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OUR VIEW

Presidential politics run against TPP

Four of the five remaining candidates for the Republican and Democratic nominations for president oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the big 12-nation trade pact awaiting Congressional approval.

That doesn't bode well for agriculture in the Northwest. Donald Trump says the TPP is "insanity," a "horrible deal designed for China to come in, as they always do, through the back door and totally take advantage of everyone."

Ted Cruz opposes the pact, and always has. Hillary Clinton was for it, when she was secretary

of state, and then was against it when she became a candidate for president. She says the deal doesn't meet her standard for providing Americans good-paying jobs.

Bernie Sanders has called it "a disastrous trade agreement designed to protect the interests of the largest multi-national corporations at the expense of workers, consumers, the environment and the foundations of American democracy."

Only John Kasich, the long-shot

Republican candidate, favors the deal. He calls it "critical" to creating economic and strategic alliances.

Seven years in the making, the TTP is important for farmers in the Pacific Northwest.

U.S. agriculture is trade-dependent, especially in the West. Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California export about \$30 billion a year in agricultural goods overseas, mainly to Pacific Rim nations. Included in the TPP are nearly all of those nations: Canada, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore and New Zealand.

No trade deal is perfect, and there are many things about this one that give even proponents pause. But walking away from the deal would be a disaster for agriculture because U.S. goods would have impossible barriers not imposed on signatories who are also our competitors.

We hope Congress will approve the deal before it gets too caught up in election year politicking.



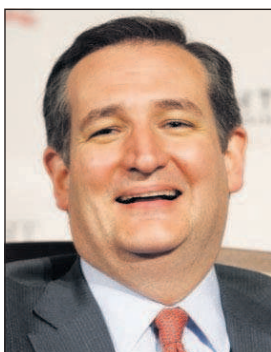
Trump



Sanders



Clinton



Cruz

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YOUR VIEWS

Third party voters should get in the game

Although the Independent Party of Oregon will not have a candidate in the presidential primary, IPO members or those who request IPO ballots will be able to write in a candidate and will be able to vote in any other contested primaries that may be on the IPO ballot.

Oregon law allows major parties to decide whether to hold "open" or "closed" primaries. In this year's May primary, both the Democratic and Republican parties will hold "closed" primaries — meaning that a voter must be registered with that party by April 26 to participate in its primary election.

This May, the Independent Party of Oregon will hold its first primary as a major party. Their primary will be "open" to all non-affiliated voters in the state, as well those voters registered as members of the Independent Party of Oregon. Voters who want to participate in the Independent Party of Oregon primary while maintaining their status as a non-affiliated voter should contact their county clerk's office by 5 p.m. on April 26.

Being that Democrats make up only 37.8 percent of registered voters and Republicans only 29.9 percent of registered voters in Oregon, this is the year that Independent and "non-affiliated" voters can exercise the true power of democracy. I urge that all non-affiliated and minor party members (Green, Libertarian, etc.) contact their county clerk's office before April 26 to be able to vote during the primary contest on May 17. The time has come for the "other" people of Oregon to stop the two major parties from dictating the far-left and

far-right extreme policies shown on the national media outlets.

Joseph Turner
Columbia City, Ore.

Nice to see city crews at work

It was good to see city equipment and staff working on South Main Street uphill from Isaac this week. They appeared to be fixing water or sewer infrastructure and then preparing to repave the street that had been dug up.

This is what we need from city government — not committees, studies, plans and reports; not new roads or housing, not new fees and taxes; just simple WORK to fix problems as they appear and to maintain the existing basic utilities and services that are city responsibilities: water and sewer, roads and public safety.

Betty Brunette
Pendleton

Hospital smokers pollute and litter

Good Shepherd Medical Center elected to go campus-wide smoke/tobacco free for the second time in my experience.

What I find is an ever-increasing number of cigarette butts and recently a whole empty package tossed into the grass. Lo and behold, a smoker's oasis appeared. I wonder if there is any concern by the smokers of how they pollute the air and hinder the care of the breathless patients.

I wonder if this time will fall as did the first.

Tom 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 Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

Who is Ted Cruz?

Enough, for one week at least, about the strange victories of Donald Trump. Let's talk about the mysteries of his last real competitor, Ted Cruz.

On the surface, Cruz is a straightforward figure: The ideological zealot, the politician-as-activist, the unbending embodiment of True Conservatism. He's the scourge of Obamacare, the bane of the GOP establishment, the evangelical moralist with a flat-tax plan and a Reagan quote for every occasion. If Trump has dynamited Republican orthodoxy and tapped out nasty tweets from the rubble, Cruz has kept pace by promising to rebuild that same orthodoxy stronger than before.

In this framing, Cruz is basically Barry Goldwater come again, an ideological crusader who might still grab his party's nomination, but whose general election prospects are limited by his own extremism.

I've used this framing myself, and it might be the best way to approach a Hillary-Cruz race. But it also seems inadequate to understanding Cruz's strange ascent.

Start at the intuitive level. Despite what you may have heard, true belief is pretty common among politicians. Listen to Rand Paul talk about liberty or Marco Rubio dilate on the promise of America; watch Bernie Sanders rail against inequality or President Barack Obama defend technocratic liberalism. They all radiate sincerity. Watch a Goldwater speech: you can tell the man believed it.

