

EAST OREGONIAN
Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher
JENNINE PERKINSON
Advertising Director

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor
TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

OUR VIEW

Make certain drinking water is safe

Some believe lead contributed to the fall of the Roman Empire. Heavily used in ancient times for many purposes including sweetening wine, it caused an array of illnesses — everything from neurological damage to sterility. Added to paint and gasoline in 20th century America, it is thought lead's corrosive effects on brains and bodies contributed to youth violence and poor school performance by inner-city kids.

The quantity of lead found in drinking water in some Oregon schools is far below the astronomical levels that once caused devastating diseases. But parents, children and officials are right to exercise great caution when it comes to lead. Even a cursory search on the internet for information about lead exposure turns up literally millions of frightening references. Symptoms include everything from learning difficulties and loss of appetite to hearing loss and constipation.

Modern-day Oregon parents aren't inclined to take such news sitting down, particularly after shocking news of widespread lead exposure and official indifference in Flint, Michigan.

Eastern Oregon schools are at various stages of conducting tests of drinking water. Statewide, Gov. Kate Brown has recommended tests by school districts and licensed child care facilities — the state doesn't have legal authority to insist on these tests.

It's obvious that everyone who looks after children should make certain drinking water is safe. Testing and prompt remediation of plumbing systems that leach lead into water is essential — the sooner the better.

Many homes and commercial buildings in rural Oregon date from a time before there was much concern about lead. Even some relatively new homes have the potential of exposing residents to unacceptable levels of lead and copper — the latter also can cause health problems. It wasn't until 1991 that the federal Safe Drinking Water Act began heightening

awareness of the issue. The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention suggests using "only cold water from the tap for drinking, cooking, and making baby formula. Hot water is more likely to contain higher levels of lead. Most

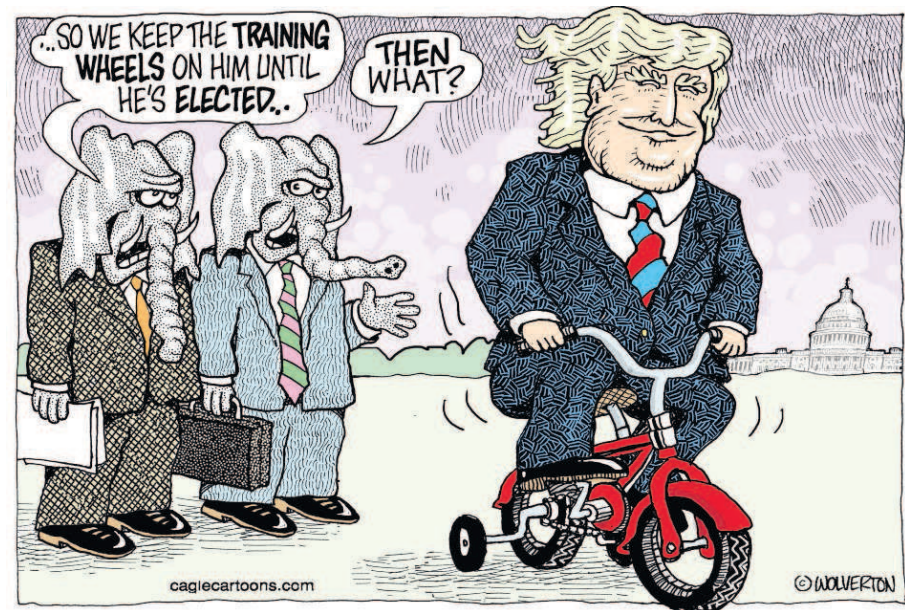
of the lead in household water usually comes from the plumbing in your house, not from the local water supply."

Lead paint was commonly used until 1978, and children can absorb it by eating cracked and peeling paint or playing in rooms or soil contaminated with paint dust. Take precautions to avoid having children spend time in pre-1978 houses that are in the midst of renovation, which can spread lead dust. In all pre-1978 buildings, assume that the paint has lead unless tests show otherwise. The CDC advises, "Because household dust is a major source of lead, you should wet-mop floors and wet-wipe horizontal surfaces every 2-3 weeks."

