

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the numerous police officers who chased Amanda Walton Thursday as she led police on a dangerous chase across two counties.



Although two Morrow County police vehicles were damaged in the fracas, it could have been much worse; for Walton, the police and innocent drivers caught up in the event.

We can quibble over the fact that the chase may not have been necessary, the police knowing who Walton was and where she lived. And we all know the danger and cost of such a long pursuit.

But plenty of good decisions were made once the chase was underway. So we tip the hat especially low to Morrow County detective Brian Snyder, who encountered the knife-wielding fugitive after the chase came to an end.

He remained patient and remembered his training, holding his ground but also his fire. Eventually the woman surrendered peacefully and was taken into custody with no one seriously hurt. We're pleased that Eastern Oregon didn't become the most recent stop on a nationwide tour of police making the decision to use fatal force.

That no lives were lost on this long, expensive and dangerous chase is both luck and skill. We have the fine actions of law enforcement to thank for it.

## A tip of the hat to the rising voice the community to speaking out about downtown Pendleton statues.

Last week, community members were able to convince city council to change their original position on decorating statues. This coming week, other (and some of the same) community members are planning to come out en force to the Tuesday city council meeting to make arguments on both sides of a debate about whether to place Don Requa in Brownfield Park.

We hope it is a turning point for civic involvement on the statue issue in particular, and city issues in general.

Having an engaged and interested electorate is the best way to keep city government running the way it is supposed to, and to keep councilors responsible to the people they represent.

The lack of a long-term plan on the statues has become self-evident. We're happy to see citizens not accept the decisions from on high and instead stand

up to have their voices heard.

Be part of the movement. Come out Tuesday and say your piece about statues, and stick around and throw in your two cents about an ordinance that would attempt to stop people from gathering on the Bedford Bridge, the city's rules for locating retail marijuana shops and much more.

Local government matters to you. And your opinion matters in local government. Don't you feel powerful?

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

# Another battle over mascots

Albany Democrat-Herald

Another battle looms in the state of Oregon's long controversy over schools using Native American names or images as their mascots — but this time, a larger issue may be at stake.

The mascot issue has been an emotional one in Oregon and elsewhere for years. The larger issue now may boil down to this: Who gets to make laws in Oregon — the Legislature or the boards charged with implementing those laws?

Lebanon, Philomath and 13 other public high schools use "Warriors," "Indians" or other team names with Native American connotations. The State Board of Education voted in 2012 to require all Oregon public schools to eliminate American Indian names, mascots and imagery by 2017 or risk losing state funding.

The rule still stands. But then-Gov. John Kitzhaber signed a bill last February allowing schools to work with their closest tribes on acceptable names and imagery, as long as those discussions are based on rules set up by the state board.

Now, though, Rep. Sherrie Sprenger of Scio, who cosponsored last year's bill in the Legislature, has introduced another bill that would ban the state board from making any rules related to the type of mascots schools may use. The bill also would prevent the board from withholding state funds from state schools based on mascot issues.

It's a warning shot to the board: Sprenger's bill, House Bill 3536, says that the board has been "unwilling or

unable to fulfill its duties as directed" by the Legislature.

Board members were not pleased. Said one: "'Unable or unwilling' is just not a fair appraisal of any reality. That is not what's gone on."

Well, maybe not. But the board never has seemed particularly enthused about working on the rules. Sprenger said a couple of months ago that she thought the board finally was making progress, but her new legislation is a clear signal that she thinks the progress has stalled.

One possible appraisal of what's "gone on" is that the board is trying to do what it can bureaucratically to gut the 2014 bill. At its March meeting, most board members made it clear they were still uncomfortable with rules that would allow the use of Native American names or imagery in any form. But that shouldn't matter.

"We made a law," Sprenger said. "They need to follow it."

The Board of Education can defuse this controversy by quickly approving a set of reasonable rules that honor the spirit of the 2014 law. People who are opposed to the 2014 law could have taken their case to the 2015 Legislature instead of trying to undermine it.

The hope behind Sprenger's 2014 bill was that it would trigger candid discussions between schools and nearby tribes, and that those discussions would give students a chance to learn about Oregon's Native Americans. Students who have been following this issue may be learning a lesson, but it's not so much about Native Americans as it is about political backfiring.

## 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.

**OUTRAGEOUS!**  
CUBA IS STILL A PLACE  
WHERE BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS  
ARE ROUTINELY ABUSED!



## OTHER VIEWS

# Will 2016 really be a foreign policy election?

There's an emerging conventional wisdom that the 2016 presidential race, once predicted to be mostly about economic issues, will instead be dominated by foreign policy.

"This is going to be a foreign policy election," National Journal's Ron Fournier said recently.

"A foreign policy election (more or less) is upon us," declared "Meet the Press" host Chuck Todd.

"We are likely to have a foreign policy election in 2016," said the Weekly Standard's William Kristol.

