

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the *East Oregonian's* subscribers.

Many have been with the paper longer than any of our employees, further back than our computer databases track. They've followed the region's news in the *EO's* pages delivered to their homes and businesses for decades and decades.

Others have signed up for delivery in the past days and weeks, taking a stand with their pocketbooks and leisure time against the unending proclamation that print is dead. They are helping us prove it is not.

It is commitment from our subscribers, who realize the *EO* only exists because people are willing to pay local journalists to seek out and report the news, that keeps us going as a media outlet and business.

To show our gratitude, beginning today we will be partnering with local businesses to thank our readers one by one. On the front page each day we'll wish a randomly selected subscriber a good morning and offer a sponsored prize for sticking with us.

Watch the space above the address bar on the left side of the page for your name, and when your day comes up bring the clipping and your ID to the sponsor's business within a year for your prize.

And thanks for reading.

A tip of the hat to the soon-to-be Hermiston recycling center, which will make returning glass and plastic bottles much easier.

Recycling rates everywhere in Oregon have been on a steady downward trend since the glory days of the Bottle Bill, when the return rate was up around 90 percent. Now, the rate is around 70 percent and decreasing steadily.

There are a few reasons for that. One is that a nickel just isn't what it used to be — five cents in 1971 was worth 30 cents today. And another is that many helpful store employees have been replaced by slow, jittery machines that often don't make returning bottles worth the time and energy.

Oregon just may change that, first by doubling the return rate to a dime, and secondly by looking to private enterprise to help make the return process simpler and easier. Enter Oregon Beverage Recycling Cooperative, which is operating throughout the state and soon in Hermiston. They are clean and well-staffed and allow recyclers to quickly do their good deed, make a little money while they're at it, and then get on their way.

We hope Hermiston residents embrace the new company and more shops open throughout the state, especially on our side.

In turn, we'll hopefully see fewer cans and bottles on the roadside, and fewer will find their way to ever-growing landfills.

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

Oregon's vanishing governor

The Oregonian/OregonLive

There's big news these days in the world of Harry Potter, the fictional wizard conjured up by J.K. Rowling. No, we're not referring to the appearance of a new play, "Harry Potter and the Cursed Child." What we're talking about is much bigger: Potter's invisibility cloak has been stolen. We know this because Oregon Gov. Kate Brown is wearing it.

Brown has decided not to show up July 22 for a debate sponsored by the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association. The ONPA debate historically has kicked off the fall election, and defections like hers are rare. In her absence, Republican candidate Bud Pierce, a Salem-based doctor, will address those in attendance and answer questions.

Brown's debate snub is only her most recent vanishing act. For months, she's declined to take a position on a \$3 billion annual tax hike that will appear on November's ballot. Even so, the governor recently released a broad plan for using the money the tax hike would generate. It seems Brown wants to avoid the consequences of taking a position on the tax, but is more than happy to smooth its path. Playing political peekaboo in this fashion should be beneath someone who'd like voters to think of her as a leader, and even former Gov. John Kitzhaber, whose resignation last year thrust Brown into the state's top office, called her out for ducking.

Brown surely has strategic reasons for remaining silent and invisible. As an incumbent, she has more to lose than gain from debating Pierce, who's never held elective office. And if nothing else, refusing to take (or state) a position on Initiative Petition 28 deprives Pierce of a chance to criticize her for supporting a tax hike that will cost low-income Oregonians hundreds of dollars per year. But this approach sends a worrisome message to Brown's constituents, who still don't know how their governor stands on the biggest ballot initiative

in years, and who have never seen her participate in a general election debate for the office she now holds. The message is this: My need to win, and to do so with little effort, trumps your need to know what I really stand for.

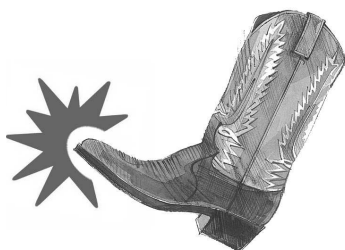
There's a word for this. It's arrogance. That's not particularly surprising given the fact that Brown is the chosen candidate of the dominant party in what has become a single-party state. Why engage any more than necessary in the political process if you're sure to win anyway? Why act like a leader if you don't need to?

As strange as it may be to see a candidate shut out the public during an election — especially a candidate who hasn't been elected to the office she holds — there's really nothing new here. Brown has been shutting out the public since she inherited the governor's office last year.

