predisposition for racially skewed cruelty and brutality. Stephon Clark is not only a casualty of this particular shooting, but he is also a casualty of American moral paucity, race-hostile policies and corrosive jurisprudence. The sound of his body falling to the ground became just another beat in America’s rhythm of state-sanctioned tragedy. ■ Charles M. Blow has been a New York Times Op-Ed columnist since 2008.