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OUR VIEW

What's in a name?

The basics of the southeast Oregon standoff are becoming clear. A group of outsiders descended on the small city of Burns to stand up for local ranchers Dwight and Steven Hammond, who were convicted of arson and expected to report to federal prison on Monday to complete their five-year sentences. A small fraction of those involved in the protest then drove 30 miles south to a federally-operated wildlife refuge and are occupying the buildings there, including a wildfire watch tower.

They claimed as many as 150 people in their group, but only about 20 is occupying the refuge buildings. Ammon Bundy, one of the group's leaders and son of Nevada rancher Cliven Bundy who had his own standoff with federal authorities in 2014, said the group's goal is to "break up" the refuge land and redistribute it to local ranchers.

Meanwhile, the Hammonds distanced themselves from the spectacle and reported to prison in California as promised.

What will happen next is anyone's guess. The group claims it is willing to stay as long as it takes to accomplish the goal. But in the meantime, we need to define what we'll call the small group that has become a national news story overnight — and what we won't call them.

TERRORIST: The goal of a terrorist group is to promote fear, and this group isn't that. While they certainly have Harney County on high alert, including the school district which canceled classes for the week, terrorist actions are defined by both their intent and destruction.

We'd argue the Hammonds aren't terrorists either, though the federal crimes they were convicted of fall under that category in the eyes of the law.

No doubt we are culturally quick to dub Middle Eastern men with guns terrorists and more likely to give white men the benefit of the doubt, but in this case the label doesn't fit. At least yet.

MILITIA: Just because a group of individuals carries guns and is

opposed to government regulations doesn't make it a militia. If that was the proof, this group would have at least hundreds if not thousands of supporters in southeastern Oregon.

Initially, a militia referred to a civilian force trained to supplement a regular army if necessary. Or it can mean a group trained and prepared to oppose the army. Either way, the training and coordination needed to be called a militia is lacking in this case. It's a simple and provocative title, but not accurate, even if this is what the group claims to be.

OCCUPIERS: An oversimplified version of what this group stands for. The Occupy Wall Street movement of 2014 brought the term to the mainstream, but occupying a public place with signs and chants is different than occupying a public place with weapons. It's also a clunky word that could be associated with any occupant, from an apartment tenant to the passenger in a vehicle.

PROTESTERS: If a group protests anything from an environmental or human rights issue to the management of federal lands, we call them protesters. It's simple and makes no judgment about their intent or purpose.

If the group makes physical threats, whether spoken or insinuated, toward those around them, we need to reconsider.

The megaload protesters in Umatilla two years ago come to mind. Their mission was to bring attention to tar sands drilling in Alberta, Canada and they accomplished this goal by standing in the path of massive trucks carrying oil refinery equipment. A couple of the protesters also attached themselves to the vehicle. The action was illegal, but the method was not threatening.

ARMED ACTIVISTS: Until the story develops further, we'll stick with armed activist or a variant thereof. The fact that they are armed is significant to the reporting and in understanding the situation.

We will continue to evaluate our representation of this group as the story develops.

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

The Clintons, sexism and the Oval Office

The Wall Street Journal, Dec. 29

Donald Trump in December used some typically coarse language to describe Hillary Clinton, who responded by accusing Mr. Trump of sexism while announcing that she is unleashing Bill Clinton to campaign for her. This was too ripe an opening for Mr. Trump, who is now attacking Hillary for acquiescing in Bill's predations against women.

Mr. Trump is rude and crude, but in this case he is raising an issue that rightly bears on the 2016 election campaign and the prospect of a third Clinton term. Mrs. Clinton wants to use her gender both as a political sword and shield to win the White House. The purpose is to make male politicians less willing to take her on, while reinforcing her main and not-so-subtle campaign theme that it's time to elect the first woman President.

So she and her allies will try to spin any criticism as sexist. Even politically correct Bernie Sanders got this treatment after he said during a debate this autumn that "all the shouting in the world" wouldn't keep guns out of the wrong hands. Mrs. Clinton later said that "I haven't been shouting, but sometimes when a woman speaks out, some people think it's shouting." Against Republicans, she'll play the "war on women" theme non-stop.

