

# Opinion

## Choose River Road options wisely

The options a consulting firm presented at a recent open house for a revitalized River Road will not please everyone, especially commuters.

One of the options unveiled at the Feb. 12 open house at Keier Civic Center called for removing the center turn lane and installing bike lanes on the east and west sides of River Road.

The other three options all put bicyclists in the driver's seat with bike lanes taking precedence over motor vehicles. There are some in the public who are not fans of bicycle lanes, who feel their life is complicated by sharing the road with non-polluting transit choices.

Aside from major cities there is not a history of mass transit in the secondary cities on the west coast. Westerners value their independence and trading their private vehicles for public transportation is a tough sell. Yet the undeniable fact is that people have to move about.

Bicycle lanes are not a "build it and they will come" situation. There are many bicyclists in Keizer but a small percentage actually use them to get to commute to work. For those who have jobs in the Salem central area, commuting on two wheels makes lots of sense, but you can't order people to ride especially in inclement weather.

Commuting by bicycle is not an issue for those who are physically fit, but it would be a challenge for those who are not in prime condition.

With all that, is the best option for

a revitalization of River Road a matter of narrowing lane widths and adding bike lanes? The city has to plan for the growth that is expected over the next 15 years and that includes a smart and workable transportation system, something for which Mayor Cathy Clark has a long-held passion.

A revitalization of River Road is more than making the city's main thoroughfare move more smoothly. Drivers use River Road to get to work in Salem or elsewhere in Keizer. They use it to get from one end of the city to the other; some trips within Keizer are fairly short—running to the grocer, dropping kids off at school.

The reality of River Road is that it is used by the public, in part, to get to a retail destination. You cannot hamper that use because it will tamp down its overall *raison d'être*: economic development. Business contributes to the city's tax base and we want to see more of that, not less.

An increase in bike lanes should be accompanied by more bicycle maintenance stations along River Road, more bike racks and an incentive to get more people on bikes for fun or commuting.

Before its next meeting on revitalization options the city should ensure that members of the Traffic Safety-Bikeways-Pedestrian Committee (many of whom are bicyclists) are there to add their valuable input.

—LAZ

## Will the real Post please stand up?

Rep. Bill Post built his name locally as an entertaining, sometimes bombastic talk radio host who delighted in aggravating the left and affirming the right's beliefs. These skills put him in a position to run for the Oregon Legislature, but it was in many ways his less prominent qualities that allowed him to be taken seriously as a potential lawmaker. Like many entertainers, his demeanor off the air was quite different—thoughtful, open-minded and willing to acknowledge hard truths even if they contrasted with party orthodoxy.

This ability to channel his inner class president helped allow Oregon's at-least-superficially-genteel political establishment to overlook Post's occasional clownish tendencies. As Keizer's representative, he has had mixed success balancing these competing personalities. Unfortunately, he doesn't seem to be learning on the job, and may be backsliding, as his recent actions caused House Speaker Tina Kotek to remove him from the House Judiciary Committee as punishment. (Kotek also removed Rep. Mitch Greenlick, a fellow Democrat, from a powerful committee chair perch for his own less-than-civil comments.)

It is primarily Post's social media presence that has caused him unwelcome headlines. There was his mocking of sexual assault victims, doxing

petition organizers, and more recently referring to a fellow lawmaker as "cray cray." By comparison, the tweet that broke the camel's back—a call for gun rights activists to show up at a rally encouraging tighter gun laws—wasn't so bad, but was the latest in a pattern Post seems unable or unwilling to break.

Post may be earning retweets and *atta-boys*, but he's not doing Keizer or District 25 any favors. Republican influence is at its nadir in Oregon due to the Democratic supermajority, but individual relationships still matter, as does the ability to be taken seriously. His credibility when advocating for his district is diminishing even as his seniority rises.

Like a young pitching prospect with a mean fastball, Post got to the big leagues of state politics with quick wit and a veteran broadcaster's keen understanding of his audience. It's past time to diversify his skill set. Unless his aspirations end at being a minority-party backbencher, we would all be well served if Post channeled his inner 1 Corinthians 13 and put away childish things—which in a modern edition might translate as "delete your account."

And if all we ask of our elected leaders is entertainment, what right do we have to demand actual solutions for what ails us?



## Debate over ISIS bride

By DEBRA J. SAUNDERS

In 2014, Hoda Muthana, then 20 years old, left Alabama to become an ISIS bride in Syria. When she left the United States, she posted her passport on her Twitter account and implied she was about to burn it.

