

When you're tired of hiding the mess



LINDSAY MURDOCK
FROM SUN UP TO SUN DOWN

Dear Kenmore,
Thank you for making some of the best made appliances around. I don't know what I'd do without the washing machine that greets almost all who enter our home, and I'm certain I can't put a price on your worth.

I used to wish that the washing machine was not the first thing a person would see when they walked into our home, but I quickly gave up on that. The mess that surrounds our life is no secret. No door can be closed so that others won't see. When you enter our home — that very first step in — you see everything. Well, maybe not everything, but close. You see dirt. You see mismatched tools, old spotlights, unmatched socks waiting to be found, boots, toy guns, laundry, and dust. You see a big part of our story.

There are catalogs where appliances shimmer and shine. I usually drool over those. In fact the Home Depot ad last week had a shiny LG washer that I almost taped up next to you. Almost, but didn't. You

are enough right now. You work well and you hold a giant part of our story. Oh, the stories you could tell of the things you've smelled, felt, and seen. You truly make us look good.

There are also catalogs that give a person ideas that what they have isn't quite good enough — filled with pictures of perfect rooms with just the right amount of stuff ... and somehow, that stuff is matching and spotless.

Life isn't spotless. Life isn't without storms and mud and a bunch of stink. Don't let the catalogs fool you. Don't think what someone else has is better or that it makes life clean. It doesn't. We all have stories of mud, and grime, and piles of stink, but we also have a story of a Savior that washes us as white as snow. The dirty brown and black is made fresh and new. He gets rid of all that you want to hide, and although it's still there as part of your story, it's been wiped clean.

In fact, our Savior is a lot like a washing machine — worth everything, but often used without recognition of what He

can really do. Used, wanted, desired, but often forgotten until He's the only thing left. It's grace pulled on like a boot. It's forgiveness covering us like a hood. It's mercy, it's hope, and it's love. And it's just like a washing machine. What was once unrecognizable and filled with filth is restored, made new, and brought back to life. Ask and you shall receive. Knock and the door shall be opened. Put your filth in, and let the stink be covered with a fresh, desirable God. Don't let the catalogs fool you that you don't need Him. You do. We all do.

The mud, the wet, the cold, the piles of mismatched life ... our stories. They are what He's given us. Our stories, our history, they are really HIS story.

Thank you Kenmore for being the first thing people see when they step into our story. Thank you for being the living proof that the things we often want to hide aren't worth hiding. Thank you for doing your job day in and day out. Steady and strong, you are just like Jesus. I'm never going to look at you in the same way ever again. My eyes will only see what you can do and the promise you hold. They won't worry about the stuff that isn't catalog worthy. They can't see God in the flesh, but they can see Him through you, and well ... I

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One insult after another

Our national legacy of a million square miles of publicly owned lands is what makes America unique, but under President Donald Trump that legacy is being sacrificed.

America's public lands exist today as a gift to us and to future generations largely owing to the foresight and determination of conservation leaders over the past century. During Theodore Roosevelt's presidency, from 1901-1909, he took the lead, establishing approximately 230 million acres of national forests and parks, wildlife reserves and 18 national monuments. Succeeding presidents have added to his accomplishment, yet under the Trump administration we are literally losing ground.

In just 18 months, in collaboration with congressional Republicans, Trump has launched a coordinated and calculated attack on the fundamental laws and policies that guide the sustainable, multiple-use management of these national assets. The cumulative effect of this could set back public-lands management for decades.

The onslaught began soon after the 2016 elections, when Republicans used the Congressional Review Act to rescind sensible Obama-era planning rules for public-land management. They included actions aimed at curbing the methane emissions that contribute to climate change, as well as efforts to protect waterways impacted by coal mining.

The Trump administration even sought to permit the sale of public lands. While this effort was rebuffed, the Republican Congress and the White House continued their assault by advancing measures to authorize oil and gas drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, shrink the Grand Staircase-Escalante and the Bears Ears national monuments and reopen their formerly protected lands for development, and authorize construction of a road across the Izembek National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska.

The administration has reversed decisions to prevent construction of the Pebble Mine in Alaska and to curb mining that threatens the Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota. What's more, the Republican members of the Montana and Oregon congressional delegation are advancing legislation to eliminate wilderness study areas in their states. And in Alaska, Republican Sen. Lisa Murkowski is working with the Forest Service to eliminate roadless areas on the Tongass National Forest.

The insults keep mounting: Under Trump's policy of "energy dominance," Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke has directed the Bureau of Land Management to expand and accelerate oil and gas leasing

on public lands in spite of historically low demand. As a result, many leases are being sold at the minimum bid of \$2 per acre, or else not being bid on at all. Despite local opposition, oil and gas development has resumed near national parks and monuments.

Interior Secretary Zinke has also proposed changing the rules that protect threatened and endangered species, even as a Senate bill and nearly a dozen House bills would significantly undermine the recovery of those imperiled species.

What is especially destructive in the West is Zinke's decision to reconsider what had proven to be a successful strategy to protect sage grouse from inappropriate development. Despite bipartisan support for this cooperative effort, including from nearly all the Western governors, 76 percent of new and proposed oil and gas leases are targeted for high-priority sage grouse habitat. What's incomprehensible is why these areas should be targeted in the first place, when taken together they amount to only one-fifth of the oil and gas potential on BLM lands.