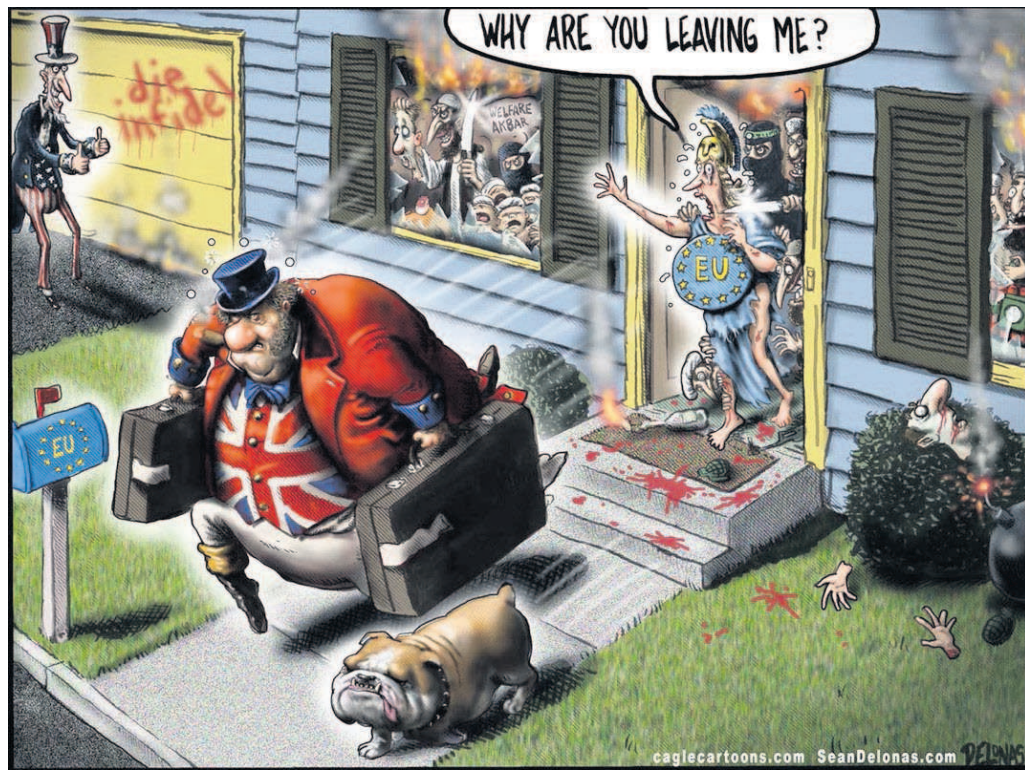
Her office participated in a months-long effort to delay the release of public records while the Legislature considered — and passed — a bill exempting the records retroactively from public disclosure. Later, her office prohibited the members of the Public Utility Commission from sharing their concerns with a sweeping energy bill in a timely fashion. When it has suited her, Brown has tucked the workings of state government beneath the same invisibility cloak she now wears as a candidate.

Perhaps Brown will participate enthusiastically in the campaign at some point, agreeing to show up at more than a minimal number of debates, taking firm positions on important issues like IP28 and sharing with voters a vision for the governor's office and where transparency and openness fit within it. We certainly hope so. But the longer she tries to remain invisible, the more uncomfortable it will be for her to answer the first question Pierce should ask her on the stage:

"When you were sworn in last year, you said you valued transparency and openness. How much of that did you really mean?"



OTHER VIEWS



A bachelor named Britain, looking for love

It has been forever since Britain was single, and there will be many lonesome and disorienting nights ahead.

Maybe we should fix it up with Switzerland.

Not immediately, of course. The divorce from the European Union was just announced. The paperwork hasn't been filed. There could be a loss of nerve, a relaxing of conjugal rules, tulips from Holland, chocolates from Belgium. Greece and Portugal could promise to stop leaving dirty dishes in the sink, Germany to quit hogging the remote.

But as things stand now, Britain will soon stand apart, and we all know how that goes: exhilaration, followed by panic, leading to an age-inappropriate Tinder account. Oh, look, here's Iceland, flashing its most voluptuous volcanoes. Nah, too stony and lugubrious, and you can listen to only so much Bjork. Swipe left.

Britain on its own is unfathomable. Think of its relationship history: epic trans-Atlantic romances, audacious trans-Pacific affairs, flings in this jungle, hookups on that dune. It was usually dominant, occasionally submissive but always coupled — if not tripled, quadrupled or quintupled. It had a lust for entanglement if no talent for fidelity.

But it's not the overlord it once was. Those imperial pheromones are gone. Where a crown once rested, a bald spot spreads. Britain's going to need primping, prodding, perhaps a prescription.

And introductions. So: Switzerland?

If marrying rich is the goal, marrying Switzerland is the jackpot. And Switzerland won't do what Britain loathed in its current spouse and encourage poorer, darker people to drop in for fondue.

