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Governor launches a smart initiative

Classroom teachers will gain professional support

The Chalkboard Project is Oregon's research and development arm for K-12 education. For 12 years, this organization, which was created and funded by Oregon's most prominent foundations, has run trial programs in public schools and measured results.

It has been a struggle to get the Legislature to fund Chalkboard's pilot programs. Gov. John Kitzhaber became Chalkboard's advocate. And now Gov. Kate Brown has taken a giant step in the same direction.

In a little noticed element of her agenda announced last week, Gov. Brown is breaking new ground. Says Chalkboard's executive director, Sue Hildick: "The governor is stepping out into K-12 space with something we think is important."

By executive order, Brown is creating a group to design a public-private entity to do things Chalkboard has tried to do for years.

The eventual product will be a Council on Educator Advancement. Chalkboard will provide the venture dollars for this innovation. This center's aim will be a statewide system of

educator supports that focus on professional development. Hildick says these supports will kick in at the point when a young Oregonian decides to pursue classroom teaching as a profession. They will also recognize the importance of mentoring teachers through the critical first few years. And they will foster the development of administrators.

Hildick describes why a private partner is essential. "It has been difficult for the Oregon Department of Education to administer because they are a compliance agency. It's hard for them to do innovation, because largely they give out dollars based on formulas.

Chalkboard is one of the brightest spots in Oregon K-12 education. Gov. Brown's initiative will lead to some excellent outcomes.

Landslides happen

If we can't prevent them, we must mitigate the outcome

This winter's heavy rain — 5 inches in some places last Thursday — is weighing down the ground, lubricating old faults and causing landslides. It's a problem that impacts property owners, developers, communities and planning departments.

Ground is visibly slipping in Emerald Heights, along the Astoria Riverwalk, at Ilwaco Cemetery and other places around the Columbia estuary. Some of these slides already are, or will become, expensive liabilities at a time when there are few public resources to stabilize them. The Ilwaco Cemetery, historically and culturally important, faces expenses far beyond its means.

• Property owners need to watch for warning signs of impending slides. These include new cracks in the ground, foundations and sidewalks; tilting trees on slopes; changes in door and window openings; springs, seeps or standing water on previously dry ground. If these signs appear, steps like diverting water away from affected areas can slow or stop slippages. Prevention is

expensive, but a far cheaper and better option than attempting to mitigate damages after slides occur. Consult an engineer.

• Developers, and municipal and county planners, have to incorporate both known and suspected geophysical dangers in decisions about development. Failure to do so exposes all parties to expenses and invites litigation.

• Logging on steep slopes must be subjected to scrutiny.

The Pacific Northwest is rife with landslide issues and there's plenty of good advice available. One good overview is available at www.tinyurl.com/LandslideInfo.

This costly and disruptive problem isn't going away, and is likely to worsen as development spreads into former forested areas and onto steeper hillsides. Climatologists believe rainfall events will become more severe. Tree roots are rotting away in long-settled areas, relaxing their hold on soil.

We have to keep landslides from happening when we can, and identify more affordable ways to repair the destruction after they happen.

Stay sane America, please!

By DAVID BROOKS
New York Times News Service

In January of 2017 someone will stand at the U.S. Capitol and deliver an Inaugural Address.

This is roughly the place where Abraham Lincoln, Franklin Roosevelt, Dwight Eisenhower and Ronald Reagan once stood.

I am going to spend every single day between now and then believing that neither Donald Trump nor Ted Cruz nor Bernie Sanders will be standing on that podium. One of them could win the election, take the oath, give the speech and be riding down Pennsylvania Avenue. I will still refuse to believe it.

Yes, I know what the polling evidence is telling us about Trump, Sanders and Cruz, but there are good reasons to cling to my disbelief.

First, these primary campaigns will not be settled in February. They won't be settled in March or April. Sometimes a candidate can sweep Iowa and New Hampshire and cruise to the nomination. But that candidate has to be broadly acceptable to all parts of the party. Trump, Cruz and Sanders are not.

