

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum, whose office has produced clear and helpful upgrades to Oregon's public records laws.

The legislation, which should go before the 2017 Legislature, would most importantly give priority to the public's right to know. Government departments would have to make the case why information should be kept from the public, instead of the public having to make the case for why it should be made available. That places the burden where it should be.

Rosenblum also asks the Legislature to set clear deadlines for public agencies to respond to records requests and provide a manual for understanding exemptions.

It's not a perfect solution, but a step in the right direction. It makes it easier for the public and the press to understand the process of our public servants and thereby hold our government and its employees accountable for their actions.

Yet, like everything, there's a catch.

"It is important to emphasize that we cannot implement these suggested reforms without the active support and involvement of our governor and the Legislature," Rosenblum noted.

In the past, the Legislature has woefully unresponsive on the issue — after all, the public can use knowledge against them. But pressure must be applied next year in order to help revive Oregon's gutted public record laws.

Most every child's most vivid memory of the county fair is the carnival. Whether it's a joyful, fearful or stomach-turning experience, it builds character and the experience lasts a lifetime.

A kick in the pants to the debacle this week at the Umatilla County Fair where rides for the youngest thrill-seekers weren't available on Wednesday. We're glad to know safety standards are followed, but disappointed that the subcontractor providing the rides wasn't up to speed with an Oregon permit (as reported on Page 3A today). The carnival scrambled and found another supplier of the rides, but not before many had already put money and time into their fair experience.

The stalled rides have left a lot of folks, parents and kids alike, upset. And rightfully so. Getting the whole family down to the fair can be an expensive outing, and paying for it twice in a week because not all the attractions were available the first time around is unfair. Pardon the pun.

We're glad to know Davis Amusements is giving those who bought passes for Tuesday or Wednesday another free pass. We'd hope the fair would follow suit and let those families back through the gates to enjoy the rides.

A tip of the hat to the city of Hermiston for doing the requisite pre-planning necessary to get the city's public art scene off the pavement.

Some temporary or permanent installations would be great for Hermiston, and the city will sidestep some headaches and confusion by putting the rules out there first. And the rules and discussion might also inspire people to come forward with some ideas of their own.

It looks like the city learned some lessons from its neighbor Pendleton, which had difficult roll-outs of unpopular projects that left a bad taste in the mouth of many residents.

By making its standards and the process clear, Hermiston is now well situated to avoid those hangups and be able to enjoy a more beautiful, interesting place.

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.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Comply with police and probably be unharmed

Baltimore federal prosecutor Marilyn Mosby has done the right thing, even though she remains defiant and unrepentant. She just dismissed the case against the last of the officers involved in the Freddie Gray case.

However, this comes only after she failed to prove her case against the first four officers, a lawsuit was filed against her by two of the officers for false arrest and defamation, and suggestions were made that she may be disbarred or fired. Even Maryland Governor Larry Hogan has publicly stated she was wrong to even file these suits.

They were costly, too: \$7.4 million for the city of Baltimore for costs related to the rioting and protests, then another \$6.4 million awarded to the Freddie Gray family — awarded by the Baltimore City Council before any of the trials even started. So all the officers were found innocent, yet the family of Freddie Gray gets rich anyway?

Most reasonable people are willing to listen to the facts and make an informed decision. I finally realize the Black Lives Matter folks are not interested in facts

or the truth. They have an agenda that is going to be pushed forth, regardless of the facts. For example, a study published by the journal Injury Prevention shows that only about one in 291 police stops or arrests ends in injury or death.

Ted Miller was the lead study author and principal research scientist at the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation in Maryland. He says the study shows those injured or killed by a police officer is more a function of who resisted or put a weapon on the officer than what race they are. The Golden Rule still applies — comply and you will probably walk away unharmed. The study also shows that children are actually less likely to be seriously injured or killed by police than older folks.

So when you clear out the cobwebs and fog of deceit, rumor and outright lies, when you filter that down to the essence, you have nothing left but the truth. Truth and honesty — that is what really matters.

