

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants

Tip of the hat to all of the wonderful Fourth of July celebrations in Eastern Oregon — and the people who celebrated safely and (mostly) fire-free.

From Ione to Hermiston and Stanfield to Pendleton, Eastern Oregon puts on a really good show for America's day of independence. For most adults it includes fireworks, barbecues and Budweisers aplenty — and dips in pools and rivers to cool off from the heat. But because that heat always seems to coincide with the Fourth, our love of fireworks, beers and barbecues can be a dangerous combination. It requires us to keep our wits about us, burn only legal fireworks, and keep all kinds off of public lands.

We did pretty good this year.

There was a small fire on Pendleton's south hill Thursday night,

and another in Hermiston just after the big show off the Butte. No major property was damaged, and no major injuries were reported. All in all, we call that a success.

So we tip our hat to everyone who tipped their hat to our great country, and to those who did it in a safe and respectful manner.

A tip of the hat to Rylee Palmer, the Heppner fourth-grader who won a national first-place prize in the "Character Counts!" essay and drawing contest.

Palmer's win came with a \$250 prize, a schoolwide assembly and her work prominently displayed on Heppner's Main Street at Murray's Drug. While those are all wonderful accomplishments, we hope Rylee's essay, which centered around how to be a good citizen, has an even bigger



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Marina Jordan, left, and Christina Jones wear patriotic-themed outfits while watching the Fourth of July Parade on Wednesday in Pendleton.

impact. May it inspire her family, schoolmates and neighbors to pitch in to help the community. We'll let Rylee make her pitch:

"Being a good citizen doesn't just mean you help yourself, it also means you help your friends, family and community. Look at the world around you. You could probably look at the first thing you saw and help it. Helping

clean the environment is an easy way of being a good citizen. Helping the elderly is a the next step in becoming a good citizen.

But, the most important thing about being a good citizen is that you are a friend. In my picture, there are friends playing, people picking up trash and someone helping the elderly."

We tip our hat to her.

PROCLAIM LIBERTY!



YOUR VIEWS

Old Emigrant Road curls down Cabbage Hill

It was a pleasure to read the editorial by Chris Rush on Eastern Oregon. My bird-watching ladies and I go out every Wednesday to seek birds, wild flowers, and enjoy the fantastic scenery in Eastern Oregon. I was also happy to notice Chris included my hometown of Joseph in his travels. When I grew up there, it was a small ranching community but now is an art center. My mother was an artist so I believe she would approve of the "new Joseph."

I suppose it is the school teacher in me, but I can't help but make one correction to Chris's editorial. The area called Poverty Flat is more south of Deadman Pass. The old road that winds down the hill is "Old Emigrant Road." This road was known locally by many and still is often called Cabbage Hill.

I always thought it was because the road wound around the hill like a cabbage, but learned later it was named after the wonderful cabbage raised near the top of the hill. People in the valley often made the trip up the mountain in late summer to buy the excellent cabbage. Much of the crisp cabbage was sliced into crocks for sauerkraut for winter meals.

Eastern Oregon hasn't changed that much since the wagon trains trekked down the mountain. My hope is it will retain its wild beauty, with many birds and animals to enhance it, for future generations to enjoy.

June Whitten, Pendleton

An informal survey on Pendleton's problems

The following is based on conversations in my daily travels around our city — opinions expressed by local citizens.

Without citing any specific accomplishments, the Pendleton City Council met behind closed doors and awarded our city manager an eight percent salary increase based not on any notable accomplishments, but on parity with other city managers in our local area.

At the same city council meeting, the recreations director was introduced and gave a brief summary of her education and employment history prior to her appointment to our Parks and Recreation Dept. Her job performance as director has been superb. This is that same individual that was banished to an obscure office at one time when the city manager attempted to give away our Recreation Center.

This same city manager, acting as the Pendleton Development Commission executive director, approved a \$10,000 grant to a new restaurant for job creation, only to have it close shortly after receiving the check. Again, acting as the PDC director, he recommended a \$100,000 grant to a business for construction of a new facility whose owners admitted after construction was complete that they really didn't need the money. Again, as PDC director, he supported a \$10,000 demolition grant to replace an old turn-of-century house with a new duplex that itself did not fit the architectural style of the historic district, only to end up with a doublewide trailer. That same city manager continues to push for additional financial support of the Pendleton Heights contractor that left the city holding a bag of unpaid debt.

Were these missteps all the fault of the city manager? Perhaps not, but the ultimate responsibility rests with his position. This all sounds pretty negative and I've been criticized more than once for not mentioning the positive, so here goes. The financial turnarounds of the airport and the convention center could have been mentioned by the mayor and council, but weren't. That credit had already been given to those individual managers, so the council's decision to eliminate written comments on his evaluation really makes no sense.