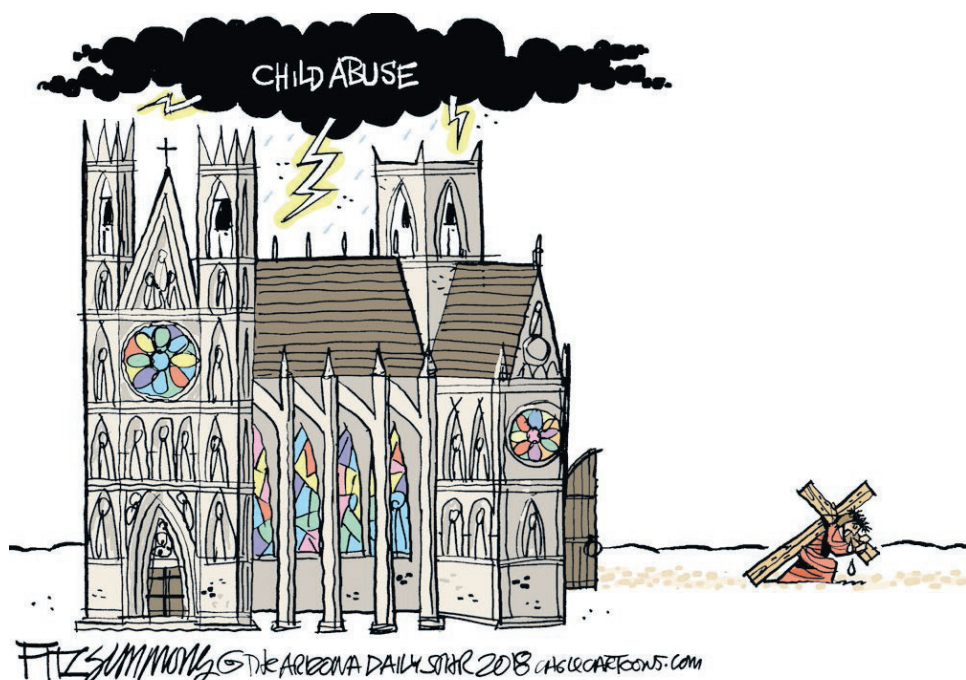
More bad policy emerged when the Bureau of Land Management and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service reversed existing mitigation policies. Now, land users who damage the public's lands in developing mineral or energy resources will no longer be required to repair the damage they cause.

One glimmer of hope under Secretary Zinke has his order to protect migratory routes for wildlife like mule deer, elk, and antelope. But with one exception, the Interior Department continues to lease oil and gas in the same wildlife corridors it has committed to protect.

Theodore Roosevelt once said, "I recognize the right and duty of this generation to develop and use the natural resources of our land, but I do not recognize the right to waste them, or to rob, by wasteful use, the generations that come after us. ... Conservation is a great moral issue, for it involves the patriotic duty of insuring the safety and continuance of the nation."

I also believe that there is a "right and duty" to use our natural resources to meet current needs. But the destructive policies of the Trump administration — and, more specifically, the Interior Department — are more likely to rob present and future Americans of their right to enjoy their public-lands legacy.

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The evil revealed by grand jury report

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

By and large, criminal complaints, affidavits and other documents prepared by law enforcement agencies are dry and poorly written.

They're portentous, heavy on jargon and short on style, with one simple sentence following another monotonously. Even if rich in detail, getting through them can be a slog.

Not so the Pennsylvania grand jury report on sexual abuse of children in the Pittsburgh, Allentown, Erie, Greensburg, Harrisburg and Scranton dioceses.

Echoing the format of a report another grand jury produced two years ago about sexual abuse in the Altoona-Johnstown Diocese, the 884-page document released Aug. 14 grabs readers from the very first sentence:

"We, the members of this grand jury, need you to hear this."

What follows, as much of the nation knows by now, is a comprehensive account of the horrors perpetrated on children by men of the cloth over several decades. The graphic details of the crimes and scope of the church's cover-ups are appalling.

But shock factor alone does not explain why the public reaction has been so visceral and why the report has resonated so strongly with so many. Presentation does. The report has a conversational, achingly honest tone that lays bare the misery of the victims, the heinousness of the crimes, the hypocrisy of a church that spurned the central tenets of its faith and a statute of limitations that now bars charges against most of the offenders.

"We are sick over all the crimes that will go unpunished and uncompensated," the grand jury says. "This report is our only recourse. We are going to name their names and describe what they did — both the sex offenders and those who concealed them. We are going to shine a light on their conduct, because that is

can't think of anything or anyone better to remind me that I'm forgiven, washed clean, and new!

Here's to a lot more mud, a lot more stories, and a lot more opportunities for others to step into our lives and see YOU first.

In appreciation for the work you do — every, single, day.

what the victims deserve. And we are going to make our recommendations for how the laws should change so that maybe no one will have to conduct another inquiry like this one."

While officially the product of the grand jury, the document was written largely by a team from the criminal division of the state attorney general's office. Attorney General Josh Shapiro was among the drafters and editors.

The report is free of jargon. It minces no words and pulls no punches, with some criticism leveled at law

enforcement officials who failed to pursue allegations of abuse over the years and "left children without their rightful civic watchdogs."

It personalizes the crimes and connects readers to the victims, introducing 68-year-old Julianne, assaulted when she was 14; Joe, who waited 55 years to tell the grand jury about the "naked, masturbating priest who told him to take off his pants and get into bed"; and Bob, 83, who "can't bear to be touched by a man, not

even to shake hands or to hug his own sons," because of what happened to him long ago.

During an investigation that spanned two years, the grand jurors reviewed half a million pages of diocesan documents. They were a trove of evidence and a source of nefarious turns of phrase — "circle of secrecy" and "secret archive," for example — that added heft to the grand jury's report.

The groundswell of anger the report engendered creates an atmosphere ripe for change. The grand jury's proposals to expand civil liability and end the statute of limitations for certain sexual offenses can be fodder for certain public discussion largely because the grand jury presented its findings as a compelling narrative in which anger, sadness and passion for change leap from the pages.

After reading it, the public cannot help but feel as the grand jurors did.

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