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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat;
kick in the pants

Tip of the hat to *East Oregonian* paper carrier Mindi Sell, who may have saved a life early Tuesday morning.

Sell has delivered for the *EO* for more than five years. She said she gets to know her customers pretty well and looks out for their property. (She gets mad when someone on her route goes on vacation without warning her first.)

Sell was delivering in the wee hours of the morning Tuesday in Pendleton’s Sun Ridge Retirement Community when she noticed something amiss. The lights were on in the duplex apartment of an elderly customer, and at least one day’s mail was sticking out of the mailbox.

Sell knew something wasn’t right, so she quickly went to Sun Ridge employees and had them check on the woman inside. They found the resident had fallen and broken her hip Sunday night and had been suffering since. They called 9-1-1 and got the woman immediately to a hospital. Cheers to all who pitched in help the woman in need, especially our pal Mindi.



A tip of the hat to Hermiston police Chief Jason Edmiston for being upfront about the gang connection in the death of Alonso Madrigal earlier this month.

Madrigal was shot to death near his vehicle outside the 11th Street Market on the night of March 4. Edmiston said Madrigal was not a gang member himself, but was killed by gang members.

“We believe those persons responsible for the death of Alonso are affiliated with a gang or gangs,” Edmiston said, plainly. We appreciate the honesty. In the past, some law enforcement in the area have been reluctant to be upfront about the gang community and culture, especially around the area of Hermiston and Umatilla.

No, the cities and their environs do not have a serious gang problem, especially compared to cities like Los Angeles and even Yakima. But they do have a burgeoning one, and it’s going to take all hands on deck to keep the gangs under control and the cities as safe as they are now.

Communicating honestly with the community is one of the keys to keeping neighborhoods free of such negative influence. We hope it continues.



A kick in the pants to those who don’t agree with holiday decorations for Pendleton’s downtown statues.

The onslaught of feedback on our Facebook page seemed to boil down to two incongruent schools of thought: 1) statues are a dumb waste of money and 2) decorating them is desecration of a holy object.

Obviously it can’t be both ways. And we think community art like that should be appreciated but not worshiped.

Sure, no one should vandalize a gravestone or the Vietnam Memorial. That’s inappropriate. But a bronze on a city sidewalk is meant to teach visitors of our history and make the community a more interesting place. Although bronze reproductions of photographs make for pretty boring art, they do at least give the community something to consider and play with.

To do the job the statues were intended to do, they need to be expressions of the Pendleton culture and aesthetic. We think a humorous outfit every once in a while is something to welcome rather than attack.



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.

YOUR VIEWS

No transparency in
council’s airport decision

The *East Oregonian* ran this headline on Jan. 5: “Pendleton officials want to open up communication in new year.” The *EO* stated that “Mayor Phillip Houk said he wants Pendleton to be known as a transparent city that works with its residents, and councilwoman Jane Hill said the council may need to consider new ways of communicating to achieve those goals.”

Let’s see how the mayor, the city council and Jane Hill have been transparent so far this year.

Today, we discovered that the resolution to approve a \$1.7 million financial package for the drone program was passed at Tuesday night’s city council meeting despite the fact that the resolution was not listed on the agenda. Corbett wanted to consider it at a special meeting but Jane Hill insisted on the vote due to Kate Brown’s visit later this week.

Jane Hill used to make her living schmoozing with politicians. She escorted Kitzhaber’s First Lady to the Olney Housing Project and to the drone site at the airport. Now she may have the rare opportunity to escort our new governor and the First Gentleman to the airport and discover how much income the drone business has brought

