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**OUR VIEW**



# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

**A kick in the pants to the Seattle Seahawks' Super Bowl opponent — the New England Patriots — who are answering fresh allegations about cheating.**

In their 45-7 semifinal shellacking of the Colts, the team is accused of using under-inflated footballs. It's easier to grip an under-inflated ball, according to most receivers and quarterbacks, especially ones that are spend a lot of time combing their hair and are married to supermodels.

It'll be hard to prove deliberate malfeasance on the part of the Pats, but the team's current regime has a long history of evading the rulebook in order to get any advantage they can.

And Thursday's press conferences by coach Bill Belichick and QB Tom Brady were high comedy, Belichick throwing Brady under the bus and Brady offering the classic quote "This isn't ISIS. No one's dying."

Although the Seahawks don't have a squeaky-clean reputation, when the other team is trying to distance themselves from terrorist-level hatred, you can rest assured that the Seahawks have secured the "less bad guy" role in next Sunday's titanic struggle.

Unfortunately, we all know the bad guys sometimes win. So let's get on with preparing for the game at hand and lay off Tom Brady's balls.

**A tip of the hat to the Hermiston School District, for allowing the use of many of their gymnasiums for a basketball tournament this weekend.**

The AAU Best of the West youth tourney is expected to bring about 4,000 visitors to the city, who will no doubt do what visitors do: post up in hotel rooms, buy meals at restaurants and breathe commerce into the town.

To attract these events and help get the most bang for the buck, the school district allows the use of their facilities free of charge. It's a great way to help tournaments make a little more money, and in turn the town make a lot more money.

Cheers to Hermiston being a lively, energetic place thanks to a nearly 25 percent jump in population over the weekend.

**A kick in the pants to the flu bug that has been cutting its way through Eastern Oregon antibodies over the last week.**

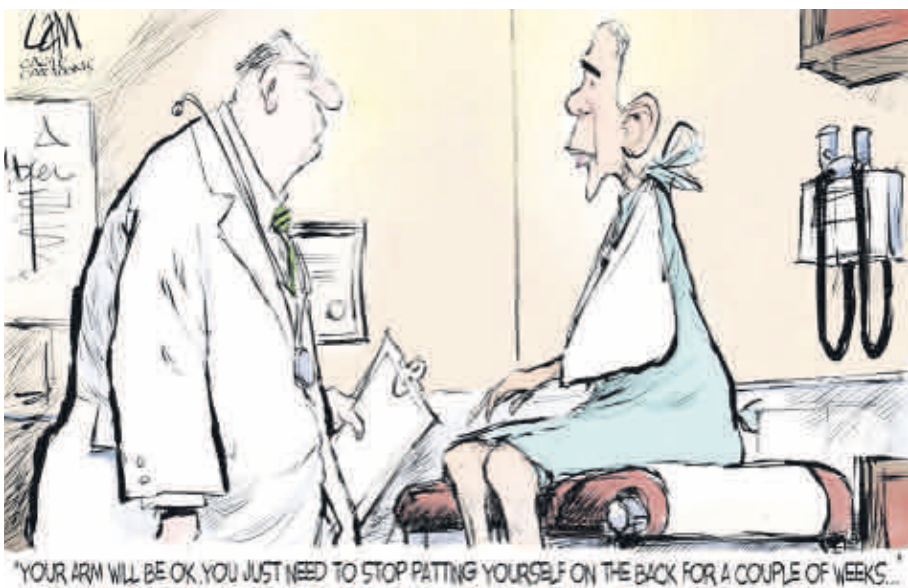
Whoa boy, the flu has dealt a blow to a lot of workplaces, community groups and households in the area.

As you read in today's edition, it did such a number on Milton-Freewater councilors that they didn't have enough healthy members to form a quorum.

With these year's flu shot not doing much to steel us against the virus, it looks like this flu season will be a nasty one. It might run all the way to the first warm days of spring.

