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**OUR VIEW**

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

The Internet is an excellent place to learn new insults. But with so many options to go with, why do people gravitate to the same century-old barbs? We give a kick of the pants to anyone who has said someone else lacks "class."

Haven't been privy to this one yet? Check out any online message board and you'll see it can be brought out in just about every argument. If you don't like the way someone did something, you just say they have no "class." Burn!

It pretty much means you are a better person than that other member of the unwashed masses because — well? — we guess it's because you have more money or mink coats or you drink tea with your pinkie up.

This is America, man! This ain't feudal France or the caste system of India. You're either right or wrong, and what "class" you fit into doesn't have anything to do with it.

Now, maybe they don't mean the word literally. They use "class" to denigrate someone who isn't behaving like a rich European with a deep knowledge of the works of Emily Post. And surely anyone who doesn't agree with those high-class mores must be some barbarian from the hinterlands whose opinions and actions should be discarded.

Class is about acting with dignity and respect. It's about humility and grace, not boasting and belittling. And whether it's on the athletic field, the campaign trail or any other forum in life, breaking out that epithet says more about you than the person you're trying to label.

If you call someone "classless," you are really just lazy at making your arguments or — more likely — you don't have a good case for why you think someone else is wrong.

Speaking of vocabulary, a tip of the hat to the Hermiston police department, who trimmed down their mission statement to make it more clear and concise.

In 2015 the department will operate behind the creed: "Without fear or favor and in partnership with our diverse community, we will create and maintain a safe environment with the reduction of crime through problem-oriented and community-based policing strategies. The quality of life for those we serve takes precedent over our individual needs."

So many mission statements are filled with so much mumbo jumbo and vague promises, it's nice to see some simple declarative sentences. If you live in Hermiston, you now know what your

police are trying to do. Ergo, that's a good mission statement — even if we word-count hawk editors think we could have whittled it down even further. Keep it classy, Hermiston!

A kick in the pants to people defending the vigilante justice of a racist, violent gang whose professed mission is to rid towns of meth dealers.

Since we published stories on a crackdown by Pendleton police on this gang, we've found some people who actually think these misguided felons are a good way to clean up our streets.

Consider us not of that ilk. We agree with law enforcement, that the stated mission of the United Aryan Empire is a bogus one that hides their real intent of violence, intimidation and power. And anyway, how could these guys have time to chase down drug dealers when they spend most of their day trying to remember all the races they think they are superior to? Classless!

Even if they were actually trying to do good, we certainly wouldn't want these men making judgments about who deserves punishment and who doesn't. That's why we've got police and a justice system.

We hope the Pendleton police continue their crackdown and they cut the legs off this nasty hate group before they get their feet under them.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.



**OTHER VIEWS**

## Can Mitch McConnell make the Senate better?

To outsiders, some of the changes new Majority Leader Mitch McConnell will bring to the Senate might seem like inside baseball. But they could bring about a huge improvement in the way the Senate works. And that could in turn lead to a huge improvement in the way Washington works.

McConnell's restoration of what is called "regular order" will give both Republican and Democratic lawmakers something they have not had in eight years under Harry Reid: the chance to have actual input into the making of laws.

Reid famously used Senate rules and procedures to block most of his fellow senators from offering amendments to bills under consideration. Of course that frustrated minority Republicans, but it also frustrated a lot of majority Democrats, who didn't get to propose changes even though their party controlled the Senate.

Now, McConnell promises to open up bills to proposed amendments, both in committee and on the Senate floor. The first example of that will be the Keystone pipeline, and already Democrats are lining up to offer amendments, something they rarely got to do under their own leader.

"We are going to introduce amendments to make it more of a jobs bill," Democratic Sen. Charles Schumer said recently. Schumer said Democrats will offer amendments to require American-made steel for the pipeline, to require that oil transported through the pipeline be used in America, and to add clean energy jobs.

Can anyone imagine Reid giving Republicans comparable freedom on any bill at all, much less a controversial measure like Keystone? "There are people who have worked in the Senate for seven or eight years who have never seen this happen," says one GOP aide.

How often will it happen in the new regime? The majority leader has the power to allow regular order, or not, on any given piece of legislation.

