

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Half of Pendleton council doesn't want public input

The ground is shrinking around Pendleton city councilors Tom Young, Neil Brown, John Brenne and Becky Marks.

They've staked their position on the quickly eroding island of a ban against marijuana businesses. But they've also staked out an even less stable and less popular position to keep the public from having any say on the matter.

The fearsome foursome claims the public already had their say on the matter when it voted on Measure 91 back in 2014. Although the measure passed easily statewide, it failed within the city limits of Pendleton and in Umatilla County.

But that argument doesn't pass muster. The public voted on another matter back then — the legalization of recreational marijuana use for adults in Oregon. The next vote would be on an entirely different issue, and it's possible that some Pendletonians would change their mind.

It makes sense that some people will never change, and remain staunchly against allowing marijuana in their community. It has been a fast evolution from education that for generations drilled in the fact that all drugs must be fought at all costs. Such a quick change in outlook can be unsettling, and it's understandable that plenty of people — including these four councilors — wouldn't be convinced by the legalization crowd.

What is less understandable is the unyielding desire of all four to keep voters from having a say in the matter.

Why? What are they afraid of?

**It makes sense to be against marijuana businesses, but it's hard to understand being against a public vote on the matter.**

Maybe the councilors realize they are in the minority and don't want to be proven out of touch by an election day landslide. Maybe they think they know better than the public that marijuana is a community-destroying weed that citizens cannot be trusted with. Maybe they legitimately

think the DEA is going to scrub Pendleton off the map for such insouciance, even as state after state begins to relax its recreational marijuana rules.

But it's just as possible that the four councilors harbor a distrust of the public's ability to choose the best course for the city.

All eight councilors' ears are surely red from being bent so often on the topic. And we realize it's up to each to decide if the arguments made by their constituents — both their friends and those they don't know — add up.

But it's hard to ignore the shift, not just in letters to the editor and on social media, but in the streets, coffee shops, stores and neighborhoods of Pendleton. If Young, Brown, Brenne and Marks are intentionally ignoring the public's desire, we suggest they re-think their roles as public servants.

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

# Without the use of hounds, should Oregon allow any cougar hunting?

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Something about cougars elicits a strong reflex among Oregon wildlife managers. Two decades after voters approved an initiative banning the use of hounds to hunt cougars and bears, and prohibiting bear-hunting with bait, the state Department of Fish and Wildlife continues its efforts to find ways around the law — but only in the case of cougars. Bears have been left alone, with no discernible ill effects. There's a lesson in that.

To be sure, the voters left the department with a wide range of motion. Measure 18, approved in 1994 and reaffirmed at the polls two years later, bans what the voters regard as a cruel and unsporting method of hunting cougars, but leaves the door wide open to other types of hunting. The measure also allows cougars to be killed by any means, including hound hunting, if they cause any problems for livestock or humans. Evidence of such problems can be weak — if a cougar is sighted, it can be killed.

As a result, the number of cougars killed each year is higher than it was before 1994. The wildlife agency sold more than 56,000 cougar tags to hunters last year, 100 times the number in 1994 — mainly because it includes the tags as part of a package deal. But Measure 18 has had some benefit; hound-hunters no longer routinely cull the cougar population for the biggest specimens as trophies.

Such culling will resume in some parts of Oregon, however, as a result of the department's designation of four target areas where deputized trophy hunters will use hounds to pursue cougars. The four areas total more than 6,000 square miles — three are in Southeastern Oregon, the fourth is in the Roseburg vicinity. In the first three, the stated objective of a reduction in the number of cougars will be to increase the mule deer population. In the fourth area, hunting is intended to reduce

conflicts between cougars and livestock or humans.

If cougars were responsible for declines in mule deer, and if killing cougars would reverse the declines, there might be some justification for the target areas. But mule deer populations have been falling for half a century, before and after Measure 18. The primary reason is not predation, but a decline in the quantity and quality of forage. The agency's own experience shows that it is unable to document significant changes in mule deer populations in cougar-hunting target areas.

And if cougars are the cause of conflicts with humans and livestock in the fourth target area, Measure 18 already allows the cougars causing the problems to be killed. Indeed, by allowing systematic hunting of trophy cougars in the target area, the department invites more conflicts. When trophy cougars are killed, their vacant territories are filled by juveniles that may be less cautious around humans. Studies show that hunting disrupts the structure of the cougar population in ways that increase livestock predation rather than reduce it.

Dr. Robert Wiegus, director of the Large Carnivore Conservation Lab at Washington State University, reviewed the department's 2010 cougar management plan and found it deficient in many respects. He concluded, "There is no scientific evidence that administrative removals achieved any of the state goals (reduced complaints, livestock depredations, and increased elk calves)." The bloodless phrase "administrative removals" means state-approved killing of cougars, as will occur in the target areas. Wiegus recommended that the department "go back to the drawing board."

The agency can also go back to honoring the voters' intent, as it has done with bears, and stop trophy hunting of cougars. Predators and prey will find balance, if the state will let them.

## OTHER VIEWS

**KNOW the ENEMY.**



# Cabs, camels or ISIS

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates — Today, I'll talk about the Paris attacks, but before I do, I want to share two news stories here, in case you missed them: The first calf to come from a cloned camel was born at a research center in Dubai and a local taxi startup is taking on Uber in the Arab world.

You may think that these emirates startups — cloning camels and cabs — have nothing to do with Paris, but they do. Bear with me.