Yet no one in American politics better personifies a war on women than Mrs. Clinton's husband. For readers too young to recall the 1990s, we aren't merely referring to Trumpian gibes about female looks or "Mad Men" condescension. Mr. Clinton was a genuine sexual harasser in the classic definition of exploiting his power as a workplace superior, and the Clinton entourage worked hard to smear and discredit his many women accusers.

Start with "bimbo eruptions," the phrase that Mr. Clinton's Arkansas fixer Betsey Wright used to describe

the women who had affairs with Bill. Gennifer Flowers almost derailed his primary campaign in 1992, until Hillary stood by her man on CBS's "60 Minutes" and the media portrayed Ms. Flowers as a golddigger.

Many more would come forward, not least Paula Jones, an Arkansas state employee who testified that a state policeman working for then Governor Clinton invited her to Bill's hotel room where he exposed himself and sexually propositioned her. Ms. Jones filed a sexual-harassment lawsuit and Mr. Clinton lied under oath, resulting in his impeachment.

Then there was Monica Lewinsky, the White House intern whose story the Clintons want everyone to dismiss as a case of consensual sex and Bill's runaway libido. But no CEO in America would survive in his job if he had a publicly known affair with a subordinate, much less a 22-year-old.

Mrs. Clinton described Ms. Lewinsky as "a narcissistic loony toon," according to the personal papers of Diane Blair, a close friend of Mrs. Clinton from Arkansas. This September Mrs. Clinton declared that "every survivor of sexual assault" has "the right to be heard. You have the right to be believed." But when her own access to political power was at stake, she dismissed the women and defended her husband.

We rehearse all this not merely to reinforce Mr. Trump's claims of a Clinton double standard. The point relates to the standards that would prevail in another Clinton Presidency. No wonder that Ruth Marcus, the Washington Post columnist and no conservative, called Bill Clinton's record with women a fair political issue. At the very least if Mrs. Clinton wants everyone to forget about Bill's harassment of women, she ought to stop playing the sexism card, or drop Bill as surrogate, or both.



OTHER VIEWS

Elections have consequences

You have to be seriously geeky to get excited when the Internal Revenue Service releases a new batch of statistics. Well, I'm a big geek; like quite a few other people who work on policy issues, I was eagerly awaiting the IRS's tax tables for 2013, which were released last week.

And what these tables show is that elections really do have consequences.

You might think that this is obvious. But on the left, in particular, there are some people who, disappointed by the limits of what President Barack Obama has accomplished, minimize the differences between the parties. Whoever the next president is, they assert — or at least, whoever it is if it's not Bernie Sanders — things will remain pretty much the same, with the wealthy continuing to dominate the scene. And it's true that if you were expecting Obama to preside over a complete transformation of America's political and economic scene, what he's actually achieved can seem like a big letdown.

But the truth is that Obama's election in 2008 and re-election in 2012 had some real, quantifiable consequences. Which brings me to those IRS tables.

For one of the important consequences of the 2012 election was that Obama was able to go through with a significant rise in taxes on high incomes. Partly this was achieved by allowing the upper end of the Bush tax cuts to expire; there were also new taxes on high incomes passed along with the Affordable Care Act, a.k.a. Obamacare.

If Mitt Romney had won, we can be sure that Republicans would have found a way to prevent these tax hikes. And we can now see what happened because he didn't. According to the new tables, the average income tax rate for 99 percent of Americans barely changed from 2012 to 2013, but the tax rate for the top 1 percent rose by more than four percentage points. The tax rise was even bigger for very high incomes: 6.5 percentage points for the top 0.01 percent.

These numbers aren't enough to give us a full picture of taxes at the top, which requires taking account of other taxes, especially taxes on corporate profits that indirectly affect the income of stockholders. But the available numbers are consistent with Congressional Budget Office projections of the effects of the 2013 tax increases — projections which said that the effective federal tax rate on the 1 percent would rise roughly back to its pre-Reagan level. No, really: for top incomes, Obama has effectively rolled back not just the Bush tax cuts but Ronald Reagan's as well.

