

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

Where are Sanders, Trump leading us?

Bernie Sanders brought his phenomenon to the Pacific Northwest over the weekend. On Saturday his outdoor rally in Seattle was hijacked by two women claiming to be Black Lives Matter organizers, but he subsequently drew a crowd indoors. In Portland, the insurgent Democratic presidential candidate drew his biggest crowd ever — 28,000 to the Rose Garden — 20,000 inside and 8,000 standing outside.

In the same week, the Republican presidential candidate Donald Trump dominated the party's first debate by breaking new ground on the topic of misogyny.

Sanders and Trump are an interesting pair. Is Sanders akin to Eugene McCarthy in 1968, who forced President Lyndon Johnson into retirement? Is Trump a new version of Ross Perot, who drained GOP votes in the 1992 general election, or is he an updated version of George Wallace, who fed right-wing voters' base instincts?

When asked last week if he were a "Bernie Sanders Democrat," Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden said: "Bernie is real." Therein lies the essential difference between the liberal outlier and the right wing bomb-thrower.

Sen. Sanders' epic December 2010 Senate speech on income inequality is the bedrock of what the man believes. Sanders' straight talk is a threat to Hillary Clinton, who has a hard time giving us a consistent storyline.

In "Donald Trump's Sales Pitch," *The New Yorker's* James Surowiecki likens Trump to P.T. Barnum, who understood that you have to say increasingly outlandish things to get the public's attention.

Neither Sanders nor Trump may persist as major party nominees. But they will assuredly change the course of history in 2016.

Campaigns are the prelude to government. While Sanders' rhetoric leads to substantive policy initiatives, Trump's insults seem only to feed grudges.

Sanders and Trump are an interesting pair. Both will assuredly change the course of history in 2016.

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

Don't have to tell me how bad Pendleton's roads are

The Aug. 6 *East Oregonian* ran an editorial headlined "Pendleton council owes us honesty."

Well, how do you tell citizens that the maintenance for their city has been less than desirable for the last 20 years? How do you tell them that maintenance of buildings and streets have been put off?

I am a city councilor at large. I take full responsibility for the council's position. Three years ago (the second year of my first term in office) at a budget meeting it became apparent to me how our budget was being balanced: We were neglecting maintenance.

I brought it up and challenged the budget committee, mayor and city manager. The result has been a scramble to find out just how much deferred maintenance there is. In fact, it is a lot. Tens of millions of dollars. I cannot honestly tell you how much, but it is north of \$50 million.

Almost everyone on our council is new except Mayor Phil Houk and councilmember John Brenne. When the new councilors ran for office, they had no idea — nor did I — about the complexity of our budget issues.

While this issue could have been swept under the rug, I kept asking, prodding and cajoling my fellow councilors and mayor about this issue. Frankly, they are probably a little sick of me bringing it up. Now you know why!

All of a sudden it's this city council's fault. However, it's not. It is news that no one wants to hear. A lot of what the *EO* printed was right. However, blaming this council for results of decisions they did not make is disingenuous. Combining the Barnhart Road with the Eighth Street Bridge is disgraceful. The *EO* knows full well this council had no part in the road.

The bridge decision was ours, and frankly a no-brainer. We could either put up 5 percent of the cost for a new



AL PLUTE
Comment

bridge (\$750,000) or bear the full cost of repairing the bridge for multi-millions of dollars, or close down the bridge and demolish, which would also cost multi-millions. Any business person in this city or anywhere else would have made the same decisions this council did.

The *EO* has a reporter come to all of our meetings. Antonio Sierra has been that person for some time. When the Perkins Street residents came before the council, they were upset to say the least. Rightfully so. They wanted their street replaced. The mayor referred them to our city manager to speak the following week. I spoke up and told them the following: "I'm going to tell you what the rest of the council doesn't want to tell you. Your street is not going to get fixed at this time. There is no money and if we fix your street, it will take the whole street maintenance and repair budget for a fiscal year." Does this sound familiar?

I believe the *EO* in their opinion was trying to take credit for bringing this to the attention of the public. It's a funny thing that not only was their reporter present at that meeting, he also met with me weeks ago and I told him in detail why we needed the gas tax.

This tax is not going to fix all the roads. That said, it is a small step toward addressing the street problem. For instance, if you have a 20 gallon gas tank, every time you fill it \$1 will go to the city. This can make a difference.

