

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Don't do drugs

As of Wednesday, marijuana is legal to possess in Oregon without a prescription.

For years now, personal use amounts were nearly decriminalized in this state, a poorly regulated medical program was put in place, and an omnipresent black market allowed recreational users avenues to access the drug.

But this is real-deal legalization. No more fake medical conditions. No more hiding grow rooms in moldy basements, or grow sites on out-of-the-way land. No more buying from a shady dealer down the street. If you are 21 years of age and on private property, you can possess four marijuana plants or eight ounces of the ready-to-use portion. And you can take up in front of your mother, the mayor and the chief of police — just not in public.

Hooray? We're in favor of reducing the black market, increasing state tax dollars and ending the wasteful, hypocritical and often racist drug war. We also think this is a good chance for freedom fighters and personal liberty supporters to put their money where their mouth is, and maybe open their eyes to the benefits that such freedom can bring to people on all sides of the political

spectrum.

But that doesn't mean we're in favor of using marijuana.

The drug is helpful to some, harmless to most, and a real drag to a few. But so are Big Macs, whiskey, tobacco, video games and motorcycles, which can be just as addicting and debilitating. Those too raise issues of personal choice and personal acceptance of danger.

Just because it's legal doesn't mean a Big Mac-a-day habit is a good one. It's the same with marijuana. Just because pot is legal now doesn't mean you should become a habitual, or even a casual user.

Where and if marijuana shops can open in our area remains up for debate. The state legislature, which dragged its feet on making important decisions on this matter until well past the eleventh hour, is still trying to decide.

But that doesn't mean we have to put off those decisions about our own habits. Spend your money elsewhere. Pick up a book, go outside, bake an old-fashioned brownie. Don't use marijuana. But it's nice to know we will no longer be wasting public money and energy cracking the skulls of those who do.

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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

Supreme Court is doing what it's supposed to

Recently I've begun to feel sad for our *East Oregonian* editors. I know that they like letters from readers, but there have been precious few since the last election. Almost the only letters that I've seen in months have been from people out of our area about some pet issue. So I decided that, since it's too hot to get out and garden, I'd write something so that our editors would know that one of their readers, in any case, is trying to help them.

So let's think about the Supreme Court. This last week the Supreme Court upheld the Affordable Care Act — for the second time — and also gay marriage. Now the right wing is on fire: Activist justices! Oh my! And Republican candidates for president are talking about making the coming election campaign about the role of the court in government. Boy, that's going to be fun. I can just see it now. So the Congress passes a law that the Supreme Court has no jurisdiction over Congressional law; the President vetoes this law; the Congress overrides the veto; and the law lands before the Supreme Court. How is the court likely to decide such a case? I would say that it's a simple 9-0 (spells no).

Recall the Citizens United decision some months back that allowed unlimited sums of money to be used to support candidates for national office. Then it was the Democrats who were all upset. "This is a re-writing of basic constitutional rights."

So then the court was on the side of the right wing; now it is on the side of the left. How can we live with a court like that? Then I had a moment of enlightenment. You know what? The Supreme Court is doing exactly what it is supposed to do: evaluate legal issues brought before it and decide what is the best determination.

We call this our system of checks and balances. It represents the most brilliant part of this wonderful constitution that we have that John Adams and Thomas Jefferson created. So, I don't like one of those three decisions, and you don't like two. So, What the hell? That's what's called democracy, and praise God! It's still alive and well in this country.

So, let's all go to the Fourth of July parade this Saturday and applaud that self-effacing WWII hero, Bob Stangier, and then retire to a local watering hole, order a glass of American whiskey, and raise a toast to the United States of America, the greatest country in the world, where there

is still hope for the hopeless, help for the helpless, and freedom and justice for all.

Jack T. Sanders
Pendleton

A wonderful advance in culture and the world

While it may not be right or traditional, we must all accept that change is a part of our lives and our culture. The last 100 years has seen some of the greatest advancements in our world's history. But my focus today is to refute the Debbie Downers.

With the Supreme Court's recent decisions and our own state's actions we must admit a few things. Firstly, love is intangible, immaterial, evolving and most important has no bounds. The court's recent decision reaffirms that all love is valid between consenting adults.

Second, the passage of the voter-approved legalization of marijuana for recreational use is telling both the citizens and themselves that as adults we have the right to consume whatever substance we want, as long as it is not causing undue harm to others.

On my bigger issues, there has to be a polar shift in our lifestyles if we want to survive. I say this not as a pessimist or a cynical person but as a logical thinking person. Please hear my argument and ideas: We have to move on from consumerism and money-items lifestyles. Second, we have to learn to better use our water or we will face a time when water is rationed like pills. We are in the 21st century; we know how the world works, we know we cause climate change, but we still drive cars everywhere, waste beyond comprehension — it must all stop.

