

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to firefighters putting out the blazes plaguing California, the deadliest in the U.S. in more than a century.

And a tip of the hat to those helping in other ways.

Two fires, one in the northern part of the state and another near Los Angeles, have tormented those communities for weeks.

More than 50 people have died and hundreds are still unaccounted for as of this writing. More than 7,000 buildings have been destroyed. They're still uncontained, according to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection.

The stories are heartbreaking and terrifying. Families forced to flee through corridors of burning trees, with traffic backed up on the one road out of town. Many who did escape will return to find their homes destroyed.

While fire crews from other states — including the Hermiston-based Umatilla County Fire District 1 — arrive to help protect lives and properties, others have pitched in to financially support those who are on the run and have lost everything.

Here are a couple of ways you can help:

- The American Red Cross manages shelters for people with nowhere else to go, and they run an online registry for people to locate and contact friends and relatives. Donations can be made on the American Red Cross website, or by calling 1-800-RED CROSS or texting the word CAWILDFIRES to 90999 to donate \$10 quickly.

- The California Community Foundation's Wildfire Relief Fund will step into action once the fires are put out, helping rebuild homes and offering health assistance. Donate at www.calfund.org.

- The Humane Society of Ventura County is providing a place for pets displaced by the Los Angeles-area fires as their owners look for their own place to stay. Donate at www.hsvc.org.

There are many other groups doing good work, but be careful where you send your money in time of emergency. Some people will take advantage of a disaster for their own personal gain.

A tip of the hat to Casey Beard, the first general manager of the Pendleton Round-Up and Happy Canyon Night Show, who has set the bar high.



AP Photo/Noah Berger

Residences leveled by the Camp Fire line a cul-de-sac in Paradise, Calif., on Thursday. The California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection said Thursday the wildfire that destroyed the town of Paradise is now 40 percent contained, up from 30 percent on Wednesday morning.

Round-Up and Happy Canyon are dynamic events, in many ways tied to the past but always in need of fresh ideas and new directions. That's not an easy balance, and working with two volunteers boards of two unique events surely takes some careful diplomacy.

But Beard, who this week announced his pending May retirement, was clearly the right man for the job when the position was created in 2014. He has brought leadership, marketing sense and rodeo credibility to boost the events into their second century.

It was more than just some good

ideas on paper. Through added vendors in the stadium, diverse ticketing options and a new approach to marketing, the Round-Up has flourished, exceeding ticket sales expectations.

The rodeo and night show have never been as widely known or as easily accessible.

He's maximized the investment of the board, the volunteers and the community, and his work will pay dividends for years to come.

We wish the board the best of luck in finding the right person to fill those boots.

LIMEY PASTOR

A call from the North

I got a letter from a church in North Dakota this week. Its question: "Am I looking for a new call?"

Why, yes, I am. I think. I sensed something was going to be coming, that I was moving into what is called a liminal space, which means a kind of indeterminate place of waiting where change is happening but is scarcely detectable. I even had an intuition that North Dakota would one day call my name. I remember the time I drove across the country and stopped in Fargo, with the snow flurrying around and a feeling of a memory had touched me — a memory of something from before.

It was a familiarity of something a long time ago. I had sailed on the Great Lakes. I had seen the Northern Lights. A Native American medicine woman, a great-granddaughter of Black Elk, from Dakota had given me the Native American name Pahasapa, the name of the sacred mountain, and said that I would receive the help of her people when I began to work.

I had been a student of the profoundly wise Dr. Jim Nestingen, who I had studied with in my clergy training, and his home ground was in North Dakota, although now, in his retirement, he spends his springs and summers in Oregon. He has written much of the modern literature in our studies, and is the wisest person I know. He is my exemplar.

North Dakota seemed to me an outpost of a holy empire that doesn't need a warm temperature to unveil the warmth of the human heart. Is there a doorway out there that is waiting for me to show up and pass through it? Or should I admit my English flimsiness and run from the temptation? A congregation of souls lives in its icy furnace, up against the hard seasons of the United States, who feel that their toil upholds the moral densities of a nation. I find the Midwesterners impressive.

So, I am going to write to them

COLIN BROWN
Faith

responsively. I will say yes! If God is against the idea, there is no way it can happen. If God is for the idea, there is no way it can be stopped. If there is a choice, we must learn to discern the right way. Discernment involves prayer, reflection and the ability to not necessarily think that what we think is as substantial as we think it is.

The Jesuit David Lonsdale, in his book "The Art of Discernment," quotes from Deuteronomy where Moses says to his people, "See today I set before you life and prosperity, death and disaster. ... If you love God and follow his ways ... you will live and increase. ... But if your heart strays, you will most certainly perish. ... I set before you life or death, blessing or curse. Choose life, then, so that you and your descendants may live in the love of Yahweh your God ... for in this your life consists (Dt. 30:15-20).

So my decision-making, my path-making must discern between an egoistic wish to make good in the place I consider Lutheran central (and perhaps that is a vanity) and a wish to follow what must be God's will. It is kind of tricky if you don't really know God's will.

