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OUR VIEW

Intra-party attack ad funded by Loren Parks

You may have been ecstatically flipping through last weekend's newspaper (that's how we like to imagine it!) when you were stopped cold by the back page.

There it was: a full page advertisement from some guy you've never heard of, attacking Athena-based state senator Bill Hansell for all sorts of alleged political crimes,

from defending illegal immigrants, to being nice to liberals and letting "sexual criminals" out of prison.

It's a hit job and we guess no one is shocked by that sort of slop anymore.

But this one was moderately surprising because Hansell, a Republican, was being attacked by someone in his own party, and it's not even close to a primary election. The ad was created and purchased by the right wing Capitol Watch PAC, a group financed by Nevada oddball millionaire Loren Parks and led by former Republican state rep Jeff Kropf. He identifies himself as The Honorable Jeff Kropf (Retired).

The *East Oregonian* navigated the Oregon Secretary of State's online campaign finance database to follow an Alice in Wonderland rabbit hole maze and connect the financial dots. Capitol Watch PAC so far lists a single contributor — Taxpayers Association of Oregon PAC — which touts itself as advocating for lower taxes. Parks has been the Taxpayers Association PAC's biggest contributor for the past three years: giving \$55,000 in 2012, \$50,000 in 2013 and \$40,000 in September 2014.

Parks also contributed \$98,173 to the Protect Oregon Driver Licenses campaign to help defeat the 2013 driver's card measure. And Kropf is the founder of the Oregon Capitol Watch Foundation, which gave \$10,862 to that same campaign.

Among four red "x's" notched against Hansell's freshman voting record in the ad, one was to his bill to give special driver's licenses to "illegals."

Maybe you have problems with Sen. Hansell's voting record, and you're certainly entitled to those feelings. But these sorts of attacks

don't lead to anything constructive, and they are contributing to the obsolescence of the Republican Party in Oregon. An out-of-district Republican attacking a freshman moderate of his same party? How short-sighted, if Kropf's goal is to make Oregon a more conservative place. As your grandmother taught: you catch more flies with honey than vinegar.

Loren Parks funded the political action committee that funded the Capitol Watch PAC.

Spewing vinegar, Kropf and his loony backer are going about it the wrong way. (And if you think loony is out of line, we recommend you check out Loren Parks' YouTube channel and watch his "10-second therapy sessions" that include a game

show buzzer and repeated shouts of "Disconnect!" to help people overcome everything from traumatic dancing experiences to hurt feelings and eczema. The octogenarian also has a lot to teach you about sex, if you can stomach it.)

Sen. Bill Hansell won the election — he got more votes than both his Republican opponent in the primary and his Democratic foe in the general — and short of criminal, ethical or moral violations, he holds that seat until his term is up.

If you want to lobby him to change the way he votes, do your best, Kropf and Parks. Make your case to Hansell and see how he responds.

If you want to lobby the voters of District 29 to elect a more conservative candidate, then find one. Finance their campaign, parade them around the district and put their name on the ballot. Then let's find out if a majority of residents agree with your choice.