None of this is panic-worthy. Rational precautions by families and school officials will substantially lower any risk that might stem from low-level lead exposure. But it is worth paying attention to, and making certain authorities follow through on their promises.

Testing and prompt remediation of plumbing systems that leach lead into water is essential — the sooner the better.

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.



Trees a bane of Main Street

The clean water act sets a standard for storm sewer wastewater, which evidently can no longer be dumped directly into rivers and streams. The city of Portland has run into a stumbling block attempting to comply. The culprit is leaves from the many trees throughout the city. Recently our sewer rates in Pendleton have been raised and more increases are expected to come as the city attempts to comply with the storm sewer requirements. Now we've been told by the public works director that the street sweeper is not intended to clean streets, but to clean debris from the gutters so as not to enter the storm drain system. That doesn't seem to be working, since many of the gutters are being missed because of vehicle and RV parking.

Down yonder in the Parks Department, we've formed a Tree Committee to ensure that we plant more trees and establish a street tree program so we can be listed as a "Tree Friendly Community" like Echo. It's pretty evident that from the experience we've had with street trees on Main Street that one of the worst enemies of sidewalks and streets is in fact street trees. Now, our beloved Public Works Department, the one that has meticulously maintained our streets, is proposing to plant street trees along Southeast Eighth Street with the replacement of the bridge, street and sidewalks with no intention of maintaining the trees. Think 25 years down the road what those property owners will be left dealing with. I get the feeling the public

works director simply doesn't care because he'll be long gone. Is being listed as a "Tree Friendly City" that important?

Personally, I'd just like to drive down Main Street and see all those fancy street lights working for longer than a month. Last Thursday evening, nine of the lights were not working if you count the one in Brownfield Park and one in front of the arts center.

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

Birth defects a red herring in transgender debate

The *East Oregonian* and Ron Gavette have both twisted my May 25 letter, which the *EO* mis-titled "When people switch gender, good becomes evil." My words were: "To force a policy on our youth where boys who in their own eyes think they are girls are encouraged to use girls' bathrooms and locker rooms is to call evil good." The innocent kids are not evil but the policy is.

In an effort to justify the genderless anti-God bathroom policy of the socialist progressives, Gavette documents those born with "ambiguous genitalia" claiming scripture "does not address this issue" and "a fundamentalist like Stuart Dick will not acknowledge (this) reality."

Fundamentalists like Stuart Dick do address scripture, the inerrant word of a loving Heavenly Father, to answer issues Ron Gavette cannot. Ambiguous genitalia is a birth defect that affects 1 of 4,500 births.



ORLANDO

The scope of the Orlando carnage

These locations are never random. These targets aren't accidental. They're the very vocabulary in which assailants like the Orlando gunman speak, and he chose a place where there's drinking. And dancing. And where LGBT people congregate, feeling a sense of welcome, of belonging.

That last detail is in the foreground of the deadliest mass shooting in American history — and rightly so.

But let's be clear: This was no more an attack just on LGBT people than the bloodshed at the offices of Charlie Hebdo in Paris was an attack solely on satirists.

Both were attacks on freedom itself. Both took aim at societies that, at their best, integrate and celebrate diverse points of view, diverse systems of belief, diverse ways to love. And to speak of either massacre more narrowly than that is to miss the greater message, the more pervasive danger and the truest stakes.

We don't yet know all that much about Omar Mateen, who pulled the trigger, again and again, in a nightclub whose name connotes life, not death: Pulse. We'll be learning more in the hours and days to come, including just how potentially homophobic in particular factored into his actions, how much ideological influence the Islamic State or other extremists had, how extensive his planning was, how far back he began plotting this, and how much he knew about Pulse itself and the specific composition of its crowd on different nights of the week.

But we can assume — no, we can be sure — that he was lashing out at an America at odds with his darker, smaller, more oppressive mindset. The people inside Pulse were citizens of it. More to the point, they were emblems of it. In Pulse they found a refuge. In Pulse they found joy. To him they deserved neither. And he communicated that with an assault rifle and bullets.