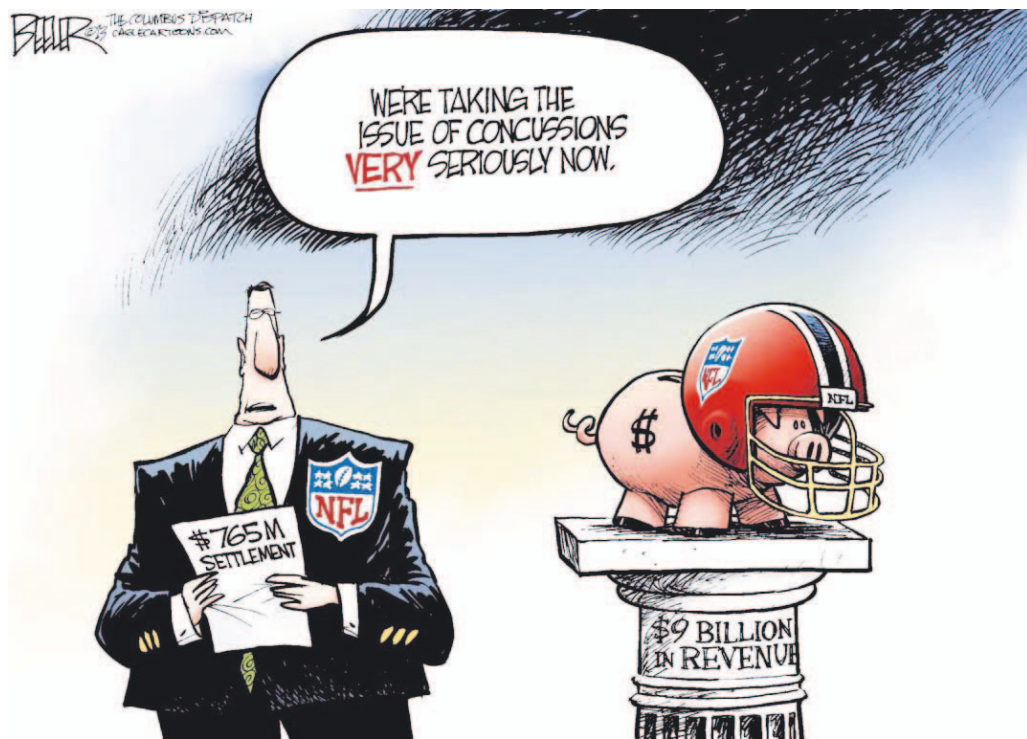
You can't ride a horse without feeding it and Pendleton has ridden this horse for the last 20 years on sugar cubes. It has finally keeled over. Do we give it some hay or just put it out of its misery? Please join me in taking the first step to revive it and vote yes on the 5 cent fuel tax on the November ballot.

Al Plute is a Pendleton city councilor.

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



Football's bogus settlement

Thanks to the ham-handedness of the National Football League's Hall of Fame, the inane "deflategate" scandal, which has been the dominant NFL headline this off-season, was pushed to the sidelines this weekend and replaced by a genuinely important issue facing the country's dominant sports league and its players. That issue is the serious cognitive impairment that appears to affect so many former professional football players.

The embodiment of that impairment was Junior Seau, the perennial All-Pro linebacker who was inducted, posthumously, into the Hall of Fame on Saturday. Three years ago, Seau committed suicide by shooting himself in the chest. He was 43 years old and had been retired from pro football for only three years.

His brain became part of a study conducted by the National Institutes of Health, which concluded that he had a condition called chronic traumatic encephalopathy, or CTE. This neurodegenerative disease, which scientists believe can cause depression, anger, loss of impulse control and poor decision-making, among other things, has been found in the brains of many deceased NFL players. Scientists like those at Boston University's CTE Center, who are studying the condition, believe that repeated hits to the head can cause CTE.

Because the Hall of Fame passed a rule in 2010 that forbids relatives of deceased inductees to speak at the annual induction ceremony — gee, I wonder why? — Seau's daughter Sydney was barred from making an eloquent speech she had prepared about her father. (In a compromise, she was "interviewed" on stage during the ceremony, where she was ultimately able to give a short version of it.)

Although Sydney Seau didn't mention her father's CTE in her remarks, she didn't have to; reporters covering the controversy did it for her. CTE was also at the heart of a legal battle between the NFL and former players, who claimed in a class-action lawsuit that "the N.F.L. held itself out as the guardian and authority on the issue of player safety," yet failed to properly investigate, warn of and revise league rules to minimize the risk of concussions.

