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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the Hermiston wrestling team.

The word "dynasty" may get thrown around a little too freely in our short attention span sports culture, but you'd have trouble arguing the Bulldogs don't fit the bill.

In this short century, the Dawgs have won 10 titles. Since reclassification moved Hermiston out of the same league as the state's largest schools, HHS has fallen short of the top spot only once.

Lots of good wrestlers have contributed to the run of dominance, but Sam Colbray is almost certainly the best.

He won a state title his freshman year, his sophomore year, junior year, senior year. A four-time state champ, Colbray will head off to Iowa State to continue his wrestling career. And, as we learned in an *EO* story earlier this week, that's just the first stop on the way to a medical degree.

Congrats to Sam and Hermiston High for a great run of success.

A tip of the hat to the Oscar-winning film of the year, "Spotlight."

In case you haven't seen it, it's the intricately told true-to-life story about investigative journalism in the *Boston Globe* newsroom. The Spotlight team uncovered and publicized a culture of child abuse and cover-up in the Catholic Church, especially in their local diocese.

It's a reminder that good journalism is brave and dramatic, and not every thrilling story is dependent on guns and bombs and screaming dialogue. Watching the small team of reporters dig into the murky areas of the church and legal system, and slowly realize how far up the scandal actually went, is frightening enough.

Newspapers across the country celebrated the win for good reason. It shows that serious journalism is important, and not easy. The reporters live in the same neighborhoods as both their readers and subjects. They are a part of the community. But the *Globe* is separate from its most powerful institutions, and that allowed it to hammer toward the truth.

The journalists are heroes only in that they're dedicated to their jobs. And the villain is a corrupt system, not a single scheming antagonist.

It's a powerful grownup movie, and worthy of the accolade.

Hopefully, more Americans will support, appreciate and cheer the work of local journalists who work to hold powerful institutions accountable.

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

PERS payments will have dramatic impact on every municipality

The (Bend) Bulletin

Welcome to Oregon, where public employee retirement benefits are guaranteed to be insulated from the economy.

Here in Oregon, it doesn't matter how the earnings on the Public Employees Retirement System were doing. The fund only earned 2.1 percent in 2015 and the assumed rate of return was 7.75 percent.

Taxpayers must pick up the tab. Here in Deschutes County, we're going to feel the impact.

Deschutes County has saved up $11 million. It is going to spend that on public safety, roads or public health? No, no, no.

The county has been saving that money for a decade because people have known for at least that long that PERS is a sinkhole.

Remember how county finance director Wayne Lowry put it recently: Paying for PERS obligations "could be the greatest fiscal challenge that an organization like ours has faced."

Schools are going to feel it, too. The Bend-La Pine Schools anticipates the increasing costs of PERS are going to cost the district $39.5 million between 2008 and 2021.

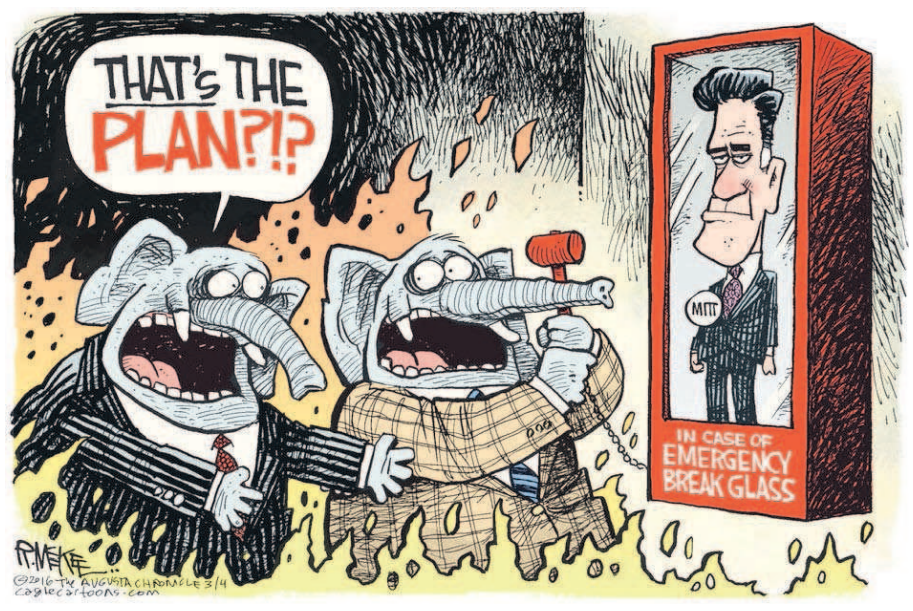
City governments get hit. The city of Bend set aside $2.7 million to deal with rising PERS costs. That's about the same amount of money the city is hoping to raise in a year with a fuel tax on the March ballot.

> Oregon is passing billions in financial liabilities on to the next generation.

And what did the Legislature do about PERS this session? It sent the only significant bill aimed at tackling the PERS costs — which was sponsored by state Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend — into oblivion. It did send along a bill aimed at expanding the people eligible to join PERS.

Public employees certainly deserve a good retirement plan. But the unfunded liability of the system is hitting $20 billion.

Welcome to Oregon, where political reform is passing on billions in liabilities to the next generation.



LETTERS POLICY

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OTHER VIEWS

Bracing for President Trump

NICHOLAS KRISTOF
Comment

The general election campaign may have already begun.

In the aftermath of Super Tuesday election results, betting markets show Hillary Clinton with more than a 90 percent chance of becoming the Democratic nominee, and Donald Trump with at least a 75 percent chance of emerging as the Republican nominee.

This is the most astonishing presidential election since at least 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War. The Republican front-runner is reviled not only by Democrats, but also by many prominent Republicans, and has less government experience than any president in history.