But it's so worryingly petite. So wearily standoffish, resisting the EU even while enveloped and protected by it. And it's sure to insist on a prenup longer than all of the Harry Potter novels combined. Britain needs freer and easier love than that, especially as its jowls sag and its pound droops.

Maybe that means Albania, Montenegro or Macedonia. They're the mail-order brides of the continent, dreaming of an "I do" from the EU. Surely they'd settle for Britain.

But would Britain settle for them? The bloated pride that brought it to this juncture won't allow for a significant other that's too other and insignificant, and most outsiders can't locate Albania on a map. (Go south to the heel of Italy, turn left, cross the Adriatic, hope for the best.) There are better charted, more ego-salving corners of Europe that haven't bedded down with Brussels and are still on the market.



FRANK BRUNI
Comment

Britain on its own is unfathomable.

Like Norway. It and Britain have plenty in common — they're both wintry, watery, fishy, boozy — but also bring different, complementary assets to the table. In Norway's case, oil. In Britain's, Adele. If that's not a recipe for global domination, what is?

Britain isn't a bachelor like most. It has been married so many times that it has pretty much run through the available options.

Its predicament reminds me of the movie "What's Your Number?" which I saw so that you wouldn't have to. Anna

Faris plays a Bostonian who believes that she has reached her maximum allotment of sexual partners and that her only hope for a husband is to circle back and reconnect with someone she disconnected from previously.

For Britain that could be India. Australia. Much of Africa. Some of the Middle East. Its exes are everywhere, though approaching any of them would require a new humility, as the Britain of yesteryear wasn't a particularly modest or accommodating suitor. It typically got the better end of the deal, until the EU came along and the arrangement wasn't so lopsided.

America is Britain's most prominent ex of all: the Elizabeth Taylor to its Richard Burton. Should our onetime colonial master become our 51st state? If we acted quickly enough, Boris Johnson could be tapped as Donald Trump's running mate, creating a tandem of tresses so perversely dazzling that it alone makes the case. This may have been Johnson's plan all along.

Britain is no more geographically nonsensical for us than Hawaii or Alaska, though it's probably too long a cultural stretch. It simply lacks the requisite prevalence of gun ownership.

Which makes it a better fit for Canada. Canada is saner, except about ice hockey. It's Britain's obvious match: comparably affluent, sufficiently English-speaking. Together Britain and Canada can laugh at the crudeness of us Americans, a favorite shared pastime and an understandable one.

Britain is suddenly leaderless, while Canada suddenly has a leader, Justin Trudeau, who's an international heartthrob. He can expand his portfolio to two continents, and has tidy hair. Sorry, Boris.

And the monarchy survives! Canada never ceased its ceremonial fealty to it, and bows before Queen Elizabeth II much as Britain does. It's a source of puzzlement, but it's a bridge to Britain, which is going to need the love.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for *The New York Times* since June 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995.

YOUR VIEWS

Transgender guidelines are in best interest of all students

The Oregon Department of Education May 5 provided guidelines for how schools are to treat transgender students. Guidelines is the key word. Christian fundamentalists, like letter writers Stuart Dick and Nolan Nelson, know no shame, no dishonor; they completely ignore this word.

To quote Mr. Dick: "To force a policy on our youth where boys who in their own eyes think they are girls are encouraged to use girl's bathrooms and locker rooms is to call evil good."

The policy does not call for force in anything, it calls for "accommodation" in considering the privacy of both the cisgender, boys or girls who identify with their biological gender, and the transgender. In no way does the policy call for genderless anti-God bathrooms. It simply recognizes the need for individual consideration such as "unisex" bathrooms or some other alternative.

The policy is "trying to make sure everyone has options," that it is in the best interest of all the students, the kindergarten, the middle school, the high school.

To quote Nolan Nelson: "Women are terribly uncomfortable with a mercurial

revelation that they believe violates their inherent natural right to feel safe and private in their person. This policy provides many the opportunities to indulge in deviant impulses."

No, it seeks to insure everyone can feel safe and private in their person. That is the purpose of the Oregon Department of Education's 15-page guideline.

The guidelines do not take a position either way on whether a child may be born gay or not, or whether being homosexual or transgender is a sin or not, or whether being transgender is a mental disorder or not.

Both these men, with regard to this issue, think they know it all. They make their statements as fact. They accept no alternate consideration. They apparently never question themselves as to whether what they espouse is a brazen distortion of the truth or not. It seems they see only with a limited view, their interpretation.

They never ask themselves, what if Jesus had a message that truly could change the world, but we have missed the point? What if the Oregon Department of Education had the best interest of all in mind when considering divergent views, and we have missed the point?

Ron Gavette
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 phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.