

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Pump your own runs out of gas

California may have its Silicon Valley and Hollywood. Ohio gets all those new high-paying computer chip manufacturing jobs for Intel. Washington state may have no income tax. But here in Oregon we don't have to pump our own gas.

Those aren't fair comparisons. We are not of a mind to be fair, hearing that once again a bill to let Oregonians pump their own gas is dead.

We get it if you don't want to pump your own. If you appreciate the bond Oregon has with the only other no self-service state, New Jersey, so be it. If you worry about people who would find pumping their own difficult, if you worry about safety, if you want another opportunity for jobs in Oregon, those are all real concerns.

But remember the bill as it was written, House Bill 4151, would not have removed the requirement to have attendants ready to pump gas. It would have made it optional for people who want to pump their own gas.

Is that so bad? We don't think so.

The undoing of HB 4151 was the need for some \$543,000 for the Oregon Fire Marshal to regulate consumer pumping. Time became too short to come up with that in this session.

We think the fire marshal may need even more money, if we understand the concerns. The worries about people pumping their own transfer to people plugging in their own electric cars, right? Especially those higher voltage charging ports.

In the 2023 Legislature shouldn't there be a bill to require Oregonians to be assisted with a paid professional when plugging in their electric vehicles?

We can't claim it as our idea. It would, though, create jobs. It would be very helpful for whom such effort can be difficult. It would be safer. And just because Oregon would be the only state to make this requirement, shouldn't be a reason to stop us. Maybe New Jersey would join in.



## Russia and Ukraine, a complex relationship



BRIGIT FARLEY  
PAST AND PROLOGUE

This month, there is only one history-related episode to discuss — Russia's war in Ukraine. Pundits, pols and smart phone users have bombarded us with words and images addressing the "whats" of this story: Russian troop movements, heroic Ukrainian defenders, Ukrainian President Zelenskyy livestreaming resistance all over Kyiv. But coverage of the "whys" or "hows" of this war is lacking: How did Russia and Ukraine come to blows in 2022? Like East European history generally, it is complicated, but the fundamentals are worth trying to unpack.

Russians and Ukrainians are closely related geographically, ethnically and culturally. They both trace their origins to Kyiv "Rus," as it was known then, the cradle of Russian/Ukrainian civilization. Prince Volodymyr (Vladimir, for Russians) accepted Eastern Orthodox Christianity in 988, the monks of the Kyivo-Pechersk'a monastery compiled the first work of Russian/Ukrainian literature there and the Kyivan state was a model of good governance for its time. But episodes of internal conflict, followed by the Mongol invasion, shattered Kyiv's unity and fatefully scattered its successors.

The founders of what became Russia — "Rus-sians" — went northeast from Kyiv and eventually located their capital in Moscow, circa 1325, and later Petersburg, by edict of Peter the Great, in 1703. The Russian state expanded south, with the defeat of the Mongols, and east, into Siberia, becoming in effect a Eurasian nation. By contrast, other former Kyiv residents, who would become known as Ukrainians, passed under the control of the Polish-Lithuanian state and later, the Habsburg Monarchy. Those governments were more diverse and subject to westernizing influences than Russia. Over time, moreover, the language spoken in 10th century Kyiv evolved. Those who had gone north spoke a language we know today as Russian. Ukrainians in Poland and later the Habsburg Monarchy began to speak a language heavily influenced by

the Poles and Slovaks living among them. Today, Russian and Ukrainian both use the Cyrillic alphabet but differ significantly in vocabulary and pronunciation. Think Spanish and Portuguese.

Several centuries after their common beginning in Kyiv, Russians and Ukrainians were different people, speaking different languages.

Fast forward to the 18th century: Ukrainians living close to Russia became subjects of the Tsar. The Russian empire had a hard going through the centuries — far-flung territories, dynastic conflict and foreign invasions, notably the epic war with Napoleon in 1812. These struggles inclined it to prioritize unity — one leader, one truth, one religion, one language — over diversity. Russia's rulers believed acknowledging difference risked disunity and danger. By the 19th century, they ordered Ukrainians and other non-Russian peoples leave their past behind and become Russians.

But Ukrainians resisted, believing their culture and language to be distinct. 19th century Ukrainians in Russia found inspiration across the border, in the Habsburg monarchy, where Ukrainians spoke and wrote in their mother tongue. Ukraine's Shakespeare, Taras Shevchenko, followed suit in Russia, writing poetry and plays in Ukrainian. Like-minded individuals published newspapers anonymously in Ukrainian. In response, the Russian authorities criminalized the very use of the word "Ukraine." This policy could prove fatal, as in 1907, when Kyiv experienced an outbreak of typhus. It was decreed that all warning signs be written in Russian, but many Ukrainians could not read Russian. Thousands died.