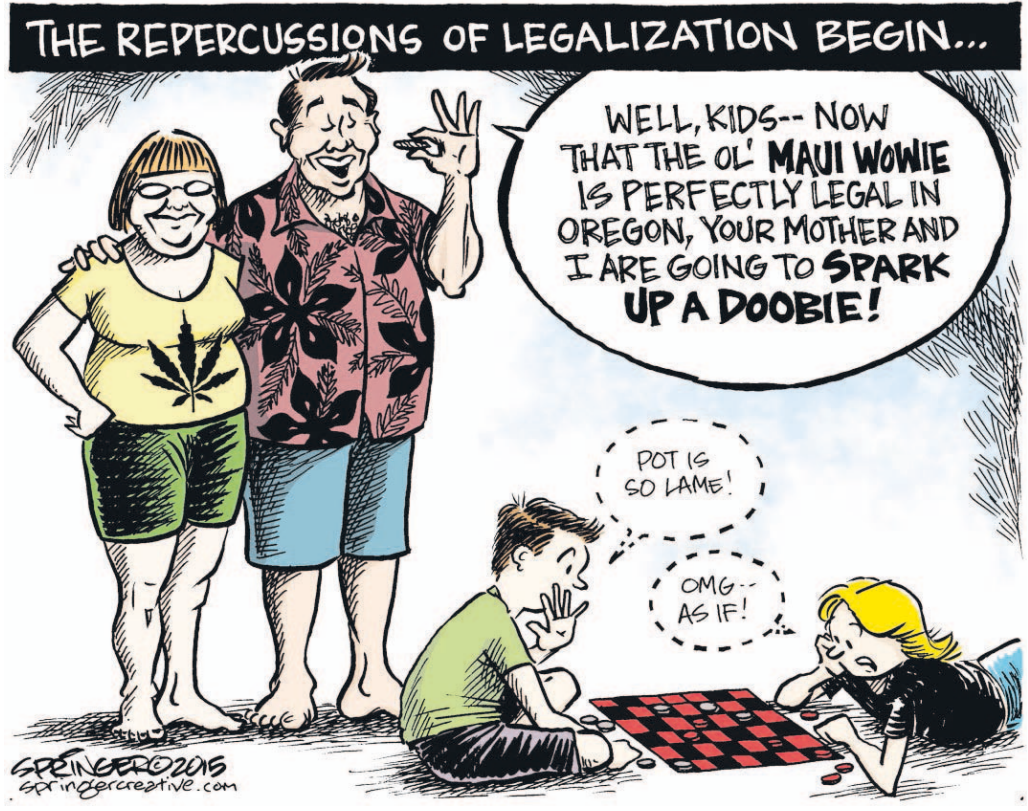
My only viable option to save the world from ourselves is to shut the Internet and power completely off and start over from the 17th century. For the biggest problem we have today — and I promise many won't like this, but freedom of speech and all — we must move on from the notion that this life is a test and the next will be paradise. How about we live to make tomorrow better than today, not just how do I get more things or more self importance?

I would like to take my last few words to thank many people that approached me on my last letter to the editor about yielding to pedestrians — thank you. I welcome any response, or if you know me let me know. Thank you for the ink and may logic guide our lives.

Zac Wiseman
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. 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.



OTHER VIEWS

A refuge for racists

In one of the little acts of subversion that creeps into "The Simpsons" every now and then, a helicopter from Fox News was shown in 2010 with a logo, "Not Racist, But #1 With Racists."

So it can be said of the Republican Party, a shelter for the kind of dead-enders who used to be Democrats, then Dixiecrats, but have found a home of sorts in the attic of the Party of Lincoln. It's encouraging to see some party leaders trying to sweep these dark-hearted elements out, but they have work to do yet — starting with Donald Trump.

The accused killer of nine black churchgoers in Charleston, South Carolina, Dylann Roof, appears to have been moved to mass murder by incendiary tracts turned out by a white supremacist group, the Council of Conservative Citizens. The leader of that same group, Earl Holt III, has donated more than \$60,000 to various Republican office holders and candidates, including the presidential aspirants Ted Cruz, Rick Santorum and Rand Paul.

The candidates, of course, are shocked — shocked! — that an extremist hate group would contribute to their cause, and most of them have now returned the money or given it to a fund for victims' families. But it raises an obvious question: Why would someone whose ideas belong in the graveyard of history contribute, across the board, to leading Republican conservatives?

Guilt by association can be unfair, or at least calls out for nuance. So let's move on to a more overt racial firebomber in the party, Trump, who is polling second — just behind Jeb Bush — in one recent survey of New Hampshire Republicans.

