

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

We are obligated to end acts of violence

The racist shooting massacre at a Buffalo, New York, supermarket two weeks ago seems far away and with little relevance to the rural heartland of Eastern Oregon, but its significance and impact is vast and should stand as a signpost for all Americans regarding a cancer that continues to metastasize.

The cancer is a violent, militant ethos that runs hard and deep within certain sections of this nation. It is not a new disease — violent racist aspects of our history are common — but its current form, exemplified by the Buffalo massacre, is by far the most serious in recent memory.

The avowed white supremacist killed 10 black people and workers at the supermarket and left behind not only a blanket of terror but questions that require deep contemplation by all Americans. Whether one lives in Alabama or Pennsylvania or Eastern Oregon, the slaughter perpetrated on the victims of the massacre should stimulate reflective pause regarding an array of subjects, including how such acts of violence are spawned and what they say about our nation to the rest of the world.

Americans by history and nature are often an unreflective bunch in perceptions of our democracy by other nations. That must change. We stand as the greatest world power and proclaim our form of democracy — where justice for all and equal representation are hallmarks — as a bright beacon for the rest of the world.

Yet, we consistently fail to live up to our own high-minded expectations. So, we must do better.

Too many men and women have laid their lives down on foreign shores for our citizens to tolerate lowering our standards. Every American, regardless of their color or their place of origin, should be able to enjoy the rights of being an American. Being gunned down while shopping for dinner doesn't fit that scenario.

It is not appropriate to place blame on others or to view the question as one for one part of the country or another and yet not an enigma for us to deliberate.

No, it is for all Americans, our obligation really, to work to ensure such acts of violence vanish and the merchants of hate and the brokers of national dissension are vanquished. If we do nothing we are tempting dishonor as well as more acts of violence.



Getting behind the wheel



REGINA BRAKER

ANOTHER MILE

It's that time of year for youthful milestones, with end-of-school-year traditions and graduations playing out around us everywhere. For many teens it's high time to pass the requirements to be able to get behind the wheel in the family vehicle, in preparation for summer jobs or just getting out and about with friends.

One parent friend proudly shared her daughter's experience two years ago navigating revised processes for acquiring a driver's license. It took me back to our sons' experiences, the most recent 10 years ago, one of those milestones toward individual freedom that involved wonderful nonfamily adults to help make it happen.

When my friend talked about this rite of passage, especially important in our rural counties, I realized that so much had changed beyond the experience of learning the rules of the road. The licensing process has changed to where parents know as little about it as their children. It's one thing to hear about it from mom, another to get it straight from the new driver.

She succeeded through sheer persistence. Passing the Provisional Instruction Permit test was not difficult, she said, having practiced on sample tests to understand what was required. Instructional options were not as available during the last two years, so a willing parent provided driving instruction, practice and feedback. Oregon's required 50 driving hours came through chauffeur

feuring her grandmother on errands.

The driving test posed the greatest challenge for our novice driver. In late February 2020 she had scheduled it for March 26, but COVID-19 closed down that service through the Oregon DMV, no longer available then in all communities at all times. A friend shared about a private company giving driving tests in La Grande, so she explored online what other options were emerging, some as far-flung as Ontario.

It felt like moving targets: an October appointment in La Grande too long a wait, a possible early August appointment for Pendleton that didn't pan out, also postponed to October. The early October slot almost fell through when the examiner was not scheduled. Each change for the behind-the-wheel test necessitated another rescheduling for the written test, too.

Finally, a parental intervention brought about an 8 a.m. road test through South Hill Pendleton in the examiner's vehicle. A small ding in performance was for hand placement on the wheel, an error picked up from her father. Her advice to others is, "Don't do anything illegal in your driver's test." And she laughed about getting in a stranger's car to be able to take the test.

Currently, Oregon Driver & Motor Vehicle Services has updated online guidelines for attaining the Provisional Instruction Permit, accessing driver education at the Learn to Drive link and options for taking the driving test and required written test at the link for WhyDriveWithEd.

As to scheduling of driver's tests, I contacted Sarah Lien, East Region manager for Oregon DMV, who reports that staffing shortages still impact wait times in Pendleton and Hermiston, with

DMV driving tests seeing a two-month wait. She stated that, "DMV is encouraging anyone interested in working for ODOT to view our open jobs online at Oregon.gov/jobs," specific to this need, but also more generally.

