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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to getting some use out of Pendleton's Christian Science church, the beautiful but long-vacant building at the intersection of Main Street and the Umatilla River.

This week, participants in the Pendleton Rock & Roll Camp — which is celebrating its 10th year — had recording classes and instrument workshops in the grand old facility that now sits mostly empty.

It was great to see one of the neatest buildings in Pendleton — both for its architecture and its location — getting some use. The community and the building's owners both have a lot to gain if that happens more often, and we hope it does.

So while Rock & Roll Camp is just a temporary, week-long fill, it's great to hear there are plans to use the space more often. Owner Roger Bisnett said he plans to rent it out as an event space. Maybe those rock camp students will come back some Saturday night as a paying concert-goer or musician, injecting some after-hours life to the old church.

A tip of the hat to the Pilot Rock City Council for making the shrewd decision of not wading too deep into the tangled web that is social media.

A city employee was concerned about some false information about the city's police force that appeared on a private Facebook page, and asked if staff should correct the post. After a good discussion, the council took no action. Which is the right move.

If you've been on Facebook, Twitter or any other user-generated website, you know there's a lot of slanted information, and quite a few outright lies. It's tempting to play the role of moderator, but it's a game a city cannot win.

Correcting misinformation on someone else's Facebook page is akin to intentionally eavesdropping on a party conversation, then butting in when you hear something false. At best it draws dirty looks, at worst a war of words.

Instead, towns should use their own portals to the web — city websites, Facebook pages, etc. — to post clear information and answer questions.

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

Debate a 'good circus,' but real issues at stake

Think about listening to Donald Trump for eight years!

Trump is still leading in the GOP polls, and if the party doesn't consider him seriously he may open a third party and split the Republican vote. We may not agree with his rhetoric but he deserves the respect of his colleagues in this weird pursuit of one of our nation's most demanding positions.

It is apparent some voters agree with Trump's ideology and believe he expresses opinions on issues other presidential candidates shy away from for fear of losing votes. Trump has raised issues that need stronger support but some (on women) do get a little bizarre.

If he continues to get top headlines in the news and polls we need to pay attention to his "free speech" even if we disagree with him.

Trump's conflict with Megyn Kelly is unfortunate. I thought she was fair but I did have an underlying sense of hostility from FOX hosts. I never watch FOX so I should not judge them. I thought the debate was a good circus. I admire Carly Fiorina for her professional performance.

I am puzzled by the comment Jeb Bush and Mrs. Fiorina made after the debate when they both said they "had fun last night." The whole debate should have been more professional. Persons seeking the presidency of the United States should not view the position as entertainment, although I have to admit, it recently has been a "comedy of errors."

So listen up, voters, to what these hopefuls really are saying.

Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton

Union sabotaging Oregon's export industry

Remember when President Reagan fired all the aircraft controllers who threatened a strike that would have caused a shutdown of air traffic and severely impact the economy? It's too bad we don't have that kind of leadership today.

In the midst of predominant presidential campaign news there is little printed or televised coverage about the reason for the devastating loss of ocean-going container transportation at the Port of Portland. However, for over nine months labor negotiations between the Pacific Maritime Association and the International Longshoremen and Warehouse Union at the Port of Portland resulted in a deliberate work slowdown during contract bargaining. Overseas shipping companies weren't able to load or unload containers in a timely manner. Incoming loaded vessels would sit idle for days waiting to be unloaded at the port as well as the increased wait for ships to be loaded.

Consequently, the Port of Portland lost Hanjin Shipping Company that handled around 80 percent of Terminal 6's business and the only line taking Oregon and other Northwest goods straight to their biggest overseas customers, primarily in Asia. The other major European shipper, Hapag-Loyd, also canceled Portland stops. During 2014, an estimated $21 billion of goods was exported from Oregon alone.

Now Oregon shippers will pay an estimated $500-$1,000 per container to send products to Seattle or Tacoma ports that are said to be already congested. Just think of the thousands of dollars lost to the state's economy, the unsustainable cost to producers and the resulting loss of market share due to higher priced consumer goods and slower delivery. This shipping problem is also shared by Washington, Idaho and Montana, who utilize the Columbia River as an efficient means to transport goods down river on the way to overseas markets.

The West Coast ILWU workers average about $35 per hour. Add the bonus and benefits to that wage it then becomes around $44 per hour. The workers doubtless have reasons for contract deliberations including their claim of mismanagement by the port manager. Considering the blow to the economy of the entire Northwest, especially the huge agriculture sector, I wonder if those union workers consider it worth it — and are they in a much better financial position now that they have a substantially decreased work load? It's one thing for unions to honestly negotiate wages and conditions that have merit, but to deliberately sabotage an industry, that seems traitorous.