With Cruz, though, even the most fervent peroration always feels like a debater's patter, an advocate's brief — compelling enough on the merits, but more of a command performance than a window into deep conviction.

This doesn't mean that Cruz's conservatism isn't sincere. But the fact that he seems so much like an actor hitting his marks fits with the story of how he became Mr. True Conservative Outsider in the first place. Basically, he spent years trying to make it in Washington on the insider's track, and hit a wall because too many of the insiders didn't like him — because his ambition was too naked, his climber's zeal too palpable. So he deliberately switched factions, turning the establishment's personal disdain into a political asset, and taking his Ivy League talents to the Tea Party instead.

Then once installed as a leader of the counterestablishment, he walked a line that looks, again, far more calculated than most conviction politicians. While his fellow Tea Party senators, from Paul to Rubio to Utah's Mike Lee, built detailed policy portfolios that fit their interests and inclinations, Cruz never seemed to take a step on any contentious issue without gaming it out 17 moves ahead.

His push for the Obamacare shutdown, and the bill of goods he sold the party's base, was a particularly remarkably exercise in self-serving political cynicism. But on



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

many fronts — Edward Snowden, trade policy, immigration, the fate of Middle Eastern Christians — Cruz has proceeded with several fingers in the wind; every time the conservative mood has shifted even a little, he's shifted quickly too.

The same pattern has prevailed in the presidential campaign, in his complicated relationship to Trump — obsequious at first, cynically imitative on issues where Trump's demagoguery has worked, and finally self-righteous

and dudgeon-filled now that the name-calling and scandal-mongering have been turned against his reputation and his family.

Throughout this rise, Cruz has often seemed less like Goldwater than like American conservatism's own Kenneth Widmerpool, the most memorable character in the English novelist Anthony Powell's series, "A Dance to the Music of Time."

A dogged, charmless, unembarrassed striver, Widmerpool begins Powell's novels as a figure of mockery for his upper-class schoolmates. But over the course of the books he ascends past them — to power, influence, a peerage — through a mix of ruthless effort, ideological flexibility, and calculated kissing-up.

Enduring all manner of humiliations, bouncing back from every setback, tacking right and left with the times, he embodies the triumph of raw ambition over aristocratic rules of order. "Widmerpool," the narrator realizes at last, sounding like a baffled, Cruz-hating Republican senator today, "once so derided by all of us, had in some mysterious manner become a person of authority."

This is not exactly a flattering comparison. But the American reader, less enamored of a fated aristocratic order, may find aspects of Widmerpool's character curiously sympathetic. And some of that strange sympathy could be extended to Cruz.

Unloved, unattractive, a Simpsons-quoting nerd still chasing the teenage dream of world domination, the Texas senator has outworked, out-organized and outlasted the candidates who were supposed to beat him, from the blueblood to the jock.

His cynicism can be repellent, his message discipline exhausting, and his Reagan-vintage policy proposals induce a mild despair. But in the drama of this insane campaign, he has actually earned his position, and if his doggedness wins the Republican nomination on the second ballot it will be one of the most fascinating triumphs in recent political history.

Though it will also probably be short-lived. But if you think a little thing like losing a general election will dispose of Ted Cruz's ambitions, you don't know Ted Cruz.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. His column appears every Sunday. Previously, he was a senior editor at *The Atlantic* and a blogger for *theatlantic.com*.

OTHER VIEWS

Rural recreation good for Oregon

The (Medford) Mail-Tribune, March 27

The case of the misguided occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge will drag on for some time as the charges against the occupiers work their way through the federal courts, not to mention the additional charges stemming from a 2014 standoff over cattle grazing in Nevada. Just cleaning up the mess the Malheur occupiers left behind will take until early summer, officials say, at a cost of \$4 million.

Meanwhile, Oregon Sen. Ron Wyden has proposed changes in recreation permitting on federal land that could go a long way toward reminding the public that these lands really do belong to them.

The occupiers — Ammon and Ryan Bundy and their supporters — espouse a twisted interpretation of the Constitution that they believe makes government control of vast stretches of land illegal. They are mistaken in that belief, but it is undeniable that federal bureaucracy contributes to frustration among many in the West. Anything that makes navigating that bureaucracy easier will go a long way toward reinforcing the notion that public land belongs to the public, and the government merely manages it on our behalf.

Wyden's proposal has to do with recreational uses such as permits for river guides who lead raft trips on the Rogue and other rivers, but it goes much farther than that.

The legislation, co-sponsored by Oregon Rep. Earl Blumenauer, requires the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission to make recreation a priority when making land-use and regulatory decisions, and directs federal land management agencies to extend recreation seasons over more of the year wherever possible. The bill also would simplify the process of seeking permits for commercial guides as well as the general public who want access to public lands.

The legislation grew out of a tour Wyden and Blumenauer undertook last year to visit Oregon's "Seven Wonders" and what they heard in listening sessions they conducted along the way. The resulting proposals have the support of many outdoor recreation and tourism groups.

Making it easier for guides and outfitters to serve those visitors as well as encouraging tourists to use public lands on their own will help the outdoor industry thrive and grow, and that's good for everyone.