

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

We tip our hat to the generations of readers and subscribers who have helped the *East Oregonian* reach its 140th birthday today.

Oct. 16, 1875: Ulysses S. Grant was well into his second term as U.S. president, Sitting Bull and Crazy Horse were tangling with the U.S. military and the Qing Dynasty was still ruling in China. Oh, and the *East Oregonian* started writing and delivering the news door-to-door in Eastern Oregon.



Yeah, the Pendleton Woolen Mills has us beat by a few years. And we've documented some family farms that date back a sesquicentennial. But we're one of the oldest continually operating businesses in Umatilla County, and all of Oregon for that matter. 140 years, and still delivering door-to-door (and 60 years after the milkman realized there were easier ways to make a buck.)

We couldn't have done it without generation after generation of reporters and editors, pressmen, advertising salespeople, designers, ink-stained wretches and wrenches, and slingers of newspapers. Ink, too. We needed a lot of that. And today we need our photographers and podcasters, website designers and network administrators that are part of a 21st century newspaper operation.

And we never forget our readers. We appreciate your support, and welcome your ideas about how to stick around for another 140 years.

Tip of the hat to the Oregon Cultural Trust who, on their annual road trip through the state, stopped Wednesday at Tamátslikt Cultural Institute, and later with the East Oregonian editorial board.

You might not have the group at the tip of your tongue — so many nonprofits with such similar names — but it's best to think of the Oregon Cultural Trust as the umbrella over many of them.



Oregon is rare — no other state has anything like what we have in the cultural trust. It promotes culture and preservation, and provides grants and funding throughout the state. Its dollars percolate through the state's Arts Commission, Council for the Humanities, Heritage Commission, Historical Society and Historic Preservation Office. (We

warned you about the nonprofits and the names!)

It's mostly private donations that make the trust hum, trust manager Aili Schreiner told the editorial board.

Last year, that meant more than \$1.8 million in grants distributed to nonprofits across the state, and tax deductions for many of residents who made the donations.

They also help funnel money to 1,400 cultural nonprofits, including plenty of local members. Some you have heard of, and some you may have not. There are more than a dozen in Umatilla County alone, including: Happy Canyon Foundation in Pendleton, the Crow's Shadow Institute in Mission, the Fort Henrietta Foundation in Echo, Inland Northwest Musicians in Hermiston, Milton-Freewater Friends of the Library and the Umatilla County Pioneer Association in Weston.

If you've given to one of those groups, or benefited from one, you can bet the Cultural Trust helped make it a little easier, and a little better experience.

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

State, federal marijuana laws continue to conflict

Albany Democrat-Herald

The private recreational use of marijuana by adults in Oregon has been legal for months, and last week, you could start buying recreational marijuana at medical dispensaries that elected to join in on early sales of pot. (Well, at least in those jurisdictions that allowed those early sales.)

But Oregon's grand experiment with legalized marijuana won't have any effect on the state's colleges and universities, including Oregon State University.

College administrators last week emphasized that nothing has changed on campuses, even as people lined up to buy recreational marijuana.

That hard line for higher education makes sense, especially at universities like OSU that attract millions of dollars of federal funding for research. Marijuana remains illegal under federal law, and no university is going to jeopardize one penny of its federal funding by rolling back its regulations on pot. (Besides, OSU's campus is smoke-free, and that presumably includes marijuana smoke.)

But this does underline the continuing silliness of the federal government's hard-line stance against marijuana. The feds still continue to regard marijuana as a Schedule I substance, the category reserved in part for drugs that have no currently accepted medical use, a designation that will surprise the thousands of Oregonians who use medicinal pot. (The state of Oregon, by the way, moved marijuana off the Schedule I list back in 2010, but that doesn't carry any water with the federal government.)

That hard-line federal stance explains

why OSU also bans its researchers from doing any sort of work that physically involves marijuana. The university's policy is reasonably clear on this point: It prohibits research that "involves the possession, use or distribution of marijuana," unless that research complies with guidelines established by federal agencies — and we already know what the feds think about marijuana.

This, too, seems silly, and it gets sillier: The ban also prohibits OSU faculty members from performing research involving industrial hemp.

There's plenty of interest nationwide and in Oregon in growing industrial hemp, which has negligible amounts of tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the active ingredient in marijuana. The fiber from industrial hemp can be used in paper, clothing, rope and for a variety of other uses. The United States is the world's largest consumer of hemp, but it still is listed as a Schedule I controlled substance, which is ludicrous.

Considering the potential industrial hemp offers to Oregon farmers, it would make sense for OSU researchers to wade right in and work on the crop. But until the federal government rolls back its stance on hemp, you won't see that happen on campus. (The potential of hemp as an agricultural commodity, by the way, is one of the very few issues on which U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Rand Paul agree.)

As states move ahead on their own regarding legalizing marijuana, the federal government's stance on the drug increasingly seems like an outlier. In the case of the prohibition against industrial hemp, another word again comes into mind: It's just silly. The feds should get out of the way, and that process starts by decriminalizing hemp.



OTHER VIEWS

Rock bottom? Things could get worse for House GOP

Yes, the House Republican conference is stunned and confused after the withdrawal of Rep. Kevin McCarthy, R-Calif., from the speaker's race. But is it any more stunned and confused than it was exactly two years ago, when the government was partially shut down amid bitter House GOP infighting over Obamacare? Or a year ago, when House Majority Leader Eric Cantor suffered a mind-blowing defeat in a GOP primary election?