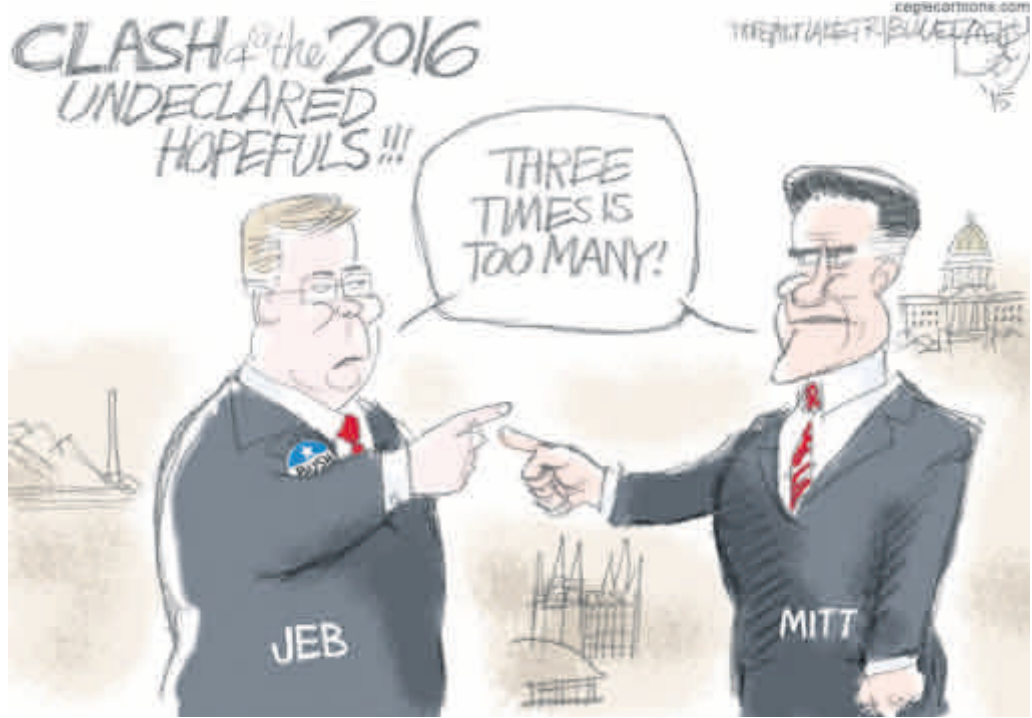
Our advice is to decrease your chances of contracting the virus by getting that shot, stock up on flu fighters and sleep with an extra blanket until the bug flies by.

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.



**LETTERS POLICY**

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**OTHER VIEWS**

## Obama rush to close Guantanamo alarms lawmakers

It took a while for Republicans to catch on to what President Obama is doing with the U.S. terrorist prison in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. But now that it's clear Obama is rushing to empty the place, Republicans are stepping up efforts to stop him. Whether they succeed could have a serious impact on national security, as well as on more general GOP efforts to rein in runaway executive power in the White House.

Obama has accelerated Guantanamo releases and transfers since last November's midterm elections. Other than the five senior Taliban leaders released in exchange for Army Sgt. Bowe Bergdahl last May — a deal Obama made in secret, ignoring the law that required him to notify Congress — the president released just one other Guantanamo inmate in 2014 before the elections.

Since the elections, the doors have opened. Obama released seven prisoners in November, 15 in December, and five more on Wednesday of this week. "Since I only got two years in office left, I'm kind of in a rush," Obama said in a speech in Iowa Wednesday. He was talking about his economic plans, but there's no doubt the sentiment applies to Guantanamo as well.

The hurry has alarmed a number of lawmakers, even those who share Obama's desire to close the prison. Now, several Republican senators — Kelly Ayotte, N.H.; John McCain, Ariz.; Lindsey Graham, S.C.; and Richard Burr, N.C. — have introduced a new bill slow the president down. The legislation would do five things:

- 1) Impose a two-year suspension on transferring high- and medium-risk detainees from Guantanamo to foreign countries.
- 2) Create a two-year ban on releases to Yemen, a country Ayotte calls the "Wild, Wild West for terrorists."
- 3) Raise the standard for release, even of prisoners who are not judged high- or medium-risk.
- 4) Extend current law prohibiting Obama from transferring Guantanamo inmates to the United States or building a prison for them in this country.
- 5) Require public disclosure — not just classified notification of a few members of Congress — of information about detainees, including whether they represent a risk.

