

EAST OREGONIAN
Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to Brian Brown, of Portland, who filched millions of dollars from a nonprofit dedicated to improving the lives of American Indians.

Brown was the former president of National Relief Charities and he later started his own charity, called the American Indian Education Endowment Fund. He was able to convince National Relief to donate \$4 million to his new endeavor, which he said would go to college scholarships for poor American Indians. But instead, Brown pocketed the money for himself.

At a hearing last week, after being found guilty of committing mail and wire fraud and transactional money laundering, Brown said he "lost his moral compass," according to *The Oregonian*. Brown will serve three years in prison.

"It is one thing to steal," said Robbi Rice Dietrich, president of the Texas-based National Relief Charities. "It is another thing to steal from the poorest of the poor."

This is one case where the decision to kick or let pass is an easy one.

A tip of the hat to all those who will donate food to those who need it this Saturday by simply leaving it by your mailbox and letting your USPS letter carrier do the rest.

The Community Action Program of East Central Oregon is again joining forces with Stamp Out Hunger, and the rules are easy for those in Umatilla, Morrow, Gilliam and Wheeler counties. Just collect some nonperishable food items (dehydrated milk, canned meats and vegetables, whole-grain rice and cereals and soups are especially appreciated) and leave them in a bag by your mailbox before your carrier stops by.

The donation will go straight to the CAPECO food bank and on to people who need it right in your communities.

A kick in the pants to the New England Patriots, who "more probably than not" cheated on their way to last year's Super Bowl win over our neighborhood Seahawks.

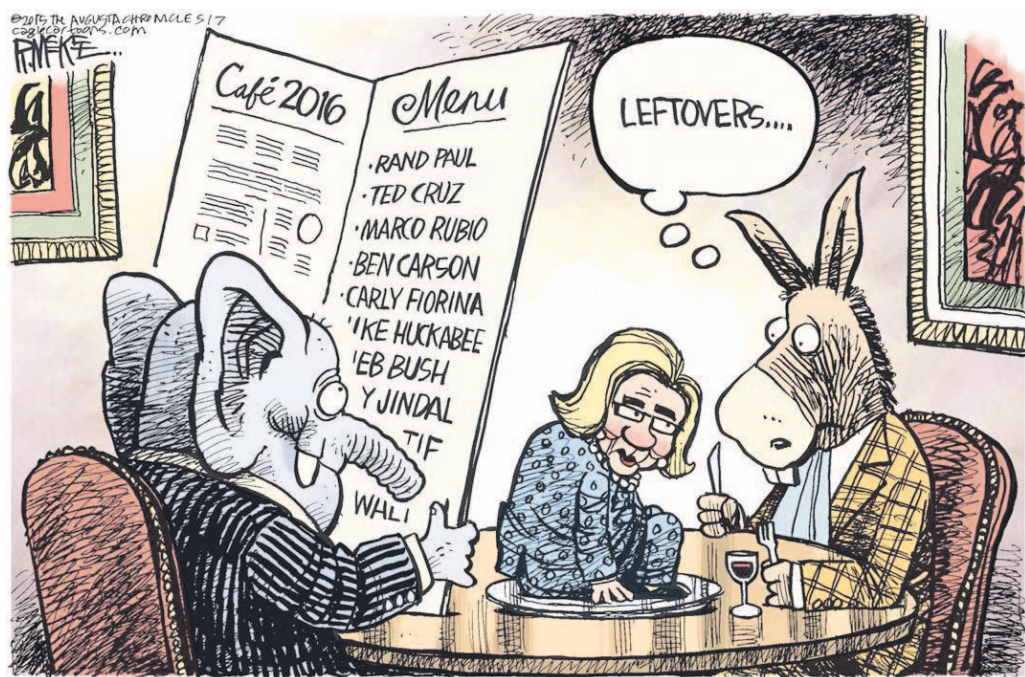
An NFL-commissioned report found that Jim McNally, a seasonal Patriots employee who worked all home games, called himself "the deflator."

The report said McNally snuck off with all 19 game footballs before the AFC Championship game between the Patriots and the Indianapolis Colts. In the bathroom, he deflated all the footballs to below legal levels, to the specifications of golden boy quarterback Tom Brady.