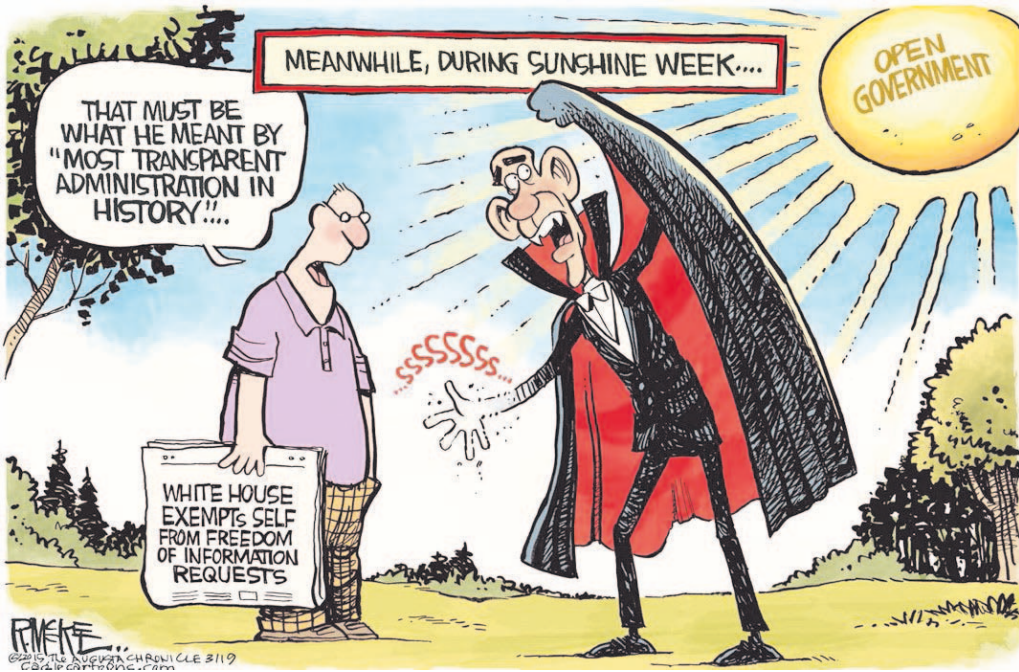
Pendleton.

As usual, the city council emphasized that the expenditure will be taken care of by grants. A close reading reveals that there are contingencies that may result in the city having to pay back the money. \$500,000 of the grant becomes a loan if the project doesn’t develop 130 jobs. \$655,000 will be a straight loan to the city, which has already spent taxpayer money on the abortive Airport Industrial Park and Peak 3 with nothing to show for its investment.

Chrisman and Houk have continually compared Peak 3 with Insitu, a successful drone production company in Hood River. Insitu has 1,000 employees who make an average of \$70,000. They fail to mention that Insitu depends on Pentagon contracts and makes products such as laser sights for sniper rifles.

Here is the *EO* report on the first Peak 3 test flight: “The drone launched and landed twice before the pilot, Peak 3 Technical Services Vice President Brian Prange, determined that it was too windy to complete its intended mission of scanning a crop for heat signatures. The ‘range’ in this case was an empty field across from the intersection of Shafer and McCormach roads outside Pendleton.”

Jerry Cronin
Pendleton



OTHER VIEWS

A war of Obama’s own making

The White House and some Democrats are livid over congressional Republican attempts to circumvent President Obama’s authority to make a nuclear arms deal with Iran. They have a right to be angry — but not to be surprised.

There’s a war going on between the executive and legislative branches in which Obama has shown contempt for Congress’ constitutional powers, and now, in response, Congress is showing contempt for the president’s constitutional powers. It’s an unfortunate situation, but it’s what Obama has wrought.

The latest development is an open letter to Iranian leaders written by GOP Sen. Tom Cotton, R-Ark., and signed by 46 other Senate Republicans. Released Monday morning, the letter reminds Iran that Obama is negotiating with them on his own, without the formal approval or support of Congress. Obama is not pursuing a treaty, which would have to be agreed to by the Senate, or a joint executive-congressional agreement, which would also require Congress’ approval.

“We will consider any agreement regarding your nuclear-weapons program that is not approved by the Congress as nothing more than an executive agreement between President Obama and Ayatollah Khamenei,” the Republican senators write. “The next president could revoke such an executive agreement with the stroke of a pen and future Congresses could modify the terms of the agreement at any time.”

Just in case there’s any confusion, the Republicans remind Iran that the next U.S. president will be inaugurated in January 2017, about 22 months from now, while at least some of the GOP senators who signed the letter will remain in office for many years to come.

The Cotton letter comes on the heels of House Speaker John Boehner’s decision to invite Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu to address Congress in what amounted to an extended attack on Obama’s Iran negotiations.