As Jay Cost writes in *The Weekly Standard*, "This could mean a lengthy nomination battle that stretches all the way to the California primary in June."

On the Republican side the early primaries and caucuses allocate delegates proportionally. Only 16.2 percent of the delegates overall come from winner-take-all states. That means the delegate-getting war will be a slog.

The first day when any candidate could rack up a big winner-take-all delegate harvest is March 15, an eternity from now. More than half the delegates will be allocated after that date.

Second, Cruz and Trump will go after each other with increasing ferocity over the next many weeks or months. There is a decent chance, given their personalities, that they will make each other maximally unattractive and go down in each other's death embrace.

Third, the Trump and Sanders turnout problems are real. Trump is



David Brooks



Mary Altaffer/AP Photo

A supporter winks at Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump after he signed an autograph for her during a campaign event at the Roundhouse Gymnasium, Tuesday, in Marshalltown, Iowa.

doing very well among people who haven't voted in the past four elections. It's possible he has energized them so much they will actually caucus and vote, but you wouldn't want to bet your gold-plated faucets on it. People who don't vote generally don't vote.

Sanders is drawing support from nonvoters, too. Sanders is up in some polls overall, but he trails big time among people in Iowa who caucused in 2008 and among those who are definitely registered to vote.

It's quite possible that the big story post-Iowa will be how badly these two underperformed.

Fourth, establishment Republicans who are softening on Trump because they think he is more electable than Cruz are smoking something. According to a Pew Research survey, a majority of Americans think Trump would make a poor or terrible president.

Chuck Todd ran through Trump's favorable-unfavorable ratings on "Meet the Press" on Sunday: Among independents, Trump is negative 26 points; among women, negative 36; among suburban voters, negative 24. Is the Republican Party really going to nominate one of the most loathed men in American public life?

Fifth, America has never elected a candidate maximally extreme from the political center, the way Sanders and Cruz are. According to the FiveThirtyEight website, Cruz has the most conservative voting record in the entire Congress. That takes some doing.

Sixth, sooner or later the candidates from the governing wing of their parties will get their acts together.

The Trump and Sanders turnout problems are real.

Marco Rubio has had a bad month, darkening his tone and trying to sound like a cut-rate version of Trump and Cruz.

Before too long Rubio will realize his first task is to rally the voters who detest or fear those men. That means running as an optimistic American nationalist with specific proposals to reform Washington and lift the working class.

If he can rally mainstream Republicans he'll be at least tied with Trump and Cruz in the polls. Then he can counter their American decline narrative, with one of his own: This country is failing because it got too narcissistic, became too much like a reality TV show. Americans lost the ability to work constructively to get things done.

Finally, eventually the electorate is going to realize that in an age of dysfunctional government, effective leadership capacity is the threshold issue. That means being able to listen to others, surround yourself with people smarter than you, gather a governing majority and above all have an actual implementation strategy. Not Trump, Cruz or Sanders has any remote chance of turning his ideas, such as they are, into actual laws.

In every recent presidential election U.S. voters have selected the candidate with the most secure pair of hands. They've elected the person who would be a stable presence and companion for the next four years. I believe they're going to do that again. And if they're not, please allow me a few more months of denial.

Sarah Palin saves feminism

By MAUREEN DOWD
New York Times News Service

WASHINGTON — It's a tough call to figure out which place is more benighted: Hollywood or Saudi Arabia.

Saudi Arabia was pulling ahead with all its beheadings and its top cleric's fatwa on chess as "the work of Satan."

But then Hollywood took the lead with its Jim Crow Oscars, Scully being offered half of Mulder's pay for the "X-Files" reboot, and its second-class treatment of Rey — the scrappy heroine of "Star Wars: The Force Awakens." Rey, played by Daisy Ridley, embodies the awakening Force. Yet even the director, J.J. Abrams, called it "preposterous and wrong" that Rey's action figure was missing in action from some game and toy tie-ins — a traditionally male realm.

And Lucasfilm is run by a girl action figure, Kathleen Kennedy, so go figure.

