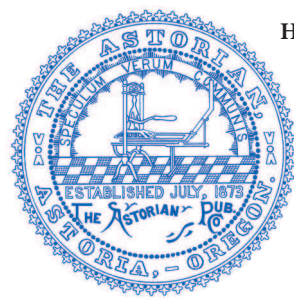


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OUR VIEW

Governor ducks responsibility for health authority mess

Bad news keeps rolling out from the Oregon Health Authority. But instead of taking responsibility, Gov. Kate Brown not only ducked it but also tried to spin it as positive news.

The issue is that OHA paid too much to regional health-care organizations, collected too much money from the feds as a result, and might have to repay all of it.

Brown announced the issue in a roundabout way last week, issuing a press release headlined, “New OHA Leadership Takes Action to Resolve Overpayments Made in Wake of Cover Oregon Failure.” It praised new OHA director Patrick Allen “and his team for acting quickly to bring stability and transparency to OHA’s work on behalf of Oregonians.

The overpayments were made to coordinated care organizations for patients who were eligible for both Medicaid and Medicare. This occurred from 2014 through mid-2016.

Brown is the state’s CEO. She is responsible what happens on her watch after becoming governor in February 2015.

Mistakes happen. Still, it is disappointing that OHA apparently overpaid \$74 million to 16 coordinated care organizations. It is disconcerting that, according to the governor’s office, Brown only learned of the problem when Allen took over as OHA director. It is disturbing that Brown, through her press release, tried to spin the snafu instead of accepting her share of the responsibility.

Indeed, this does sound like Cover Oregon, but not in the way Brown suggested. The Cover Oregon fiasco stemmed from Gov. John Kitzhaber appointing the wrong people to key jobs, not keeping close tabs on the project and accepting dubious progress reports. That also sounds like this new OHA fiasco.

As governor, Brown is CEO of a multi-billion-dollar organization with tens of thousands of employees. A good CEO develops a solid record of hiring the right people, giving them freedom to do their jobs while also staying on top of their work. In that regard, Brown has a decidedly mixed record, although she did eventually oust Lynne Saxton as OHA director and bring in the well-regarded Allen.

No one, especially a politician, likes to look bad. But a good CEO builds confidence, trust and respect by taking responsibility when things go awry.

Better sooner than later to get junkers out of marinas

Just as adorable spring lambs unavoidably transmogrify into stupid tick-infested sheep, pretty new watercraft eventually decay into weed-festooned hulks. The Warrenton Marina is in the midst of rounding up its ugly derelicts and getting them out of the water, a labor-intensive but worthwhile chore.

To live in any ocean-dependent community is to become familiar with the phenomenon of unloved, neglected and abandoned watercraft. Once someone’s pride and joy — or at least a valuable tool — recreational and commercial vessels all eventually become worn out and obsolete. They have an air of mystery and are magnets for dreamers and artists. Even seasoned mariners who know the truth — that they are holes in the water into which you throw money — may feel pangs of temptation to restore them to productive life. Often, however, vessels slumbering in local mooring basins are too far gone, too encumbered in liens and toxic paint to be rescued.