Merlyn Robinson
Heppner

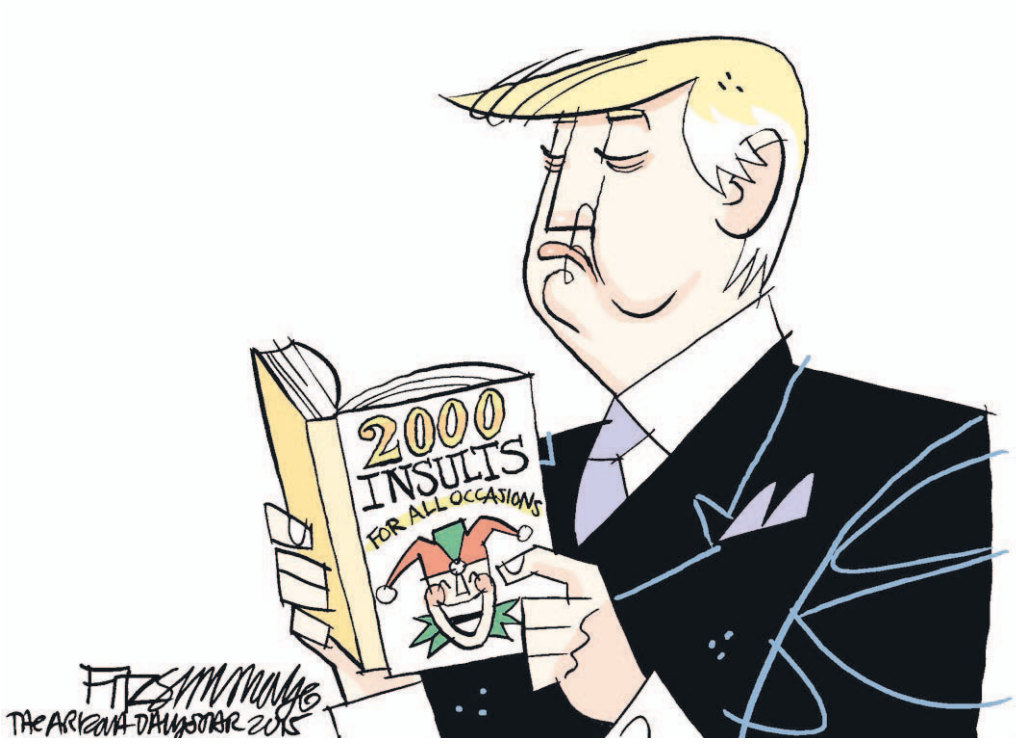
Wolf pack requests new tunes

As the leader of the Manysheep Pack, I would like to thank the officials of the ODFW for their decision not to try to kill us. Our pack had a recent bout with tapeworms that killed little Woolsley, so we are not up to full pack strength right now.

The noise box in our area is playing some of Michael Jackson's songs. Would it be possible to change that to Justin Bieber? The pups seem to like him for some ungodly reason. Please keep up the good work.

A Wolf, packmaster
(as told to Mike Mehren, recently appointed wolf docent, Hermiston)

OTHER VIEWS



In midst of Trump mess, GOP shines at RedState

BYRON YORK
Comment

It's likely the Donald Trump melodrama is the only news you've heard from the RedState Gathering of conservatives in Atlanta. But something unusual happened here, and it had nothing to do with Trump.

A parade of Republican presidential candidates marched through — Chris Christie, Rick Perry, Bobby Jindal, Marco Rubio, Carly Fiorina, Mike Huckabee, Ted Cruz, Jeb Bush, Scott Walker — and not one of them bombed. Not one underwhelmed, disappointed, or mailed it in. Instead, the GOP hopefuls were sharp, fired-up, and focused, even as the embarrassments of the latest Trump controversy threatened to overshadow it all.

Why were they so good? Here's a theory: The candidates prepared like crazy for the recent Cleveland debate, honing their arguments, finding the most effective way to express their positions. Most of that material was never used — there was no time, given the constraints of a big-field debate. Plus, they were terrified of making a mistake in front of the huge Fox News audience. But in Atlanta, with all that preparation, and with more time — and without the crushing pressure and nerves of the debate — they let go with their newly-polished best stuff.

> The news was good: a field of remarkably talented candidates ... a group younger, more energetic, more passionate, and more focused on the future than the geriatric Democratic field.

Ted Cruz staffers privately complain that when he gives a knockout speech, it's often dismissed because Ted Cruz is expected to give a knockout speech. That's just what he did in Atlanta. The Texas senator focused on a theme of conservative authenticity — attacking the Republican congressional leadership in Washington — that deeply resonated with the RedStaters. They rewarded him with multiple standing ovations.

