

Fighting news fatigue

It can be exhausting trying to keep up with the news.

It can make you seasick trying to concentrate on everything speeding by the transom.

It's enough for many people to throw their hands in the air. A new malady has been coined — "news fatigue" — this feeling that you cannot keep up with the steady stream of important information emanating from journalists the world over. The news is depressing and nausea-inducing, and that's no way to start the day. To combat the symptoms, many citizens are finding themselves pushed to make a choice.

First, they can convince themselves that the fire hose of news isn't important — you can check out and not care about it, and all will be fine.

Or they can take the route of believing there are vitally important updates and critical things happening every day that they must stay apprised of, but their own mental and physical well-being requires them to take a step back and clear their head.

Or, they can just take the tack that everything they don't want to hear is fake, allowing only one person or group to dictate the terms of reality. That's the laziest and simplest route, but to many it offers the veneer of peaceful understanding.

Sure, we're in the news business — it benefits us for people to pay attention.

But we're first and foremost citizens. And we know the danger that comes when powerful people and institutions attack the news, purposely try to confuse and overwhelm their constituents

and try to numb them with scandal after scandal until none are remarkable enough that they incite the public to demand accountability. It's a way to get away with anything, this slow spread of news fatigue disease.

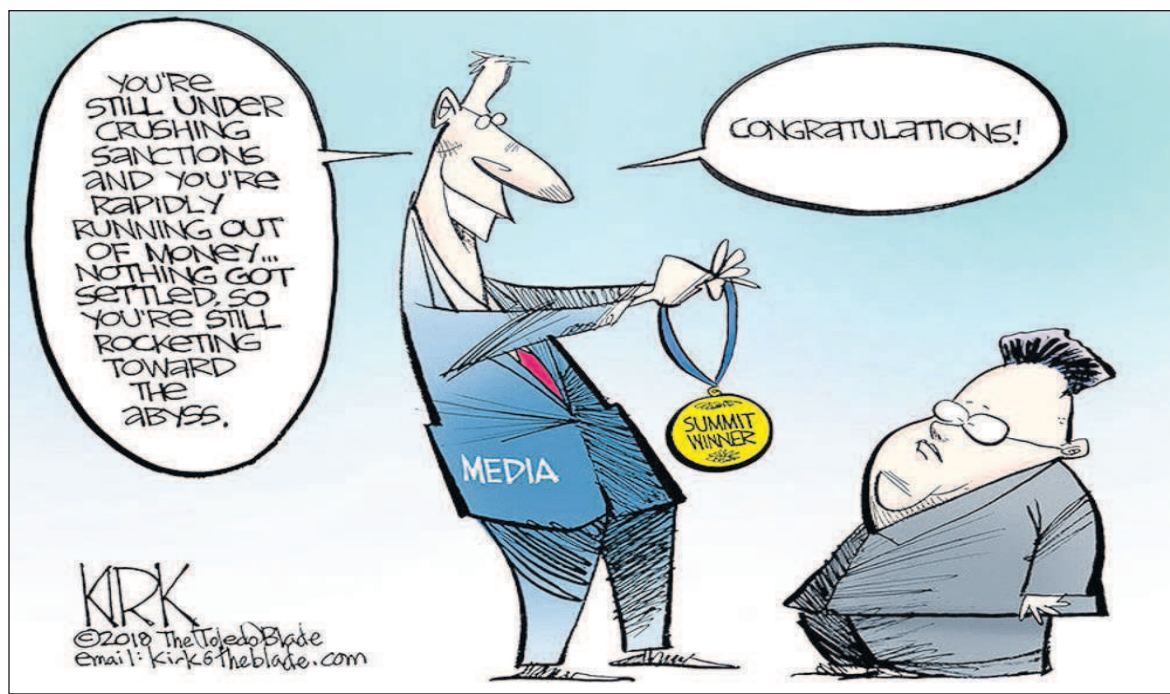
As David Frum, the political commentator and former speechwriter for George W. Bush, said recently in an interview: "If your child is feverishly ill, it can be very fatiguing to take care of her. But it's what you do, because that's your duty ... if your country is ill you have the same responsibility."

Part of the reason why "news" seems overwhelming, and some are trying to shirk the responsibility of understanding it, is that many people no longer agree on what "news" is.

