



BETTE HUSTED
FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

The power of stories to pull us through

Local columnists had chosen titles that revealed the perspectives of their voices: From the headwaters of Dry Creek; From the tractor seat; From sunup to sundown. Since I would be writing about the power of stories, I decided to call mine From here to anywhere.

Sometimes stories take us to frightening places. Years ago, I severed two tendons in my left hand, and I remember the helpless shock of not being able to flex my fingers. This month my husband had a similar experience when suddenly he couldn't move his legs. All summer we'd been walking around Community Park, and now — the future looked dim.

But after 15 calls, St. Anthony Hospital finally found a hospital with room to accept one more patient, and he was on the helicopter to Seattle and life-renewing surgery.

We were among the lucky ones. A few days later, according to the East Oregonian, the St. Anthony Emergency staff would call 20 hospitals for a patient who needed a transfer, this time without success.

This shortage of hospital beds is, of course, the result of two conflicting stories. Stories have power: Can anyone doubt that, now? Power to destroy as well as create. Hoping for solace as we waited for a post-surgery rehab bed — they were full, too, all over the Northwest — I turned to the books I'd stuffed into my pack just before the hurried drive over Snoqualmie Pass.

One was a collection of poems by Maggie Smith. You may have found "Good Bones" on Facebook last year — to many people, it seemed the perfect take on 2020. "Life is short," she wrote, "though I keep this from my children. ... Life is short and the world / is at least half terrible, and for every kind / stranger, there is one who would break you, / though I keep this from my children. I am trying / to sell them the world. Any decent realtor, / walking you through a real sh*thole, chirps on / about good bones: This place could be beautiful, / right? You could make this place beautiful."

The other book in my pack was David Treuer's "The Heartbeat of Wounded Knee" — a title echoing Dee Brown's famous "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee." Published in 1970, Brown's book contended that in the 30 years before the 1890 massacre at Wounded Knee, "the culture and civilization of the American Indian was destroyed ... if readers should ever chance to see the poverty, the hopelessness, and the squalor of a modern Indian reservation, they may find it possible to truly understand the reasons why."

Imagine being a Native college student reading that sentence. No culture? No civilization? Nothing but poverty, hopelessness, squalor?

Treuer's own book tells a different story: a story of survival, resilience, and adaptation — "the sound of a heartbeat going on" — even through genocidal attacks and the greed of unscrupulous agents, through boarding schools and the Allotment Act, from the Court of Indian Offenses to the 1978 Religious Freedom Act, through two world wars, termination and relocation, AIM and Standing Rock, casinos and tribal capitalism and digital connectedness. As he travels the country listening to stories of people from several reservations and cities he shared his own experiences from his Leech Lake Reservation childhood and beyond.

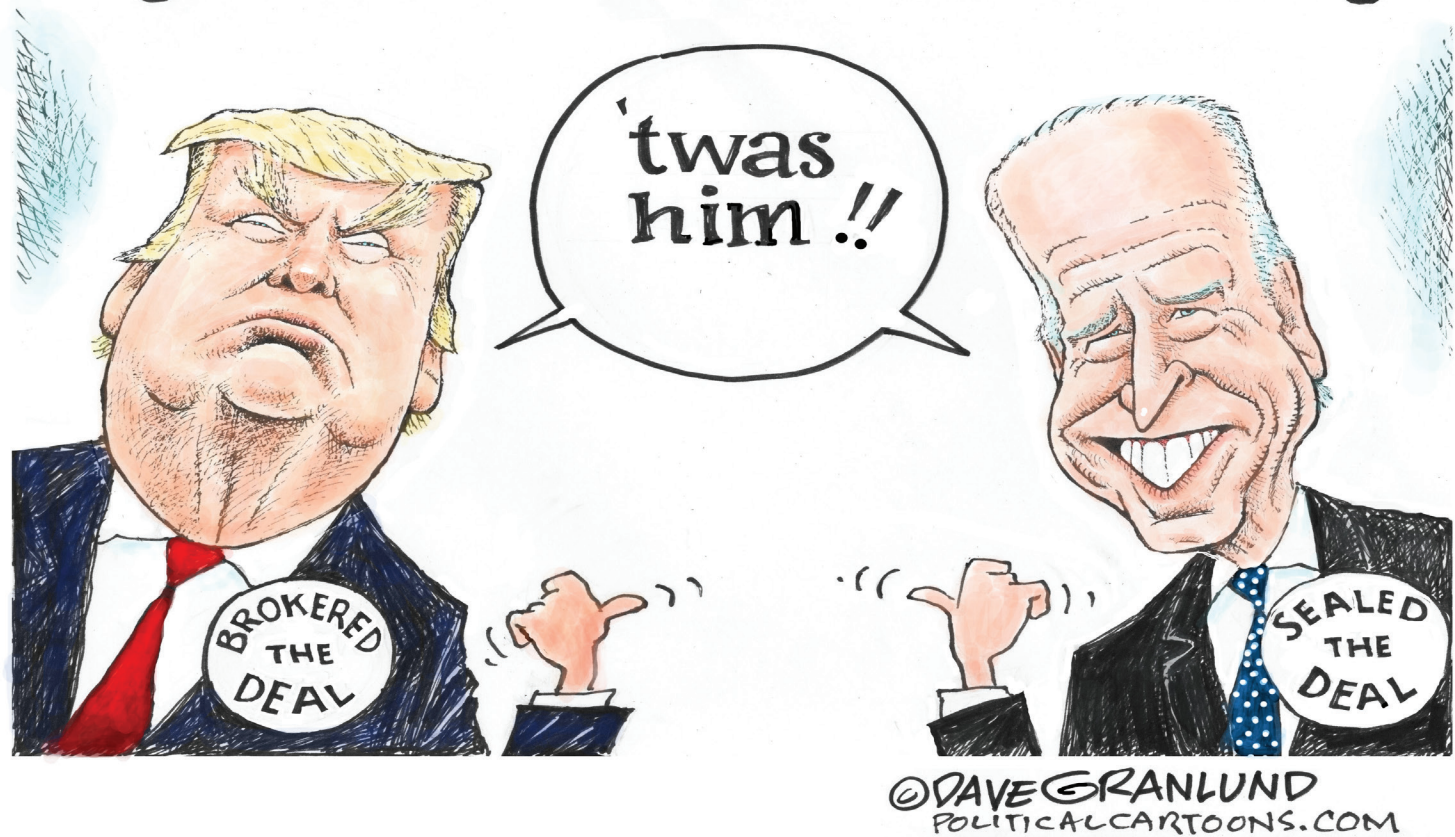
During his travels he realizes that the descendants of Wounded Knee survivors — and other Indian communities around the country who have had their own holocausts — "survived to make mistakes and to recover from them. They survived to make history, to make meaning, to make life ... and in doing so, to make the story of the country itself."

