

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2022

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

## OUR VIEW

# Firefighters' hard work appreciated

The actions by the more than 70 firefighters who responded to the once-in-a-decade fire at Shearer's Foods in Hermiston last week deserve praise and to be recognized.

None of us will ever hear emergency response personnel sing their own praises. That isn't how they operate and the most you might get out of them is they were simply doing their job.

That wonderful self-effacing attitude is what makes our emergency services personnel so endearing and so important.

Yes, they were just doing their jobs, and yes, they were fulfilling the mission entrusted to them by the public. Yet there is more to this specific situation than that and always has been. The men and women who gladly take up the mantle of public service — as police, as firefighters and EMTs — are a special breed and deserve as much admiration and respect as we can give.

The fire disaster at Shearer's is a good example of how important such emergency services are. The fierce blaze destroyed a warehouse, but the fire crews were able to keep the fire from spreading.

Nine agencies and 73 firefighters responded to the fire that could have inflicted far more damage and threatened the lives of far more people if not for the efforts of our emergency service agencies.

Periodically, bonds or other legislative devices will come before voters regarding upgrading funding for fire or police services. The usual debate — so important in a democracy — will erupt but in the end any investment in fire and police services is the best one taxpayers can make, and the fire at Shearer's warehouse is a good case in point as to why emergency services agencies deserve every dollar taxpayers can spare.

We often do not give such services much thought until tragedy strikes close to home. Then, firefighters, police and emergency medical services agencies loom very large in our vision. When they are needed, they are needed badly.

We must as a community — and as voters — always remember that investing in the fire department or the police department is not about boosting the pay of public servants but showing our gratitude for the job these men and women do on a regular basis.

We cannot forget how important they are to all of us, and we must always strive to ensure they are fully funded.



## The journalist-politician worked well for Oregon



STEVE FORRESTER  
WRITER'S NOTEBOOK

It is unfortunate that Nicholas Kristof won't be on the Oregon Democratic primary ballot for governor.

Kristof and former state Sen. Betsy Johnson were the two candidates who did not neatly fit into the tradition of electing Democrats beholden to public employee unions. As the former Republican Secretary of State Dennis Richardson once said during conversation at The Astorian, "The public employees unions run the statehouse."

In different ways, Kristof and Johnson would have brought fresh ideas to this race for governor. Johnson has yet to flesh out her message, but Kristof's was clearly about human welfare — the vast swath of displaced and damaged Oregonians. His nationally published articles and books are about the travail of common people in turbulent times. One of those books is about drug addiction among Oregonians whom Kristof knew while growing up in this state.

Some referred to Kristof's national and international journalism as though

that made him a novelty candidate. But Oregon has enjoyed good luck with journalist-politicians. Three of our prominent officeholders have been journalists. One of those was Oregon's most consequential governor of the 20th century.

Charles Sprague owned the Oregon Statesman newspaper in Salem. As editor, he wrote editorials and a widely read front-page column, "It Seems to Me." He became Oregon governor in 1939 and served through 1943. Sprague was a Republican in the Theodore Roosevelt Progressive tradition. His defense of civil liberties put him at odds with the GOP's right wing.

Today's Oregon Republican Party would turn their backs on the man. To learn more about Sprague, read Floyd McKay's biography, "An Editor for Oregon: Charles A. Sprague and the Politics of Change."

Tom McCall and Richard Neuberger were journalists of a different sort, but they had a symbiotic relationship. McCall began as a sportswriter in Idaho and became one of Oregon's most prominent television journalists, as a news analyst for KGW-TV. Neuberger's prodigious output appeared in The Oregonian, from the time he was 18, and subsequently in national magazines that collec-

tively reached a broad demographic.

Conservation was a paramount value — a theme in many of Neuberger's articles. By the time he was elected to the U.S. Senate as a Democrat, Neuberger had built a national constituency among conservationists, and they were elated at his victory. Brent Walth in "Fire at Eden's Gate" describes Neuberger as McCall's "role model." When Neuberger died at the age of 47 in 1960, McCall took up the cause of conservation and became Oregon's most prominent conservationist.

In other words, Oregon's three prominent journalist officeholders carried positive, inspirational values into the arena and left their mark.

The important distinction between Neuberger and Kristof is that Neuberger served in the Oregon House of Representatives and the state Senate prior to the U.S. Senate. Neuberger had done a legislative apprenticeship — all of which he wrote about.

Nonetheless, it would have been useful to have an injection of Kristof's perspective in the race that lies ahead.

Steve Forrester is the president and chief executive officer of EO Media Group and author of the recent book, "Eminent Oregonians: Three Who Matter."

## YOUR VIEWS

### Use nonlethal practices on wolves and coyotes

We are a rural, hunting family and would never kill a wolf or a coyote. Research in several states has proven wolves and coyotes prefer to eat wild game. Destroying their family structures leads to increased livestock predation. So we buy beef only from ranchers that use predator-friendly practices, available locally.

Currently before the state Legislature are two bills: House Bill 4080 authorizes creation of "predator damage control districts" to pay the controversial "Wildlife Services" program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture to kill Oregon's wildlife deemed a threat to private property, without having to use or consider nonlethal methods. End of year 2020, this program killed 201,606 native wildlife in Oregon.

HB 4127 requests an additional \$1 million on the heels of \$400,000 from the Legislature, just last year, to be paid into the current Wolf Compensation Fund. This fund was established to support nonlethal prevention methods and compensate rancher losses. These funds have been misused to

supply livestock managers with "tools" such as telemetry equipment tuned to wolf radio collars and ATVs used in state-issued kill orders. "Coexistence" doesn't mean deputizing these compensated livestock managers to hunt down state-protected wildlife.

Before handing out any tax candy, the political arm of the livestock industry needs to prove the same success as individual ranchers. The largest sheep operation in Idaho has proven such success. Even after initial skepticism, the most cost-effective protection of their business is nonlethal methods over killing programs or reimbursement fund programs. See link to film: [wildlifecoexistence.org/the-wood-river-wolf-project](http://wildlifecoexistence.org/the-wood-river-wolf-project).

Killing everything in order to do our human business is not the future we want to hand our children.

Susan Strass Bend

### Time to restore energy independence

Time to wake up, America. Things have to change. What we see happening in Ukraine is unconscionable.

Since becoming a player of some significance on the oil and petrochemical scene, Putin has decided to flex his muscles and he needs to be reminded he is not invincible. One way to do that is to hit him in the pocketbook. Every time we fill our tanks with gas, we contribute to his war chest.

Why are we still buying Russian oil? Oh, right, now I remember, someone higher up decided we Americans should quit being energy independent, quit producing so much oil at home and buy Russian. By doing so we have aided and abetted — and still are by the way — Ukraine's desperate situation.

We should not be begging Russia or OPEC to sell us more oil, we should be petitioning our politicians to do their job and demand the restoration of drilling operations and the opening up of the Keystone Pipeline work here in America immediately, creating American jobs and American profit. America could be exporting oil and gas to the EU.

Please, folks, write to your representatives and senators. Time for us "little people" to make our voices heard. Stand up for American Made, America.

Darrell and Rose Howe Monument

### EDITORIALS

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### LETTERS

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