A newspaper here, The National, quoted Dr. Ali Ridha Al Hashimi, the administrative director of the Reproductive Biotechnology Center in Dubai, announcing "that Injaz, the world's first cloned camel, gave birth to a healthy female calf weighing about 38 kilos on November 2. Injaz, whose name means 'achievement' in Arabic, was cloned in 2009 from the ovarian cells of a dead camel." Previously, when the pregnancy was disclosed, the center's scientific director, Dr. Nisar Wani, said, "This will prove cloned camels are fertile and can reproduce the same as naturally produced camels."

Also last week, a hot local Arab ride-sharing startup, Careem.com, raised \$60 million more in venture financing to take on Uber in the Arab world, using technology that allows for pre-booking of vehicles through its mobile app — ideal for Saudi Arabia, where women can't drive and need chauffeurs to take them and their kids everywhere.

So, about 1,000 miles south of the Islamic State startup in Iraq and Syria — where jihadis are using technology to spawn disruption on a massive scale — another group of Muslims (and non-Muslims) in another Arab country are disrupting the world of camels and cabs.

The message? The context within which Arabs and Muslims live their lives really matters. And in too many places they've had only two choices — SISI or ISIS — the iron fist of generals, like Egypt's President Abdel Fatah al-Sisi, who is trying to stifle all dissent, or the ISIS madness that says the only way forward is to take the Arab-Muslim world backward.

Fortunately, there is a third way: the autocracies, monarchies and a few frail democracies that have invested in their people and created islands of decency — Tunisia, Jordan, Lebanon, Kurdistan, Kuwait, Morocco and the UAE — where more young Arabs and Muslims can realize their full potential and build their dignity by disrupting camels and cabs — not Paris and Beirut.

For me, the big strategic question in Iraq and Syria is: What would it take to uproot ISIS and create a Sunni island of decency in its place? For starters, that requires an honest assessment of how big the challenge is.

Sixty years ago Asian dictators told their people in effect, "I am going to take away your freedom — but give you the best education,

export-led economics and infrastructure that money can buy — and in a half-century you'll build a middle class that will gradually take your freedom back." In the Arab world, 60 years ago dictators told their people, in effect, "I am going to take away your freedom and give you the Arab-Israeli conflict, a shiny object to distract you from my corruption and predation."

That difference, 60 years later, has produced the Asian economic miracle and fueled the Arab civilizational

meltdown/disorder in Yemen, Libya, Syria and Iraq.

Given that, I believe U.S. foreign policy out here should progress as follows: Where there is disorder, help create order, because without order nothing good can happen. I will take Sisi over the Muslim Brotherhood. But where there is order, we need to push for it to become more decent and forward-looking. That is where Sisi is failing: His vision is just order for order's sake, with no positive slope. Where there is decent order, like the UAE, Jordan or Kurdistan, encourage it to gradually become more open and constitutional. And where there is constitutional order, as in Tunisia, protect it like a rare flower.

An Iraqi friend with family still in ISIS-controlled Mosul tells me that President Barack Obama's stepped-up bombing and special operations with the Kurds are hurting ISIS a lot. It was in part to disguise this that ISIS unleashed its death parade in Paris. But these ISIS guys are smart and still very dangerous. I'd support more bombing and special ops to further weaken and contain them.

But before we go beyond that, we need to face this fact: To sustainably defeat bad ISIS Sunnis you need good non-ISIS Sunnis to create an island of decency in their place. And right now, alas, finding and strengthening good non-ISIS Sunnis is the second priority of all the neighbors.

Turkey cares more about defeating Kurds; Saudi Arabia and its Arab Gulf allies care more about defeating Iran and its proxies in Iraq, Yemen and Syria; Qatar cares more about promoting the Muslim Brotherhood in Syria and annoying Saudi Arabia; Iran cares more about protecting Shiites in Iraq and Syria than creating a space for decent Sunnis to thrive; and many of the non-ISIS Sunni activists in Syria and Iraq are still Islamists — and they're not going away. How do you weave a decent carpet from these threads?

I don't know — and until I do I'd be cautious about going far beyond what we're already doing. Paris may be totally different today. The Middle East is not.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for The New York Times. He became the paper's foreign-affairs Op-Ed columnist in 1995.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Time to think positively about Pendleton's problems

News flash from city hall: The mayor and city council (well, some of them at least) deserve an apology, Jerry Cronin. Evidently you live in some fantasy world where you expect rational decisions from our elected officials. There are several positive things that deserve recognition.

We are probably the only city of this size to actually own, free and clear, a "Road to Nowhere." With the city's full financial support, we nearly had a much-needed Korean restaurant. We are probably the only city of this size to have "speed bumps" on their Main Street. A well deserved thanks from Les Schwab is definitely in order here.

If you bothered to check out the plaques on the Main St. statues, other than Requa and the madam, you'd find that besides those generous individuals listed, who I'm sure personally financed the project, you are included. Though not specifically mentioned, I think "The City of Pendleton" is all-inclusive. That's a well-deserved "Thank You, Jerry."

Our city is the largest real estate owner in the city limits and I'm sure they have a darn good reason for hoodwinking the county out of those extra 10 miles of streets. By the

way, the old Eighth Street bridge is for sale. The sale of this valuable antique should more than make up for the lost revenue expected from the gas tax failure. Luckily, a single item special election kept confusion over any other pending issues to a minimum — pretty thoughtful on the part of the council.

You just have to be a little more positive. Take some time and visit that new Sergeant City development near Olney. It will re-install that lost confidence you have for our leadership.

**Rick Rohde**  
Pendleton

### Early voting states have too much power in elections

As we rush into the next major election, now less than a year away, the same question comes up over and over. Two states always on the tip of the reporters' tongues.

I think it unfair that they are allowed to dominate the early election fury and unfair that two states get all the news attention.

I worry about states far across the land that might cut out candidates for whom we might want to vote.

**Thomas L. Farney**  
Hermiston

## 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 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.