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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to those who are not welcoming President Obama as he journeys to the shell-shocked city of Roseburg today.

In times of tragedy, we should have the decency to put political differences aside. You might not agree with the president's stance on gun control, or anything for that matter. But visiting the site of terrible events is part of the job of being president — and certainly among the worst parts of the job at that.

A strange Fox News interview with a man who prints his own right wing newspaper in Roseburg certainly gave the nation a warped view of the feelings of the majority of residents of that city. In fact, officials from both the city of Roseburg and Douglas County felt that need to release statements noting that the president would be “extended every courtesy” and they hoped he would be able to comfort people in a town that is so clearly hurting.

Their word show that hostility to a president doing what he can is not an opinion shared by those leadership positions. But because one angry man made national headlines, it gave the impression that Oregonians are not the good hosts we know ourselves to be.

Readers are probably sick of this by now, but since we kicked other councils we might as well extend the boot to the Pendleton city council for not allowing its residents to vote on whether marijuana businesses should operate in the city.

Sure, 55 percent of Pendletonians voted against Measure 91 back in 2014 — a measure that passed anyway and made it legal to grow, possess and use small amounts of marijuana. But that vote is moot now that marijuana is legal in Oregon. We imagine many people who were against legalization now hope their city at least gets some dollars out of the stuff, which can help reduce the tax burden and care for people who may be affected by the change in legality.

Unfortunately, it doesn't look like we'll be given the opportunity to prove that attitudes have changed in two years.

The council voted 5-3 to continue down the road toward a permanent ban, and making sure voters don't have a say in the matter. There is clearly a better, more democratic way here. And the council could have done the politically expedient thing by washing their hands of the controversial matter and letting the people decide.

They refused, and deserve a kick for doing so.



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.

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Racist name calling not a hate crime

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John Shippentower
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Just look at streets and see need for gas tax

Are you going to believe what you see or are you going to believe what Rex Morehouse tells you? The slogan of Rex Morehouse and the other Pendleton naysayers appears to be “Save the Potholes: Vote No on the Fuel Tax.”

What Morehouse doesn't tell you is that you are going to pay an increased price in city services in some other area if you follow his advice. This increased price will be born 100 percent by yourself.

What Morehouse does not want you to understand is that the city resident does not have to bear 100 percent of the shortfall in present monies received for street

maintenance. With the 5 cent per gallon increase in place, 40 percent or more will come from those who live outside the city.

It is only fair that all those who use the streets help maintain the streets. It is that simple. To quote Larry O'Rourke, let's believe what we see. Not only believe but “Fix the damn streets.”

By the way this is not a tax, it is a street users fee.

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Presidential candidate disappointed in Obama

My name is Ed Baker and I am a resident in Portland. I am also a candidate in the 2016 presidential election. I was very disappointed by how our current President responded to the recent shooting at Umpqua Community College.

Our President should have acknowledged the event and given his condolences to the family members and loved ones of those who died or were wounded. He should have stated that the suspect was diseased. That should have been the end of it.

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City can't be trusted with gas tax dollars

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I've been branded as a “naysayer” but every letter I have ever written was based on valid research.

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However, this advice is given by a developer who was given a loan of \$500,000 from the city and yet refused to pay a local plumber \$61,000. On April 29, the *EO* revealed that Judge Hampton wrote in a four-page opinion that Plute must pay \$61,000 to Pendleton Plumbing.

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within that area along Court Street be two-story. The owner of Wtechlink later stated that those additional costs eventually deterred him from locating his business there.

The Urban Renewal District was established in 2003, the same year I returned to Pendleton to care for my mother. Twelve years have gone by and the “Riverwalk Quarter Enhancement Plan” has been a complete and costly failure.

Advisory committee member Mary Hallman “compared the plan to Barnhart Road, a project the city hasn't completely abandoned despite a current lack of interest from developers.”

