

EAST OREGONIAN

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KATHRYN B. BROWN
PublisherDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorJENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising DirectorTIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

News as a service,
not a product

News is a hot commodity, but it's a buyer's market. There are a number of places to find out about things happening in the world or in your neighborhood.

At the *East Oregonian*, we strive to be a valuable source. In fact, we aim to be the most valuable source in our area — not just trusted or well-liked, but essential.

To reach for that goal, we pay a staff of journalists to spend every working day explaining the happenings of Eastern Oregon.

We're intrigued by a chorus of emergency sirens, but also by the silence when the public interest is being debated behind closed doors. We share the joy when the news is good and pain when it's not. We are part of the community and have been for 140 years.

While we put out a product five days a week — a physical newspaper, from our Pendleton press to your doorstep — our value is not the ink and paper. It's the content within, created by reporters and photographers and editors. It's the time spent at meetings, at fires, in classrooms, at our desks poring over budgets, filing records requests and chasing down sources. And like all good services, we can't do it for free.

Because most of our news is now consumed digitally, we can't sustain a model where only print subscribers like you pay for our work.

Our online paywall is an attempt

to continue to serve the community without undercutting ourselves. Though some content providers are using them, we know it's rare and annoying to encounter one. But hopefully it's a reminder of the resources expended to get you that information — much of which you won't find anywhere else.

We've settled upon a structure we plan to test over the course of the summer. The *East Oregonian* website is open to everyone and includes many free features, such as obituaries, coming events calendars and other public notices. Visitors will get to see three free articles a month, plus one bonus article each day that they find via social media. Our 20,000 Facebook friends make up a large portion of our daily online audience, and we hope they have a positive experience on our site.

We also hope those online readers, especially residents who find themselves returning again and again to our site, consider the work it takes to report the news and invest in that process — like print subscribers have done for generations.

We also ask that our invested readers join the effort in serving the community. Tell us what we're missing and which stories have an unexplored layer. You can send tips or ideas to editor@eastoregonian.com or call us directly: 541-966-0835 connects you to the heart of the newsroom.

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

Opioids in Oregon

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Oregon is awash in opioids, with the second-highest rate of prescriptions in the country and a skyrocketing death rate from opioids. The death rate in Oregon from these drugs — which include Vicodin, OxyContin and Percocet — surpasses any other type of drug poisoning, including alcohol, methamphetamines, heroin and cocaine.

Physicians who are dealing with this are, unhappily, reaping a crop that was sown more than 25 years ago.

There was a major movement in the 1990s to push doctors to do more to treat pain — or risk possible censure by medical boards for failing to do their job. Opioids were deemed a safe and effective option.

One small company, Purdue Pharma, touted a new medication as not only effective in reducing pain, but also having a lower risk of abuse because of its time-release properties. The new drug, Oxycontin, quickly became popular.

In 2007 Purdue admitted, after being hauled into federal court, that it had misled the public about OxyContin's risk of addiction.

That admission came too late.

Health care professionals are now aware that opioids are not as safe — or even effective — as once believed. The same cannot be said for patients, particularly those who have become dependent on opioids and need them to feel normal. There are Oregon physicians who say they have been threatened with malpractice lawsuits, even physical violence, by some patients and their families when they try to wean a patient off opioids.

These patients flatly refuse to believe the opioids are, in fact, ineffective in treating many types of pain and may even make it worse in some cases, such as lower back pain.

Research now shows that weight loss and exercise are the most effective ways to reduce pain in many cases, but that prescription can be a tough sell to many patients.

Oregon has made some progress in recent years in dealing with opioid dependency. There is a statewide registry that allows doctors to see if a patient has additional opioid prescriptions from other physicians. Local emergency rooms no longer prescribe opioids for migraines and urgent care clinics won't prescribe opioids for chronic pain.

After peaking in 2006, prescription opioid deaths in Oregon had fallen by about 35 percent by 2012, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics. But this was still 250 percent higher than in 2000 — and

some physicians say they see use and abuse growing again.

Opioids still account for 6.7 percent of all prescriptions written in Oregon today — about a third more than the national average. If Oregon is to win the battle against opioid addiction, more needs to be done.

This includes looking at areas with the highest rate of opioid prescriptions to determine what's going on and deal with it.

It also means increasing connections and sharing more information among the different parties who deal with opioid addictions, including all types of health care providers and nonprofits that deal with addiction.

While there is a reporting system that allows doctors to see if a patient is obtaining multiple opioid prescriptions, there is no requirement to check the database, which does not include prescriptions written in emergency rooms. And physicians who have used the site complain that it is cumbersome and hard to use.

Better partnerships and connections between health care providers, insurers and employers also is needed for a coordinated approach to attack opioid addiction.