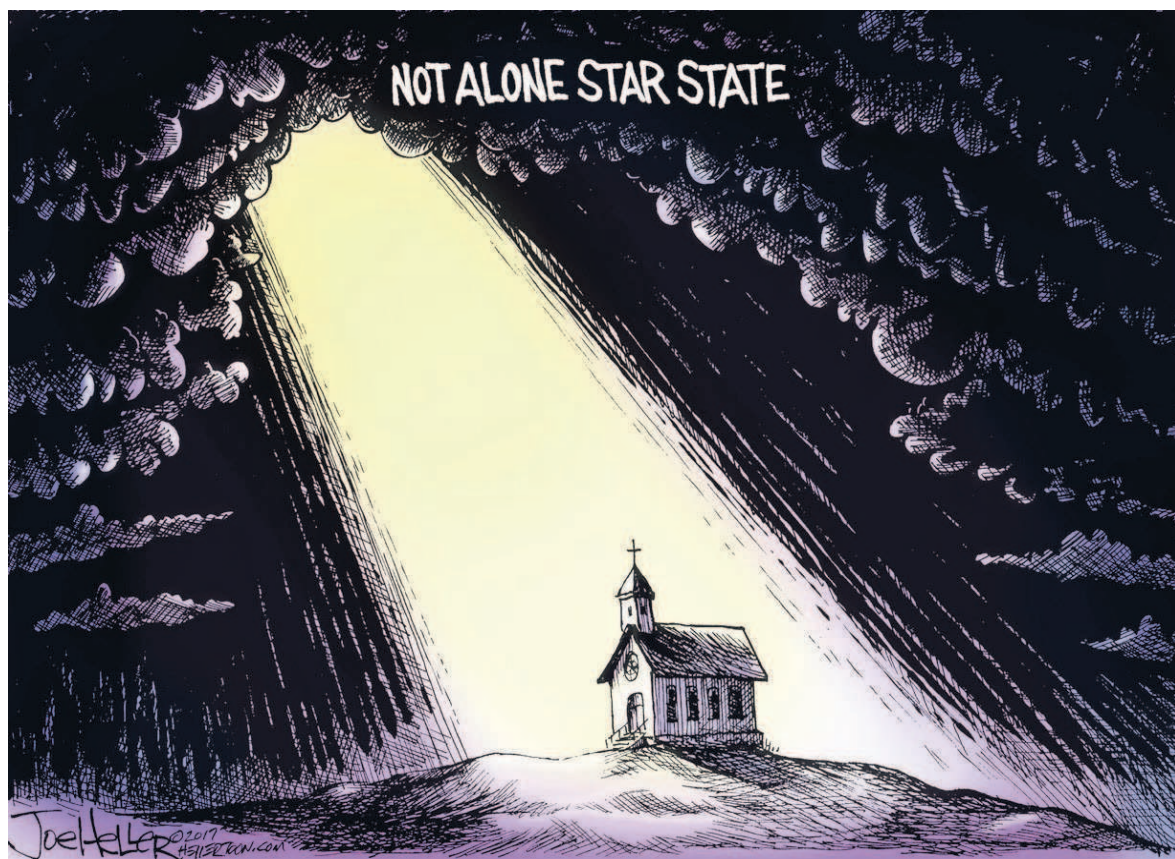
Warrenton has joined other local marinas in going through a formal legal process of clearing vessel titles so they can be sold or demolished. Walking the marina’s floats, it was easy to spot once-prized vessels that hadn’t moved out into the estuary or ocean in years. They were taking up potentially valuable moorage space. Like neglected houses in an otherwise gentrifying neighborhood, they harmed the overall impression of an up-and-coming marina.

Most crucially, they threaten to sink — as the abandoned *Western Skies* did at its slip this summer — leaving taxpayers to soak up expensive cleanups.

Goated by these costs, marinas have been getting smarter and tougher about requiring current insurance and registration documents before allowing boats to take up a slip. Over the course of a few years, these steps and seizures of previously abandoned vessels will get them out of public facilities.

Oregon and Washington both also have large, unfunded liabilities in the form of sunken watercraft, along with many others left to decay on dry land in blackberry thickets and junkyards. Both legislatures must step up funding for these seeping sores on the environment. All by itself, the partially sunken Antarctic research ship *Hero* at Bay Center, Washington, will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars to extract from its resting place and dismantle. Dealing with junkers before they sink is far cheaper than waiting until after they’re in the drink.

Commendations to Warrenton Marina. The steps it is taking will make it a more appealing and valuable public asset.



National parks for the 1 percent



AP Photo/Felicia Fonseca

Visitors gather at an outlook on the South Rim of Grand Canyon National Park in northern Arizona in 2015. A National Park Service plan would impose steep increases in entrance fees at 17 of its most popular parks, including the Grand Canyon, Yosemite, Yellowstone and Zion.