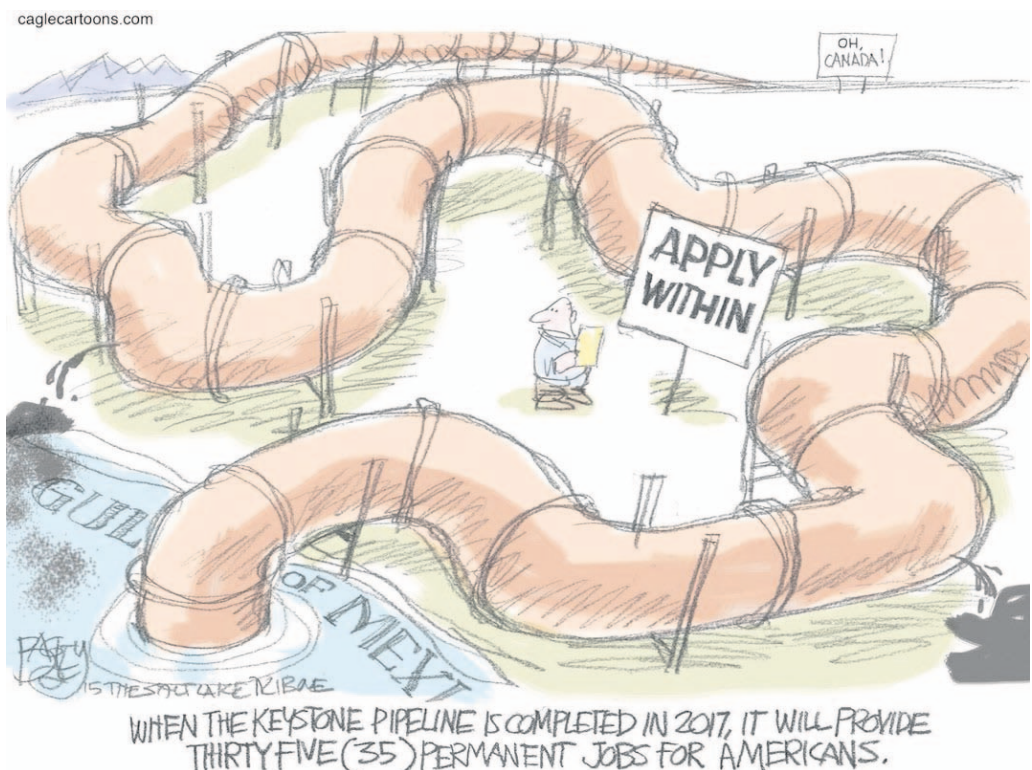
If so, you get what you want. If not, the people get what they want. Either way, we all live with the results for four years.

Thankfully, the man behind this ad had the guts to sign his name to it. But he didn't have the guts to say where he got his money when we asked him.

Kropf paid for the ad space (with Parks' money), which means he can pretty much say what he wants and call himself what he wants.

But honorable isn't a word we'd use to describe Jeff Kropf or this ad.

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

The devotion leap

The online dating site OkCupid asks its clients to rate each other's attractiveness on a scale of 1 to 5. When men rated the women, the median score was about 3 and the ratings followed a bell curve — a few really attractive women and an equal number of women rated as unattractive.

But when women rated men, the results were quite different. The median score was between 1 and 2. Only 1 in 6 of the guys was rated as having above average looks. Either the guys who go to places like OkCupid, Tinder and other sites are disproportionately homely, or women have unforgiving eyes.

Looks, unsurprisingly, dominate online dating. But I learned some details from "Dataclism," the book by Christian Rudder, who is the co-founder and president of OkCupid.

There's a gigantic superstar effect. Women who are rated in the top 5 percent of attractiveness get a vast majority of the approaches. The bottom 95 percent get much less. For men, looks barely matter at all unless you are in the top 3 percent or so. The hunks get barraged with approaches.

It's better to have a polarizing profile than a bland one. People who generate high levels of disapproval — because they look like goths or bikers or just weird — often also generate higher levels of enthusiasm.

Racial bias is prevalent. When Asian men are looking at Asian women they rate them as 18 percent more attractive than average. But when they are looking at black women, they rate them as 27 percent less attractive. White and Latino men downgrade black women by nearly the same percentage. White, Latino and Asian women have similar preferences.

When people start texting or tweeting to each other, they don't turn into a bunch of Einsteins. Rudder looked into the most common words and phrases used on Twitter. For men they include: good bro, ps4, my beard, in nba, hoopin and off-season. For women they include: my nails done, mani pedi, retail therapy, and my belly button.