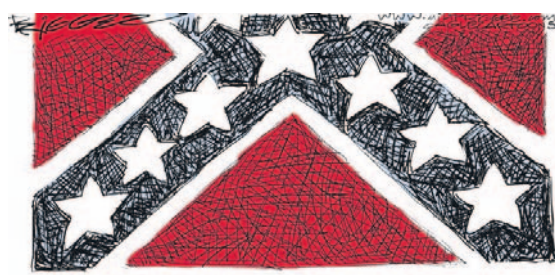
Trump does not use dog whistles or code words. He's blunt. And his wealth affords him a halo of respect in some circles that a low-rent racist would not get. In the spasm of surreal narcissism that was his presidential announcement earlier this month, Trump said some things you would expect to hear at a Klan rally — 20 years ago.

"When Mexico sends its people, they're not sending their best. They're not sending you," he said. "They're bringing drugs. They're bringing crime. They're rapists. And some, I assume, are good people."

Because Trump is a buffoon, a punchline and a fact-checker's full-time project, he gets away with things that more serious candidates cannot. So Mexicans — and by extension, all immigrants — are not "you," but rapists,



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment



drug lords and leeches in our fair land. Ha-ha. That Trump — what a straight-shooter.

For his "insulting remarks about Mexican immigrants," Univision, the Spanish-language broadcaster, just dumped its relationship with Trump's Miss Universe pageant. (He's a part-owner.) Great. Now where are the Republican leaders — supposedly intent on trying to make the party something more than a collection of grievance-

gorged old white guys — giving Trump a similar message?

Trump also has consistently challenged President Barack Obama's legitimacy as an American citizen, making a clearly racist play in his questioning of the president's place of birth, even after the release of a long-

form birth certificate.

Money insulates Trump. But the same cannot be said of Mike Huckabee, who also questioned the president's American authenticity, concocting a lie about how "his childhood" in Kenya shaped his worldview. Huckabee sent a well-received video, in 1993, to the supremacist Citizens Council, though he later condemned the group.

Let's yield to a British-born comedian, John Oliver, to set Lost Cause apologists straight: "The Confederate flag is one of those symbols that should really only be seen on T-shirts, belt buckles and bumper stickers to help the rest of us identify the worst people in the world."

The party label is meaningless. The white South was solidly Democratic after the Civil War, vowing never to vote for the party that liberated the slaves. A hundred years later, the white South changed allegiances with the advent of the civil rights movement. Richard Nixon then sealed the transformation with his Southern Strategy, which parked Southern whites firmly in the Republican Party.

For the many Republicans who believe in free markets, less government and the racial legacy of Lincoln, the question has to be asked: What do some of society's worst elements see in their party? It's the coded language, yes, the hard voices of its broadcast wing, but also actions. Of late, this is the party that has been behind restrictive voting measures aimed squarely at blacks. Don't give racists anything to root for, and they'll crawl back under their rocks.

Timothy Egan, a New York Times Contributing Op-Ed Writer, covers the environment, the American West and politics.

Police camera bill misses the mark

The (Albany) Democrat-Herald, June 29

The Legislature has passed, and Gov. Kate Brown has signed, a bill that spells out standards for police agencies that choose to equip their officers with body cameras.

House Bill 2571 is useful in some regards: For example, it offers guidance to police about when they should turn on their cameras and how long recordings should be retained. And the bill does not require police agencies to buy video systems, which could have been another substantial unfunded mandate from the state.

But in terms of one of the primary reasons to have the bill in the first place — helping to restore public confidence in police agencies — the bill misses its mark. The recordings will not be publicly disclosed, unless such release is deemed necessary to the public interest. It seems unlikely that prosecutors and judges will be racing to release these recordings to the public.

And even if they do, the bill mandates that before anything is released, "all persons within the recording" must be unidentifiable, which would seem to limit the usefulness of the recording for members of the public trying to make sense of a noteworthy encounter between citizens and police.

There was a time, not so long ago, when routinely equipping police officers with these body cameras seemed like a natural prescription for helping to improve the transparency

of police agencies across the nation. Unfortunately, it's not too hard to think of any number of recent incidents in which having access to video filmed from an officer's point of view would have been helpful — and, in some cases, might have helped avert tragedy.

But the version of the bill that now is law in Oregon has little to do with rebuilding trust between police agencies and the public and even less to do with increasing transparency. Instead, its primary focus is about protecting the police.

Testimony to the Legislature on the bill from police officials includes a revealing turn of phrase. Daryl Turner, a Portland officer who serves as the president of the Oregon Coalition of Police and Sheriffs, noted in his written comments the importance of protecting the recordings from "wanton public records requests." Well, of course: We wouldn't want to burden a public agency with requests to access public records. Those crazy citizens! What will they ask for next?

At least the Legislature managed to pass a related bill that does offer some protection to the public: The bill clarifies that it's not illegal for members of the public to make their own videos of public encounters between police officers and citizens.

That's important, because one of the clear messages sent by the passage of House Bill 2571 to ordinary citizens is this: Better keep your smartphones handy, just in case.