



**BETTE  
HUSTED**  
FROM HERE TO ANYWHERE

## We can learn to belong here

Last week, President Joe Biden issued a first-ever proclamation to recognize Indigenous Peoples' Day.

"On Indigenous Peoples' Day," he wrote, "our Nation celebrates the invaluable contributions and resilience of Indigenous peoples, recognizes their inherent sovereignty, and commits to honoring the Federal Government's trust and treaty obligations to Tribal Nations.

"For generations, Federal policies systematically sought to assimilate and displace Native people and eradicate Native cultures. Today, we recognize Indigenous peoples' resilience and strength as well as the immeasurable positive impact that they have made on every aspect of American society."

He also officially recognized the federal holiday of Columbus Day and honored the contributions of Italian-Americans. But, he added, "Today, we also acknowledge the painful history of wrongs and atrocities that many European explorers inflicted on Tribal Nations and Indigenous communities. For Native Americans, western exploration ushered in a wave of devastation: violence perpetrated against Native communities, displacement and theft of Tribal homelands, the introduction and spread of disease, and more."

The first national Columbus Day came after a mob broke into Orleans Parish Prison in 1891 to kill Italian immigrants who had been found not guilty of murder. The New York Times wrote that "while every good citizen" would agree that "this affair is to be deplored, it would be difficult to find any individual who would confess that privately he deplores it very much," and Theodore Roosevelt, in a letter to his sister, wrote, "Personally, I think it a rather good thing."

Italy — and Italian-American voters — were angry, and since communities were already planning celebrations of the 400th anniversary of Columbus's landing, President Benjamin Harrison was urged to proclaim a one-time national holiday to win their support and "impress upon our youth the patriotic duties of American citizenship."

People had fun — who doesn't love a holiday with a parade? — but it clearly wasn't an acknowledgment of the discrimination against Italian immigrants, and it didn't celebrate a patriotic determination to live up to America's ideal of equality.

The word "resilience" is repeated in Biden's proclamation of Indigenous Peoples' Day for good reason, it seems to me. Resilience is what has enabled Indigenous peoples not only to survive but to thrive, to grow, to adapt, and to keep offering alternative perspectives to their non-Native neighbors.

The times we are living in now are testing us all — this week there was even talk of "shock troops" and "civil war." Can our society as a whole be as resilient?

I take heart from people like Julia Ward Gillis, whose "Letter from an Army Wife" (which I found in the Oregon Literature Series) reveals an American with courage to face painful truths. When she came west as an Army bride she wrote to her parents about the accommodations at Fort Dalles, where on the parlor walls were "swabs, rammers, sabers, and other things whose names I have not yet learned" while on the floor "with its nose (Jim says I must say muzzle) pointing out the window is the dearest brass gun mounted on a wooden carriage. Captain C. says it is a mountain howitzer."

The next year she and her husband are living in a slab hut with a sloping dirt floor in what is now Harney County, where Gen. Crook's troops are searching for people to kill.

This time she writes, "I think it is a wretched unholy warfare; the poor creatures are hunted down like wild beasts and shot down in cold blood. The same ball went through a mother and her baby at her breast. One poor little creature just the size of my baby was shot because he would some day grow up."

Julia would be amazed, I think, and grateful for Biden's proclamation, for the steps our country is taking toward becoming a better people.

On this Indigenous Peoples' Day I'm reminded that those of us who are immigrants or descended from immigrants are not and can never be indigenous to North America.

But we can, as Robin Wall Kimmerer suggests in her book "Braiding Sweetgrass," become "naturalized."

We can learn from Indigenous peoples, realize that relationships with "all our relations" are reciprocal. We can learn to belong here. All of us, together.

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## Reading is helpful tool for catching kids up in school



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THE EDUCATION CORNER

Children across the country and around our communities are returning or have returned to classrooms. However, parents, teachers and students have expressed significant concern.

How do we make up for the past year and a half with so much loss of instruction? First, some students were not able to connect with the online learning, parents were overwhelmed and trying to help them with their school work, and then some students just disappeared not showing up at school when schools resumed, creating frustration for parents, teachers and students.

Teachers have experienced challenges over the years with multiple levels of students in the classroom. They have become more overwhelmed with students at more significant learning gaps upon returning to school. There are those students who were able to connect with and participate in online learning, as well as those with parents who could adjust their schedules to participate in home-schooling. Still, some parents didn't have those opportunities, and their children faced new challenges.

We can't go back. We have to keep things moving forward. Our children are resilient, and they will bounce back quickly. But, we all have to be aware and provide additional support if we see a child struggling. As parents and community members, one of the best things we can do to assist our schools is to engage our children. Language is key to the child's development and understanding of their surroundings. Take the time to have a child tell you what they are doing and why not just when they have done something wrong, builds pathways in their brains to increase their comprehension of what is happening around them.

Reading with or to children remains one of the best learning opportunities an adult can do with children. When you read with a child or to a child, there are several key activities you can engage the child with to increase their understanding.

Questions along with asking their opinion will increase their knowledge. If you can relate the activities in what you are reading to real-life experiences, it will help the child build the comprehension skills they may have missed during the last couple of years.

Consider a nonfiction book in your child's area of interest. We all enjoy a good story, but a nonfiction book might help make up for some lost classroom time. Again the learning happens during the discussion about the information.

Still, no matter how hard we try, the time has been lost because of the pandemic, and we have to keep moving forward. Getting our children engaged can be difficult sometimes. You're ready or have time to work with them, and they start crying and arguing making a whole different challenge. If you should experience your child pushing back, know you are experiencing a learning opportunity. Our children want to have some form of control in this out-of-control time. So knowing how to deal with this will make everyone's day happier.

