

KNOW YOUR HISTORY

Mark Harris is right in that high schools (and all schools) also have free speech rights under the Constitution (“Black Lives, Local History,” 2/15). And further, it is important for every community to know its own history.

Beverly Mowery
Eugene

A PLACE AT THE TABLE

I want to express my deep gratitude to the anonymous woman who had the courage to write about how her husband turned into a white supremacist (*EW*, “Married to Hate,” 2/1). I hope your friends who were shunning you have read your story and accepted you back.

We all need to spend more time asking each other “What is it like to be you?” and really listening to the answer.

I am reminded of Starhawk’s novel *The Fifth Sacred Thing*, where a totalitarian army is attacking a community of diverse, egalitarian, peaceful people. They mount a non-violent resistance by persuading army

soldiers to defect to their side, focusing on the soldiers who have killed one of their people. They tell them “there is a place for you at our table,” and then follow through on that promise and make them welcome in their community, accepting them as human, forgiving their past mistakes.

How else can non-violence succeed?

Sharon Blick
Eugene

DREAMERS AND NIGHTMARES

There are serious flaws in Brian Palmer’s assumptions in his letter to the editor (“Don’t Blame Trump,” 2/15.)

Palmer says, “If Hugo Nicholas and another couple million DACA folks stay or leave, it probably won’t affect me one way or another. I likely won’t notice whatever financial impact it has on the country.”

Really?

You won’t notice fewer teachers and nurses? Fewer chefs and doctors? Fewer housekeepers and contractors? Fewer mechanics and programmers? Fewer EMTs and firefighters?

The “Dreamers” are not invisible. They are woven into the fabric of our daily lives and contributing to all facets of our communities.

Despite what right-wing extremists love to repeat, Dreamers aren’t the “bad hombres, rapists and terrorists” Trump loves to shine his racist spotlight on.

Don’t blame President Obama because the alt-right has found comrades in the White House whose dream is not for a better America but for a whiter one.

Michele Postal
Eugene

KILLING FREE SPEECH

EW’s Slant (1/25) closed with a paragraph on white supremacists by stating, “the media should and will expose those who hold reprehensible viewpoints.” Whoa, Nellie! We’re going to be punished for our viewpoints?

Wisely, our country was specifically founded on the proposition that our viewpoints are our own. If someone reveals an intention to blow up public buildings,

in speech or print, then that’s an actionable offense. If someone attacks another person with vicious and demeaning remarks — or, tragically, with actual violence — society’s mandate is to react aggressively. But believing, and even stating publicly, that “black is beautiful” or “white is supreme” does not constitute a crime.

As long as you get to decide what is “reprehensible,” you will not notice the damage. But if the punishment of “reprehensible” viewpoints catches on, you may find some of your own treasured views subject to repression.

Already, protesting against animal cruelty is codified as “animal terrorism.” A strong aversion to sprayed or GM produce, or even strict veganism, has found a place among America’s official mental illnesses (“orthorexia”).

Strong counter-propaganda is definitely necessary to de-normalize hate speech. But returning hate for hate victimizes the opponent and (as was true of crushed Germans after World War I) encourages more determined resistance. Discussing issues with

HOT AIR SOCIETY BY TONY CORCORAN

Lane County Commission Needs Estrogen Therapy

TRUMP AND #METOO IN THE YEAR OF THE WOMAN

March 6 is the candidate filing deadline for the May 15 primary election, so let’s review what’s at stake and who should be politically burned at the stake.

The main issue with primaries is turnout. Over the last four Oregon general elections turnout has averaged 76 percent. During that same period our primaries averaged a little over 42 percent. And as recently as 2014 it was less than 36 percent.

Turnout is heavily influenced by the races that occur in any primary. On the federal level, Lane County folks will see at least four Republican candidates seeking to run against Peter DeFazio in the 4th Congressional District.

The Republican gubernatorial primary has nine candidates with no clear favorite at this time. Knute Buehler has picked up an opponent in right wingnut Trumpophile Greg Wooldridge, a 70-year-old former Navy pilot and darling of the Oregon Right to Life crowd. Buehler is in trouble; he’ll probably spend a million dollars encouraging Republican turnout in May. And Wooldridge will do his best to get out Trump’s loyal base.

Locally we have one contested Democratic race in the Oregon House, with Phil Barnhart’s retirement in District 11. None of our local Senate seats feature contested primaries.

Bottom line: Republican candidates will have a lot of incentive to encourage partisan turnout in these contested federal and statewide elections. Democrats won’t. This in turn could impact the non-partisan county commission races. Just because these races are “non-partisan” doesn’t mean the outcomes aren’t impacted by the party affiliation of those who turn out to vote.

If Art Robinson succeeds in getting his Republican fringe in the 4th District out to vote, and if Wooldridge brings out the Trump fringe in the governor’s race, and if progressive turnout is weak, non-partisan positions could be heavily impacted.

There are three Lane County Commission seats up for grabs.

Two progressive candidates will challenge incumbent Jay Bozievich in the West Commissioner race. Nora Kent appears to be an anti-aerial-herbicide spray single-issue environmental activist. David Goldberg was particularly incensed at Libertarian Bozievich’s vote for a 12 percent pay raise for the commissioners while proposing

county nurses only receive 2 percent during the recent strike.

The problem in a three-way race is that the progressives split their vote and the incumbent conservative Libertarian, 12 percent wealthier, walks away with the seat.

The Springfield Commissioner race could be interesting. Incumbent Sid Leiken is being challenged by Joe Berney, a recently retired business owner and educator. Berney has garnered some strong labor endorsements. Sid has baggage. Both Bozievich and Leiken own the recent Lane County workers strike; threatening health care benefits while giving themselves and the county administrator a lavish raise left a bad taste in everyone’s mouth.

The East Lane County Commissioner position is the most interesting. Incumbent Faye Stewart left for a fat job. The remaining commissioners appointed Gary Williams, an empty suit, to fill his position. Commissioner Pat Farr orchestrated the selection of the three finalists — two Democrats and a Republican. Guess who won?

The county commission is a non-partisan race. So forget Democrat and Republican labels: think progressive versus conservative. Remember when we had three progressives and two conservatives during the halcyon “bookclub” days — the Handy, Fleenor, Sorenson triumvirate? Now Pete’s the loneliest progressive on the planet. There are five progressives in the East Commission race versus one conservative, Williams the appointed incumbent. Who knew that Heather Buch would have to run against the four smartest white men in east Lane County? If you don’t believe me, just ask them. Tim Laue, Kevin Matthews, James Barber and Frank King. Only one of them admits to being a professional comedian. I’ll leave it to you to figure out who it is. The other three are karaoke hacks.

Progressives in the East Commission district need to coalesce around one candidate, or we’re sunk. Buch’s a business owner. She has managed the renovation and transformation of the Oakridge trailer park and the Saginaw trailer park working with St. Vincent DePaul, local governments and law enforcement to reduce crime in the rural areas of Lane County by focusing on safe adequate housing. She is the only candidate with experience working on rural jobs, housing, poverty and rural crime.

Recent polling in the post-Trump victory era indicates that women of all affiliations will determine the outcome of our primary. I’m encouraged. I say, in the year of the woman, Heather Buch is a no-brainer. We need more estrogen turnout.