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OUR VIEW



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

A hyperbolic banner claiming that potholes are terrorists and promoting the gas tax on the November ballot sits in the yard of a home on Southeast Court Avenue and Ninth Street on Monday in Pendleton.

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to the strange sign that reads “Potholes are terrorists” located at Southeast Court and Ninth Street in Pendleton.

It’s a ridiculous message, and one that has turned off a lot more people than it has turned on to the cause. Equating road degradation to the real-life monsters that destroy buildings, kill innocent people and decapitate their prisoners is preposterous. Whether it’s supposed to be a joke is unclear, but if so it’s not funny.

The pro gas-tax PAC said they are not affiliated with the sign, but it’s another example of a lack of consistent messaging that has plagued this hurried campaign. Add in the disastrous timing of trying to require residents to foot another tax — while at the same time turning down money given freely in marijuana taxes — and you’ve got a recipe for big trouble at the ballot box in a few weeks.

And who will suffer from the inability to make that strong case for the gas tax? Pendleton’s streets and Pendletonians who drive them.

A late surge and change in tactics is necessary for a successful November 3 — although it may already be too little too late.

Tip of the hat to Jeb Bush’s idea to move the Department of the Interior headquarters to the West.

This part of the country is home to 90 percent of the nation’s federally owned land, so it would make sense that many of the people making decisions about those lands were located nearby.

Bush didn’t say where he would locate the headquarters, but mentioned

Denver, Salt Lake City or Reno. May we recommend Heppner, Boardman or Hermiston? Certainly those cities are at the fore of some of the West’s most important land and resources issues moving forward. And we’d love to see the property market and building boom that comes with all those high-paying federal jobs.

Certainly, in 1776 Washington, D.C., was square in the middle of this new country of ours. It isn’t now. We don’t imagine the White House will move anytime soon — though it would be much safer in Lebanon,

Kansas, the geographic center of the contiguous United States.

But we do think breaking the Beltway would be a good thing for the country. As transportation becomes faster and cheaper, and teleconferencing smarter and more useful, we don’t see why nearly all of our federal agencies should be bunched up behind a bubble in one corner of the country.

Let some breathe out here in the West — especially the Department of the Interior.

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.

Byrnes Oil a local company, unfairly targeted by gas tax

I would like to clarify a bit of information that was stated in a recent letter to the editor by Mr. O’Rourke.

First of all, Byrnes Oil Co. had its start in Pilot Rock in 1963, then began operations in Pendleton in 1984. Currently two of the owners have Pilot Rock addresses and one has a Pendleton address. Byrnes Oil also donates on a regular basis to the OPA PAC Fund. The \$3,000 figure you refer to is for the 2015 calendar year. We do not tell the OFA how to disperse our contributions. Like many industries, unions, public interests, etc., the OFA has many issues that they lobby for and against to protect their members. No different than any other organization.

The fuel dealers and the OFA are not against any city trying to improve the livability for their citizens. We are just opposed to the avenue of revenue that is being proposed. The OFA worked with the Oregon Legislature to support the last state of Oregon fuel tax increase from 24 to 30 cents per gallon. We would support another

reasonable state fuel tax increase, which is fair and equitable for all fuel dealers in the state of Oregon.

Contrary to many public opinions, we do not “pass this tax along” to the consumer. This tax will come directly out of dealers’ gross profit. This is not like a lodging tax when you see the rate posted for a night’s stay. The lodging taxes are added on after the advertised rate. We do not have that luxury with a local fuel tax.

If any city in the state of Oregon needs more funds for streets, they and their constituents should be lobbying the state to increase the state fuel tax, not attacking locally owned businesses. If Pendleton needs extra funding to fix its streets, why are Hermiston, La Grande, Baker City, Ontario and Milton-Freewater not doing the same thing?

Sam Byrnes
Byrnes Oil
Pendleton

If spending money goes to tax, business suffers

This just in: “Let’s skip that drink.” Pendleton City Councilman John Brenne advises taxpayers to stop drinking beer

and coffee, and will personally finance city street repairs with this generous contribution. Taverns and coffeehouses predict severe financial impact, may face closure. Juan Valdez forced to sell burro. Eagles Lodge, “No comment.” This also raises serious doubts as to the viability of a second annual Oktoberfest Pendleton.