In other words, he says, he has "tried to catch us not in the act of dying, but, rather, in the radical act of living. Because at the heart of the political convulsions that now grip the country we love lies a human question. A simple one. What kind of country do we want to be?"

As I closed the book, I heard the man in the next bed struggling to breathe. I can only hope the stories we listen to now will be stories of compassion for our neighbors and unvaccinated children. And should you need one, I hope there will be a bed for you.

Bette Husted is a writer and a student of tai chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.

Afghan exit plan responsibility..



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Climate crisis: We did this to ourselves



SYLVIA HAYES
OTHER VIEWS

The devastating findings recently released by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change really shouldn't surprise anybody. But it should break our hearts. It does mine. Mountains of real-world scientific evidence already showed we are nowhere near the level of action needed to prevent catastrophic climate change and its consequences.

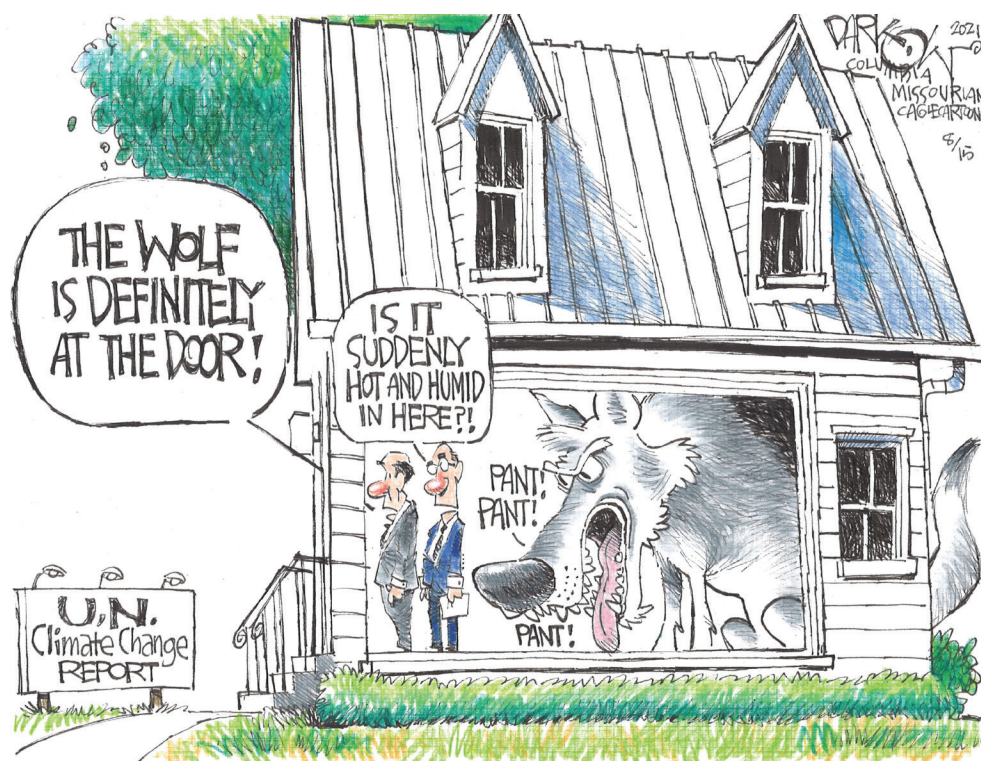
Look no further than our own home, the Pacific Northwest. An unprecedented heat dome broke temperature records, killed hundreds of people and even baked mussels and clams alive in their shells. Mount Rainier lost a third of its snowpack in that one heat event. There simply isn't enough water for rivers, fish and farmers, at least the way irrigation is currently conducted. Forests are stressed by drought and burning at massive rates and intensity. Smoke, haze and unhealthy air is our new summer norm.

