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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the city of Pendleton, whose councilors in the last week made smart decisions on a possible new fire hall, marijuana businesses and a boat ramp to the Umatilla River.

The St. Anthony Hospital site is the best option for a future station — plenty of space, won't take up important real estate in what must be the economic and cultural heart of the city, can be built relatively affordably and will help grow a now empty-feeling neighborhood.



The city and fire department still have a difficult job ahead of them: convincing taxpayers that a new station should be atop the city's long list of needs. But having a good location, and a well-defined one, will help that effort.

The councilors dragged their feet as long as possible on the marijuana issue, but did the democratic thing by letting voters have their say on the matter. It will be interesting to see if Pendleton voters have changed their mind on the issue,

now that the industry has proven itself more lucrative than predicted and the dire warnings of increased crime and addiction have not come to fruition. Whichever way voters go, they will have had their say on the matter and who could ask for more than that?

And while we're in a tipping mood, we think a boat ramp on the Umatilla River is a great idea. As the river becomes more flush with water and fish, recreation is bound to increase. Good signage and a safe place to enter and exit will help make locals and visitors feel welcome to enjoy the beautiful river that runs right through the heart of town.

A tip of the hat to Sen. Ted Cruz, who stood up for his convictions against the bully Donald Trump, and has been taking heat for it since.

Cruz snubbed Trump at the Republican National Convention on Wednesday, instead offering lukewarm support of Republican candidates "up and down the ticket." He barely even mentioned Trump's name.

And you can understand why. Throughout the primary campaign, Trump routinely called Cruz "Lyin' Ted," insinuated Cruz's father was involved in the JFK assassination and attacked Cruz's wife for her looks.

"I am not in the habit of supporting people who attack my wife and attack my father," Cruz said Thursday, noting "this is about principles and ideals."

There is a selfish reason why Cruz would make this stand — he sees Trump getting crushed in November and wants to distance himself early for a run in 2020. "I told ya so" will be strong with this one.

Still, it took some guts to stand up to the rabid Trump crowd and say his piece. It's also telling that, to Trump supporters, it's insulting to be told to vote your conscience.

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 vote-by-mail example should go nationwide

The (Eugene) Register-Guard

Three Oregon members of Congress are trying to expand Oregon-style voting by mail nationwide. It's an idea whose time has come.

Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley and Rep. Earl Blumenauer, all Democrats, said they introduced their bills in large part because of new voting restrictions 17 states have adopted — just in time for the 2016 presidential election — that will make it harder for many people to vote, or will disenfranchise them entirely.

Wyden said that working people, young people, people of color and people with disabilities will be faced with significant new hurdles.

Since Oregon adopted vote-by-mail in 1996, it has proved efficient, cost-effective and popular.

About the only complaints that have surfaced are a few expressions of nostalgia for polling places and some complaints that Oregon is making it too easy for people to vote, particularly the wrong sort of people — generally speaking, liberals.

On the other side of the scales are compelling arguments for expanding vote-by-mail nationwide:

- It doesn't disenfranchise people who have trouble getting enough time away from work to commute to their polling place and vote.

- It doesn't hamper or disenfranchise people who have mobility issues, including elderly people, those without cars or people with physical challenges.

- It doesn't burden people with small children who are trying to vote while wrangling tiny people who may be running, crying, exploring or some combination thereof.

- It avoids last-minute voting machine malfunctions and long lines. Remember the people waiting up to five hours to vote in this year's Arizona primary?

And the 126,000 people in New York who were purged from the voting rolls? Polling places that ran out of ballots?

- It also avoids situations like that of Rhode Island, which slashed the number of polling places by two-thirds earlier this year, outraging voters.

- It eliminates the problem of voters showing up at their polling place only to find it's been moved or is opening late, and the problem of finding enough poll workers.

- It allows people to research issues as they fill out their ballots, instead of standing in the voting booth and trying to remember what Measure 77 is about — or showing up with a summary of recommendations ripped from a newspaper and blindly following those.

- The cost to administer an election in Oregon dropped by nearly 30 percent after vote by mail was adopted. In Colorado, costs dropped an average of 40 percent.

- It eliminates current inconsistencies among states: three states conduct elections solely by mail, and 22 states allow some elections to be conducted by mail.

All states currently allow any voter to request an absentee ballot for any election, although a number demand a reason. Requiring all states to offer vote by mail as an option would not only provide equity, it would keep states from asking voters what is going on in their private lives that merits an absentee ballot.