Gas tax update: Rex Morehouse’s claim that gas prices will rise once voting is complete, pass or fail. Claim was “simply not true” states mayor and some council members. I guess we’ll just have to wait on that one.

Provided by on-scene reporter.
Rick Rohde
Pendleton

People can’t figure out ‘whom,’ so trash it

Language changes. In Europe, the word “corn” has always meant what we Americans call “grain,” but we long ago changed the meaning of “corn” to refer to what people in Britain call “maize.” And we invented a new word to replace the British “torch” — flashlight. Shakespeare could have Juliet ask Romeo, “Wherefore art thou Romeo?” but “wherefore” dropped

OTHER VIEWS

Bush, Rubio squabble while Trump runs away with it

One odd thing about the Republican presidential race is that the strong front-runner, Donald Trump, isn’t fundraising.

Soliciting contributions takes a huge amount of the time for most candidates, and the quarterly reports of how much they have raised and how much cash they have on hand become carefully watched measures of their campaigns’ viability. None of that applies to Trump.

So the new fundraising reports for the third quarter that have been the talk of the political world for the last few days have an odd also-ran feel to them.

Of the candidates who are raising money, the winner is Ben Carson, who collected \$20 million in the third quarter. After Carson is Jeb Bush, who raised \$13.4 million; Ted Cruz, with \$12.2 million, Carly Fiorina, with \$6.8 million; and Marco Rubio, with \$5.7 million. (The rest raised less than that.)

When Bush announced his total recently, his campaign immediately started a spat with Rubio over who had the better quarter. In an email memo accompanying the Bush announcement, campaign manager Danny Diaz noted that Bush’s total was “double what Sen. Rubio and Carly Fiorina raised in the same time.”

Six minutes later, the Rubio campaign sent out an email boasting that it finished the quarter “with more money in the bank than Jeb Bush for President and most other campaigns.” It’s true. Rubio reported having \$10,975,988.78 in ready cash — yes, he included the pennies — while Bush had \$10,271,229.

For those concerned that Bush had blown too much of his money on a bloated staff and private planes, Diaz noted that Bush’s big expenditures were “substantial investments in data and grassroots operations across the February and March states, as well as paid advertising in New Hampshire.”

For his part, Rubio stressed frugality. “The campaign bought office furniture from Craigslist, took over 300 UberX rides, and traveled on budget airlines including Frontier, Southwest, Jet Blue and Spirit,” the Rubio note said.

It’s all intended to reassure nervous donors that their money is being well spent. And Rubio has gone further, with leaks that he might soon receive big money from mega-donor Sheldon Adelson and some top New York contributors.

The Bush-Rubio dustup is a fight between



BYRON YORK
Comment

the fifth-place and sixth-place candidates in the polls in Iowa, or, looked at another way, between the fourth-place and fifth-place candidates in New Hampshire, or between the fourth-place and sixth-place candidates in South Carolina, all according to the RealClearPolitics average of polls.

The first-place candidate in all those races is the guy who isn’t fundraising — Trump. And these days, Trump is looking stronger and stronger.

He first took the lead in the RCP national poll average on July 20, meaning he has spent a full three months at the top. And Trump is far ahead of the two squabbling candidates, Bush and Rubio, in the early voting states:

(1) In Iowa, Trump is up by 17 over Bush and 18 over Rubio, according to the most recent poll, by *The Wall Street Journal*.

(2) In New Hampshire, Trump is up by 10 over Bush and 11 over Rubio, according to the *Journal*.

(3) In South Carolina, Trump is up by 25 over Rubio and 30 over Bush in a brand-new CNN poll.

(4) In Nevada, Trump is up by 31 over Rubio and 32 over Bush, according to CNN.

