

EAST OREGONIAN
Founded October 16, 1875

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OUR VIEW

From current event to history

The tragic events of September 11, 2001, happened 15 years ago. That means the event is now closer to the era of the Berlin Wall than to present day.

9/11 — the defining moment of today's world order — is moving from a current event into the realm of history. That's the neighborhood of not just the USSR, but the assassinations of the 1960s and the bombing of Pearl Harbor — dates that now live in infamy, but also textbooks and yellowed newspaper pages.

Many have never forgotten 9/11, but a growing number of Americans never even knew it. Current high school students were not alive when the towers fell. They did not huddle in offices or dorm rooms or the Round-Up Grounds to watch the incomprehensible footage on television. They did not call their wives and husbands, mothers and fathers and sons and daughters, to cry onto shoulders and through landline telephones.

They never knew the 3,000 people who were lost that day. They did not watch the entire foundation of the world disappear in explosions and columns of dust. They did not have the seething anger, the desire for vengeance, the foreboding sense that a world of warfare was on the

horizon and America was no longer invincible.

Even the peace-loving poet Leonard Cohen wrote and sang soon after the towers fell: "Did you go crazy/or did you report/on that day/ they wounded New York?"

The legacy of September

11 — the destruction of the Twin Towers, the Pentagon crash and Flight 93 — has become muddled by the fog of two wars, further disintegration of peace in the Middle East, the current refugee crisis and an inability to stabilize the world. Our immediate sense of foreboding was right in tune. But time has stripped us of the seething anger, and it has been replaced instead by growing

apathy and isolationism.

There is no sense in mourning the passage of time. The hand-wringing required to do so is better spent on the wash.

But we can study history in order to avoid repeating the same mistakes. The attacks exposed deep fissures in the world that two presidents have failed to heal, as have any number of world and religious leaders. As 9/11 becomes history, we have more to learn from our response — both as people and as nations — than we do from the terrible events of that day.

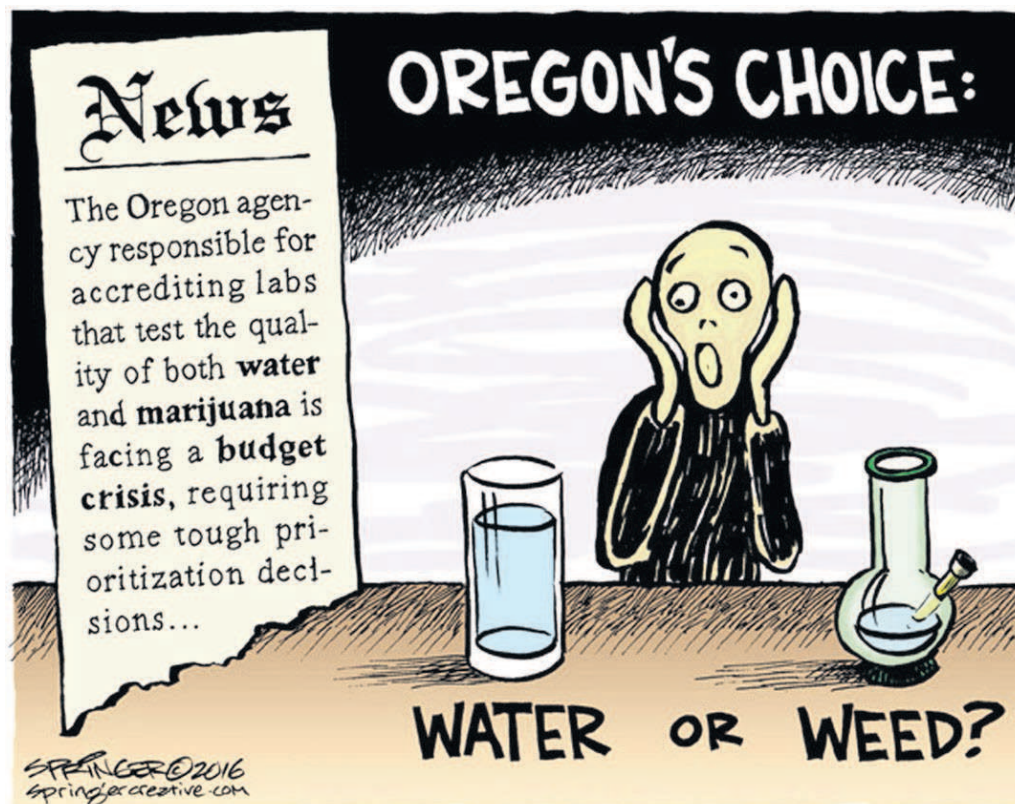
Many have never forgotten 9/11, but a growing number of Americans never even knew it.