Third party vendors report a four-week wait, with a shorter wait time possible in Hermiston if an additional examiner is hired. Her advice is, "Applicants need to go to the website to look for availability and to schedule their appointment at DMV2U."

I asked about whose vehicle is used in the test, with her answer reminding us all of vehicle documentation: "Tests are conducted in a vehicle provided by the customer. It is important they bring proof of current registration and insurance to their appointment and the vehicle can pass the pre-trip inspection. Information on what to expect on a drive test and how to be best prepared is at www.oregon.gov/odot/forms/dmv/6614.pdf."

For those drivers needing a commercial license, Lien also included this information:

Class C drive test providers in the Hermiston and Pendleton area include: Hanford Testing Services, Hermiston and Milton-Freewater, 541-730-8484, www.hanfordtestingservice.com; Training Wheels of Oregon, Pendleton, trainingwheelsoregon@outlook.com, 541-961-9753 or 541-272-4917.

Here's to success in getting licensed to drive, and thanks to all who help make it happen.

Regina Braker, of Pendleton, is a retired educator with journeys through many places and experiences who enjoys getting to know people along the way.

YOUR VIEWS

Recent B2H article only had part of the facts

Only part of the facts were included in a recent article, "Idaho Power gains access for surveys, withdraws lawsuits," on the front page of the East Oregonian (May 12, 2022).

What is a glaring omission in the article was in the paragraph that stated, "Although sections of the proposed route runs through public property — Idaho Power has received permission from the federal government to do so — the line, as proposed, also would cross several dozen parcels of private land in multiple counties, including Baker, Union, Wallowa and Morrow in Oregon."

What the writer stated is incorrect in that it is far more than several dozen parcels of private land. The fact is that the proposed line will actually cross 100% private land in Umatilla County and the land is owned by around 700 land owners.

Idaho Power is being allowed to run over the small private landowners, with the support of Umatilla County commissioners, unlike Union and Baker County who opposed the line and support the private land owners. It seems as Umatilla County cares less about private landowners and cares more about revenues.

With the magnitude of this project there will be land, water, wildlife and private range lands destroyed forever, not

including the loss of value of the properties to the private property owners. But because of additional tax money promised to the counties, Umatilla County sold the people out.

Idaho Power says "they want to work and get along with the land owners." This is why they file lawsuits against the landowners and threaten to sue for high legal fees, if the landowners don't comply with their demands. This also shows how the laws are written to cover eminent domain in Oregon to the benefit of the big corporations and against the small land owners. Idaho Power seems to have only filed suits against select landowners at this time and many have found their neighbors have not been contacted about legal actions being taken against them. It should be noted that the majority of the landowners object to this line being built on their properties.

An example of the over reach by Idaho Power against private landowners, Idaho Power has filed a lawsuit against a family farm in Malheur County for access to build roads across their property. This being done even though the unneeded power line would be on adjoining BLM property and not on the families property. Idaho Power must believe it would be easier to build access roads on private property as opposed to that of a government held property.

I would like someone to explain why Idaho Power would want to build a line using a route that goes south from Board-

man, then east, back north, back east and then southeast, instead of a straight line from Boardman to Hemingway, Idaho.

Could it be possible, while being denied by Idaho Power, that it is to avoid all the requirements state, federal and Tribes would put on the line as opposed to the small private landowners who can't afford to fight the for profit private corporation?

John Harvey Stanfield

Worth the road trip

We took a trip back in time on the old highway between Reith and Echo. We got a taste of what the pioneers felt when crossing into Oregon in covered wagons. The road varied between gravel, cracks, potholes making it quite adventuresome.

About halfway we pulled over and had a tailgate picnic while the kids fished in a pothole. Each caught a small fish and were just delighted. The scenery was beautiful between the meadows so green this time of the year and the hills with cattle grazing peacefully.

As we were approaching Echo, we were delighted to find a brand new road that was smooth as glass. This trip is well worth your time if you enjoy the beauty and nostalgia as you cross a small stretch of Eastern Oregon.

Mike Mehren Hermiston

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