A recent poll conducted by the Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs and the American Press Institute noted that most readers and journalists agree on what they want from journalism — news stories that are factual and offer context and analysis. Yet most of what people absorb, via social media or partisan talking heads on television, or via 280-character tweets, does not offer clear facts and clear context. Absorb too much of that and the brain decides to close down and give up.

There is a real joy of a few days of vacation, to check out of the news stream. That may be necessary to our mental health.

We know time away from the fusillade is important, and useful. But we urge you to jump back in, to remain vigilant and knowledgeable about the problems affecting our nation and the progress made by it.



FARMER'S FATE

Dr. Pendyke's miracle salve

By Brianna Walker
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

Mirror mirror on the wall, what the heck happened? This is not what adulthood looked like in the brochure!

I've reached the age where looking in the mirror is like checking the news. I know there will be some new developments I won't like: crows feet, new wrinkles, more white hair. Actually, that's not quite the truth. While I don't spend long in front of the mirror — I have never given my wrinkles more than a cursory glance — they are just smile memories, character lines. They define my journey — although recently that journey has been bombarded by expensive skin care products.

"What do you use for your daily skin care routine?" queried a persistent salesperson.

"Baby wipes, bull grease and sweat." I grinned.

She looked horrified. "On your face?"

"I smiled. "Arms, legs, face— wherever."

While she was racking her brain to decide what sales tactic is supposed to follow that response, I quickly made my escape.

The next time, however, I wasn't so successful. At a dinner party, I found myself trapped at a corner table with an extremely persuasive multi-level salesperson. No matter where the conversation went, she adeptly steered it back to the skin care product she was selling. Guaranteed to lessen wrinkles, tighten your skin, make it less puffy, clear up age spots — basically work miracles — which it should for the price.

"I don't mind wrinkles," I laughed. "I don't even own an iron — why should my face get more special treatment than my clothes? Although climbing in the dryer with a wet washcloth and coming out wrinkle-free and three sizes smaller doesn't sound too bad."

Usually sarcasm is my life ring out of these situations, but this salesperson didn't even blink. When the other two people at the table pulled out their

credit cards, I tried to sneak away. But a well placed hand on my arm and suddenly I felt a guilty obligation to open my wallet and purchase my very own bottle of miracles.

Several weeks later, our family was curled up in front of the TV, eating popcorn and watching "The Andy Griffith Show." Opie and his friends were trying to sell a miracle salve that didn't work. Barney decides to help Opie get his money back by pretending to be Dr. Pendyke, DVM, who wants to buy all the salve the company can get back — because it cures "the mange."

"Why look at that," my husband poked me in the ribs and, in the falsetto voice of Dr. Pendyke, began, "Look here at this miracle salve. For the low price of the cost of an airline ticket, you can buy this cream that will do nearly everything — it even cures the mange!"

I rolled my eyes and tried to ignore him. But it was hopeless.

As if being suckered in to buying the expensive "miracle salve" wasn't enough, my husband made sure to poke fun every chance he got. If he saw me going to bed at night without putting it on, he appeared horrified.

"Oh no!" he would exclaim. "I think I see new wrinkles! Maybe we need to get you more miracle salve to stop them!" Or he saw me apply it, he would sigh with exaggerated relief. "I am so glad you are putting that cream on. I thought I detected a hint of mange yesterday! Oh, come on, laugh," he snickered. "That was hilarious!"

I raised an eyebrow. "I'm laughing on the inside — so I don't get more wrinkles," I snorted, as I threw the bottle of miracle salve at him.

Recently, we were enjoying the sun on the white, sandy beaches of the Caribbean — perhaps a little too much, as our noses were peeling a bit. One afternoon while downtown, a well-dressed young man stepped out of a beauty shop. "It looks as if you could use some skin care," he smiled,

and I self-consciously touched my peeling nose. "Come, try a free sample."

I thought he had meant for my peeling skin, but before I had fully comprehended the situation, the young man was applying serum to one of my eyes. "Your skin could be so beautiful. It just needs a little extra care," he smiled. "Don't worry," my sarcasm deflected, "my other face is in the photoshop."

He looked at me curiously, but totally missed my sarcasm as he held up a mirror and exclaimed, "Wow, wow! Just look at that difference. Why, you look at least 15 years younger!"

I looked in the mirror. One eye looked tired and puffy. The other eye looked tired and puffy and covered in a sticky goop.

My husband smirked at me, but before he could make even one silent miracle salve reference, the young man had smeared the serum on one of his eyes too. "Look at that! You see that? Wonderful, amazing! And 10 years younger without a surgical face lift!"