This was nothing new. The report says before most games, Brady and McNally would get balls onto the field that had not been checked by game officials.

And while the balls were certainly inflated to the proper extent when the Patriots played the Seahawks in the Super Bowl, this team of cheatin' cheaters took shortcuts all year (and probably all decade) long. Still, the 'Hawks should have handed off.

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

Time for Ben Carson to run a real race

Ben Carson declared his presidential candidacy in Detroit Monday. Not a minute too soon.

The retired neurosurgeon and conservative star formed a presidential exploratory committee on March 3. Since then, he's been traveling around the country in what might be called a non-strategic way — making paid speeches that he had longstanding commitments to give, appearing at events for his Carson Scholars Fund (which awards money to promising students around the country) and, in other ways, not directing any particular focus on the key early states of Iowa, New Hampshire, South Carolina and Nevada.

At the same time, Carson has been absent from some important party gatherings. For example, Carson did not attend the GOP summit in New Hampshire a couple of weeks ago that featured a huge field — almost every serious (and non-serious) 2016 candidate. Nor did Carson go to Iowa last weekend for a big social conservative gathering that showcased a large number of hopefuls.

As Carson traveled non-politically, he slid down polls of the GOP race. Since the beginning of March, Carson has slipped from 12.3 percent in the RealClearPolitics average of polls — nearly in the top tier of candidates — to less than half that, 5.8 percent, today.

In a new Fox News poll, Carson dropped five points in just three weeks — from being the choice of 11 percent of Republicans surveyed at the end of March to 6 percent in mid-April. It was the biggest drop of any Republican candidate in that period.

In addition to a loss of support, most people still don't know who Carson is. They don't know anything good about him, and they don't know anything bad about him.

For example, when Fox asked respondents whether Carson is "honest and trustworthy," 43 percent said they didn't know — the highest of any Republican candidate. (For the record, 32 percent said Carson is honest and trustworthy, while 25 percent said he is not.) Carson also fares poorly in other attribute measurements — Is he a good leader? Does he care about people like you? — because most Americans simply don't have a clue about him.

Carson aides dismiss such concerns. "Polls go up and down," notes political committee spokeswoman Deana Bass. "Right now, as we're in the exploratory phase, Dr. Carson has been focused on listening to people in determining whether he is going to run or

not." Aides say Carson is doing well on social media and in various outreach efforts. After Carson announced the exploratory committee, according to Mike Murray, a senior adviser for fundraising and grassroots efforts, the would-be campaign raised \$2.1 million from a little more than 30,000 donors, with the average contribution between \$50-60. In April, the campaign added another 25,000 donors. "It's been tremendous," Murray said.

On his committee's website, Carson has been asking conveniently leading questions designed to offer him encouragement to run. Such as: "Some people say non-politicians shouldn't be elected because they lack 'experience.' Which in your estimation is a more important quality for a president: Having a career in Washington politics or having solid values and character?" Carson's committee says people "overwhelmingly" choose solid values and character.

Carson made his announcement in Detroit. It's a natural choice, since it is not just Carson's hometown, but also a good political choice because some conservatives see the city, mired in bankruptcy and general, long-running decline, as a laboratory for new policies that could reverse its fortunes. Carson could direct special attention to the city's problems.

After the rollout, Carson also has the chance to bring new attention to his fledgling campaign that could stop his slide in the polls. "It's safe to say that all of the declared candidates so far have seen pops around their announcement," notes Murray. "We see a great opportunity as Ben starts to define his message and positions on issues."

Whatever Carson does, it will stand out from the rest of the field. Calling his approach to the 2016 race "unorthodox" would be an understatement. Carson speeches, even in a political setting, can seem more like TED talks on the values that brought him success in the decidedly non-political field of brain surgery. At the same time, Carson has deflected policy questions by saying he is not yet a candidate and is still studying the issues.

That ends soon. If he runs, Carson will have to get into politics in a big way. No more putting off questions. Carson may run an unconventional campaign, but it will still have to be a campaign. And it has to start very soon.

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



BYRON YORK
Comment

YOUR VIEWS

Residents should choose court judge

One of the Hermiston city councilors commented that city councilors should pick the municipal court judge because they were better informed, or something of that ilk. It is truly a slippery slope when an elected government official is deluded into believing his/her constituents are low-information voters.

