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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to Wheeler County officials, who have a mess on their hands after asking for the resignation of a county judge without presenting any evidence of wrongdoing.

We've written about the issue and will continue to follow it. In case you need a primer: Two county commissioners asked county judge Patrick Perry to resign during a public meeting in Fossil. Yet in their letters and public testimony, they did not reveal why they were asking for his resignation. They made subtle allusions to improprieties, but no charges were leveled. Members of the public were confused and asked for further explanation, yet none was proffered.

Maybe there is a good reason why Judge Perry should resign. It's quite possible. But the two commissioners, county sheriff and other county officials did not produce any evidence supporting their opinion that Perry should resign.

They should have stated what they are privately alleging. By not doing so, they have done nothing but smear a man's reputation, allow the rumor mill to churn on, and allow small Wheeler County to be divided and kept in the dark about a possible serious problem within their local government.

A tip of the hat to Pendleton City Council for a couple of wise decisions out of Tuesday's meeting.

First off, councilors decided to not damage the city's longstanding relationship with Blue Mountain Community College by rewriting a lease agreement for the baseball field. The city had discussed that it may need to kick the college out on short notice if a business came sniffing around the property.

Then the council opted to wait until a fire bond was fully formed before pitching it to voters. The fire department is eager to build a new fire station with more space and updated equipment, but when a deal for the St. Anthony property fell through there was no immediate clear choice for

the next best spot.

Rather than agreeing to put a measure on the ballot and then finding out what would be included, the council decided to wait until at least November, if not later.

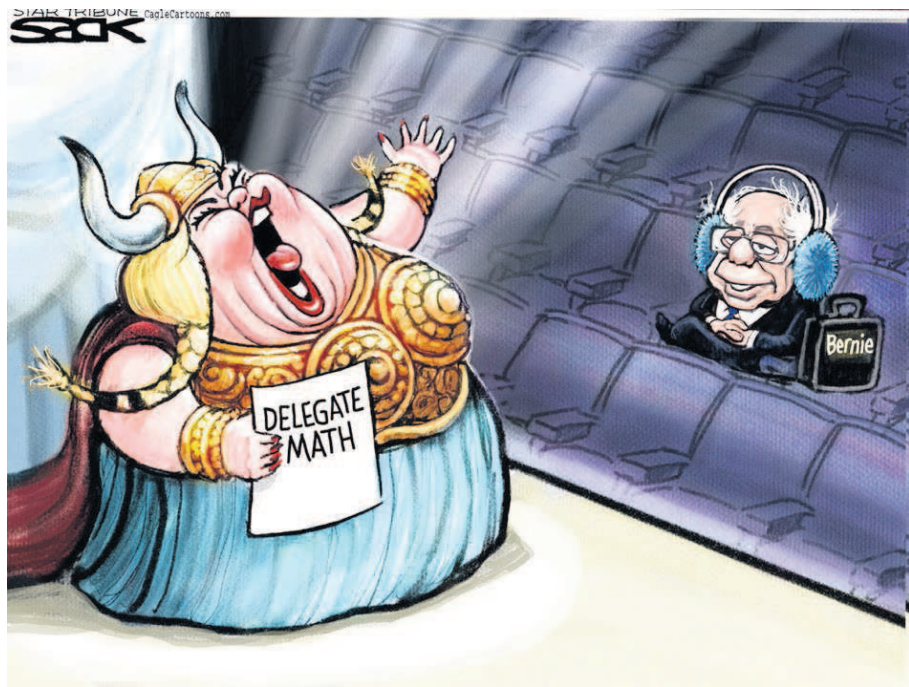
It's nice to see the horse put before the cart.

A kick in the pants to two of the three Republican candidates for President. Or former candidates. Ted Cruz and John Kasich dropped out in between the time ballots arrived on the doorstep of Oregon voters and the time when those ballots need to be returned.

These important late changes to elections are when the vote by mail system is at its weakest. It's likely that some voters registered Republican in this election solely to vote for or against Donald Trump. Now that vote is of no concern, and it is much too late to unregister as a Republican or take part in another party's primary.

On the Democratic side, give Bernie Sanders credit for at least staying in this long, to allow Oregon voters to have one say in a national race. It's almost assured that Oregon Democrats will reward him a significant number of the state's delegates.

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.



Bailor for county commissioner

Please join me in supporting Tom Bailor for county commissioner. Tom is a small business operator who has also worked with CTUIR in cultural resources management, renewable energy, and toxic and nuclear waste cleanup.