Some insurers, for example, may not cover alternative treatments for pain that would replace opioids. And programs to help a patient lose weight and exercise as part of a program to reduce pain may not be readily available.

A system to identify and divert patients who are at high risk for opioid abuse to an agency that specializes in substance abuse also would be helpful.

And specific guidelines for prescribing opiates should be in place, focusing on such parameters as prescribing the lowest active dose for the minimum amount of time and considering offering other, non-addictive options if there are factors on record that show a possible disposition to abuse.

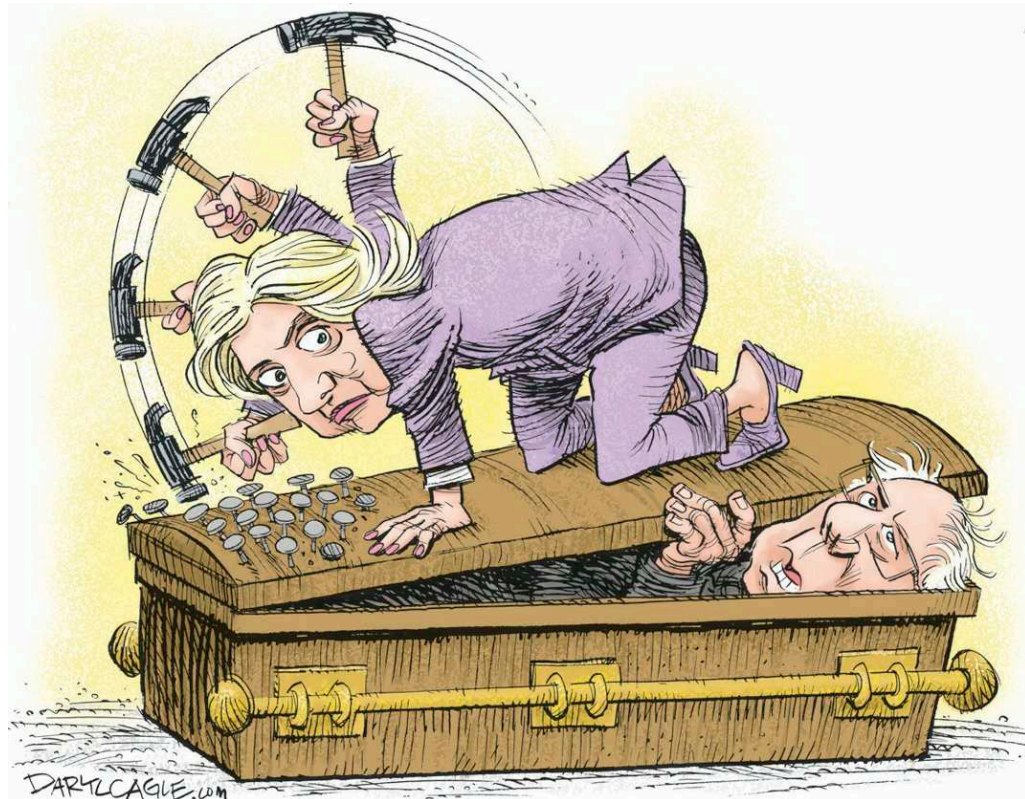
There is room for, and a need for, innovative approaches in dealing with the opioid epidemic.

Opioid abuse is not just an issue for the people who are dependent on opioids, and their families, it is an issue for the community. It causes needless deaths, takes people from being productive members of society to non-productive and feeds into rising health care costs and crime.

It will take a coordinated effort, with support from everyone from individual community members to health care providers, health insurers, counselors, employers and law enforcement.

But it is an effort that is worth making, and that promises a significant payoff.

OTHER VIEWS



Why is Clinton disliked?

I understand why Donald Trump is so unpopular. He earned it the old-fashioned way, by being obnoxious, insulting and offensive. But why is Hillary Clinton so unpopular?

She is, at the moment, just as unpopular as Trump. In the last three major national polls she had unfavorability ratings in the same ballpark as Trump's. In the *Washington Post/ABC News* poll, they are both at 57 percent disapproval.

In the *New York Times/CBS News* poll, 60 percent of respondents said Clinton does not share their values. Sixty-four percent said she is not honest or trustworthy.

Clinton has plummeted so completely down to Trump's level that she is now statistically tied with him in some of the presidential horse race polls.

There are two paradoxes to her unpopularity. First, she was popular not long ago. As secretary of state she had a 66 percent approval rating. Even as recently as March 2015 her approval rating was at 50 and her disapproval rating was at 39.

It's only since she launched a multimillion-dollar campaign to impress the American people that she has made herself so strongly disliked.

The second paradox is that, agree with her or not, she's dedicated herself to public service. From advocate for children to senator, she has pursued her vocation tirelessly. It's not the "what" that explains her unpopularity; it's the "how" — the manner in which she has done it.

But what exactly do so many have against her?