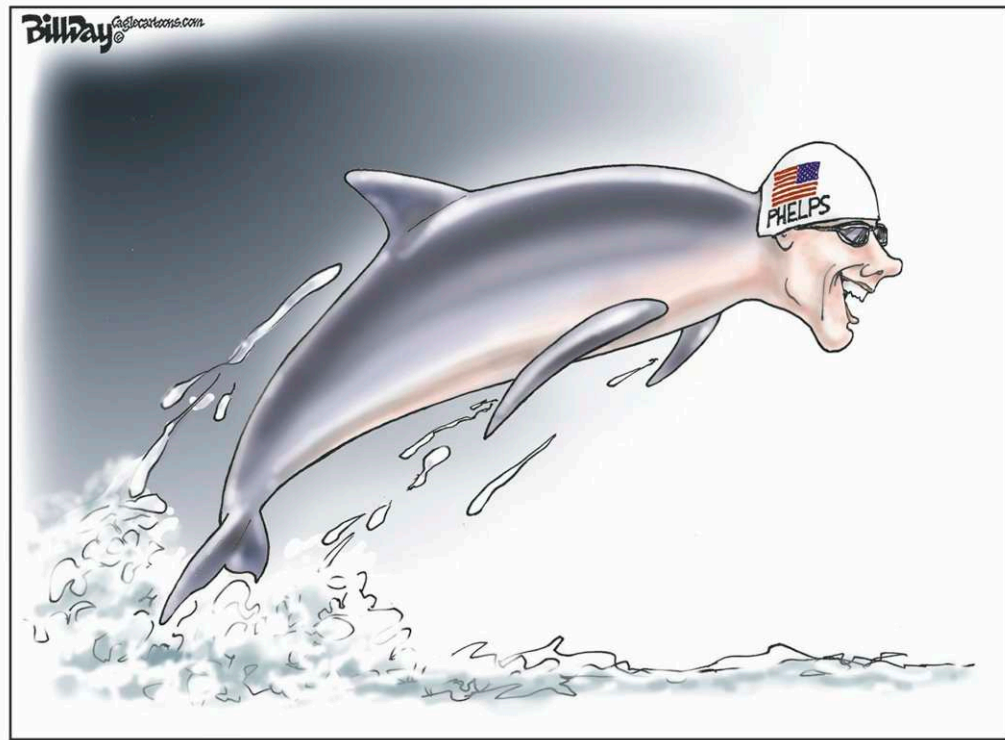
So can you handle the truth, BLM? OK, then who killed Freddie Gray? It was Freddie Gray.

David Burns  
Pendleton

## LETTERS POLICY

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

## OTHER VIEWS



## The Olympics make a grown man cry

Somewhere between the Zika stories, the doping stories and the stories about what a fetid, toxic swamp Rio really is, I got the message: I was supposed to feel cynical about these Olympics, the way we feel cynical about pretty much everything these days.

I was supposed to marvel at our talent for making messes, cutting corners, evading responsibility, procrastinating. Rio was a testament to that, both as the host of the games and as a sublime, wretched theater of humanity. All the promises we fail to keep, all the plans that go awry: They were and would be on vivid display. I was supposed to shake my head in disgust. Sigh in frustration.

Instead I cried, and I mean good tears. It was Monday morning, and I was telling someone what he'd missed on Sunday night: how American swimmer Michael Phelps defied age and his own stabs at self-destruction to swim toward yet another gold, in a men's relay.

How American gymnast Simone Biles, in the team qualifying round, responded to the gaudy expectations for her not by crumbling but by meeting, even surpassing, every one of them.

And then there was that tiny wisp of a Brazilian girl — 4-foot-4, 16 years old — who floated onto the balance beam, whirled the length of it and turned in a near perfect routine that no one expected. The roar from her hometown crowd was so loud, so true, that I'm certain it crossed time zones. I bet it traversed the stratosphere. No lottery winner, no matter the purse, has ever matched the glow of elation on her face.

I hadn't even reached the part about the British gymnast who tumbled onto her head, stood up dazed and kept on going when I myself had to stop, because I was suddenly so choked up that I couldn't get another word out.

Don't tell me what's wrong with the Olympics. Let me tell you what's right with them.

In a world rife with failure and bitter compromise, they're dedicated to dreaming and to the proposition that limits are entirely negotiable, because they reflect only what has been done to date and not what's doable in time.

They make the case that part of being fully alive is pushing yourself as far as you can go. Every Olympic record, every personal best and every unlikely comeback is an individual achievement, yes, but it's also a universal example and metaphor.