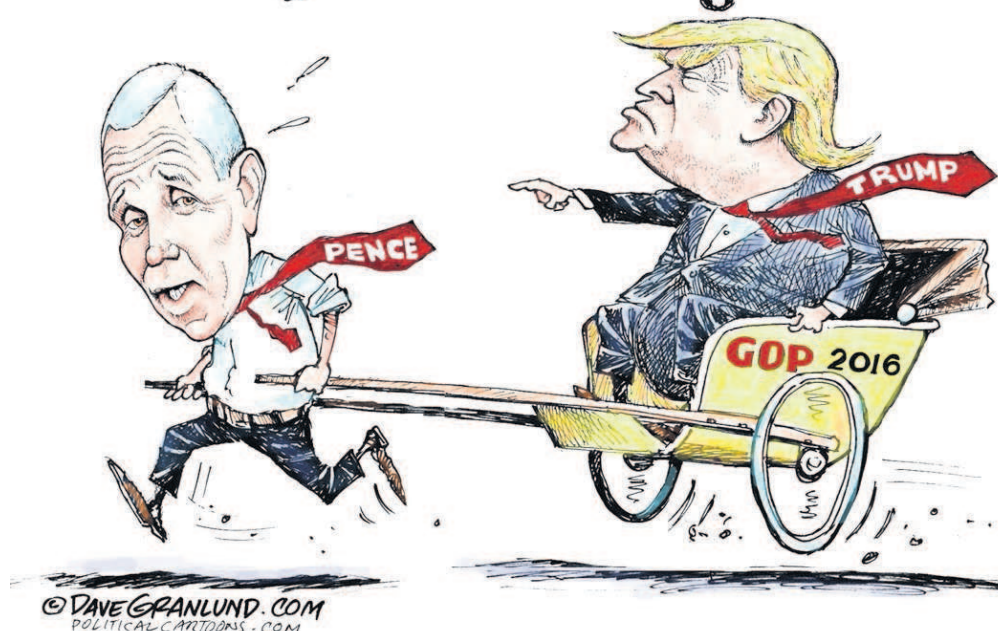
There have been a few complaints or questions in Oregon about signature verifications on ballots.

In 2009, Orange County, Calif., which was considering vote by mail, investigated Oregon's experience and found no confirmed reports of voter coercion or fraud.

There are no compelling arguments against national vote by mail. There are, however, compelling arguments for it.

OTHER VIEWS

Trump's running mate...



Trump and the Sultan

Turkey is a long way from Cleveland, where the Republicans are holding their presidential convention. But I'd urge you to study the recent failed military coup against Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. America is not Turkey — but in terms of personality and political strategy, Erdogan and Donald Trump were separated at birth.

And the drama playing out in Turkey today is the story of just how off track a once successful country can get when a leader who demonizes all his rivals and dabbles in crazy conspiracy theories comes to believe that he alone is The Man — the only one who can make his country great again — and ensconces himself in power.

Let's start with Erdogan, who was prime minister from 2003 to 2014, but then maneuvered himself into the previously symbolic role of president and got all key powers shifted to that position. I confess that when I first heard the news of the July 15 coup attempt, my first instinct was to consult that great foreign policy expert Miss Manners, *The Washington Post's* etiquette columnist, because I was asking myself, "What is the right response when bad things happen to bad people?"

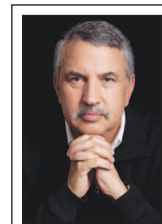
"Dear Miss Manners: I instinctively oppose military coups against democratically elected governments, like the one in Turkey. But am I a bad person if part of me felt that Turkey's president had it coming?"

Anyone who has been following Turkey closely knows that Erdogan has been mounting a silent, drip-by-drip coup of his own against Turkish democracy for years — jailing reporters, hounding rivals with giant tax bills, reviving an internal war against Turkish Kurds to stoke nationalist passions to propel his efforts to grab more powers — and by generally making himself into a modern-day sultan for life.

I'm glad the coup failed, especially the way it did — with many secular Turks who actually opposed Erdogan's autocratic rule, and had been abused by it, nevertheless coming out against the plotters on the principle that Turkish democracy must be upheld. That was a truly impressive act of collective wisdom and a display of democratic sensibilities.

The maturity of the Turkish people resulted in Erdogan's getting what golfers call a mulligan, or a do-over, to demonstrate that he is committed to the universal precepts of democracy. Will he? Or will Erdogan go right back to his preferred means of staying in power: dividing Turks into his supporters and enemies of the state, weaving conspiracy theories and using the failed coup as a license for a witch hunt, not only for plotters but for anyone who has dared to cross his path?

