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Impeachment better than recall

Courtney's obstruction protects Oregon's one-party government

In the wake of Gov. John Kitzhaber's resignation, Oregonians learned we are the only state without an impeachment clause in our Constitution.

Our state representatives rightly responded by approving a measure to put a constitutional amendment on the ballot, allowing Oregon voters to enact an impeachment clause.

But a funny thing happened on the way to the ballot. Senate President Peter Courtney blocked the amendment, ruling he would not bring it to the Senate floor for a vote.

Courtney's stated excuse was that Oregon voters have the recourse of recalling a governor and that should be sufficient. (Translation: Shut up and eat it.)

Courtney's rationale is evasive. His excuse for inaction allows legislators to escape responsibility for a governor whose actions warrant removal from office.

Here is the essential distinction between recalling a gover-

nor and impeaching him. Recall elections become re-election campaigns. Impeachment requires a legislative body to be specific about the chief executive's malfesance and to hold focused debate beyond the level of sound-bite politics.

As president of the Senate and a creature of the statehouse for almost three decades, Peter Courtney epitomizes Oregon's one-party government. Shielding our governors from what is common in every other state is effectively a Democratic Governor Protection Act. It is good for the axis of longtime legislators, lobbyists and public employee unions who define our state's one-party politics.

In the wake of John Kitzhaber's perfidy, it is appalling that Courtney is so tone deaf.

Financial shenanigans in state government

Oregon state government is a vast enterprise — larger than giant private employers.

But if you read the recent articles from our Capital Bureau, you notice a theme. There seems to be no common standard among state agencies for enforcing financial control over your tax dollars.

Moreover, a governor was allowed to operate in what an accountant would call a capricious manner.

Hillary Borrud's story, published in last Friday's Daily Astorian, concerned tax credits given to investors in green energy projects. Borrud reported that "... around 2011, the Oregon Department of Energy scaled back its oversight of the tax credit sales. The department quietly stopped enforcing pricing and other rules, which allowed private brokers to strike deals in which the prices were never verified by the state."

When auditors in the Department of Revenue raised an alarm about this disparity,

Gov. John Kitzhaber effectively told them to back off.

It is remarkable in Oregon state government, that kind of financial funny business is deemed to be OK.

An earlier story from our Capital Bureau made a similar point. The agency in that story was the Department of Geology and Mineral Industries. Its employees struggled to track the many grants and other types of funding the agency receives. And the executive director spent down funds in one account that was meant for another purpose. As a consequence, the agency risked running out of funding altogether.

Why aren't financial controls in force to forestall that kind of capricious behavior?

Like state government's history of botching large computer software projects, this matter of building and enforcing financial controls is the unglamorous work of the state Legislature. And that is probably why it simply doesn't get done.

Where to write

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Daily Astorian File
 It wouldn't be the Fourth of July in Cannon Beach without the community parade. Those who aren't in the parade are watching it from the sidelines in 2014. The day is filled with activities from early morning to late evening.

Don't rain on the Fourth of July parade

It's summer, after all!

By NANCY MCCARTHY

Despite what the calendar tells you and what the sunshine says, summer doesn't usually start around here until July 5.

That's why there's so much celebrating on the Fourth.

Yes, there's a certain nod to the theory of liberty, freedom and Uncle Sam, but, locally it's summer that everyone is excited about.

In fact, it's an inside joke around here: We don't really get summer until after the parade.

But what a lead up to summer do we offer on the North Coast! It's what a small town does best: celebrate the Fourth of July, and we have so many small towns along our stretch between the sea and the mountains, it's extra special.

In Cannon Beach, where I live, the locals are likely to parade down Hemlock Street any time. We have parades to pay tribute to Earth Day and Sandcastle Weekend. So, it would be a crime not to have a Fourth of July parade.

And, boy, is it done right.

The police sirens signal the start, and for the next hour, downtown Cannon Beach is red, white and blue

IMPRESSIONS

By NANCY MCCARTHY



pandeonium. It's not time to stay home: Everyone comes out for the parade, either to cheer it on or to be in it. There's even room in line for pets.

Dressed-up bicycles mingle with flag-carrying color guards, which give way to floats filled with kids and balloons, just ahead of Hula-Hoopers and jugglers, who are followed by dancing neighbors dressed in multi-print shorts and orange clown wigs twirling their lawn chairs, and after the crowd's applause, decorated wagons with sleepy-eyed toddlers are pulled by cheerful parents who are followed by firetrucks and frenzied teenagers in holiday garb who just joined the parade for the fun of it.

The scene is duplicated in Seaside, Gearhart and Warrenton, where the Fourth of July parades also are classic small-town celebrations.

Look who's hiding in Lincoln's attic

By TIMOTHY EGAN
New York Times News Service

In one of the little acts of subversion that creeps into *The Simpsons* every now and then, a helicopter from Fox News was shown in 2010 with a logo, "Not Racist, But #1 With Racists."