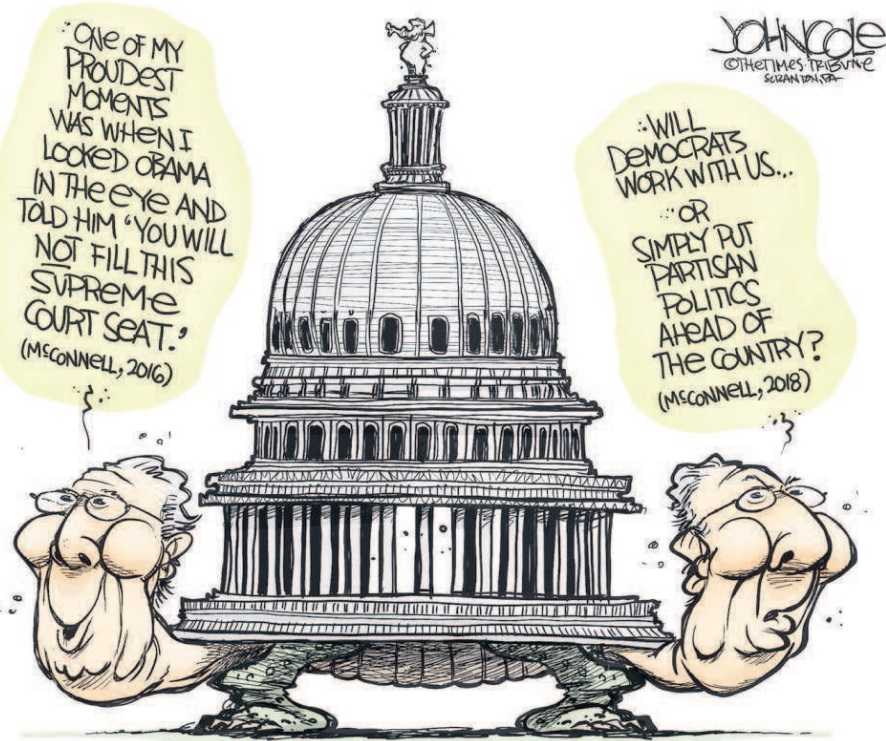
My colleague, Pastor Becky, was called out to visit Ethiopia, and I must admit I felt that to get a call like that was remarkable, to be an emissary of the church to a distant African nation of Ethiopia, where according to legend the Ark of the Covenant may even reside. For me, that would be a vanity and wildly exciting. North Dakota is truly an earth of earth, a place of work and a mainstay of the nation in its effort, toil and earthy wisdom. It would be a honor to serve a congregation there, and one that I could truly learn from as well as speak on behalf of Jesus who toiled in the fields of Israel.

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YOUR VIEWS

A balanced view would be better coverage

It's so nice to spend my money supporting my local *East Oregonian* newspaper to read about local Eastern Oregon news. I hope to read what is happening in our schools, sports, local government, community in general, and the history of our local citizens that have few years left to share their knowledge with us. There is so much to learn about our area.

I don't read too much about what goes on in La Grande, Boardman, Umatilla, Mission or any of the other small towns in the area. I thought they are all part of Eastern Oregon? So, the *East Oregonian* can't find any local news to share with the readers who support their newspaper? I get more local information from the *Tri-City Herald* than from the *EO*.

We have been contemplating whether to keep our subscription to the *EO* because we really do like to keep up the what's happening, but hearing so many conservative attacks on your liberal neighbors and customers isn't very businesslike. A newspaper should offer a balanced view of news along with news of the people.

The Nov. 17 paper made me up to upchuck for sure! Front page, and continued onto the inner pages, is an overwritten manuscript-style, not newsworthy story of the Bundy matter that happened way back when, and in our state (not his), and was not favored by the citizens in the area when they brought all their hate, anger and militia-style protest to try and prove their political point!

Why was that story, if you're going to

cover an ou-of-area story, so important to even have but not cover what we could do as a community to help the people in California who are losing everything to the fires? This is not an Eastern Oregon newspaper but seems more like an eastern conservative right-wing propaganda paper.

This paper needs a change. There is a lot of good stuff that happens in our area and I'd like to read about it. Interview school kids on issues; talk with the Native American elders and share their knowledge with everyone; ask the churches how they work together when crisis happen; what do small towns need from the larger towns? There are so many stories out there. And there are so many positive stories outside our area to use as fill-ins from our neighbor states.

Bernie Sanderson
Hermiston

Voting is your chance to be heard

A short while ago, a young man asked me if I thought it was important to vote. I said yes, as it is your chance to be heard. He said, "Well all my life I have waited to be old enough to vote, and now with all the confusion, disrespect and corruption I wonder if it really matters if you vote."

I held my breath for a second and said, "Some good comes from everything, and it matters even though on the face of it things look bad. But for some reason we have no better way to improve."

James Tiede
Hermiston

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