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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the city of Pendleton for investing in their GIS program — geographic information systems, for those of us who don’t speak in letters.

Updating and compiling this data will allow future users to have more reliable information about what is underneath their yard and their street. Once the database is up and running, the information contained within will allow faster diagnosis of problems and more precise and cheaper fixes.

If a homeowner wants to check where city lines pass through their property, there will be a map for that. And if a prospective business is curious how large the sewer and water lines are outside a property, there will be a map for that. It could also avoid costly zoning snafus like we saw recently in Irrigon.

It all makes sense for a city that has already fallen behind on maintenance and infrastructure. If Pendleton wants to get more bang for their public works dollars, reliable information that can be provided by GIS is one way to do it and a worthwhile investment.



A kick in the pants to the clock at McKenzie Park in Hermiston, which hasn’t been working for months.

Rather than relying on internal gears to keep it ticking, the clock communicates with a satellite that keeps that second hand moving at just the right speed. Hermiston Parks and Rec director Larry Fetter said it’s a high quality system that works well — except when it doesn’t.

And that’s not acceptable for the city’s centerpiece park, and a clock tower built in celebration of Hermiston’s 100th birthday.

It would be costly to call out a specialized repairman, so Fetter said he has been looking at other ways to get the clock back in time. No luck yet, he said, and he’s preparing to bite the bullet and pay the professionals for their service.

It might not sound like too big of a deal, but we’re now all familiar with the broken windows philosophy of policing — where cops concentrate on the little things that influence daily lives in the hopes of stopping big problems before they start.

Clocks in parks are a little like that. Make sure the small things are working before you tackle the big problems.

Yes, a broken clock is still right twice a day. But for the other 23 hours and 58 minutes, it’s wrong, wrong, wrong. Let’s fix it.



A tip of the hat to the city of Irrigon and the Oregon Trail Library District for finally, *finally* agreeing to rules that will reopen the public library.

Whew!

The \$1.2 million library was open for just a few weeks, then closed for a few months while the two sides argued over a nondescript shared space between the two buildings. The whole controversy was pretty ridiculous, and neither side should be happy with how the silly sniping over minutiae forced the closure of an important community space.

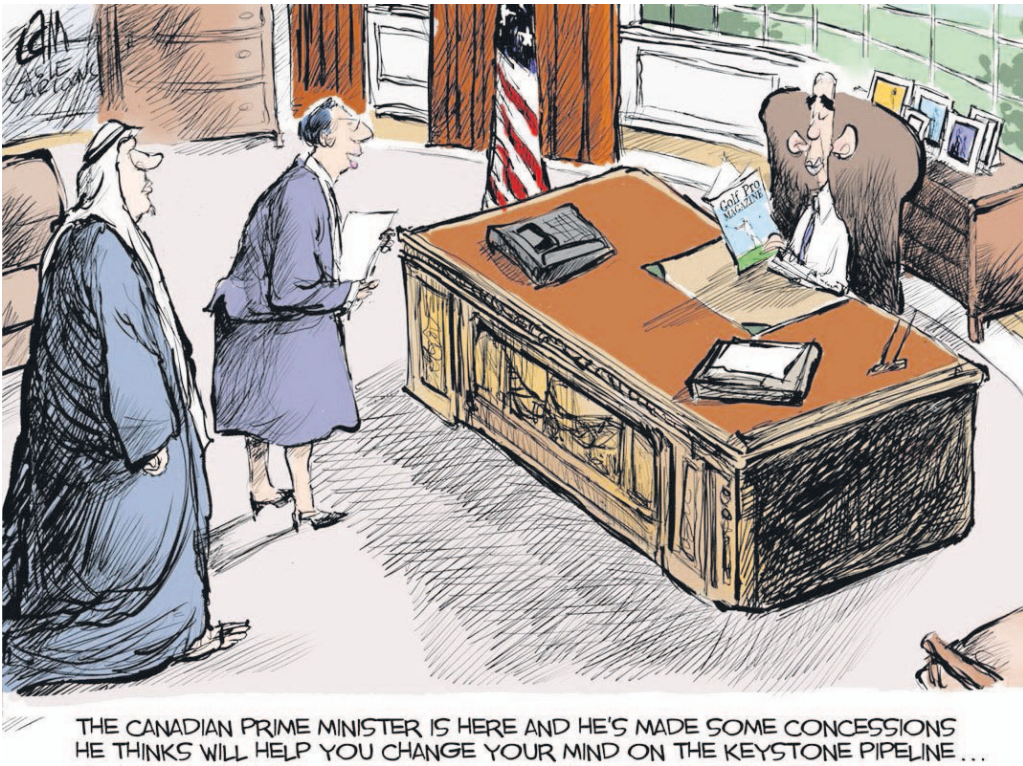
Both sides look like they’ve finally signed on the same dotted lines, and bearing any last-minute shenanigans (which we’re not ruling out!) the city will get its library. Which, we think, they should have had months ago.