It should go without saying that the reason Republicans are doing these things is because they are deeply concerned about a possible Iran deal. But another reason they’re acting is because they can. On Iran and before that on immigration, healthcare, and other matters, Obama has pushed his executive authority beyond its proper limits, on the flimsy pretense that he is entitled to act unilaterally if Congress does not pass bills he wants. Could anyone fail to anticipate that in response Congress would stretch its own authority, too?



BYRON
YORK
Comment

Democrats from President Obama on down have condemned the Cotton letter. Some of the less disciplined among them have called Cotton and his colleagues “traitors.”

But remember what preceded the Republicans’ action. A number of senators, led by Republican Sen. Bob Corker, have been working on legislation to require congressional approval for any Iran deal. “The legislation is a response to the administration’s intention not to seek approval or review from Congress for the agreement with Iran, despite a long history of Congress playing a role in international agreements, which has provided added legitimacy and longevity to many of these accords,” notes one GOP aide.

The White House response to Corker’s initiative was swift. “If this bill is sent to the president, he will veto it,” said a National Security Council spokeswoman.

Now, the president’s supporters interpret Cotton’s letter as the latest in a long line of Republican outrages directed against Obama. “It’s safe to say that no president in modern times has had his legitimacy questioned by the opposition party as much as Barack Obama,” says the liberal writer Paul Waldman. “But as his term in office enters its final phase, Republicans are embarking on an entirely new enterprise: They have decided that as long as he holds the office of the presidency, it’s no longer necessary to respect the office itself.”

Actually, things are much simpler than that. Time after time, Obama has told Congress to go to hell. Now Congress is telling Obama to go to hell. It’s an entirely predictable development.

Of course, it is still a bad thing. It is not good to invite a foreign leader to address Congress in a campaign against the U.S. president. It is not good to undermine the president’s authority to conduct foreign policy. But it’s not a good thing to undermine Congress’ authority to make laws, either. And to threaten even more undermining in the future, as Obama has done.

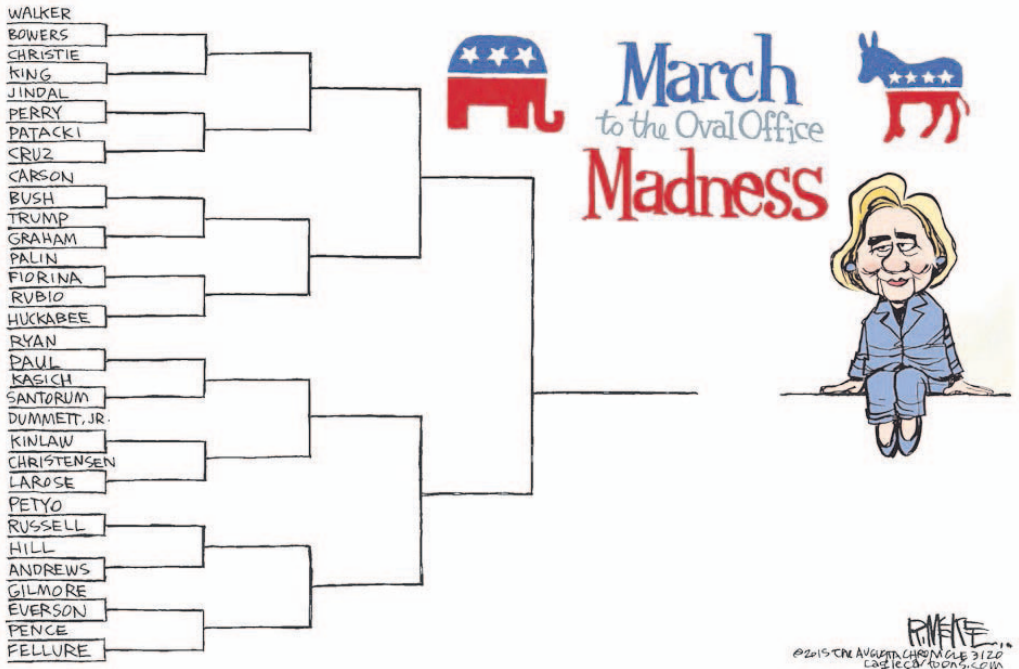
It’s too bad for Obama that he couldn’t persuade Congress to do everything he wanted. That did not give him the right to encroach on Congress’s constitutional authority.

Now Congress is pushing back. It’s a shame it’s come to this, but that’s the way things work.

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

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LETTERS POLICY

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