YOUR VIEWS

In response to Ms. Sacco's letter on Liberalism

Carlin Sacco is a frequent contributor to this column, and I must answer her letter of Jan. 2. However, I feel kind of like David Huddleston in "Blazing Saddles" who gets up after Gabby Johnson's speech at the town meeting and says "Who can argue with that?" pointing out that the speech was delivered in "authentic frontier gibberish."

Ms. Sacco decries liberalism and its effect on the state of Oregon. Her complaints are somewhat unfocused, but as a proud liberal I will attempt to respond. First, and foremost, I believe government should provide a safety net for our citizens who need help. Like Ms. Sacco, I'm concerned about the "nanny state" that has grown up around that safety net, but blaming all the problems on us liberals will not fix the overreach of some government agencies and officials.

Two of Ms. Sacco's allegations must be addressed. Obamacare (thanks for the name) has improved health care and will only get better as the bugs are worked out. Thanks to bipartisan action, there are financial incentives in place to discourage welfare dependency and they have been working for a long time.

I don't expect Ms. Sacco to pay much attention to me because I am a former government employee with a law degree,

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.



PAUL KRUGMAN
Comment

The point, of course, was not to punish the rich but to raise money for progressive priorities, and while the 2013 tax hike wasn't gigantic, it was significant. Those higher rates on the 1 percent correspond to about \$70 billion a year in revenue. This happens to be in the same ballpark as both food stamps and budget office estimates of this year's net outlays on Obamacare. So we're not talking about something trivial.

Speaking of Obamacare, that's another thing Republicans would surely have killed if 2012 had gone the other way. Instead, the program went into effect at the beginning of 2014. And the effect on health care has been huge: according to estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the number of uninsured Americans fell 17 million between 2012 and the first half of 2015, with further declines most likely ahead.

So the 2012 election had major consequences. America would look very different today if it had gone the other way.

Now, to be fair, some widely predicted consequences of Obama's re-election — predicted by his opponents — didn't happen. Gasoline prices didn't soar. Stocks didn't plunge. The economy didn't collapse — in fact, the U.S. economy has now added more than twice as many private-sector jobs under Obama as it did over the same period of the George W. Bush administration, and the unemployment rate is a full point lower than the rate Romney promised to achieve by the end of 2016.

In other words, the 2012 election didn't just allow progressives to achieve some important goals. It also gave them an opportunity to show that achieving these goals is feasible. No, asking the rich to pay somewhat more in taxes while helping the less fortunate won't destroy the economy.

So now we're heading for another presidential election. And once again the stakes are high. Whoever the Republicans nominate will be committed to destroying Obamacare and slashing taxes on the wealthy — in fact, the current GOP tax-cut plans make the Bush cuts look puny. Whoever the Democrats nominate will, first and foremost, be committed to defending the achievements of the past seven years.

The bottom line is that presidential elections matter, a lot, even if the people on the ballot aren't as fiery as you might like. Don't let anyone tell you otherwise.

Paul Krugman joined The New York Times in 1999 as a columnist on the Op-Ed Page and continues as professor of Economics and International Affairs at Princeton University.

A tip of the hat to the Umatilla City Council

Maybe the East Oregonian could give a "Tip of the Hat" to the Umatilla City Council in their consideration to purchase the old gas station property across from their city hall to build a new city park.

The city of Umatilla reportedly owns property adjacent to the gas station and the whole area would be a green spot in the heart of downtown Umatilla.

Pendleton has many fine parks but does not have many downtown sites, although the green area at Hamley's is a pleasant stopping place as well as the tree-shaded space at Heritage Station. It would be a bonus if the Umatilla City Council would consider erecting a monument in the park as the Umatilla Village/Old Town Site. The movement of that town was an historic event.

Dr. Dorys C. Grover
Pendleton