I looked at my husband's face. Bright raccoon eyes from his sunglasses were very visible, but try as I might, I couldn't see any difference where the gloppy serum was. "All these beautiful results for only \$1,099!"

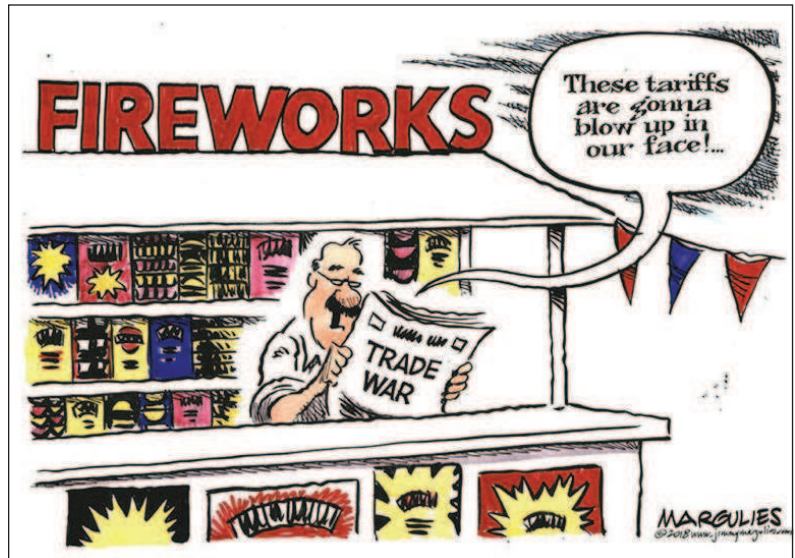
My lips twitched up — a thousand dollar cure for the mange. The young man mistook my smile for approval. "Would you like a bottle for each of you?" he asked.

I shook my head. "I don't know, honey, Dr. Pendyke has us on a pretty strict skin care regimen of baby wipes, bull grease and sweat."

We backed up, trying to retreat. The young man started after us, and we practically tripped over ourselves to get away.

My husband laughed as I began smearing the sticky goop off my eye, and in Dr. Pendyke's falsetto said, "Amazing, just amazing. Not only do you look 15 years younger, but I think you finally got rid of the mange!"

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

An education on the dark side of technology

To the Editor:

Kudos to the Eagle for the May 9 issue heading "The dark side of technology." Its hidden effects on society today frequently go unnoticed until it's too late. Our younger generation is certainly addicted to high tech as evidenced by the amount of time it consumes on a daily basis.

Keizer Police Sgt. Trevor Wenning made a solid argument for parents to educate themselves and ensure oversight on what their children are doing with the smartphones they have provided.

We are fortunate Todd McKinley and Cindy Tirico of the Grant County Probation Department took the time to arrange Sgt. Trevor's presentation. Even those of us ignorant of smartphones enjoyed the education.

Fred Fitzgerald
Monument

Voice opinions on forest plan

To the Editor:

I understand that the Blue Mountains forest plan revision will be released on or before Friday, June 29. While my public comment was shouted down by staff of the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest Supervisor's Office, and neither mine nor any other Eastern Oregon citizens' comments were responded to over the last four years, it will be interesting to see what the path forward looks like in northeastern Oregon for public lands, and how the U.S. Forest Service plans to allow us to use the mountains we love.

Once the plan is released, commenters on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement from 2014 will have 60 days to file an objection with the Forest Service on the Final EIS. Also, if new information is found in the plan, or a substantial change is found in the Final EIS, you will also have an opportunity to file an objec-

tion. Along with the formal objection process, you also can file as an "interested person," and there will be a 10-day period to make this request after objections have been filed. An "interested person" is someone who may or may not have objected or commented during the forest plan and amendments process, but who has an interest in supporting or opposing a submitted objection.

After watching the meetings and the treatment of residents at these meetings, I can understand why folks chose to remain silent. Forest Service staff yelling and belittling residents, former Forest Service staff doing the same. Environmental groups name calling and yelling during "facilitated" meetings, while subsistence users of the forest tried to politely articulate their concerns, only to be demeaned and belittled.

You will have a chance to have another voice; I would simply ask that you do so.

John D. George
Bates

WHERE TO WRITE

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• **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.

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• **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

• **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

• **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

• **Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.



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