McConnell has not pledged to allow it 100 percent of the time. But he told *Roll Call* that not allowing amendments should be "an exception rather than the rule."

McConnell has also said that after last November's elections, he received a lot of calls from Democrats wondering whether he would really go through with his promise to restore their rights. The answer is yes.



**BYRON YORK**  
Comment

But some Republicans see the restoration as even more significant for the majority party than for the minority. "The reason why that is so important is not because of Republican versus Democrat, but because of the tension between rank and file and leadership," says another GOP aide. "Outside the Senate, there might be some conservatives who say, 'Why do you want to offer Democrats amendments when for years Democrats didn't offer them to Republicans?' But what if there's a big immigration bill? Do you want the Republican rank-and-file not to be able to offer amendments?"

In that sense, by opening up the Senate, McConnell could be buying himself some headaches from his own party. Indeed, it could be argued that the move will empower some of the Republican senators — Ted Cruz and Mike Lee come to mind — who have sometimes antagonized the leadership. Some might see that as a green light for them to make trouble.

**The majority leader has the power to allow regular order — or not — on any given piece of legislation.**

"Nonsense," says an aide to Lee. "I wouldn't characterize a senator exercising his or her institutional rights as 'making trouble.' What it will do is allow each senator the right to fully represent the interests of their constituents and finally get back to a substantive debate on policy reforms."

That's all good. And Republican leaders hope the change will have other salutary effects. Committees will become more active, with members taking a greater part in shaping legislation. The work week will lengthen. (Under Reid, senators often came in on Tuesday afternoon and left late Thursday; now, they can expect an honest-to-God five-day week.)

With all that, the hope is, senators of both parties will actually work with each other more. "If people feel like they have the opportunity to make their points, the place becomes a more collegial body," says one of the aides. The hope is that "we'll be able to turn this into a legislating body instead of a campaign studio, which is the way it has been for eight years."

Of course, it might not work. But there's no doubt Senate leaders need to institute reforms after Reid's ugly and divisive tenure. And if things go as planned, McConnell's restoration could become a ding-dong-the-witch-is-dead moment that revitalizes the Senate.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.

**YOUR VIEWS**

### Proposed Don Requa statue doesn't fit downtown theme

More comments on whether an extra-large statue of Pendleton High football coach Don Requa should go up on Main Street near the Main Street Bridge:

As others have said, a sculpture of a modern day sports figure would not really fit with the downtown sculptures of those from the history of Pendleton or northeast Oregon. Other thoughts:

- The Requa statue is to be 7.5 feet high, way larger than the bronzes already downtown. Requa, whom I enjoyed knowing, was not a city founder and might chuckle at a project that suggested otherwise.
- Requa's teams dominated the Blue Mountain Conference, but a coach does not have the far-reaching impact on Pendleton of a Roy Raley or a Wallace McCrae. The alternative idea of putting the Requa sculpture at Pendleton High seems to me a wise one.
- Members of the Pendleton Arts Commission make recommendations on pieces of public art to the mayor and city council. But no rules or guidelines exist to help make those decisions. Seems to me it would be helpful to draft guidelines on qualifications of nominees to be subjects of public art. Likewise on portraying figures from the early years of this area in comparison with subjects from, say, after World War II.

One way to give more perspective on doing a sculpture would be to require persons considered to have died more than 40-50 years ago. That delay would give an arts board a chance to compare early-day figures to contemporary ones. Although Don Requa compiled a great win-loss record, he attracted fair numbers of both fans and critics.

Roberta Lavador, director of Pendleton Center for the Arts, said the idea of drafting guidelines for public art has come up recently at Arts Commission meetings. That could be a constructive step.

**Mike Forrester**  
Pendleton

### Time to recall entire Pendleton city council and mayor

I am in complete agreement with Jerry Cronin. His letter of Jan. 14 restated the case of our dysfunctional city government. Years ago I laughed at the "antics" of Athena and Weston as they went through one recall election after another. I am no longer laughing.

We need to replace our entire council and mayor. Their repeated errors in judgment have cost us time, money and infrastructure while only providing cosmetic patches.

It's time for a recall.

**Dale Hilding**  
Pendleton

**LETTERS POLICY**

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.