The fact is, the chaos plaguing Republicans in the House has been building for a long time. It's no wonder some GOP lawmakers were reportedly weeping in the Capitol after McCarthy's announcement.

Not long after, McCarthy was asked by National Review Online whether House Republicans are, at the moment, ungovernable. "I don't know," he said. "Sometimes you have to hit rock bottom."

The GOP's problem is that there is no way to know whether this is rock bottom or not. Things could get worse. There's certainly no reason to believe they will get better anytime soon.

The fundamental cause of the disarray is lawmakers' inability to answer to this question: What is the role of a Republican Congress in opposing President Obama? Republicans took over the House in 2011, and they haven't agreed on that yet.

After the GOP's smashing victory in Obama's first midterm, in 2010, Republicans came to Washington and immediately began squabbling among themselves. Why had they won the majority? Was it because they promised to repeal Obamacare? Was it because they promised to reduce the size and scope of the federal government? Was it because, as the new Speaker John Boehner believed, they promised to create jobs?

The argument became so intense that Republicans actually commissioned a private poll, which found that by a large majority, Americans voted for Republicans to create jobs. Obama didn't seem terribly interested in jobs during his first couple of years in office, and frustrated voters wanted Congress to take action.

"There has been a misunderstanding over how we got our majority," says a well-connected GOP strategist who works closely with Hill Republicans. "In 2010, what was the number-one issue? It was not health care. It was jobs and the economy by a more than 60 percent margin."

Nevertheless, a lot of newly elected GOP members were driven by opposition to Obama. They had never served in the majority before and did not come to Washington to get along and go along. They pushed Boehner to be more and more confrontational. They realized that



BYRON YORK
Comment

with Democrats in lockstep defense of the White House, even a relatively small group of Republican members — 30 or 40 — could stop Boehner from passing spending bills or other critical legislation.

The partial shutdown was the result. Boehner's days were numbered after that.

But Boehner's retirement announcement — like McCarthy, he sprung it on a surprised world — didn't resolve any of the conflicts inside

the GOP conference. Many of that core 30-40 member group of the most assertive conservatives saw McCarthy as more of the same. And they realized, again, that if they voted as a bloc against leadership, McCarthy couldn't become speaker.

And why should he have asked the conservative rebels, who like everyone else watched as public approval of GOP leaders went down and down?

"When 72 percent of Republican voters disapprove of the congressional leadership, it's hard to simply promote the next in line," says one conservative member. "We are in a representative business, and it is unsustainable to have the people who do so much work to send Republicans to Congress harbor such dissatisfaction with the party's leaders."

On the other hand, among the large majority of House Republicans who aren't part of the rebel group — that would be about 200 members — there are some who are deeply angry at the conservative firebrands.

"Didn't Jim DeMint say it very clearly?" asks the GOP strategist, referring to the very conservative former senator. "DeMint said he would rather have 30 true conservatives in the Senate than 60 that don't really have principles. Of course, with that, you won't have any say in how the government works. Now, what (the House firebrands) are saying is, forget if we don't have any say, forget if we can actually do anything, the key thing is to be able to say what we want."

That's the fight that caused the McCarthy melodrama. (Yes, his Benghazi comments were a disaster, but the basic conflict inside the House GOP conference was a much bigger factor.)

Yes, it is reasonable to ask whether Republican leaders — the experienced ones steeped in the ways of Washington and, in particular, of K Street — did everything they could to understand the priorities of the conservative militants. But it's probably too late for understanding now. The speakership is up for grabs, the conference is in disarray, and rock bottom might not even be in sight.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Call people by their names, not their color or labels

Just a comment to Mr. Shippentower's response about the elderly woman that was recently arrested here in Milton-Freewater for her verbiage toward her neighbor and then turning a hose on him. He was Hispanic and she referred to him as a "wetback." I believe that she insulted and hosed down a police officer of color as well before she was arrested.

I am not sure exactly where you start and stop considering behavior racist. But I do know that 50 years ago, at our family dinner table, my parents said you call people by their names. You don't call them by color, by geography, by gender, or anything else but their names.

I believe that if you are comfortable calling our police force a bunch of hicks, and find "wetback" just a slang terminology, then your sense of respect for people may be found, in my world, offensive. Pure and simple.

So, I can tell you that I have found the police department to be particularly sensitive to our diverse community. They are a diverse force. And if you think "wetback" is OK, then please define what it actually means. Then we will once again decide if it is offensive, because I believe that my circle of friends would be stopped in their tracks — and some

would even find those "fighting" words.

I might also add, if small children are in the home, and we are using all of this terminology that really doesn't mean anything and is just a "not-so-nice prank," when they start calling their classmates "wetbacks," perhaps we may understand perpetuating hate among ourselves due to labels.

Mardi Hagerman
Milton-Freewater

Pendleton gas tax would be tied for highest in state

Before election day, please consider the significant consequences of a Pendleton gas tax. This local tax raises the overall cost of gas pumped within our city, and would in fact rank us as tied for the number one highest municipal gas tax in the state of Oregon. This is not an achievement to be proud of.

Why doesn't our city council see that the increased cost will hurt small businesses and local families who live and work in Pendleton while giving visitors an incentive to fuel up down the road? Many of us are on fixed incomes and every penny, or five pennies, count.

There are significant consequences to a Pendleton gas tax and I am voting no on November 3.

Ross D. Taylor
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. 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.