1917 brought revolution to Russia. In the wars and chaos that followed, Ukrainians campaigned for an independent state, but Communist forces fought to control all the former Russian territories. Ukraine thus became a republic of the Soviet Union in 1922. A few years later, Soviet leader Joseph Stalin — believing Ukrainians' desire for independence constituted treachery — plotted revenge when he launched his drive to bring all agriculture in the country under the control of the state. He instituted a policy of food and grain confiscation, in effect guaranteeing a famine, in the Ukrainian countryside. About three million Ukrainian peasants died of starvation. This outrage, the Holodomor in

Ukrainian, is considered a crime against humanity, on par with the Holocaust. Crucially, Stalin then moved Russians into the vacated Ukrainian countryside, to make it difficult for Ukrainians to break away in the future. And he continued to deny Ukrainians their culture and language.

There was worse to come for Ukraine. When Nazi forces invaded the Soviet Union in 1941, they targeted Ukraine's large Jewish population, killing nearly a million Jews well before the Polish death camps became operational. After the war, Soviet authorities continued to repress Ukrainian culture and language all over Ukraine, despite official denials. I will never forget a young Ukrainian man in Kyiv engaging me and some American colleagues on a bus in 1987, declaring he could never use Ukrainian language in school and his teachers taught only Russian literature. "Don't believe what they tell you about our culture being respected," he insisted. "Ukrainian language is outlawed here." We tried to quiet him, but he became more and more agitated. It wasn't long before the bus driver reached for his radio. Soviet police intercepted and stopped the bus, dragged the young man off and broke his spine with a billy club. We were too shocked to speak.

When the Soviet Union of Mikhail Gorbachev was headed for a breakup in 1991, Ukrainians understandably jumped at the chance to vote for independence. In the first decade after the Soviet Union, Boris Yeltsin's independent Russia showed no interest in dominating Ukraine and the former Soviet states. Independent Ukraine accordingly looked to cultivate closer ties to western Europe than Russia. Fatefully, Yeltsin proved unable to cope with the challenges of a transitioning Russia and stepped aside in 1999 in favor of Vladimir Putin, a former KGB major, now a player in Russian politics. As the world would learn, Putin's views on Russia's destiny differed drastically from Yeltsin's. This automatically put Ukraine's aspirations to join Europe in jeopardy. The road to Russia's war with Ukraine will be the subject of next month's column.

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

## YOUR VIEWS

### Possible drought solutions

Now that we again have a drought in south-central Oregon and the southwest United States, it seems like it is time to seriously think of long-term solutions. One of these could be pumping water out of the Columbian River to that area.

The ocean does not need that water. Power companies could be compensated for the loss of the electricity that would be generated by that water at the Bonneville Dam and The Dalles Dam. A good place to take the water out of the Columbia River would be somewhere between The Dalles and Biggs, using two large pipes along Highway 97, dropping off the necessary amount at Klamath Falls and pumping the rest to Lake Shasta near Redding, California. Two pipes would be better than one, in case something happens to one, the other one still would

work. California has the canals, etc., to take it from Lake Shasta. This would not help immediately, but could be part of a long term solution.

This drought problem is not going to go away. The sooner we start working toward a long term solution, the sooner it can be done.

**Bob Mattila**  
Brush Prairie, Washington

### Hermiston Police Department says thank you

It is always easier for me to put words on paper versus trying to say everything I want to say to a room full of people.

First, on behalf of the Hermiston Police Department Christmas Express program, we would like to thank Mayor Dr. Dave Drotzmann for nominating this incredible annual event for the 2021

Award of Merit at the Distinguished Citizens Awards.

Second, we are grateful to the selection committee for recognizing this program. Countless volunteers have supported this program financially, physically, and even spiritually over the 53 years, it has existed. Our intent is to provide a hand-up every Christmas season.

Once a year, the mayor and members of the Hermiston City Council meet with department heads in a goal-setting session. For the last couple of years, we have talked about taking a pause and recognizing a "win" as they occur. We do this not in a braggadocious way, rather to give credit where credit is due.

The Christmas Express program is a win for this entire community, and we are blessed to be a part of it.

**Chief Jason Edmiston**  
Hermiston Police Department

### EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

### LETTERS

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