The Republican lawmakers feel that current events — not just the terrorist attacks in France but also the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria — have made it extremely important to slow down, not speed up,



**BYRON YORK**  
Comment

releases from Guantanamo. "This is all happening in the context of a very dangerous world," Ayotte told me in an interview.

For example, the five inmates released recently are all suspected al-Qaida, all captured fighting in Pakistan, and all from Yemen. Four were released to Oman, which just happens to share a border with Yemen.

Of course, Yemen has been in the news this week because the al-Qaida branch in Yemen claimed responsibility for the Charlie Hebdo attack in France, and there are reports that one of the attackers received training in Yemen.

So administration policy is to return al-Qaida-linked terrorists to a country next door to their terror-ridden homeland at a time when terror attacks are on the rise. The president has even lifted a ban on returning inmates directly to Yemen.

The law already requires Obama to give Congress 30 days notice before releasing Guantanamo inmates. Other than the Bergdahl case, lawmakers say the White House has fulfilled that requirement. But the problem is, such notifications are secret and given only to a few selected committee chairs on Capitol Hill. The result is that there is no public discussion of the wisdom of a particular decision before it takes place.

"They are hiding behind the cloak of classification," said Ayotte. "The president should give an accounting to the American people of what the people he is transferring out of Guantanamo did — why, if they were previously designated high risk, are they not a risk any more?"

There are 122 inmates left in Guantanamo. There is some dispute about how many are hardcore terrorists who would undoubtedly return to the battlefield. Some say the number is around 50; Ayotte believes it is higher. There's also a dispute about how many of those released already have resumed the fight, but there's little doubt a troubling number have.

In any event, Congress will need to act fast. Obama is determined to move quickly, even as terrorism proliferates in the areas to which he will release more inmates in the future. It's already happened this week, and each day could bring news of more releases.

"We just introduced this legislation the other day," Ayotte said. "I go to bed, and they've released five more."

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

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**YOUR VIEWS**

### Super PAC attack ad relied on half-truths to sting Hansell

Ultra-conservatives from the Republican Party just ran expensive attack ads against our Republican state senator Bill Hansell. Carried in the *East Oregonian* and on Pendleton radio station, the ads probably are financed by out of state money.

They are filled with half-truths and lies to distort Mr. Hansell practical voting record. How sad it is that ultra conservatives cannot tolerate an elective representative of their own party who is fair, compassionate and uses common sense. How sad it is that they use lies and deceit in their intimidation.

**George Anderson**  
Hermiston

### Pendleton/Irrigon game good for teams, area sports fans

Pendleton boys basketball coach Brian Broadus lamented his decision (*East Oregonian*, Jan. 21) to play 2A state champion Irrigon as a lose-lose situation no matter the outcome. It took a lot of courage for Broadus and the Pendleton administration to be willing to play a 2A school that wasn't even on the map ten years ago. The result of this courageous decision was a win-win-win for Eastern Oregon sports. It was a huge win for basketball fans.

This pitted what may be the best Pendleton team in decades against an Irrigon boys team that arguably is the best boys team in Northeastern Oregon — ever. When will that

opportunity ever happen again?

It was a win for Irrigon, not because they won the game, but because the competition from Pendleton made them a better team. It was a win for Pendleton because they play in a weak league, so the intense pressure and competition they faced in Irrigon will prepare them for state tournament competition.

A big pat on the shoulder to Pendleton and Irrigon coaches and administrators for making this unprecedented event happen.

**Stuart Dick**  
Irrigon

### After end of gas tax, what next for economic development?

Did you know? The city of Pendleton is not charging a gas tax anymore. I didn't until I was talking with one of the council members and they said it's been over for about a year now. Wow, I did not know that. So why is gas higher here in town than just outside of town?

While I have your attention, if you are interested in asking our mayor Phillip Houk any questions regarding Umatilla economic development I would invite you to attend the Umatilla Democratic Central Committee meeting Tuesday, Jan 27, in the Pendleton City Hall meeting room at 6 p.m. I know I have a few more questions and I would encourage you to come with a few of your own to ask after the mayor gives us a brief synopsis of what is cookin' with Umatilla economic development for 2015.

**Sue Petersen**  
Pendleton