That is why it's so inspiring to see a woman out on the campaign trail who has had such a historic impact on feminism, helping to recast outmoded assumptions about women.

Yes, Sarah Palin, I'm giving you a shout-out.

Before Palin, if a woman flamed out in a spectacular fashion, it was considered an X through the X chromosome. If Billie Jean King lost to Bobby Riggs, women would be seen as second-class athletes. If Geraldine Ferraro seemed unfit for the White House, all women might be judged incapable.

But when Palin turned out to be utterly unqualified and unintelligible, spouting her own special Yoda-like language, it did not reflect poorly on women as a whole — only on her and John McCain. What the hell were you thinking, Senator?

Ordinarily, it's considered sexist to call a woman shrill. But Palin liberated us on that score. She really is shrill.

Ordinarily, it's dicey to focus on

what a woman in politics is wearing. But again, Palin has freed us up. She sported a cardigan so gaudy and rogue at her Iowa endorsement of Donald Trump (the man who viciously mocked her former running mate's war record) that we would be remiss not to mention that it was the sartorial reflection of Palin and Trump themselves.

Ordinarily, you have to tread gingerly in critiquing a working woman on her mothering skills. But Palin's brawling brood runs so wild around the state she once governed, in a way that is so contrary to her evangelistic, sanctimonious homilies on family values, that it seems only Christian to advise her to study the Obamas to see what exceptional parenting looks like.

With Palin and Trump, a failed reality star and a successful one, gall is divided into two parts. There has been a lot of talk this campaign season about how female pols bring superior qualities to the table: collegiality and listening skills. But SarahCuda shows that we are truly the equals of men, capable of narcissistic explosions, brazen hypocrisy and unapologetic greed. She had barely finished the endorsement Tuesday when she began using it to raise money for SarahPAC, so she can take her show on the road.

Her oldest son, Track, was a kid with a temper before he served in Iraq for a year, conveniently shipping off in the fall of 2008 as his mother began her hockey-mom spiel. The 26-year-old was arrested Monday on an assault charge, accused of punching his girlfriend in the face and kicking her during an alcohol-fueled argument at the Palins' home in Wasilla, Alaska. His girlfriend told the police that he was also waving around an AR-15 assault rifle.

Instead of just admitting that her family is a mess, Palin exhibited Trump-like swagger, conjuring a story in an attempt to gin up the crowd and occlude her son's behavior.



Maureen Dowd

She used the last refuge of scoundrels in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Wednesday, wrapping herself in patriotism. In her convoluted, disingenuous way, she charged President Barack Obama with a lack of "respect" for veterans and suggested that Track had post-traumatic stress disorder and became "hardened," implying this

is what led to the incident prompting his arrest. This from the archconservative who presents herself as a model of personal responsibility and scourge of victimhood?

Outraged vets urged Palin not to reduce PTSD to a political "chew toy," as one put it, or to excuse domestic violence by citing the disorder.

The rattlebrained Palin has reversed her Iraq position, so that now her stance somehow matches Trump's consistent and prescient one against the Iraq invasion.

When she saw Track off to Iraq in 2008, she echoed W.'s specious argument, calling the war a "righteous cause" to avenge "the enemies who planned and carried out" 9/11. But in her endorsement of Trump, she praised Rand Paul, who thinks we should have left Saddam Hussein in place, and argued that America should stop "foolin' the bill" for oil-rich nations and "their squirmishes that have been going on for centuries, where they're fightin' each other and yellin' 'Allah akbar,' calling jihad on each other's heads for ever and ever."

Hillary Clinton is presenting herself as the embodiment of women, an American Marianne, pushing her gender in an all-for-one-one-for-all, now-or-never way. She's even campaigning this week in Iowa with Billie Jean King. Women should support her because if she founders, it will be bad for women. One Democratic senator said privately that many Democrats believe that Hillary is still the presumed nominee because she is a woman.

But Palin has done us a favor by proving that a woman can stumble, babble incoherently on stage and spew snide garbage, and it isn't a blot on the female copybook.

It's all on her. Can I get a hallelujah?