You might start with a question, such as, "Would you like to read a book?" Whatever activity you have in mind. We would hope to hear "Sure," but it doesn't always happen. Then, if you start to get push back, this is your child showing they want to challenge control. So give them a statement like, "We need to complete this story or do our reading today so we can do it now or when you're ready, but we need to start in 15 minutes to complete it in time for ... Which would you prefer?" Doing this shows your child they can control something in what seems to be an out-of-control time in their world. In most cases, children will come and read because the number one thing they want is time with you. Our children want our time, whether it be positive or negative. We as adults have to make it positive, and this trick is quick and straightforward.

Looking forward is our way to help our children move past these last couple of years. Spending time and interacting with them will also help overcome the time missed in the classroom. Let the learning begin.

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## We need more problem-focused responses



**KEVIN  
FRAZIER**  
OTHER VIEWS

You learn that the Clintons, Laura Bush, two major philanthropic foundations, and even Jay-Z are behind a project. Surely, you think, this must be a silver bullet solution.

Who supports a solution, though, matters far less than actually understanding the problem and learning from the people dealing with it. That's why PlayPump, which relied on children using merry-go-rounds to pump water from wells in Africa, was a complete disaster. The "toys" were placed in communities without their consent. Children in some communities were forced to "play" so that others could get water. And, the devices soon were in disrepair without any sort of servicing on the horizon.

Policymakers and philanthropies in Oregon often demonstrate the same troubling behavior of endorsing a solution before truly understanding the problem. On the left and right, politicians may feel like they have to embrace certain solutions because the "Clintons" or "Bushes" or some fill-in-the-

blank celebrity endorsed it. So they search for a problem to apply their solution. This is a horrible idea.

Any good entrepreneur, community organizer or faith leader will tell you that problem solving starts with listening. And this isn't listening to some contrived focus group or even knocking on doors as part of a campaign; this is the sort of listening that actually leads to exposure to a problem, to seeing the roots of that problem, and to understanding how and why it is a pain point for a member of your community. This is the sort of listening that takes time, genuine empathy and a commitment to constant reevaluation to see how the problem is evolving and changing.

This approach to problem solving doesn't allow for cookie-cutter, universal solutions. Instead, it forces people to create highly localized, contextualized and adaptable solutions that require substantial investment and monitoring. In other words, these solutions are not the "easy way" nor the sort of thing that fits nicely into a tweet or Instagram post.

That's precisely why we rarely see these sorts of solutions emerge out of our politics. Politicians make plenty of time for listening to donors, but limit their listening to "town halls" packed with hundreds of people who never have the opportunity to truly teach the



**JAMIE  
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OTHER VIEWS

## Even our smallest streams, tributaries can play a big role

A river, as all great things, must start somewhere. Like the network of blood vessels in your body, our watersheds are interconnected. You have big arteries running to your organs, and from those arteries stems a complex network of millions of tiny blood vessels that allow the rest of your body to function.

So too is true for our watersheds.

Behind every rushing river I raft and every hefty steelhead I catch is a vast web of small streams all lined up to do their part. No matter what you call them (tributaries, headwater streams, intermittent streams, spawning grounds), they're incredibly important.

Yet when we look at the various policies crafted to safeguard water, they've been relegated to somewhere on the spectrum of "overlooked" to "intentionally ignored." In fact, many of these waters don't even appear on maps, and Oregon has no comprehensive inventory. This isn't because they're useless. Far from it.

Without their cumulative influence, Oregon's great rivers would be shells of themselves.

Now, science is highlighting the need to make up for decades of neglect. I recently discovered the paper "Where Rivers Are Born: The Scientific Imperative for Defending Small Streams and Wetlands," in which stream experts detail the myriad contributions to natural ecosystems and human economies coming from headwaters, even those that don't run all year.

For example, scientists have catalogued 290 types of plants, animals and other living organisms in headwater zones, including some that are unique to these areas. This fact comes as no surprise to me.

Though I love to fly fish, I also love to snorkel, and I've discovered the ultimate way to get to know some of these smaller streams is by dipping my head in to take a look. While they might not look like much on the surface, headwater streams are quite literally bursting with life.

My most recent snorkel in a small bedrock-lined creek revealed great plains of algae-covered rocks upon which hundreds of caddis fly larvae were munching, while schools of juvenile wild steelhead and salmon poked curiously at my feet.

The health and abundance of the tiny creatures I saw inhabiting those streams high up in the river system directly contributes to the downstream success of Oregon's recreational and commercial fishing industries.

The abundant food, complex structure and lower flows that headwater streams provide create ideal conditions for young fish to grow.

In Oregon, fish biologists have found coho salmon frequently head to intermittent streams to spawn, and young salmon will later return to these streams for refuge when conditions in mainstream rivers prove to be treacherous.

But more than just fish benefit. "Where Rivers Are Born" outlines how our human lives and economies are also very directly affected by the health (or lack thereof) of these streams. Protecting these areas in their natural condition helps prevent downstream flooding, cleans and recharges the groundwater that fills municipal water stores (like your well, if you have one), and leads to healthier forests and more stable flows throughout the summer.

By drastically altering these forests, or removing them wholesale as we often do on private and state lands across Oregon, we accelerate the water cycle and lose many of these key functions in the process. We are already seeing the consequences of overlooking these integral components of our watersheds: struggling salmon runs, toxic algae blooms and drought.

If we fail to protect these headwater streams, we will continue to see the state of our larger rivers deteriorate.

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