I urge Hermiston voters to vote no on 30-56 and maintain the right to vote on municipal court judge.

Fred Huling
Hermiston

Plass would be effective BMCC board member

Susan Plass is uniquely prepared to serve on the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education. Susan, former Director of Grants for BMCC, has a thorough knowledge of the college and the experience to be an effective board member. During her tenure at BMCC, Susan helped to bring more than \$9 million to the institution. She is a strong supporter of higher education and understands the critical role BMCC plays in the economic health of northeastern Oregon.

Susan is informed, dedicated and experienced. I have worked with Susan in Altrusa where she demonstrates strong leadership and organizational skills. We strongly support her candidacy and urge a

vote for Susan Plass, BMCC Board of Education.

Gale and Pat McClintock
Pendleton

All unnecessary costs trimmed from bond

As a member of the Blue Mountain Community College budget committee, I encourage all registered voters in Umatilla and Morrow counties to carefully and thoughtfully think about this measure. This measure must be passed. It is for the benefit of the entire region. Education of our younger generation is not only a benefit, it is a "must do" in today's world. They are the future, without question.

The technology of the world is advancing at a pace we could not comprehend two decades ago. If we are to keep pace with the rest of the world, we must educate and motivate our upcoming generations. As a country, the USA is still the greatest nation in the world, but our educational systems are falling behind other countries. We cannot allow this to continue.

There have been many meetings over the past few months regarding the needs of BMCC. There has been a great deal of input from the voters of our counties. I can assure you, the voters throughout Umatilla and Morrow counties, that the BMCC administration has heard the message from the people, loud and clear. We recently had a budget committee meeting

to review the upcoming BMCC budget, along with the bond measure. While it is a considerable amount of money, the cost to us, as individual taxpayers, is very affordable. The administration has diligently worked through their budget process and they have trimmed all unnecessary costs and "fat" from the budget and the proposed bond. What is left is the financial requirements needed to make appropriate improvements and maintenance to a group of facilities and educational programs that have been well used for the past 50 years. Its time to upgrade for the benefit of the students.

The cost to most of us as taxpayers is less than one cup of coffee (of your choice) per week: 25 cents per \$1,000 of assessed property value. I don't think there is any taxpayer in our area that cannot afford an average of \$50-\$60 per year to ensure that our students who aspire to go to college have that opportunity.

BMCC has a great reputation; the administration is working diligently to meet the demands of the changing world. Read the materials presented with the ballot; read the letters to the editor; go online to learn more; watch your mail for flyers.

Help BMCC provide students with the skills that employers of the present and future will demand. Please vote yes for BMCC bond measure 30-106.

Jim and Barbara Stanton
Milton-Freewater

Pendleton schools levy will maintain programs

My wife and I are writing this letter to encourage the people of Pendleton to support the renewal of the Local Option Levy.

After retiring from the Pendleton School District after 28 years in the classroom I've realized what a special place Pendleton is, and one of the things that make it special is its schools.

We have watched four of our children go through the system and graduate. Three are now currently working in professions they love and owe a lot of that to the teachers and support staff they had in this district.

Passing this local option levy will help maintain current programs and staff levels so we don't see a return to the 2009-2010 and 2012-2013 cuts and reductions in programs.

We urge you to vote yes to show your support of our local schools, teachers and most importantly, the children of our community.

Dale and Amy Freeman
Pendleton

A step backward if Pendleton levy fails

It is time to vote, and I am writing to urge you to remember to vote, and to ask you to vote yes on the Pendleton School District local option levy renewal.

Because this is a renewal, it does not represent any increase in tax rate to you. What it does represent is over \$450,000 that stays in the district and allows the district to support teachers and programs that are crucial to the education of our children. Loss of this revenue would likely result in reduction in teachers or programs or both. As a parent and a business owner, I feel that this would be a big step backward for our school district. I don't think, as a society, that we can afford not to fund our schools to the best of our ability.

Everyone should have their ballot already. Please take a moment to vote. The local option levy is listed on the back of the last page. Remember, there is no increase in taxes to you if this levy passes. Please consider supporting your local schools with a yes vote.

Michelle M. Monkman
Pendleton

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