He holds a graduate degree from Gonzaga in organizational leadership, and in his roles as manager, program developer and teacher he has worked with a wide cross-section of people, helping to build community.

Tom is excited about the ways technology — unmanned aircraft and precision agriculture, as well as discoveries yet to come — will shape our future, and he wants to help Umatilla County plan for that future. In this time of accelerated change, having a voice from Tom's generation on the Board of Commissioners will be more important than ever.

Bette Husted
Pendleton

Elfering is honest, sincere, hardworking

I have known Bill Elfering

for almost 50 years and over the decades I have always appreciated his genuine interest in serving his community.

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Commissioner Bill Elfering has firmly positioned himself to be a major player for economic development in our region.

I am extremely pleased to endorse Bill Elfering for re-election as Umatilla County commissioner.

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Cimmiyoti for Pendleton council

I am writing to urge consideration of Cody Cimmiyotti for Pendleton City Council. I have known Cody for four years, he is hard working and dedicated. Cody

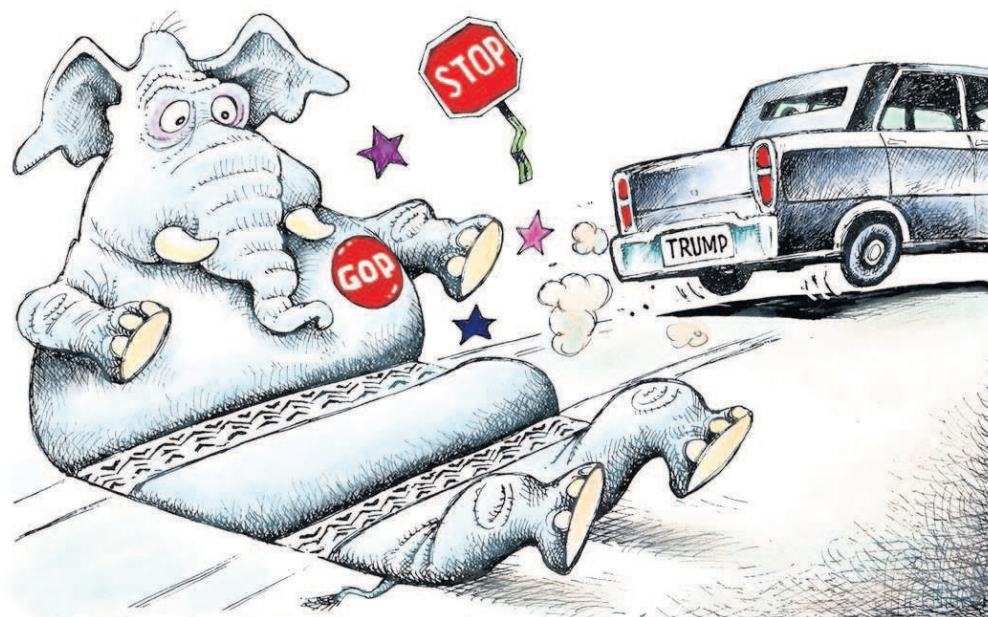
has been a resident of Pendleton all his life, and became a home owner at 23. He is committed to our community and wants to be instrumental in Pendleton's growth and development

It is always good to see a candidate that wants to approach issues and concerns with an open mind.

My address is not within Cody's district so I am not able to vote for him at the ballot box. He does, however, have my vote of confidence as an excellent choice to serve on city council.

Jane Neal
Pendleton

OTHER VIEWS



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The defeat of true conservatism

When Donald Trump knocked first Jeb Bush and then Marco Rubio out of the Republican primary campaign, he defeated not only the candidates themselves but their common theory of what the GOP should be — the idea that the party could essentially re-create George W. Bush's political program with slightly different domestic policy ideas and re-create Bush's political majority as well.

Now, after knocking Ted Cruz out of the race with a sweeping win in Indiana, Trump has beaten a second theory of where the GOP needs to go from here: a theory you might call True Conservatism.

True Conservatism likes to portray itself as part of an unbroken tradition running back through Ronald Reagan to Barry Goldwater and the Founding Fathers. It has roots in that past, but it's also a much more recent phenomenon, conceived in the same spirit as Bushism 2.0 but with the opposite intent.

If Bushism 2.0 looked at George W. Bush's peaks — his post-Sept. 11 popularity, his 2004 majority — and saw a model worth recovering, True Conservatism looked at his administration's collapse and argued that it proved that he had been far too liberal and that all his "compassionate conservative" heresies had led the Republican Party into a ditch.