People who date online are not shallower or vainer than those who don't. Research suggests they are broadly representative. It's just that they're in a specific mental state. They're shopping for human beings, commodifying people. They have access to very little information that can help them judge if they will fall in love with this person. They pay ridiculous amounts of attention to things like looks, which have little bearing on whether a relationship will work. OkCupid took down the pictures one day. The people who interacted on this day exchanged contact



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

info at twice the rate as on a regular day.

The dating sites have taken the information available online and tried to use it to match up specific individuals. They've failed. An exhaustive review of the literature by Eli J. Finkel of Northwestern and others concluded, "No compelling evidence supports matching sites' claims that mathematical algorithms work." That's because what creates a relationship can't be expressed in data

or photographs. Being in love can't be done by a person in a self-oriented mindset, asking: Does this choice serve me? Online dating is fascinating because it is more or less the opposite of its object: love.

When online daters actually meet, an entirely different mindset has to kick in. If they're going to be open to a real relationship, they have to stop asking where this person rates in comparison to others and start asking, can we lower the boundaries between self and self. They have to stop thinking in individual terms and start feeling in rapport terms.

Basically, they have to take the enchantment leap.

This is when something dry and utilitarian erupts into something passionate, inescapable and devotional. Sometimes a student becomes enraptured by the beauty of math, and becomes a mathematician. Soldiers doing the drudgery of boot camp are gradually bonded into a passionate unit, for which they will risk their lives. Anybody who has started a mere job and found in it a vocation has taken the enchantment leap.

In love, of course, the shift starts with vulnerability, not calculation. The people involved move from selfishness to service, from prudent thinking to poetic thinking, from a state of selection to a state of need, from relying on conscious thinking to relying on their own brilliant emotions.

When you look at all the people looking for love and vocation today, you realize we live in a culture and an online world that encourages a very different mind-set; in a technical culture in which humanism, religion and the humanities, which are the great instructors of enchantment, are not automatically central to life.

I have to guess some cultures are more fertile for enchantment — that some activities, like novel-reading or music-making, cultivate a skill for it, and that building a capacity for enchantment is, these days, a countercultural act and a practical and fervent need.

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in September 2003.

YOUR VIEWS

Neighbor appreciated alert from police after incident

This letter is in response to the recent articles covering the investigation of the possible shooting on Snyder Road on January 16.

It is troubling to learn that Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan believes the incident, as it was reported that night, should not have reached "the level that it went to the Neighborhood Watch." When that incident was reported to Neighborhood Watch members, there was no reason to believe it was a hoax.

Hindsight in this case should not change the decisions in the future to report possibly dangerous situations to the Neighborhood Watch members.

As a member who lives a farm or two away from the incident area, I appreciated receiving the report. It put me on alert exactly as it should have done. Better to be safe than sorry.

Marcia Lorenzen
Pendleton

Open letter to Rep. Read, speaker of the Oregon House

Congratulations. I hope as you take on this obligation that you will lead your Democrat colleagues in a direction of common sense, fiscal responsibility and open-mindedness.

As I see it, the Democrats' legislative agenda ahead is fraught with status quo tax

and spending, leftist progressive thinking and misguided faux-crisis reactions, which this state and its people, frankly, cannot afford. The proposed bills tied to energy and climate change/global warming have to be considered within the framework of all the science that is out there and not just that science that has been cherry-picked by those who generate their living and financial stability by destabilizing our economy and information pools through outcome-oriented "science" (i.e. government agencies, academia and environmental activists and their attorneys).

Further, and extremely importantly, I hope you will see the necessity to move against the overreach of the federal government into the everyday issues that should be the responsibility of the states and the individuals within those sovereign states.

You need to look at what the rest of the nation has recognized and mandated at the November 2014 elections and move Oregon out of the doldrums created by the Democrat-run politics of this state for the last 30 years. It hasn't worked and responsible, forward-thinking Democrats are recognizing that. I am a product of the once top-of-the-line education system in Oregon and know it can be that again if we look, not forward, but back at and emulate what made it great in the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s. It can be done!

Good luck and good vision to you.

Tim K. Smith
Hines, Ore.