It might seem odd to say that a crowd that could appreciate Cruz so much would also, just an hour and a half later, give a warm reception to Bush. But that's what happened when the former Florida governor delivered a solid, policy-packed speech that at the same time gave off an air of energy, passion, and liveliness. Before Bush spoke, some in the audience had thought about booing him. When he finished, they stood and applauded.

Who else shone? Mike Huckabee gave a good-humored speech that sent the clear message that, while he still feels strongly about the social issues that characterized his 2008 campaign, this time the economy and national security are tops.

"People ask me, every time I go to a campaign event, what do you think the most important topic we face?" Huckabee said. "I think they want me to limit it to one. I say that's like asking me which wing of the airplane is most important — the one on the left, or the one on the right?" Huckabee explained that, for him, one wing is "the economy, jobs, getting America moving again," while the other is "national security, making sure this country is safe."

Who else? Bobby Jindal was a hit — funny, focused, with an at-times touching emphasis on his family's immigrant story. The Louisiana governor's parents came to the United States from India knowing virtually nothing about their new country and worked hard to become Americans from day one.

"We need to insist on assimilation," Jindal told the crowd. "Immigration without assimilation is invasion. We must not let that happen in America."

Carly Fiorina followed up on her breakthrough debate performance with the kind of speech that has been winning supporters one-by-one for the last several months. Chris Christie was entertaining and substantive, pleasing the crowd by openly discussing the rift between the Chamber of Commerce, once a strong ally, and conservatives on issues like immigration and crony capitalism. Rick Perry was strong, as was Scott Walker, as was Marco Rubio. They all impressed.

The news was, in other words, relentlessly good: a field of remarkably talented candidates rounding into campaign shape. A group of candidates younger, more energetic, more passionate, and more focused on the future than the geriatric Democratic field.

The bottom line is that the RedState gathering illustrated the degree to which Trump's antics, and the wall-to-wall media coverage they inevitably attract, are like an eclipse casting a shadow over all the good things happening in the Republican presidential field. That's not to say Republicans should try to force Trump out of the race; given the increasingly out-of-control feel of Trump's campaign, the problem will likely work itself out in coming weeks. But it is to say there is a lot good happening in the Republican presidential campaign, and someday Republicans will be able to see it, clearly and without the distraction that is Donald Trump.

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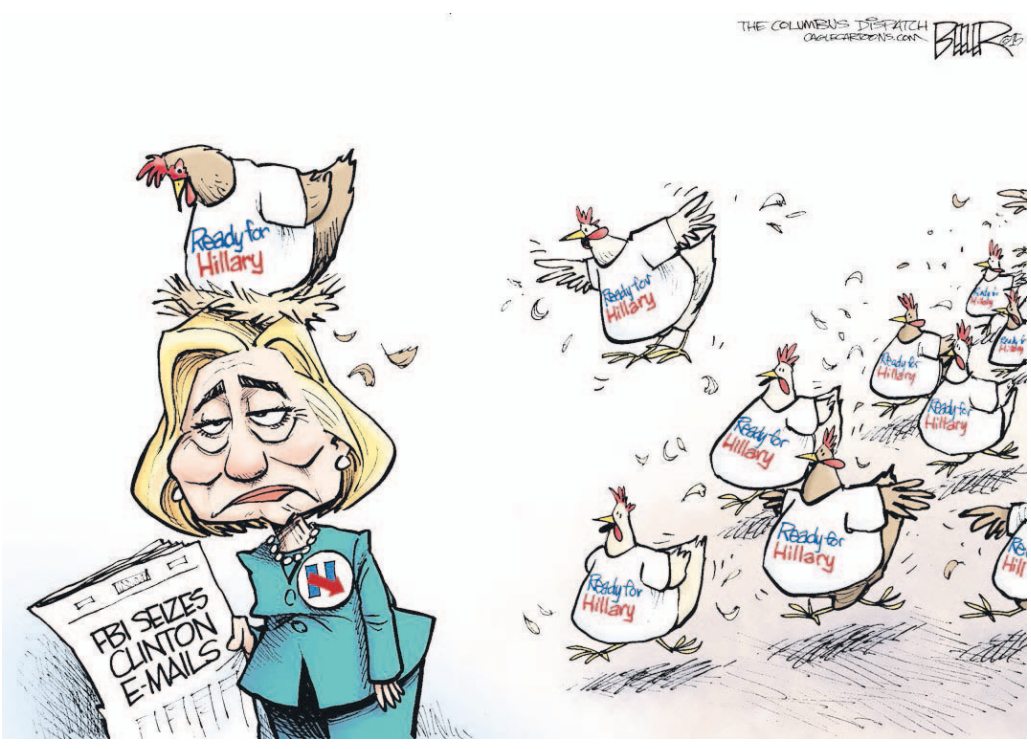
Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.



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