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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Bud Pierce imagines a new Oregon GOP

Is Bud Pierce the kind of Oregon Republican who can win a statewide election?

The gubernatorial candidate and his campaign staff made their first trip to Umatilla County last week and met with the *East Oregonian* editorial board.

During the short sit-down, there was no mention of the social issues that have hampered Republicans in this state for decades: gay marriage and abortion most notably. Both are reliable election losers in this state.

"The party needs new messengers and new messages," he said, frankly.

As a practicing cancer doctor, he actually said something nice about Obamacare. For years he raised millions of dollars to help pay medical care for the uninsured, and he is happy that he no longer has to do that.

So what makes this guy a Republican?

Well, for one thing, he talked about his displeasure with Democratic-controlled Oregon state government. He thinks it needs to run much better — not necessarily smaller, just smoother — if the state is going to grow and prosper. He said state workers are a talented lot, but their hands are tied by moribund bureaucracy, managers that don't want to make a waves and an atmosphere where imagination and excellence are so far out of the norm as to be unwelcome.

He said rural Oregon has been forgotten in the Valley-dominated statehouse.

And that shows in economic and population declines in much of Oregon, outside of the main population centers. Pierce said he would incentivize the movement of people and resources to rural areas. No, Eastern Oregon doesn't have to be an urban center, put it has to attract enough people to make businesses profitable. And it has to have enough economic variety to keep the best and brightest from fleeing to metropolitan lights.

He spoke of the need to support airplane subsidies in rural areas, like Pendleton. He called a significant



Bud Pierce

statewide minimum wage hike an undue burden on economically depressed areas. He said Portland wouldn't stand for valuable, empty high rise buildings that occasionally burned and endangered the town. That's what rural Oregon has to deal with as our forests become more unhealthy and temperatures increase.

And the Republican he bases his politics on? No, he didn't mention Ronald Reagan. Instead, it was

Abraham Lincoln.

Pierce was short on details and heavy on generalities. But that's how you begin to introduce yourself to voters, and let both sides drill down into specifics as a long and arduous campaign moves along.

Clearly, it's going to take a new kind of GOP candidate to have success in Oregon — a state, remember, whose most beloved politicians have been out-of-the-mold Republicans. We're not comparing Pierce to a Hatfield or McCall, but we notice he comes from their tradition rather than the more modern, defiant, intransigent and losing one.

Pierce has his work cut out for him just to win the GOP nomination, much less unseat probable Democratic nominee Kate Brown. But when a candidate so clearly has a focus on rural Oregon, it's hard not to hope they stay in the game for a long time and have a significant impact on the race.

Pierce said he would incentivize the movement of people and resources to rural areas.

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

Sen. Hansell and Rep. Barreto reach across the Cascades

The (La Grande) Observer

Oregon is a big, diversified state on a number of levels. In a sense, two distinct cultures exist side-by-side. The size of the state, along with the sharp political divisions that endure, can create a gulf between perception and understanding.

Sometimes it can appear that the needs and values of the eastern side of the state are lost in the bustling white noise of the Willamette Valley. It is true, at least at first glance, the eastern portion of our state has little in common with portions of Western Oregon.

So while the natural resources tour that cruised through Eastern Oregon earlier this week may not secure blaring headlines across the state, the effort should be lauded.

Five state legislators joined area lawmakers, Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove, and Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athena, in an excursion in the Columbia Basin and Willamette County. At first glance, the political outing may seem unimportant, but a closer review illustrates that such efforts are not only good for lawmakers from the western side of the state but also a good thing for Eastern Oregon.

That is why such endeavors as the one this week are so important. Lawmakers with little knowledge of our great piece of this state and what makes our economies run should be allowed every opportunity to get to know the area. That way, when decisions

are reached in Salem, lawmakers from the western side of the state can make better informed judgments about future impacts in areas like Wallowa County.

In this day and age — where instant communication is the norm — it would seem easy to find out all one needs to know about an area with the simple click of the mouse on a computer. The truth is, though, that the best way to learn about an area is to be on the ground — actually visit it and talk to residents and stakeholders and gain an understanding of the challenges they face.