By TIMOTHY EGAN

New York Times News Service

America’s Best Idea is now just another commodity. A president who knows the price of everything and the value of nothing, as Oscar Wilde had it, wants to make it prohibitively expensive for many to enter the most popular national parks.

You may have missed this, between the indictments, the terrorist attack, the Civil War revisionism. But the Trump administration has proposed nearly tripling the entrance fees to select national parks, to \$70.

The man who loves nothing so much as his gold-plated bathroom fixtures wants to gouge people who want to experience something that all of Donald Trump’s minions could never create. It’s a teardrop in the federal budget, but is emblematic of the ocean of wrong coming from this president.

First, we already own these parks — Glacier, Olympic, Mount Rainier, Zion, Yellowstone, the names themselves music to lovers of magic in the natural world. They are a birthright of citizenship.

Second, the Trump administration wants to jack up the price of admission to our most spectacular public lands while moving to cut the Park Service budget by almost \$300 million. The new fees would add \$70 million. Go figure. His attacks on the parks would be the biggest cut to the agency since World War II.

Third, he not only wants to make it more costly to get into beloved public places, he also plans to take away land already protected in ways similar to national parks. He

told Sen. Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, he’s going to shrink two extraordinary national monuments — “for you, Orrin.” It’s a corrupt-sounding gift to a senator, and a giveaway of a public trust. No drain of this swamp.

But this is the Trump ethos. There’s always a velvet rope — coming soon, at the rim of the Grand Canyon — a place for VIPs, deal-makers and insiders, and too bad for everyone else.

It may sound like no big deal — raising admission fees in the 17 parks targeted for price gouging — when Trump’s government is running a \$660 billion deficit. You’d pay \$107 to get into Disney World. But national parks are not theme parks, market-driven to match the latest entertainment blockbusters.

All national parks should be free, like the great museums of Washington. We should care for these special places with a budget commensurate to their value, treating them like the huge income generators they are, producing \$34 billion to local businesses. Instead, we starve them nearly to death.

In the bizarre world of this administration, taxpayers are being asked to subsidize a dying industry, coal mining, while their government is slashing the budget for a growing one that is responsible for four times as many jobs.

We saw again this week how confused so many people are about basic elements of our history. When a general, Trump Chief of Staff John Kelly, doesn’t even have a grade-school understanding of the Civil War, you know we need more park-uniformed historians.

Kelly should visit the national battlefield at Antietam, site of the bloodiest single day in our history. Or walk up the slope of the national military park at Fredericksburg, Virginia. There, the Union Army’s

Irish Brigade was slaughtered by the slaveholding forces of Gen. Robert E. Lee.

The park service keeps that vital history alive. Trump’s budget would drastically cut money for historic preservation, and eliminate more than 1,200 full-time employees.

It’s too bad that the statue of Teddy Roosevelt in front of the American Museum of Natural History was recently defaced, which a handful of extremists took responsibility for. Roosevelt was a founding progressive voice who saw parks and public land as a basic right.

National parks are “as uniquely American as the Declaration of Independence and just as radical,” wrote Dayton Duncan, a parks historian and a co-writer of many a Ken Burns documentary.

Ryan Zinke, the thin-skinned and very strange secretary of the interior, says the price hikes for select parks are necessary to ensure their preservation. Yes, the parks have a huge backlog of things that need to be fixed. Broken toilets, pockmarked roads, untended trails. And yet, there were 331 million visits to these much-loved and abused places last year — a record.

The solution is not to make it more difficult for those who are financially struggling to see their parks. Yes, again, *their* parks.

We could, for instance, not build Trump’s nonsensical border wall, which looks like it will cost upward of \$20 billion, more than eight times the entire proposed budget for the Park Service. (Wait — wasn’t Mexico supposed to pay for that?)

Or we could keep the estate tax, which affects only about 1 out of every 500 people who die every year, and raises \$20 billion as well. The bigger question, after all, is about inheritance: What would we rather pass on to our children?

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All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and, on occasion, factual accuracy. Only two

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