Sadly, these kinds of catastrophes and challenges are happening all across the globe.

We did this to ourselves. We failed to act, at scale, because we are all addicted to fossil fuel and the insane concept of a limitless growth economy on a planet of finite resources. Even those of us who have been trying to get attention and action on this issue for over 30 years are part of the same addicted system. Now, because we didn't act, the scale and scope of action required is staggering.

But action is still possible. There is still a small, small window to slow climate change to a level that we and many other species can adapt to. The science is really clear: Every fraction of a degree of additional warming makes the future worse, which means every fraction we avert makes it better.

So, what is needed? At a policy level we must drastically reduce greenhouse gas emissions immediately and get on a path toward zero net emissions by 2050.



We already have the ability to do this but have lacked the collective and political will, nationally and globally. Steps to take:

- Massive investment in clean energy technologies, combined with unprecedented policies such as government buy out of old, inefficient cars so that people can afford to upgrade to electric, low-emission options.
 - Cap methane leaks at all fossil fuel extraction sites, immediately. Methane is a far more dangerous climate change pollutant than CO2.
 - Let the so-called free market actually work. Stop keeping gasoline artificially cheap at the pump. Just recently President Biden asked oil producers to increase production to bring down gas prices. That might feel nice to all of us who aren't rich, but it's a bonehead move if we want a livable planet.
 - Relocalize the economy. Rebuild local supply chains. Stop burning fossil fuel, and the planet, shipping stuff across the globe.
- At the personal level we all need to reduce our energy consumption, drive less, etc. — the things we already know we should do.

More importantly, in my opinion, and I'll probably tick some people off here, we need to stop buying stuff we don't need, stop indulging in retail therapy. Every item that includes plastic, or metal, or glass, that is shipped or trucked contributes to climate change. Buying used and buying local is every bit as big a positive action as driving less. Finally, and I'm sure to really tick some folks off here, eat less meat. The meat industry is one of the biggest contributors of climate change pollution in the world.

Lastly, the most important action is to finally start treating this like the urgent crisis it is. We do not have time for the luxury of apathy, denial, or overwhelm. The COVID-19 delta variant may be devastating, but a destabilized planet is far more deadly. My fervent hope and affirmation is that the uncomfortableness of our new norm will move us to create a saner trajectory going forward — we still have that option, for a very little while at least.

Sylvia Hayes is CEO of 3EStrategies and founder of The ReThink.

Look for the positives in a gloomy world



ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

There is a lot to be depressed about right now.

The debacle in Afghanistan continues to spill out across TV screens, online and in print.

Fires rage and drought has a stranglehold on much of the western United States.

COVID-19 cases continue to climb — and Umatilla County recorded its 100th death from the infection recently — even as a vaccine remains readily available.

Yes, no one must look very far to find something to be angry, depressed or sad about. Yet, the world isn't all doom and gloom. I think from time to time we forget that fundamental axiom.

Our national economy seems to be doing well and ahead lies autumn, and the local area will have a whole lot to look forward to when September rolls around.

The Pendleton Round-Up will kick off its week-long run in September, and there is nothing that excites me more than the prospect of a full Round-Up Grounds in September.

The Round-Up is an iconic fixture for not only Umatilla County and the Northwest but for the entire nation. The event will offer up a variety of special events — including the world-renowned rodeo — that should spell a whole lot of fun.

There is nothing quite like the Round-Up, and every year I discover some element to the event that grabs my interest.

Fall also means the start of school and that, in turn, will translate into a full slate of high school sports across the region.

As an old sportswriter, not much is as dear to my heart than the memories I hold from the countless football games, volleyball matches and cross-country meets I attended when I worked in Malheur County for the Argus Observer.

Granted, that was a long time ago, the beginning of my newspaper career, but there is something special, something hard to define, about the start of high school competition in the fall.

I can remember countless nights standing under the bright stadium lights as prep football teams competed, or striding into gyms on a Saturday to watch volleyball teams go head to head. A lot as change since then. While all the teams remain, many of the leagues that I covered while at

the Argus Observer are gone or have been modified.

What I think I remember the most about those Friday nights and Saturdays was the purity of the competition. I wasn't covering players making millions of dollars, but watching young men and women compete and win.

We can all stop every day and see and remember all the things that are going wrong in our world. That's why it is so important to stop and reflect on the good things that we must choose from.

Go to the Round-Up — albeit safely — and have a good time. And, if you want to, check out a prep soccer, football or volleyball game this autumn. At the

very least those types of events will help you forget, if for only an hour or two, the negative elements of our world.

Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian and the regional editorial director for the EO Media Group, overseeing the East Oregonian and five more newspapers in Eastern Oregon.

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