Only two presidents — William Howard Taft and Herbert Hoover — lacked background in major elective office or in the military, and both had held Cabinet posts. In short, a Trump presidency would be unprecedented not only for his bizarre policy positions and propensity to insult women and minorities, but also because of his staggering lack of relevant experience or knowledge.

> This is the most astonishing presidential election since at least 1968, at the height of the Vietnam War.

Trump has shrewdly manipulated the news media and has proved a much more accurate reader of the electorate than we pundits. Yet I've never met a national politician so ill informed, so evasive, so bombastic and — frankly — so puerile.

According to Dana Milbank of *The Washington Post*, most Republican candidates spoke at a high-school or middle-school level in the last Republican debate, based on the Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level Index. Meanwhile, Trump spoke at a third- or fourth-grade level. After the Nevada caucuses, Ted Cruz spoke at a ninth-grade level, Clinton at a seventh-grade level — and Trump at about a second-grade level! (I checked Trump's victory speech on Super Tuesday evening, a more moderate speech that seemed to reach for the center, and Trump had raised his rhetoric to a sixth-grade level.)

So let me engage a (imaginary) Trump voter:

Me: How can you possibly support a demagogue with less experience than any president in history?

Voter: You media know-it-alls are so patronizing! Trump has experience where it matters, making things happen in the business world. Anyway, what have experienced politicians brought us? A corrupt and broken system. Let's try something new — and at least he's a straight shooter.

Me: He has a reputation as a straight shooter, but he lies. When PolitiFact was choosing its "lie of the year," it found that all its real contenders were Trump statements — so it collectively awarded his many campaign misstatements the "lie of the year" award. And in backing him, you're pretty much guaranteeing a Hillary Clinton presidency. Indeed, because of Trump, the betting markets are now predicting a Democratic Senate as well.

Voter: Come on! Trump proved all of you pundits wrong again and again, and he'll do so again. And even those betting markets you like to cite — they show Trump with at least a 1-in-4 chance of being our next president, and that's while other Republicans are trying to rip him apart. Just wait until the party rallies around Trump.

Me: But how can you support a candidate who is so hateful? This is a man who calls Mexican immigrants rapists, who is slow to denounce the Ku Klux Klan, and who is mulling a registry for Muslims. You're OK with a racist in the White House?

Voter: Give me a break. You media guys always roll out the race card, but we're fed up with political correctness. I don't agree with everything Trump says, but at least he isn't pussyfooting around. He'll make America strong again. As for his wilder statements, take them with a grain of salt. He probably doesn't believe them himself, but he'll use them to negotiate. His history is as a dealmaker, not an ideologue.

Me: But Trump is already damaging America's reputation worldwide by commenting sympathetically about Russian President Vladimir Putin and the Chinese massacre of protesters from the Tiananmen democracy movement. More than 580,000 Britons have signed a petition to ban him from British shores. And prominent economist Larry Summers warns that just the prospect of a protectionist demagogue as president could tip the United States into recession or trigger an international financial crisis.

Voter: Take a deep breath. I don't care whether foreigners like us, as long as they fear us.

Me: And you don't have a problem with a candidate who demeans women as sexual playthings, who critiques women based more on busts than brains (in his words: "A person who is very flat-chested is very hard to be a 10"), who insults or leers at half the population?

Voter: In the past, Trump was an entertainment personality, so he said outrageous things. From now on, he'll be more presidential and more moderate, reaching out to Democrats — which he can do better than Cruz or Rubio, because he's not so conservative. And for all your naysaying, he'll be elected president, and he'll show that all your anxieties are as imaginary as I am. Get used to the phrase: President Trump.

■

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. He has been a columnist for The New York Times since 2001.

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton should consider realistic transportation plan

Back in January, I attended a transportation plan open house hosted by a consulting firm hired to update the city's transportation plan, since the present plan was 20 years old. There really wasn't much of a turnout for that presentation, probably because there really isn't much interest in putting in place any of the recommendations due to a lack of any funding available to build miles of bike trails, sidewalks, or extending the riverwalk.

On Feb. 4, consultants presented another open house with updated material. Interest was so great that only 13 people, excluding the consultants and city employees, attended the event. John Turner was present and seemed to show some interest. However, there was a conspicuous absence of top city officials.

Was this update even necessary? Isn't this why we have a planning department? Our primary means of transportation is the automobile, yet the condition of our streets is not addressed in the transportation plan. Again, time is money and it should be spent on realistic projects that have a chance of materializing.

I do have to apologize for stating that the appointment of our newest councilor was done in executive session. The decision was made most likely after interviews earlier in the day. The formal vote was taken later in the evening during the council meeting.

I also have to thank Glenn Graham for getting the lights fixed at Riverfront Park. Great job. And also a pat on the back to Robb Corbett for getting the planning department turned in a more positive direction.

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

Hermiston, Stanfield fire consolidation makes sense

Creating Umatilla County Fire District #1 is a change. If you live in Hermiston, Stanfield or the surrounding area, the biggest benefit you will see is full time manning of the Diagonal rural station in Hermiston, where currently it is minimal. That in itself will make response times quicker.

At this time, the risk of missed calls grows every few months. Combining these two entities will stop this from happening. When the consolidation is passed, in both communities staffing will change.

And the cost increase for the increase of protection is minimal. Stanfield will see slight decreases to the tax rate. On the other hand, Hermiston rural will increase roughly 55 cents per $1,000, or $55 a year for a $100,000 home. Consider that in comparison to risking the reality of missing a run.

I hope you take the time to review and discuss this option with your family and friends. Also, consider the changes in volunteer liability, because of the training costs.

Remember, you will be selecting five new fire board members. That is the ultimate way to become involved in decisions for the future.

Remember to cast your vote in May.

John Perkins, Hermiston