In April, Judge Anita Brody of U.S. District Court approved a settlement of the lawsuit. Although the settlement could put an estimated \$1 billion or so in the hands of former players who are suffering from dementia and other brain diseases — money that many of them desperately need — the deal has been controversial. Some 200 players have opted out, and hope to bring their own lawsuits against the NFL. Lawyers for other



JOE NOCERA
Comment

former players are appealing the settlement, arguing that it doesn't do nearly enough for players with damaged brains.

And you know what? They're right. The Junior Seau-Hall of Fame imbroglio prompted me to take a closer look at the settlement. One of the things I learned was that if Junior Seau were alive today, he would more than likely not have been eligible for compensation: Although he obviously had CTE, his symptoms of erratic behavior and depression aren't covered by the settlement.

The settlement will help former players who have dementia and Alzheimer's get compensation, though the older they are, and the fewer years they played in the league, the less money they will get. But those with CTE, which seems to be the primary way playing football damages the brain? Not so much. The settlement, to be blunt, is a travesty.

It's hard not to view the settlement as the cynical effort by the NFL to contain its potential liability.

In her lengthy decision approving the settlement, Brody defended this aspect of the deal by saying that retired players "cannot be compensated for C.T.E. in life because no diagnostic or clinical profile of C.T.E. exists, and the symptoms of

the disease, if any, are unknown." But Robert Stern, one of the scientists at the BU center, told me that he expected a test to be developed within a decade that will be able to diagnose CTE in living people. As for symptoms, the real problem is that plenty of people suffer from lost impulse control and depression without having CTE. Even so, the primary symptoms the settlement will reward financially are those that suggest cognitive impairment, rather than the behavioral and mood symptoms of CTE.

"At a minimum," said Stern, "former players whose behavior changes in ways that suggest CTE should have full evaluations paid for by the settlement. And treatment would be nice, too."

It's hard not to view the settlement as the cynical effort by the NFL to contain its potential CTE liability; indeed, once the settlement is final, it will be nearly impossible for players — past, present and future — to be compensated if they are found to have the disease. Even the plaintiffs' expert has said that only 17 percent of the roughly 21,000 former players who have become part of the class will ever see any money.

Oh, and did I mention that the NFL has agreed to pay the plaintiffs' lawyers over \$112 million? It's not the nation's dominant sports league for nothing.

Joe Nocera is an Op-Ed columnist. Before joining *The Opinion Pages* in April 2011, he wrote the *Talking Business* column for *The New York Times*.

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton should embrace idea of being a 'festival city'

I was inspired by the article by Tom Hebert to throw out some "tourism" ideas of my own. If Pendleton is serious about becoming a "tourist destination town," they need to have events going on that will attract visitors during the year. What Pendleton needs is to hire a festival director who would create, coordinate and make festivals and events happen throughout the year. Pendleton has the perfect setup for any kind of event one would want to create.

Pendleton is a perfect place to have festivals of all kinds. Some that come to mind are: wheat festival — perhaps around the 4th of July; equine festival — around the last weekend of May; film festivals during the fall and winter; cowboy festival, music festival, art festival, dance festival.

For the wheat festival there could be a parade of old farm equipment at the Round-Up Grounds, some pulled by horses, with commentary and explanation of wheat-raising with these implements from the past. A parade in the morning of motorized farm equipment before 1960 could take place downtown. Saturday evening could end in fireworks if presented Fourth of July weekend.

The equine festival could draw horse lovers

from all over the U.S. There could be horse racing in the Round-Up Grounds all day on Saturday, a big horse parade downtown (a dress-up with a different theme each year, the horses could be decorated as well as the rider), the Convention Center filled with booths selling/displaying all things related to horses.

For the cowboy festival, people could be invited to pay to take part in an old-fashioned cattle drive at the Round-Up Grounds. People from cities could take part by getting on a horse and riding around with other riders and a bunch of cattle. At the end, the participants could gather around a campfire to sing cowboy songs and hear cowboy poems recited.

Another event could be marching bands who do intricate marching patterns while playing who would perform at the Round-Up Grounds in the evening.

A popular event in other cities involving art is an evening of art with regional beers and wine and local restaurants offering samples of one or two dishes. A few local bands could provide music.

The list goes on and on. There is really no reason why Pendleton couldn't become a first-class tourist destination — it only takes the will and desire to do it.

Loree McKenna
Pendleton

Be heard!

Comment online at eastoregonian.com