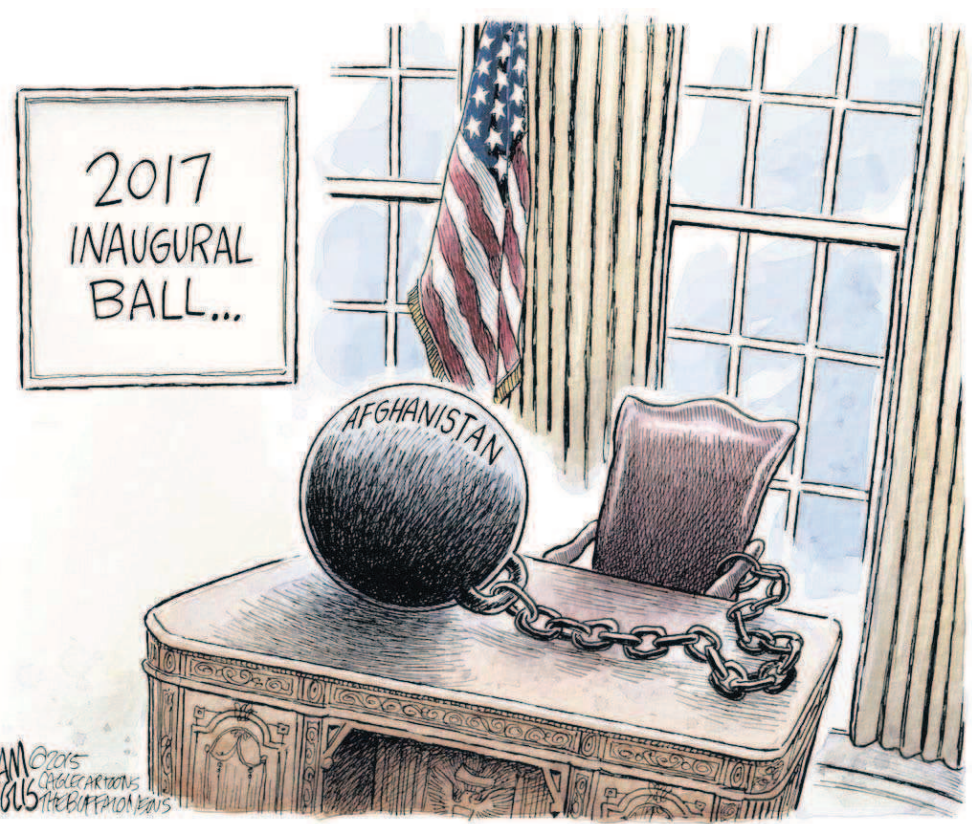
Both the Bush and the Rubio campaigns are motivated by an unshakable conviction that Trump will eventually decline. That conviction is shared by most political insiders. Perhaps it is correct, although each day forces those insiders to adjust their estimate of how long Trump can stay aloft.

In the meantime, the would-be front-runners, Jeb and Marco, are reduced to bragging about flying commercial and taking UberX. Their donors will apparently be pleased.

But it won’t solve Bush’s and Rubio’s problem. At the moment, Trump is leading because he seems big and they seem small. More voters believe Trump will be a stronger leader than either Bush or Rubio. Trump’s put-downs of both men — that Bush is “low energy” and that Rubio is a “little boy” — are outrageous but effective ways of reinforcing voter concerns that Bush doesn’t have the drive to be president and Rubio doesn’t have the maturity.

There’s still time for those perceptions to change. But for the moment, Bush and Rubio are fighting over who has the resources to stay alive until Trump begins to fade — if that ever happens.

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



YOUR VIEWS

“who” is used, proper English language rules call for “whom.” These examples, however, are not in any way unusual and might have been found in various newspapers and other print media anywhere in the United States. Almost no one knows how to use “who” and “whom” any more. Frankly, I doubt that very many English teachers in this country today could tell me why each of the examples above is incorrect English.

So we should just drop whom. Nobody knows when to use it, and when we try to use it, we get it wrong. Take it out of the dictionary, embrace the present situation, have a wake for “whom” if you wish, but go boldly into the whom-less future.

Whom, we hardly knew ye.
Jack T. Sanders
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.