The Islamic State and its ilk are brutal to gay people, whom they treat in unthinkable ways. They throw gay people from rooftops. The footage is posted online. It's bloodcurdling, but it's not unique. In countries throughout the world, to be gay is to be in mortal danger. To embrace love is to court death.

That's crucial context for what happened in Orlando, and Orlando is an understandable prompt for questions about our own degrees of inclusion and fairness and whether we do all that we should to keep LGBT people safe. We don't.

As Florida Gov. Rick Scott spoke publicly of his heartache Sunday, I saw



FRANK BRUNI
Comment

complaints on social media about his own lack of support for issues important to LGBT people. Those complaints have merit.

But this isn't a moment for identity politics, which could muddle the significance of the carnage. Yes, that carnage exposed the special vulnerability of LGBT Americans to violent extremists, recommending special levels of security. And there was a frightening coda to it on the opposite coast, in the Los Angeles

area, where a man with an arsenal of weapons was arrested en route to gay pride festivities.

But the threat isn't only to LGBT Americans, as past acts of terror have shown and as everyone today must recognize. All Americans are under attack, and not exclusively because of whom we drink, dance or sleep with, but because of our bedrock belief that we should not be subservient to any one ideology or any one religion. That offends and inflames the zealots of the world.

Often our politicians can't find their voices. Sometimes their words are poignantly right.

President Barack Obama, speaking about the victims Sunday afternoon, said: "The place where they were attacked is more than a nightclub. It is a place of solidarity and empowerment where people have come together to raise awareness, to speak their minds and to advocate for their civil rights. So this is a sobering reminder that attacks on any American, regardless of race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation, is an attack on all of us and on the fundamental values of equality and dignity that define us as a country."

And this was Eric Garcetti, the Los Angeles mayor, at a news conference: "Today we know that we are targeted as Americans, because this is a society where we love broadly and openly, because we have Jews and Christians and Muslims and atheists and Buddhists marching together, because we are white, black, brown, Asian, Native American. The whole spectrum and every hue and every culture is here."

It was a perfect description of the country I love.

And it was an equally perfect description of what the Orlando gunman couldn't bear.

Frank Bruni is a New York Times columnist and the author of the bestseller about George W. Bush called "Ambling into History" and the co-author of "A Gospel of Shame: Children, Sexual Abuse and the Catholic Church."

YOUR VIEWS

Jesus was asked who caused these kinds of birth defects (in this case blindness). "Neither has this man sinned, nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." (John 9:3) All human beings are precious to God and even those with birth defects like ambiguous genitalia are created in His image and precious in His sight. With parental counseling, doctor support (including genetic and endocrinologist) support groups and proper counseling these children can have fulfilling, productive and satisfying lives.

Unfortunately, those that force genderless bathroom and locker room policies that put men in women's bathrooms use rare birth defects like ambiguous genitalia as justification to make confused kids believe they are transgender. This is unconscionable, Mr. Gavette. Presently three states, California, New Jersey and Massachusetts, have passed laws barring psychiatrists even with parental permission from striving to restore gender feeling to a transgender person. The only transgender counseling allowed in government schools today is sex change operations. Documented studies have

discovered 70 to 80 percent of children that experience transgender feelings spontaneously lose those feelings over time.

The truth is, those that would fundamentally change American moral values concerning gender, marriage between one man and one woman and sexual fidelity could care less about ambiguous genitalia or other birth defects. Two thirds of women are screened for such birth defects and 70 to 80 percent will be persuaded to abort that precious baby made in God's image. Doctors that fail to detect such birth defects can be sued.

Stuart Dick
Irrigon

Gas tax debate lowers prices

I feel the city of Pendleton should put the gas tax on the ballot again. At least while it is being debated locals could enjoy the lower gas prices surrounding communities do. Pendleton's gas was cheaper than anyone's back then.

Robert Doherty
Pendleton

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.