I would begin my explanation with this question: Can you tell me what Hillary Clinton does for fun? We know what Obama does for fun — golf, basketball, etc. We know, unfortunately, what Trump does for fun.

But when people talk about Clinton, they tend to talk of her exclusively in professional terms. For example, on Nov. 16, Peter D. Hart conducted a focus group on Clinton. Nearly every assessment had to do with on-the-job performance. She was "multitask-oriented" or "organized" or "deceptive."

Clinton's career appears, from the outside, to be all consuming. Her husband is her co-politician. Her daughter works at the Clinton Foundation. Her friendships appear to have been formed at networking gatherings reserved for the extremely successful.

People who work closely with her adore her and say she is warm and caring. But it's hard from the outside to think of any non-career or pre-career aspect to her life. Except for a few grandma references, she presents herself as a résumé and policy brief.

DAVID BROOKS
Comment

For example, her campaign recently released a biographical video called "Fighter." It's filled with charming and quirky old photos of her fighting for various causes. But then when the video cuts to a current interview with Clinton herself, the lighting is perfect, the setting is perfect, her costume is perfect. She looks less like a human being and more like an avatar from some corporate brand. Clinton's unpopularity is akin to the unpopularity of a workaholic. Workaholicism is a form

of emotional self-estrangement. Workaholics are so consumed by their professional activities that their feelings don't inform their most

fundamental decisions. The professional role comes to dominate the personality and encroaches on the normal intimacies of the soul. As Martyn Lloyd-Jones once put it, whole cemeteries could be filled with the sad tombstone: "Born a man, died a doctor."

At least in her public persona, Clinton gives off an exclusively professional vibe: industrious, calculated, goal-oriented, distrustful. It's hard from the outside to have a sense of her as a person;

Her formal, career-oriented persona puts her in direct contrast with the mores of the social media age.

she is a role.

This formal, career-oriented persona puts her in direct contrast with the mores of the social media age, which is intimate, personalist, revealing, trusting and vulnerable. It puts her in conflict with most people's lived experience. Most Americans feel more vivid and alive outside the work experience than within. So of course to many she seems Machiavellian, crafty, power-oriented, untrustworthy.

There's a larger lesson here, especially for people who have found a career and vocation that feels fulfilling. Even a socially good vocation can swallow you up and make you lose a sense of your own voice. Maybe it's doubly important that people with fulfilling vocations develop, and be seen to develop, sanctuaries outside them: in play, solitude, family, faith, hobbies and leisure.

Abraham Joshua Heschel wrote that the Sabbath is "a palace in time which we build." It's not a day of rest before work; you work in order to experience this day of elevation. Josef Pieper wrote that leisure is not an activity, it's an attitude of mind. It's stepping outside strenuous effort and creating enough stillness so that it becomes possible to contemplate and enjoy things as they are.

Even successful lives need these sanctuaries — in order to be a real person instead of just a productive one. It appears that we don't really trust candidates who do not show us theirs.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in September 2003.

YOUR VIEWS

Playground equipment leaving Pendleton neighborhood parks

I write this letter to draw attention of Pendleton residents to the quiet taking of playground equipment from Pendleton city parks currently in process, with hopes of discouraging or preventing its removal — at least without a full public discussion.

In my area, the May Park playground equipment was fenced off about two weeks ago without explanation or notice. I believe the other two parks with scheduled removal of playground equipment are Aldrich and Rice.

In conversation with a Pendleton Parks Department representative, I was told the removal is the result of an insurance audit regarding the danger of an uncushioned fall from monkey bars, yet the swings and seesaw are also scheduled for removal.

The representative said notice was planned for area residents of the three parks affected but had not been mailed out. The schedule for this notice was not yet set. My concern is that the equipment will disappear with no discussion and then be too late for retrieval.

We discussed the shortage of resources for the parks department and the costs of dealing with vandalism in May Park affecting the restroom there, forcing its closure during the school year. I've seen the vandalism to the

playground equipment also, and repaired it where possible.

However, I've also witnessed the use of playground most often by preschool children year-round and elementary school-age children during the summer. This is the only park in a neighborhood with many children. Removal of the equipment removes this resource for the youngest children in the area — there is no unaccompanied walking-distance alternative for younger children.

This neighborhood, sadly, is under-funded. The park, even with the sad state of repair, is one of few city resources available close by.

The loss of the playground would mean more than a terrible inconvenience, but would deprive the inhabitants of a rare resource. This becomes more stark while parks in distant, more affluent neighborhoods, with more alternative resources continue unaffected.

The estimate for replacing wood chips to cushion falls from the monkey bars is \$1,500 plus labor to install them. Perhaps we could trade the restroom, open only three months each year, to keep a year-round resource for local children?

I'm grateful to the parks department for all they do and offer this in the spirit of consultation.

Bill Young
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.