The early signs are bad. A day after the failed coup, Erdogan dismissed 2,745 judges and prosecutors. How did he know exactly



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

who to fire in one day? Did he already have an enemies list? To date, he has now reportedly purged 1,500 university deans, revoked the licenses of 21,000 teachers and either purged or detained nearly 35,000 members of the military, security forces and judiciary as part of his "cleansing" of coup supporters.

Here's the real tragedy: Erdogan was an outstanding leader his first five years and truly lifted the country's economy and middle class. But since then it's all gone to his head, and he has gotten away with increasingly bad behavior by creating an us-versus-them divide between his loyal, more religious followers, and the more secular communities in Turkey.

In terms of personality and political strategy, Recep Erdogan and Donald Trump were separated at birth.

Because his followers see their dignity wrapped up in his remaining in power, he can say and do anything and never pay a political price. His base will always rally to his us-versus-them dog whistles. But Turkey in the long run suffers.

Sound familiar? Trump relies on the same tactics: He fabricates facts and figures on an industrial scale. He regularly puts out conspiracy theories — his latest is that President Barack Obama's "body language" suggests that "there's something going on" with the president — hinting that Obama is not comfortable condemning the killing of cops by African-American gunmen and has sympathy for radical Islamists.

Trump also relies on the us-versus-them bond with his followers to avoid punishment for any of his misbehavior. He, too, is obsessed with his own prowess, and he uses Twitter to get around traditional media gatekeepers — and fact-checkers — to inject anything he wants into the nation's media bloodstream. (Erdogan just uses his own friendly media.) And most of the people Trump has surrounded himself with are either family or second-raters looking for a star turn, including his vice-presidential choice and the person who wrote his wife's convention speech and clearly plagiarized part of it from Michelle Obama. The whole thing reeks of flimflam.

If Trump is elected, I don't think there will be a military coup, but I guarantee you that Jeb Bush's prediction will be proved true, that he'll be "a chaos president" just as he's been a "chaos candidate." Americans will regularly be in the streets, because they are not going to follow — on any big issue — a man who lies as he breathes, who has not done an ounce of homework to prepare for the job and who generates support by conspiracy theories and making people afraid of the future and one another.

If you like what's going on in Turkey today, you'll love Trump's America.

Thomas L. Friedman won the 2002 Pulitzer Prize for commentary, his third Pulitzer for *The New York Times*.

YOUR VIEWS

Whisky Fest attendee feels partial refund is in order

"What a wonderful event!" I was thinking to myself, as we walked into the first annual Pendleton Whisky music festival. The weather was perfect, the music was awesome, the stage was set thoughtfully so that patrons had the sun to their backs. We had purchased the VIP pre-party tickets two months in advance and had been looking forward to it for as long.

Yet within a few hours we would be so disappointed we left before the Zac Brown Band finished.

To start, there seemed to be no information available — we had asked on first arriving where the pre-paid VIP dinner and drinks were being served. At least three staffers had no idea, so we just found our seats and walked around.

It was early in the evening, so we then decided to find some food. A pulled pork sandwich or nachos for \$10 each? Seriously? We had already spent \$270 on the VIP seats, so where was the VIP treatment?

After wandering throughout the Round-Up Grounds, we realized the limited number of bars set up for the amount of people who were there were sorely lacking. Again, I watched

one drink at a time served slowly by a very few people, throughout the event. At some point during the second band, again, another excellent choice, my fiancé and I got in line for another beer. The second act concluded, and Zac Brown was coming up. No beer, not even close — the line had extended to the dirt track, and we hadn't reached the grass yet. The roadies broke down and built up the stage. Finally on the grass, no beer yet. The headliner came on stage. Yes, no beer still. We waited another 45 minutes into Zac Brown's set.

At this point we chose to return to our seats and bought bottled water from one of the few organizations there to raise money for school sports.

We stayed a little longer, but I am disappointed to say standing in line for 90 to 120 minutes had worn out our patience. What a shame. We work hard for our money and Pendleton Whisky's music festival was a waste. Why wasn't it staffed appropriately, for the volume of tickets sold? The Zac Brown Band was a terrific choice, and I'm sorry to say it was one of the few that night. Does anyone else feel entitled to a partial refund, as I do?

Anna Garnett
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LETTERS POLICY

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