Thus True Conservatism's determination to avoid both anything that savored of big government and anything that smacked of compromise. Where Bush had been softhearted, True Conservatism would be sternly Ayn Randian; where Bush had been free-spending, True Conservatism would be austere; where Bush had taken working-class Americans off the tax rolls, True Conservatism would put them back on — for their own good. And above all, where Bush had sometimes reached for the center, True Conservatism would stand on principle, fight hard, and win.

This philosophy found champions on talk radio, it shaped the Tea Party's zeal, it influenced Paul Ryan's budgets, it infused Mitt Romney's "You built that" rhetoric. But it was only in the government shutdown of 2013 that it found its real standard-bearer: Ted Cruz.

And Cruz ended up running with it further than most people thought possible. His 2016 campaign strategy was simple: Wherever the party's most ideological voters were, there he would be. If Obama was for it, he would be against it. Where conservatives were angry, he would channel their anger. Where they wanted a fighter; he would be a fighter. Wherever the party's activists were gathered, on whatever issue — social or economic, immigration or the flat tax — he would be standing by their side. He would win Iowa, the South, his native Texas, the Mountain West. They wanted Reagan, or at least a fantasy version of Reagan? He would give it to them.

It didn't work — but the truth is it almost did. In the days before and after the Wisconsin primary, with delegate accumulation going his way and the polling looking plausible once the Northeastern primaries were over, it seemed like Cruz could reasonably hope for a nomination on the second or third ballot.

So give the Texas senator some credit. He took evangelical votes from Mike Huckabee, Ben Carson and Rick Santorum; he took libertarian votes from Rand Paul; he outlasted and outplayed Marco Rubio; he earned support from Mitt Romney, Jeb Bush and Lindsey Graham, who once joked about his murder. Nobody worked harder; no campaign ran a tighter ship; no candidate was more disciplined.

But it turned out that Republican voters



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

didn't want True Conservatism any more than they wanted Bushism 2.0. Maybe they would have wanted it from a candidate with more charisma and charm and less dogged unlikability. But the entire Trump phenomenon suggests otherwise, and Trump as the presumptive nominee is basically a long proof against the True Conservative theory of the Republican Party.

Trump proved that movement conservative ideas and litmus tests don't really have any purchase on millions of Republican voters. Again and again, Cruz and the other GOP candidates stressed that Trump

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wasn't really a conservative; they listed his heresies, cataloged his deviations, dug up his barely buried liberal past. No doubt this case resonated with many Republicans. But not with nearly enough of them to make Cruz the nominee.

Trump proved that many evangelical voters, supposedly the heart of a True Conservative coalition, are actually not really

values voters or religious conservatives after all, and that the less frequently evangelicals go to church, the more likely they are to vote for a philandering sybarite instead of a pastor's son. Cruz would probably be on his way to the Republican nomination if he had simply carried the Deep South. But unless voters were in church every Sunday, Trump's identity politics had more appeal than Cruz's theological-political correctness.

Trump proved that many of the party's moderates and establishmentarians hate the thought of a True Conservative nominee even more than they fear handing the nomination to a proto-fascist grotesque with zero political experience and poor impulse control. That goes for the prominent politicians who refused to endorse Cruz, the prominent donors who sat on their hands once the field narrowed and all the moderate-Republican voters in blue states who turned out to be #NeverCruz first and #NeverTrump less so or even not at all.

Finally, Trump proved that many professional True Conservatives, many of the same people who flayed RINOs and demanded purity throughout the Obama era, were actually just playing a convenient part. From Fox News' 10 p.m. hour to talk radio to the ranks of lesser pundits, a long list of people who should have been all-in for Cruz on ideological grounds either flirted with Trump, affected neutrality or threw down their cloaks for the Donald to stomp over the nomination. Cruz thought he would have a movement behind him, but part of that movement was actually a racket, and Trumpistas were simply better marks.

Cruz will be back, no doubt. He's young, he's indefatigable, and he can claim — and will claim, on the 2020 hustings — that True Conservatism has as yet been left untried. But that will be a half-truth; it isn't being tried this year because the Republican Party's voters have rejected him and it, as they rejected another tour for Bushism when they declined to back Rubio and Jeb.

What remains, then, is Trumpism. Which is also, in its lurching, sometimes insightful, often wicked way, a theory of what kind of party the Republicans should become, and one that a plurality of Republicans have now actually voted to embrace.

Whatever reckoning awaits the GOP and conservatism after 2016 will have to begin with that brute fact. Where the reckoning goes from there — well, now is a time for pundit humility, so your guess is probably as good as mine.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009.

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