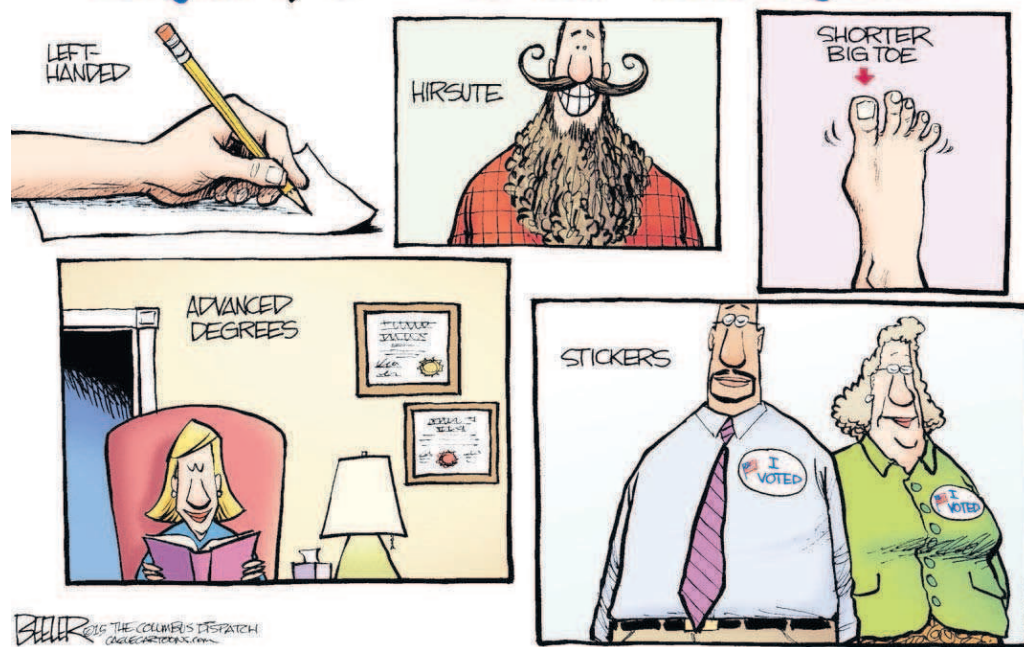
No doubt a gulf of understanding does exist between many on the western side of the state and Eastern Oregon. Yet efforts such as the one this week are one very good way to educate Western Oregon lawmakers on the unique attributes of our side of the state.

A gap in understanding between regions in the same state is not a recipe for success. Instead, it can only lead to further misunderstanding and political angst when a lot of hard political work needs to be completed.

Events such as the natural resources tour, along with ag and manufacturing tours, should be — if they are not already — annual exercises and should also include other courses.

Whether we want to accept it or not, Eastern Oregon depends on Western Oregon. Yet the only way to create a seamless future mechanism of prosperity is through mutual understanding and knowledge.

Signs of ABOVE-AVERAGE Intelligence



OTHER VIEWS

And that's my opinion!

Opinions. That's what we do in Op-Ed: We render informed opinions that we hope are smart and sometimes provocative, backed up by good, old-fashioned shoe leather. I'm heading off to a new assignment, and as I do, please indulge me as I toss off a few last opinions:

Few people are more anti-gun than Michael Bloomberg. And few people are wealthier. According to Forbes, Bloomberg is worth around \$40 billion, some of which he spends backing anti-gun candidates and supporting the advocacy group Everytown for Gun Safety. His success, though, has been limited.

How about another approach? I propose that he buy a gun company. Seriously. Smith & Wesson and Sturm, Ruger & Co. both have market capitalizations hovering around \$1 billion. Buying one would barely dent Bloomberg's wallet.

Owning a gun company would allow him to take a different kind of leadership role on issues like improving gun safety and imposing universal background checks. A Bloomberg-owned gun manufacturer could make a smart gun, for instance — that is, a gun that only its owner can use. Gun companies today won't sell them for fear of retaliation by the National Rifle Association. A Bloomberg-owned gun company has more potential to effect change in the country's gun culture than anything else I can think of.

I've written many columns about education, especially the effort, spearheaded by wealthy philanthropists, to "fix" public education by funding the charter school movement.