I also read about the city's new transportation plan that features bicycles front and center. If you have insomnia, I suggest you read the city's Unified Development Plan prepared by avid bike rider Evan MacKenzie.

It has 114 pages. I predict that there will be an exodus from Pendleton if this advice by consulting company Murray, Smith and Associates is implemented: “In order to pay for the improvements, the report suggested doubling water rates, raising sewer rates by 57 percent and creating a systems development charge — a fee assessed to new developments.”

Gas tax? No thanks. Quit spending money you don't have.

Jerry Cronin
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Downtown police presence is strong

On Wednesday a letter was published in the *East Oregonian* complaining about the lack of police presence in downtown Pendleton.

I just wanted to defend the police because they definitely are present. I live downtown and see them driving up one street and down another.

Sometimes from my porch I will see multiple officers in different vehicles in only the few minutes I'm outside. I know that if there is an emergency they can get to me almost instantly.

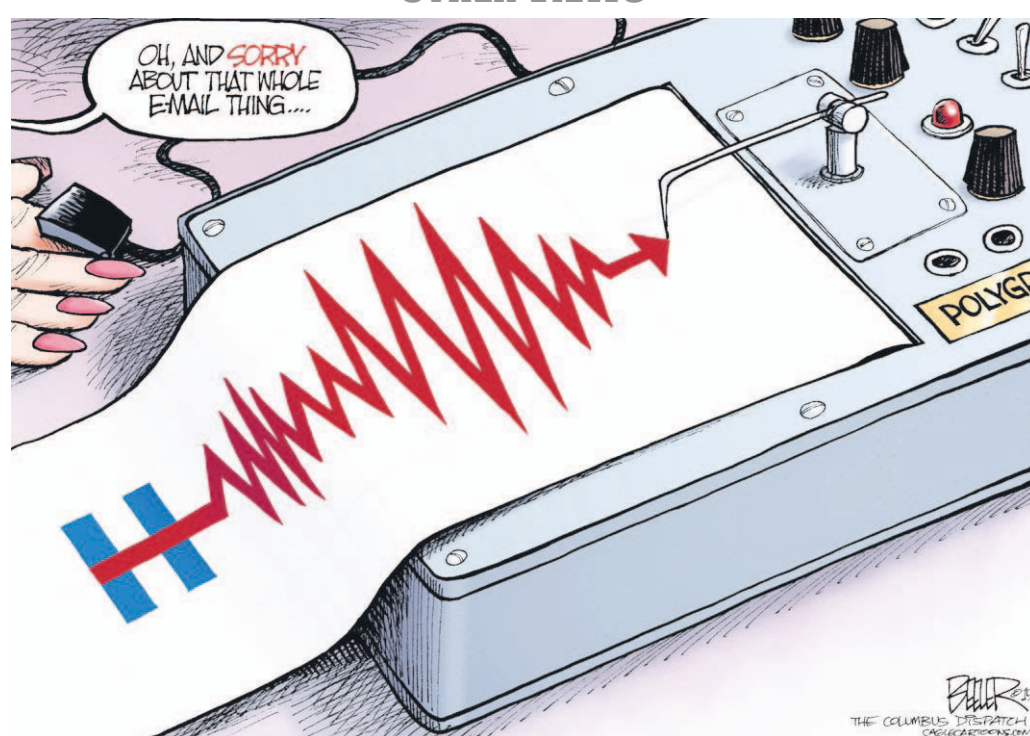
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Some people are going to get away with things like minor traffic violations and that's just the way life works.

While I support an increase of police presence in school zones and the addition of roadblocks during special events, I must commend the local law enforcers for doing a great job in Pendleton overall and especially in the downtown area. We are blessed to have such peaceful relations with our men and women in blue. They deserve our respect and gratitude.

Carlin Sacco
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OTHER VIEWS



As Clinton falls, some Democrats remain optimistic

In a recent *Wall Street Journal* poll, the number of Americans who say they have a very positive opinion of Hillary Clinton hit its lowest point in the years since she was first lady. Meanwhile, the number of Americans who say they have a very negative opinion of her hit its highest point.