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

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. 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. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

White House traps itself in terrorism word games

Why has the Obama administration tied itself in knots over what to call Islamic terrorism? We know the president has rejected the term in favor of “violent extremism,” ordering his administration not to refer to Islamic terrorists like the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria as Islamic. “No religion is responsible for terrorism,” Obama declared at the recent White House Summit on Countering Violent Extremism.

And yet in the same speech, Obama uttered the word “Christianity” once, “Judaism” once, “Buddhism” once — and “Islam” or “Muslim” 52 times. If a listener did not know better, he might think there was something Islamic about the extremism that was the subject of the White House conference.

Obama’s semantic preferences have left his spokesmen struggling to find words to describe one of the United States’ top national security concerns. It’s a particular troubling problem now, with the rise of the Islamic State, but it has deep roots; the president has long appeared conflicted on how to refer to Islamic terrorism.



BYRON YORK
Comment

In his 2006 book “The Audacity of Hope,” Obama referred to “Islamic-based terrorism” and “Islamic militants” and “militant Islamic organizations.” But at other times, Obama was deeply reluctant to connect the words “Islamic” and “terrorism.”

In April 2007, for example, Obama outlined his vision of a post-Bush, post-Iraq world during an address at the Chicago Council on Global Affairs. The speech was missing something. “Remarkably, he doesn’t mention Islam, much less Islamic extremism,” a *Washington Post* editorial noted.

That was nearly eight years ago. Now, the president’s aversion to the phrases “Islamic terrorism” and “Islamic extremism” has made it difficult for top U.S. government officials to discuss world affairs without becoming caught in word games. When is it OK to mention Islam? When is it not? What about Christianity and other religions?

White House spokesman Josh Earnest fell into a variety of holes recently as he tried to navigate the president’s vocabulary requirements. For example, a reporter noted that Obama and top administration officials “have gone to great lengths to not say that it’s a summit about Islamic extremism ... but if you look at the groups that are participating, most of them ... are related in one way or another to the Muslim community. How do you square the message with the participants?”

“We’re very mindful of the fact that a particularly virulent strain of extremist ideology has tried to insert itself in the Muslim community,” Earnest said. Weaving back and forth, Earnest noted that extremism can take other forms, such as in the 2012 shootings at a Sikh temple in Wisconsin, although on the other hand “that does not diminish in any way the concern that we have that some extremists have made some inroads into some Muslim communities.”

Earnest’s contortions left some listeners baffled. “You just won’t call it militant Islam or anything like that?” asked a reporter. “Well, I think we’ve been very clear about what we call it,” Earnest replied.

Later, another reporter asked about a statement Earnest released a few days earlier condemning the Islamic State’s beheading of 21 Egyptian Christians. The statement referred to the victims as “Egyptian citizens,” rather than “Egyptian Christians.” Why was that?

Earnest quickly conceded the victims were killed not just because they were Egyptian, “but also because they were Christian.” When asked why he didn’t just say that last weekend, Earnest

The men and women trying to explain the president’s policies don’t know what to say.

answered, “I can’t account for that specific line in the statement.” The statement, of course, was his own.

Still later, yet another reporter asked about a comment from State Department spokeswoman Marie Harf, who during a TV interview discussed the Lord’s Resistance Army in Africa. “That’s a Christian militant group,” Harf said, correctly. The question for Earnest was: Why does the administration refer to a Christian militant group as Christian when it won’t refer to an Islamic militant group as Islamic?