FRANK BRUNI  
Comment

The swimmer Dana Vollmer, a gold medalist in 2012, stopped training, became a mother and attended to her newborn. But the pool still beckoned, and last weekend, just 17 months after giving birth, she won a silver and a bronze in Rio. Good for her. Good for all women who don't want to obey some timeline that they never signed on to or stay in a box of someone else's construction.

These champions usually aren't children of extreme privilege. Biles was separated from her mother, who battled drug and alcohol addiction, at an early age. Others had worse odds and more daunting setbacks.

But they had a drive more powerful than that. They swapped resentment for goals. And they worked. By God, did they work. We tend to marvel at their freakish gifts, but we should marvel even more at their freakish devotion. That's what made the difference.

They invested hour upon hour, day after day. They sacrificed idle time and other pursuits. They honed a confidence that eludes most of us and summoned a poise that we can only imagine.

They took risks, big ones.

And they pressed on, because there was this thing that they wanted so very, very badly and the only way to know if they could get it was to put everything on the line.

I'm no naif. I know that there's another, darker side to this — that some of them are overly preoccupied with fame, with riches. At least they're earning it.

I know that there are flaws in the system, even corruption. I'm reading and I'm hearing plenty about that, about the inane remarks that NBC's commentators have made, and about the excessive commercial breaks that the network builds into the prime-time telecast. A certain crassness and greed have taken over. It's true.

But I fear that with the Olympics, as with so much else, we've let the language of complaint supplant the language of wonder, and there's wonder aplenty here.

Just watch Phelps kick or Biles vault heavenward, a force of will seemingly bound for the stars. Just think about what it means to aim that high, commit that much and invite the eyes of the world to see it all come together or all fall apart.

If that doesn't put a lump in your throat and a tear in your eye, you're made of stone.

Frank Bruni has been an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times since June 2011.

## OTHER VIEWS

# Legalize at the federal level

The (Boulder, Colo.) Daily Camera,

Colorado's now yearslong experiment with legal medical and recreational cannabis markets has been mostly positive and fascinating, and yet the federal government has been slow to rethink its decades-long prohibitionist position.

We hope the Obama administration takes advantage of its historic opportunity to end or take steps toward dismantling the destructive war on pot. What an irony it would be if Obama, who has openly admitted to pot use in his early years, and who has shown great tolerance toward local legalization laws, left office without having moved the nation away from the antiquated reefer-madness enforcement of past presidencies.

The problem appears to be entrenchment at the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, which missed the July 1 deadline it set for itself to reach a determination on whether to reclassify marijuana from its current — laughable — position as a Schedule I substance. Like heroin, the classification is reserved for the most dangerous drugs with which the DEA concerns itself.

Certainly the issues are complex. But few of the social-ills predictions for Colorado and the small handful of state and local jurisdictions that allow recreational sales, as well as the many that allow medical marijuana, have come to pass. In June, for example, data from the state's Healthy Kids Colorado Survey showed that marijuana use among high school students has not increased and tracks the national average.

Meanwhile, families trust medical

marijuana to help children with seizures and other ailments. Patients with serious conditions seek medical marijuana for a range of treatments. They do so largely without significant scientific study to guide them.

Both medical and recreational markets struggle with the fact that the federal definition of marijuana continues to block law-abiding dispensary owners from access to banks, creating a largely cash-only business model that invites risk and related security expense.

The businesses also face enormous tax penalties and layer upon layer of regulatory hurdles few other legal businesses would tolerate.

In the absence of sensible national rules, Colorado also faces tensions when it comes to regulating medical marijuana patients who opt to grow their own, as we saw last month when state regulators took action against four doctors for recommending excessive numbers of plants to patients. If marijuana were legal, such problems would wither away.

We get it that ending marijuana prohibition would be difficult. Back in 2012, when Colorado voters were asking themselves whether to support Amendment 64, we urged them to vote against it for reasons specific to the amendment itself and yet also called for an end to prohibition at the federal level, which we considered the more appropriate approach.

Perhaps more debate is needed before the feds can get behind full-scale legalization. But without the kind of scientific research that prohibition shackles, it is difficult to see how that debate could be well-informed.

The DEA should step up and look past its ridiculous hard-line approach.