Just 14 percent of those surveyed told *Journal* pollsters they had a very positive opinion of Clinton — a dramatic drop from the 34 percent who felt that way in January 2013, as she was finishing her service as secretary of state.

On the other side, 34 percent of those in the new survey said they have a very negative opinion of Clinton — a dramatic increase from the 9 percent who felt that way in May 2011.

In hypothetical head-to-head matchups, the *Journal* poll showed Clinton losing (by a single point) to both Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina, Republican candidates whose chances, not too long ago, would never have been mentioned in the same breath as Clinton's.

The numbers are another indication of the dramatic change in Americans' thinking about Clinton, as she moved from the relatively non-partisan position of secretary of state to the hyper-partisan role of presidential candidate. And as the public's opinion of her goes down, her lead in the Democratic primary race shrinks.

Six months ago, before Clinton formally announced her White House run, she was the presidential choice of an astonishing 67.6 percent of Democrats, according to the RealClearPolitics average of polls. In second place in the Democratic race — if that's what it could be called — was Vice President Joe Biden, then as now not a candidate, with 10 percent of the vote. Bringing up the rear of the three-candidate contest was Martin O'Malley, with 1.0 percent. (Bernie Sanders wasn't a factor at that time.)

Today, Clinton's 57.6-point lead from six months ago has shrunk to 13.2 points in the average, and some new polls show it to be shrinking further still. The *Wall Street Journal* survey shows Clinton leading Sanders by a seven-point margin, 42 percent to 35 percent. And in the early states, Clinton has a small lead over Sanders in Iowa, according to the average, and is far behind him in New Hampshire.

Partially driving her decline, of course, is the email scandal, which has exacerbated the public's doubts about Clinton's truthfulness. A recent Fox News poll asked, “Do you think Hillary Clinton is lying about how her emails were handled while she was secretary of state?” A solid 58 percent said Clinton

was lying, while 32 percent said she wasn't, and 10 percent said they didn't know.

Clinton's various explanations of her email system have been undermined by new revelations in the case. That has led to new questions, and then to new explanations, and, most likely, new revelations as the investigation moves forward. The process has been so damaging that Clinton's aides are virtually begging for everyone to just stop talking about

it.

“Questions on @HillaryClinton's emails on this morning's #MTP? Asked and answered. Time to move on,” tweeted senior Clinton adviser Karen Finney recently after Clinton faced questions on “Meet the Press.” Democratic surrogates tweeted the same message, using the same words, after the interview, suggesting the campaign has been reduced to hoping it all ends soon.

The email matter is serious and could become more serious still. But Democrats argue the press and voters should not lose sight of fundamental trends in the race that still support Clinton. In a recent column headlined “No, pundits, Hillary Clinton isn't collapsing,” the Democratic strategist Joe Trippi argued that Clinton has strengths that virtually guarantee victory. First, her campaign is better organized than it was in her 2007-2008 run. Second, Iowa and New Hampshire, where Bernie Sanders is doing well, won't necessarily determine the Democratic nominee. And third — and most importantly — Clinton will be formidable in states with lots of African-American and other minority voters who are the backbone of the Democratic coalition.

Indeed, the Fox poll — the one that showed a majority of Americans believe Clinton is lying about the email affair — underscores some of that strength. Just 26 percent of black respondents told pollsters they believe Clinton is lying, versus 65 percent of whites. And Clinton is far ahead of her rivals among non-white Democrats — 54 percent to Biden's 20 percent and Sanders' 15 percent.

Finally, of course, Democrats still express faith in their party's demographic advantage in presidential elections, arguing it would take huge Republican good fortune to defeat even a damaged Hillary Clinton.

So there are reasons some Democrats view the email scandal as more of an irritation than an existential threat to Clinton. But look at the steeply declining trend line of her polls. How low will it have to go before Democrats panic?

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

YOUR VIEWS

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