So it can be said of the Republican Party, a shelter for the kind of dead-enders who used to be Democrats, then Dixiecrats, but have found a home of sorts in the attic of the Party of Lincoln.

It's encouraging to see some party leaders trying to sweep these dark-hearted elements out, but they have work to do yet — starting with Donald Trump.

The accused killer of nine black churchgoers in Charleston, S.C., Dylann Roof, appears to have been moved to mass murder by incendiary tracts turned out by a white supremacist group, the Council of Conservative Citizens. The leader of that same group, Earl Holt III, has donated more than \$60,000 to various Republican office holders and candidates, including the presidential aspirants Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum and Rand Paul.

The candidates, of course, are shocked — shocked! — that an extremist hate group would contribute to their cause, and most of them have now returned the money or given it to a fund for victims' families. But it raises an obvious question: Why would someone whose ideas belong in the graveyard of history contribute, across the board, to leading Republican conservatives?

Guilt by association can be unfair, or at least calls out for nuance. So let's move on to a more overt racial fire-bomber in the party, Trump, who is polling second — just behind Jeb Bush — in one recent survey of New Hampshire Republicans.

Trump does not use dog whistles or code words. He's blunt. And his wealth affords him a halo of respect in some circles that a low-rent racist would not get. In the spasm of surreal narcissism that was his presidential announcement earlier this month, Trump said some things you would expect to hear at a Klan rally — 20 years ago.

"When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you," he said. "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

Because Trump is a buffoon, a punchline and a fact-checker's full-time project, he gets away with things that more serious candidates cannot. So Mexicans — and by extension, all immigrants — are not "you," but rapists, drug lords and leeches in our fair land. Ha-ha. That Trump — what a straight-shooter.

For his "insulting remarks about Mexican immigrants," Univision, the Spanish-language broadcaster, just dumped its relationship with Trump's Miss Universe pageant. (He's a part-owner.) Great. Now where are the Republican leaders — supposedly intent on trying to make the party something more than a collection of grievance-gorged old white guys — giving Trump a similar message?

Trump also has consistently challenged President Barack Obama's legitimacy as an American citizen, making a clearly racist play in his questioning of the president's place of birth, even after the release of a long-form birth certificate.

Money insulates Trump. But the same cannot be said of Mike Huckabee, who also questioned the president's American authenticity, concocting a lie about how "his childhood" in Ken-

But the parades are only a start. In Cannon Beach, the firefighters cook and give away hot dogs, and the women of the PEO sell strawberry shortcake. In Seaside, the Historical Museum holds an old-fashioned ice cream social, and there's a drum and bugle corps concert. A spectacular fireworks display on the beach caps the day's festivities.

But Warrenton isn't to be outdone by Seaside. In Warrenton, the day starts with a community breakfast for Uncle Sam (I never thought about it before, but I guess Uncle Sam does need to eat, doesn't he?), and later, classic cars are on display, a motorcycle tailgate party is held (do motorcycles even have tailgates?), kids decorate their bicycles and play games and firefighters offer a free barbecue.

In addition to Seaside's fireworks display, Astoria also lights up the sky over the Columbia River.

The Fourth of July is one day that the North Coast doesn't forget. Cynics might say that's because the events attract tourists and it's one of the best money-making weekends of the year for businesses.

I, however, ignore those naysayers, preferring, instead, to don my rose-colored sunglasses and head to the beach — following the parade, of course.

After all, summer has just arrived, and it's time to celebrate.



Timothy Egan

ya shaped his worldview. Huckabee sent a well-received video, in 1993, to the supremacist Citizens Council, though he later condemned the group.

Huckabee's buddy — a "patriot and a friend," in his words — is Ted Nugent, a raised rocker who often appears on stage with a Confederate flag, wrapped in it or wearing it. It was Nugent who called President Obama "a subhuman mongrel."

Let's yield to a British-born comedian, John Oliver, to set Lost Cause apologists straight: "The Confederate flag is one of those symbols that should really only be seen on T-shirts, belt buckles and bumper stickers to help the rest of us identify the worst people in the world."

The House whip, Rep. Steve Scalise of Louisiana, has had trouble trying to explain why he spoke, in 2002, to a white supremacist group founded by the former Klan leader David Duke. Scalise now says he finds the group's beliefs repugnant. But earlier this year, Duke told a radio interviewer that Scalise "agreed with all my ideas."

The party label is meaningless. The white South was solidly Democratic after the Civil War, vowing never to vote for the party that liberated the slaves. A hundred years later, the white South changed allegiances with the advent of the civil rights movement. Richard Nixon then sealed the transformation with his Southern Strategy, which parked Southern whites firmly in the Republican Party.

For the many Republicans who believe in free markets, less government and the racial legacy of Lincoln, the question has to be asked: What do some of society's worst elements see in their party? It's the coded language, yes, the hard voices of its broadcast wing, but also actions. Of late, this is the party that has been behind restrictive voting measures aimed squarely at blacks. Don't give racists anything to root for, and they'll crawl back under their rocks.