

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
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OUR VIEW

State's water challenges need to be addressed

The Oregon Legislature has hit on a winner with the Irrigation District Temporary Transfers Pilot Project.

While the name sounds a bit off-putting, the project is effective. It allows some irrigation districts to internally make temporary transfers between water users. The project has been in operation 18 years. During that time it has been extended and expanded to 15 of the state's 40 or so irrigation districts.

The beauty of the project is its simplicity. A farmer or rancher within an irrigation district with an unused water allocation can transfer it temporarily to someone who needs it.

This not only addresses some of the water shortages that have arisen over the years, but it helps farmers and ranchers hold onto water allocations that otherwise might be lost, courtesy of the state's "use it or lose it" law.

While not perfect — nothing is — the project brings out the best in cooperative spirit among farmers in addition to getting water to where it's needed.

It is time for the legislature to expand the program to all Oregon irrigation districts and make it permanent.

While they're tackling water issues, legislators should take a close look at the Oregon Water Resources Department, which appears to be chronically underfunded and understaffed.

The department has a national reputation for its sluggish performance. The Daugherty Water for Food Global Institute at the University of Nebraska has found Oregon has an unnecessarily complex and bureaucratic water transfer system.

Year after year, the department also reports it is behind in its work, in part because of red tape and in part because the Legislature does not provide enough money from the general fund.

Some believe water users should provide most of the department's funding, but since the state owns the water, all citizens should pony up adequate funding to manage it.

After all, everyone eats the food grown with that water.

More also needs to be done.

Water issues in Oregon will not go away. The state needs a flexible game plan for managing the water that grows our food and powers our economy. Leaders need to take a close look at everything from recharging aquifers in the winter to lake taps to increasing water storage behind dams. Instead of constantly talking about taking out dams, we should be looking at ways to increase their number and capacity. That's because scientists say the mountain snowpacks that serve as water storage will continue to shrink.

We should also come up with a statewide plan to transfer water from locations with plenty of water to those facing drought and other shortages. California, for example, has a massive intrastate water transfer system.

Climate change means Oregonians will have to be smarter in how they manage water.



Books offer insight into historic conflict



BRIGIT FARLEY
PAST AND PROLOGUE

August has come, the traditional month for vacations and staycations. We are approaching 80 years since Pearl Harbor and the U.S. entry into World War II. If you are lucky enough to have some time off to read, I have two excellent books to recommend that will deliver some fresh perspective for the upcoming 80th anniversary.

Especially in this era, when the COVID-19 emergency has revealed deep divisions in society, Americans look longingly to World War II. At that time, the nation seemed to face a monumental challenge united and unafraid. Historian Tracy Campbell takes issue with this perception in his new book, "The Year of Peril: America in 1942."

Having refrained from international involvement since World War I, Americans suddenly found themselves at war in December 1941 with powerful enemies that already dominated much of Europe and the Pacific. The U.S. armed forces were undermanned and ill-equipped, training with trucks marked "tank" and using rifles made in 1903. It seemed unlikely they could prevail.

The nation was accordingly panicky and querulous, Campbell asserts. Fears of enemy attack on the mainland led to the removal of the original Constitution and Declaration of Independence from Washington, D.C., to Fort Knox, Kentucky, and the issuing of Executive Order 9066. This order interned — without trial on suspicion of espionage — all Japanese-American citizens living close to the Pacific Ocean.

The imposition of rubber and gasoline rationing angered car owners whose freedom to drive was sharply curtailed. Campbell emphasizes that the war

"intruded on a nation in which white supremacy was deeply ingrained." As in World War I, the War Department decreed that African Americans could serve only in segregated units, lest integration upset white soldiers. Even so, rumors circulated in some quarters that the government was actually recruiting and arming African Americans to "subdue the south and impose a Second Reconstruction."

If Campbell's is a ground-eye view of the war's first months, Doris Kearns Goodwin's "No Ordinary Time: Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt on the Home Front in World War II" goes to the top to chronicle President and Mrs. Roosevelt's efforts to unite the nation for the fight and prepare it for a better future.

In Goodwin's narrative, the First Lady emerges determined that the nation try to make democracy a reality at home as it fought against dictatorship and militarism overseas. Goodwin uses Mrs. Roosevelt's voluminous correspondence to underline her outrage at the injustice of African Americans fighting against Nazi racism in a segregated army and country. In one famous letter, she learned of the humiliation visited upon a group of African American soldiers traveling through Louisiana on the way to training. Their active duty status did not spare them Jim Crow treatment — they were refused sit-down service inside the train station lunchroom.

As they ate their sandwiches outside, they watched in disbelief as a group of German POWs was led into the dining room. Afterward, Mrs. Roosevelt successfully lobbied her husband to desegregate all transport and facilities on U.S. military installations. If the government could not protect African American servicemen from discrimination in private businesses, it certainly could set things right on its own properties. The end of segregation on military bases became an important first step towards the complete desegregation of the U.S. military in 1948.

Another point of emphasis for Goodwin is Mrs. Roosevelt's support for the legions of Rosie the Riveters turning out tanks, planes and ships in the defense plants. Concerned for the children fending for themselves while their mothers worked, Mrs. Roosevelt applauded and promoted the country's first daycare facility at the Kaiser Shipyards in Portland. The center provided 24/7 care for children of all races, staffed by graduates of prestigious women's colleges.

These first efforts at easing the burden for defense workers opened the door to similar arrangements for future generations of working women. Goodwin makes clear that both Roosevelts believed the country owed a debt of gratitude to the servicemen who had saved the world from Nazism and militarism. President Roosevelt responded by proposing the G.I. Bill of Rights, which financed a college education for a generation of veterans. That investment paid huge dividends: It fueled the greatest peacetime economic expansion in American history.

These two books offer compelling insights into a conflict that many believe they know well already. One is that, although President Roosevelt did rally the country to "win through to absolute victory," the Americans we know now as the greatest generation were initially shell-shocked, fearful and divided. The second is an old truth often forgotten: leadership matters.

I have always felt that the U.S. is blessed more by geography than God. But perhaps only God explains the fact that this country had gifted, farsighted stewards in Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt during the critical years, where the Nazi and Imperial Japanese leadership were charting a course toward the utter destruction of their nations.

Brigit Farley is a Washington State University professor, student of history, adventurer and Irish heritage girl living in Pendleton.

YOUR VIEWS

Don't be a fool: Get vaccinated!

I have one word for those of you that have yet to get a vaccination: fools! I can also add self-centered, selfish, sheepy and, Kool-Aid drinkers to that. If you don't understand the Kool-Aid drinkers, look up Jonestown, as you are headed in the same direction — dead!

Umatilla County, once again, has the "honor" of being the hotspot when it comes to COVID-19 for Oregon.

Why? Because too many of you out there think, "I don't need no stinking shots." Well, you're in the same group as the actor in "Treasure of the Sierra Madre," saying, "I don't need no stinking badges." There is a good chance you will end up like he did — dead!

COVID-19 is not a joke, it is not a government conspiracy, there are no nanobots being injected so they can track you (there are enough satellites up above now, they can track anytime they want, you paranoid fools). What you are doing is subjecting your

family and friends to a greater risk of catching this disease and possibly dying from it, thanks to your being too self-centered to consider anyone but yourself. Do you believe that if you catch it and end up passing it along and therefore possibly killing a friend or family member, it's not your fault? Good luck on lying to yourself for the rest of your life. I hope you can sleep at night knowing you killed someone because you were so selfish.

Mark Severson
Hermiston

EDITORIALS

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SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801