“Well, I did not see my colleague’s comments on this topic,” Earnest said, “so I don’t want to sort of weigh in and try to explain what she meant.”

At that moment, the administration’s self-created confusion became total. The men and women who face reporters each day, trying to explain the president’s policies, simply don’t know what to say when it comes to the terrorist attacks that so often dominate the news.

At the summit, Obama said Americans “can’t shy away” from discussing the true nature of terrorism. And yet that is what his White House is doing every day, to the utter confusion of those whose job it is to deliver the president’s message.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

Requa statue would be revered at PHS

There is no doubt, even for those that didn’t play football, that the man deserves a tribute and a lasting legacy for all the reasons stated in the letters and probably many others.

At first glance, I understand the thinking of locating the statue on Main Street that has been that has been stated in numerous letters. After all, they want the statue in a place fitting the high regard for which they hold the memory of Coach Requa.

Sure, Main Street is a good location while those that remember him are still alive, but what happens in a decade or two when most of those people have passed on? Who will remember Requa 50 years from now? The key to having an enduring legacy for any icon is to have future generations hear the story, take ownership, and pass it on to the next generation. Now I ask you, is Main Street the best location to accomplish that?

If the statue is located at the high school across from Bedford Bridge, it has the potential to become so much more than just

another bronze on Main Street.

I envision it could be used as the centerpiece of some new traditions to promote Pendleton football. Since the team walks from the high school to the Round-Up Grounds, why not include the fans and other students in the walk in support of the team?

Can you imagine the boost it would give the team to have a bunch of screaming fans following them to the stadium? The statue could be a good luck icon that people touch on the way, and every future fan is exposed to the Requa legacy — where the story could be incorporated into the ethos of the Pendleton football program, where every player hears the story, takes ownership and passes it on.

Or do you locate it downtown, where only the odd tourist or people walking the levee, see the statue, read the plaque, and think “That’s nice” and move on. The only high school students that care about it are the ones using the statue of some old dude to do skateboard tricks around.

Again I ask, does Main Street still seem like the best location for an enduring legacy 50 years from now? I don’t oppose putting

the Requa statue on Main Street because I don’t think his legacy is good enough for Main Street, I oppose it because I think his legacy deserves better than to be forgotten on Main Street.

Mike Navratil
Pendleton

Requa to Hermiston, where athletics matter

You might consider placing the statue in Hermiston. Coach Requa drove a group of Hermiston sports boosters to demand excellence in athletics from our school board. We had been told that Hermiston just didn’t have the athletes. We used his example of decades of success to debunk that myth.

Great sports teams are a source of pride to every community. This pride extends from young to old. So if you can’t agree on a place for the statue, send it west.

Mike Mehren
Hermiston

Goodwin the right choice for Brownfield

Having taught at Pendleton High School for 30-plus years, I

can think of many other educators who deserve statues as much as, or even more so than, Don Requa (whom I very much respected).

At the very top of my list would be Rudy Rada, who not only devoted his life to education, but to this community as a whole. I am sure anyone who has attended, or who has children in Pendleton schools, could add names to this list.

Almost 100 years after they made history at the Pendleton Round-Up, Jackson Sundown and George Fletcher are still remembered. One hundred years from now who will remember Don Requa, and since not one team ever won a state football championship, what will they remember him for?

We agree with many who have written to suggest a more fitting personality without whom there would be no city of Pendleton. His name is Moses Goodwin, who donated the land this city sits upon.

The park in question is directly across the river from his very homestead. In December 1868 Moses Goodwin and his wife deeded land from which the original town was platted. It certainly seems more fitting that

this man should be honored in such a manner.

It seems to us that Don Requa’s larger-than-life statue would be much more of an inspiration to future athletes at Pendleton High School rather than as a curiosity at Brownfield Park. We urge the city council of Pendleton to rethink their approval of the placement of the Requa statue.

Ken and Sabra Crysler
Pendleton

Put Requa at location approved by council

The Requa statue (art) should be located where it has already been approved — Brownfield Park on Main Street.

To me the Requa statue represents what hard work and the pursuit of excellence can accomplish, not only on the football field but also in the classroom and in life.

These are the attributes that should be celebrated on Main Street along, with our western heritage.

Mike Carey
Milwaukie