The fact that the salary of the chief of police, a position that requires putting oneself in harm's way, would exceed the city manager's holds no water when you consider that the governor of Oregon's salary doesn't make it into the top 20 of state of Oregon employees. Parity? The survey says hogwash.

Rick Rohde, Pendleton

OTHER VIEWS

To hackers, we're Bambi in the woods

If you're worried about terrorism, here's a bigger threat to lose sleep over: an all-out cyberattack.

Suddenly, the electricity goes out at the office. Cellphone networks and the internet have also gone black, along with subways and trains.

The roads are jammed because traffic lights aren't working. Credit cards are now just worthless bits of metal. Gas stations can't pump gas.

Banks have lost records of depositors' accounts. Dam floodgates mysteriously open. Water and sewage treatment plants stop working.

People can't reach loved ones. Phone systems are down, so 911 is useless. Looters roam the streets. Food and water soon run out in the cities.

And that's just the first week. Security experts have nightmares like that. Countries like Russia and China have implanted malicious software in the American electrical grid, nuclear power plants and water systems to have the capacity to mount such attacks — and we have done the same to them. Indeed, the U.S. prepared an extensive plan, Nitro Zeus, to unplug Iran through cyberattacks, but in the end we never implemented it.

These are some of the issues explored in an important — and deeply sobering — new book about cyberwarfare, "The Perfect Weapon," by my *Times* colleague David Sanger. I've known Sanger since we joined our college newspaper together at the beginning of freshman year, and he has spent the decades since exploring the intersections of technology and international security — and trying to alert us to our vulnerabilities.

The risks aren't just of a cyber-Pearl Harbor but also of a full spectrum of attacks. The Russian hack of Democratic emails should have been a wake-up call. A senior FBI official told Sanger: "These DNC guys were like Bambi walking in the woods, surrounded by hunters. They had zero chance of surviving an attack. Zero."

Even after the attacks we didn't learn, and much of the U.S. is still like Bambi. The Russian hack of the U.S. elections in 2016 should have us on our toes for 2018, but the Trump administration has done little to prepare to fight off new hacking.

Sanger describes a Russian cyberattack on the Ukrainian electrical grid shortly before Christmas 2015. Operators of the grid were bewildered: Nothing they clicked on their computers had any effect, and cursors dashed across their screens to disconnect circuits and delete backup systems. Finally, the hackers disconnected the backup electrical system, so that the operators in the control room were literally in the dark.

Hackers are increasingly brazen. When Russian hackers infiltrated State



NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

Department and White House computer systems in 2014, National Security Agency specialists tried to uproot them — and the hackers fought back. "It was basically hand-to-hand combat in a network," Rick Ledgett, a senior NSA official, told Sanger.

Cyber is the "perfect weapon," in Sanger's formulation, because attackers typically get off scot-free.

If North Korea had responded to the Sony Pictures movie "The Interview" by blowing up cinemas, it might have faced a strong response. Instead, it hacked into Sony's system, destroyed computers and paralyzed the company. In both the Sony and Democratic Party attacks, the hackers enlisted the American news media to magnify the damage; we in the media were used, and we should reflect on that.

Later, North Korean hackers pilfered \$81 million from the Bangladesh Central Bank (they might have gotten away with almost \$1 billion, but someone misspelled "foundation"). For all this, North Korea faced no significant punishment.

Sanger writes that U.S. officials debated whether to punish Vladimir Putin for his hacks by exposing his links to oligarchs, or even by making some of his money disappear. But Barack Obama balked, fearful of what Putin might do next, and Donald Trump has also dithered.

Gen. Paul Nakasone, head of the U.S. Cyber Command, was asked in his confirmation hearings this year what our adversaries think will happen if they attack us in cyberspace. "They do not think much will happen," he replied. "They don't fear us."

As Sanger writes, "Deterrence is not working in the cyber realm." Why wouldn't Putin interfere in our 2018 midterms since we're both vulnerable and not serious about responding?

We need to establish a cost to cyberattacks and help establish norms for cyber — a Geneva Convention for hacking. The problem is that the U.S. also uses cyberwarfare (to destroy Iranian centrifuges and, apparently, North Korean missiles), and we don't want to constrain ourselves.

Meanwhile, we are becoming ever more vulnerable, partly because daily life is becoming more dependent on computers, and partly because cyberoffense is far ahead of cyberdefense. The U.S. started with a huge advantage, but Russia and China have nearly caught up, and Iran and North Korea don't seem far behind.

In the 1990s, we were too complacent about the risks of terrorism; it took the twin towers collapsing to galvanize us. In the world of cyberspace, we're still too complacent: Let's stop playing Bambi!

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. A columnist for *The New York Times* since 2001, he won the Pulitzer Prize in 1990 and 2006.

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