Now Muthana wants to return to the U.S. with her 18-month-old son, but President Donald Trump doesn't want to let her back in the country.

Here's the TV news take on her case as laid out by the *Today* show's Craig Melvin: "This is the Alabama woman who left four years ago to join ISIS. She has a son. She said that she wants to come home now; she was radicalized, she made a big mistake."

"Alabama mother begs to return to the US," reads an online *ABC News* headline. Considering that Muthana left Alabama four years ago to renounce the United States and join ISIS, "Alabama mother" is not the way most people would describe her.

Problem: Muthana doesn't seem really sorry. In an exclusive interview with *ABC News*, Muthana was asked what she thought would be proper punishment for joining ISIS. She replied: "Maybe therapy lessons. Maybe a process that will insure us that we'll never do this again."

Muthana also described herself as "just a normal human being who's been manipulated once and hopefully never again."

The "Manson girls"—young women who trolled and killed for cult leader and mass murderer Charles Manson in 1969—come to mind. But at least the creepy young women who fell for Manson didn't

know what they were getting into when they joined his so-called family.

Muthana was radicalized over the internet. Months before she flew to Istanbul on the road to Raqqa, Syria, ISIS posted a gruesome video of one of its masked thugs beheading journalist James Foley.

ISIS forces had beheaded Syrian troops, humanitarian workers, civilians and western hostages. A normal person does not see videos of people being beheaded and want to marry the executioner. But Muthana did. She married three ISIS fighters as her contribution to the caliphate.

Muthana also had a Twitter account on which she urged others to drive trucks to kill people at American parades. And she urged her followers to look up President Barack Obama's schedule so they could "take down that treacherous tyrant."

Muthana now is being used as another example of what is wrong with Trump. After all, The president, tweeted, "I have instructed Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, and he fully agrees, not to allow Hoda Muthana back into the Country!"

As Pompeo told Melvin, the U.S. does not believe Muthana is a U.S. citizen, as her father served as a Yemeni diplomat for the United States shortly before her birth. The government asserts that the fact that Muthana had a U.S. passport did not establish her bona fides as a citizen.

Muthana's family is suing to prompt Washington to get her out of a Syrian refugee camp and back into the United States.

"This shows us to be a nation of laws," attorney Charles Swift argued

on CNN Friday. Swift also said that Muthana "understands that she's going to be prosecuted." I'm not so sure she does understand, given her assertion that jail time is less likely to help her when she really needs help to recover from the trauma she experienced.

Muthana family attorney Hassan Shibly told the *Daily Mail* that Trump would use the case to undermine birthright citizenship in a way that affects "mostly Latino Americans."

There is one little problem with that argument. According to Swift's petition to establish Muthana's citizenship, as well as that of her son, the U.S. government sent a letter to her in care of her parents' address on Jan. 15, 2016 informing Muthana she was not a citizen. January 2016—that's before Trump was elected.

It was the Obama administration that determined Muthana was not a citizen. According to Swift's brief, the United Nations did not notify the U.S. government about the father's diplomatic status until months after the daughter was born. And if there is one thing President Obama was not known for, it was working to end birthright citizenship.

Swift may well be right on the citizenship issue at hand. And if he is, may Muthana be greeted with a quick embrace from a legal system ready to let her take responsibility—*real* responsibility—for joining a terrorist organization.

Or maybe the courts will rule that Muthana is not an American, and if that happens, for once, it won't be because of Trump.

(Creators Syndicate)

### other voices

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## Four weeks in, major bills getting play

As the fourth week of session comes to a close, cap and trade and rent control have proven to be the most controversial issues as of yet.

The cap and trade bill (LC 894) was originally 98 pages and has now been turned into HB 2020, being 55 pages long. The Joint Committee on Carbon Reduction has been meeting to work on HB 2020 and to hear from interested parties. The committee is comprised of 14 senators and representatives with eight Democrats and six Republicans. Much like the transportation package from 2017, the committee will be taking this bill around the state to have hearings and

unanimously through both chambers as many of us agree that no cause evictions are unfair. The most contentious part of the bill relates to rent control,

which has proven not to work. In fact, in the only places where rent control has been used, large metropolitan cities, it has been significantly scaled back from the original concept. Land lord constituents have reached out to me and shared their opposition to SB 608, but they also recognize this bill will allow them to raise rent to 7 percent per year, which is typically unheard of to raise rent that high.

These two bills have been at the height of discussion, but what I believe should be



from the capitol

By BILL POST



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