The argument is that the rise of the Islamic State of Iraq and Syria, an ongoing crisis in Syria, the Iranian nuclear negotiations, Russian aggression and other international issues have elevated foreign policy and national security to a higher position in the presidential debate than seemed likely, say, a year ago. At the same time, with the unemployment rate down to 5.5 percent and job creation improving, economic concerns that dominated the 2008 and 2012 presidential races won't be as critical in 2016.

At least, that's the idea. And maybe it will happen. (I've written about it myself.) But some newly released figures from the Labor Department are a reminder that economic anxieties underlie everything else — and the economy will likely remain the biggest factor in the next presidential race.

On April 2, the department reported that the average American household's pre-tax income went down from mid-2013 to mid-2014. That was on top of a similar decrease the previous year. Amid all the happy talk about the nation's economic recovery and a falling unemployment rate, Americans are earning less and less.

The Labor Department divided earners into five levels, and income went down for four of the five.

In the lowest fifth, pre-tax income went from \$10,174 to \$9,818 — a 3.5 percent decrease.

In the next-lowest fifth, income went \$27,094 to \$26,369 — a 2.7 percent decrease.

In the middle fifth, income went from \$47,017 to \$45,724 — a 2.8 percent decrease.

In the second-highest fifth, income went from \$75,990 to \$74,410 — a 2.1 percent decrease.

Only in the highest fifth did income increase, from \$164,647 to \$166,048 — a 0.9 percent rise.

In other words, the top 20 percent did just a little better, while the bottom 80 percent did significantly worse.



BYRON YORK  
Comment

Some experts warn that other government surveys due out later this year might show a somewhat better income situation than the Labor Department's. But it won't be good. And the fact remains that the economic recovery is not much of a recovery for millions of Americans.

On top of that, the damage done by the economic meltdown remains unrepaired. Last year, the Russell Sage Foundation found that for households right in the middle of the American wealth distribution, net worth declined from nearly \$88,000 in 2003 to about \$56,000 in 2013.

There are plenty of other measures showing that, despite an improving employment situation — and even that is not as good as the 5.5 percent unemployment figure would suggest — Americans are still in a tough place economically.

**A strong foreign policy vision will be important, but Americans will likely be more concerned about other things when they go to the polls.**

Given that, how can 2016 be a foreign policy election? Barring some Sept. 11-level catastrophe, how can foreign policy dominate a campaign when the incomes of 80 percent of Americans are going down, even during a so-called economic recovery?

Of course candidates will have to craft strong and consistent national security policy platforms. But there haven't been that many true foreign policy elections in recent decades — 1980 and 2004 are the only real examples.

And if the foreign policy election of the pundits' vision does not materialize, the winner in 2016 will be the candidate who best addresses the concerns of Americans who are still seeing their standard of living go down.

It's hard to envision Democrats coming up with proposals that go beyond their reflexive advocacy of fixes like increasing the minimum wage, increasing transfer payments and taxing the rich. Perhaps the bigger question will be whether Republicans can come up with proposals that go beyond their reflexive advocacy of cutting marginal tax rates.

There are a number of conservative thinkers who are working hard on just such plans, and potential candidates are interested. But right now, with campaigns still in the organizing phase, it's too early to know who will embrace what proposal.

They'll have to come up with something good. Yes, a strong foreign policy vision will be important. But as critical as world events are today, Americans will likely be more concerned about other things when they go to the polls in November 2016.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Plass competent and capable to succeed in BMCC seat

A vote for Susan Plass on the BMCC Board of Education is a vote for an extremely competent and dedicated person.

I worked with Susan for several years while we were both employed at BMCC. The college prep department where I worked was frequently involved in grant opportunities and relied on Susan's abilities in this area.

Diverse partners are a given in grant applications and Susan displayed several skills during meetings that are essential for a BMCC board member.

You could count on Susan to be analytical, diligent, creative and thorough. In interactions with others she remains consistently objective and listens well, enabling her to build consensus. She is thoughtful and personable.

I cannot think of a person I know that would be better suited to bring strong leadership qualities to BMCC's Board of Education. Please join me in a vote for Susan Plass.

Karen Reeder  
Pendleton

### Oregon senators turn over rights to United Nations

Both Oregon Senators Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley voted to give up our Second Amendment constitutional right.

They didn't care that the Second Amendment was enacted to restrict the very congressional actions they are trying to destroy. The Second Amendment was penned because it was the hammer given to the people, if necessary, to protect us from a tyrannical power structure by those who may decide the Constitution is nothing more than a document consisting of the articles of rights that conflict with government's control.

It was not enacted for governmental enforcement and if we didn't have that right we would have no way to defend any of our rights. Yet we have officials in our elected government, like those two from Oregon, who are ready and willing and have voted to turn over our rights to the United Nations.

I ask those of you who are interested in America's constitutional rights to check out the United Nations Resolution 2117, and mark those that cause such offenses.

Frank E. Vincent  
Hermiston