Paula McAvo, the program director for the Center for Ethics and Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison — and, I should note, my son Amato's fiancée — recently suggested a different idea: "Why don't they spend their money on infrastructure instead?"

Her point is that a broken-down school sends a powerful message to students: "Society doesn't care about your education." McAvo added, "The place where you learn matters."

A new school sends the opposite message: that the country does care and wants public school students to succeed. A new school is also a huge morale booster, for students and teachers alike. "If you want to fix American education," McAvo told me, aiming her remarks at education philanthropists, "how about setting a goal of putting every kid into a state-of-the-art school by the year 2025?"

Two of the best ideas I heard as an Op-Ed columnist:

Norman Ornstein of the American Enterprise Institute believes that Supreme Court justices should serve one 18-year term,



JOE NOCERA
Comment

and those terms should be staggered so that one expires every other year. That way, every president would be able to nominate two justices during a four-year term. What difference would this make? Few things have more poisoned our politics than battles over Supreme Court nominees, precisely because they are lifetime appointments. With term limits, the stakes would be lower when a seat is vacated, and maybe, just maybe, our political culture could start to heal.

William Wachtel, a New York lawyer and co-founder of the group Why Tuesday?, believes that elections should be held on the weekend, when most people are not

working, instead of Tuesdays, when they are. Tuesday voting, he likes to note, was originally built around farmers' schedules; today, it is nothing less than a form of discrimination. As I quoted Chris Rock when I wrote about this in 2013, "They don't want you to vote. If they did, we wouldn't vote on a Tuesday."

Two of the best ideas I heard as an Op-Ed columnist: 18-year terms for Supreme Court justices, and Election Day on the weekend.

Why, oh, why won't the Metropolitan Opera perform "Porgy and Bess"? As I once noted in Sunday Review, it is the greatest American opera ever written, with a half-dozen of the finest songs George Gershwin ever composed. Its mostly

black cast would help bring in a more diverse audience, something the Met could use.

Whenever I've inquired whether Peter Gelb, the Met's general manager, is considering "Porgy and Bess," I'm told that he is — "in the future." The last time the Met performed it was a quarter-century ago. How much longer are we supposed to wait?

The late South African psychiatrist Mike Russell was among the first to note that smokers "smoke for nicotine, but they die from the tar." Meaning that while nicotine addicts smoke, it is the burning tobacco, with all of the carcinogens the smoke produces, that kills them.

I've written a lot about e-cigarettes — maybe excessively so — because I think this point is so important. In demonizing e-cigarettes, the public health community has created a false equivalency between cigarettes and e-cigarettes, a stance I believe is costing lives. E-cigarettes may not be completely safe, but there is no doubt they could save lives if adult smokers could be encouraged to make the switch. And with that, I've had my last word on the subject.

I've enjoyed writing this column and I hope you've enjoyed reading it. Thank you for your many thoughtful responses, both pro and con. I'm looking forward to engaging with you again soon.

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

Reason we need more prison space is Measure 11

I read your article about the Department of Corrections needing \$9.5 million to expand Madras prison. Yet you won't do a series on why it needs to be expanded. Let me do it for you. Measure 11 — district attorneys use it for anything and everything.

Fact: In October 2015, there are 14,689 inmates in Oregon; 6,274 (42.7 percent) in under Measure 11 — almost half the prison population. Of those 6,274, 3,876 are in under first-time offense with no criminal background. From the voters pamphlet in 1994: "We must imprison all violent and repeat offenders and keep them locked up for a substantial amount of time." Where does it say first-time offenders with no criminal background? Whoa, it doesn't. The district

attorneys intimidate, harass and add charges just so they can get a plea agreement.

Cost to the state: \$87.08 per day = \$199 million per year for those measure 11 inmates.

For those 3,876 first-time offenders with no criminal background, it is \$123 million per year. They are asking \$9.5 million for expanding a prison; what makes more sense, when possibly half of those 3,876, with no prior history, first-time offense could be let out on strict probation with GPS monitoring? That would be about 1,900 fewer inmates. I am not talking about letting out "career criminals" or violent criminals.

Why will papers do an article on this and not on what is causing the issue: Measure 11 and the district attorneys total power over the legal system.

Barbara Dickerson
Milton-Freewater

LETTERS POLICY

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