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LETTERS POLICY

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OTHER VIEWS

Time for a realignment

There's a good chance many of you will be switching political parties over the next 15 years. You may be a corporate executive who's voted rock-solid Republican for decades, but you may be a consistent Democrat by 2024. You may be an African-American community activist in Cleveland, but don't be surprised if you someday call the Republican Party home.

The fact is that political parties can swap constituencies in unexpected and dramatic ways. Over American history there's been a general pattern: a period of party stability; then some new issue comes to the fore that divides the country in new ways; old party coalitions fall apart and new ones emerge.

African-Americans were once Republican, but the Great Depression brought economics to the fore and FDR lured them the other way. New England professionals were once Republican, too, but the rise of Barry Goldwater-Ronald Reagan Sun Belt conservatism turned them Democratic.

We seem to be at one of those transformational moments now. Something bigger is afoot this year than the relative deficiencies of Trump and Clinton.

In the first place, many of the existing partisan mentalities are dying out. This is the last presidential election in which two baby boomers will be running against each other. In the years ahead, politics will no longer be defined by the hidden animosities of the Vietnam era, by the sexual revolution/culture war issues of the 1970s.

Future candidates will not be nostalgic for some white America of ancient memory or the union-heavy labor markets of the 1950s. They're not going to be fired up by the "paradise lost" hot buttons that excite the old guys who watch Fox News.

Politics is catching up to social reality. The crucial social divide today is between those who feel the core trends of the global, information-age economy as tailwinds at their backs and those who feel them as headwinds in their face.

That is to say, the most important social divide today is between a well-educated America that is marked by economic openness, traditional family structures, high social capital and high trust in institutions, and a less-educated America that is marked by economic insecurity, anarchic family structures, fraying community bonds, and a pervasive sense of betrayal and distrust.

These two groups live in entirely different universes. Right now each party has a foot in each universe, but those coalitions won't last. Before too long the politics will break down into openness versus closedness, dynamism versus stability, what Ronald Brownstein of The Atlantic described in 2012 as the Coalition of Transformation versus the



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

Coalition of Restoration.

The Republican Party is now a coalition of globalization-loving business executives and globalization-hating white workers. That's untenable. At its molten core, the Republican Party has become the party of the dispossessed, not the party of cosmopolitan business. The blunderers at the Chamber of Commerce and the Business Roundtable bet all their chips on the GOP at the exact instant it stopped being their party.

Now imagine a Republican Party after Donald Trump, led by a younger candidate without his bigotry and culture war tropes. That party will begin to attract disaffected Sanders people who detest the Trans-Pacific Partnership and possibly some minority voters highly suspicious of the political elite.

Something bigger is afoot this year than the relative deficiencies of presidential candidates Donald Trump and Hillary Clinton.

The Democratic Party is a coalition of the upscale urban professionals who make up the ruling class and less-affluent members of minorities who feel betrayed by it. That's untenable, too. At its molten core the Democratic Party is the party of the coastal professional class, the 2016 presidential ticket of Yale Law and Harvard Law. It's possible that this year the Democrats

will carry every state that touches ocean.

Just as the Trump GOP is crushing the Chamber GOP, the Clinton Democrats will eventually repel the Sanders Democrats. Their economic interests are just different. Moreover, their levels of social trust are vastly different.

We don't normally think that politics is divided along trust lines. But this year we're seeing huge chasms depending upon how much trust you feel toward your neighbors and your national institutions. Disaffected low-trust millennials see things differently than the Hollywood, tech, media and academic professionals who actually run the party.

This sort of divide is being replicated all around the world. The distinctly American feature is race. If the Republicans can drop the racial wedges — which admittedly may be a big ask — and become more the party designed to succor those who are disaffected from the globalizing information age, then it might win over some minority voters, and the existing party alignments will unravel in short order.

Polls suggest the Democrats will win among college-educated voters. Republicans will win among whites without a college degree.

The social, mental and emotional gap between those two groups is getting wider and wider. That's the future of American politics. Republicans are town. Democrats are gown. Could get ugly.

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

YOUR VIEWS



Contributed photo

Can Pendleton residents fill potholes for tax credits?

For the past nine months there has been a depression (5 feet by 3 feet by 8 inches deep) at the corner of Court Avenue and 23rd Street in Pendleton (Safeway/Wal-Mart area).

I know my high taxes go for various studies, but you would think some might go to downtown streets.

My question is: If I pay for filling this, can I subtract it from my taxes?

John Borgerson
Pendleton

Pendleton's costly firehall

The new fire house is now up to \$10 million. Our city council and fire chief are fine with this — are you?

Not two months ago the fire chief Mike Ciraulo was against the fire station being at the old St. Anthony's due to response time. Now the chief can't stop spending. Oh, he forgot to mention the extra bay area for the new vintage fire truck to look at.

People's worst fears will come true when an emergency happens and no one shows up, or at least 30 seconds late, I should say. If your child is choking, or a loved one is having a heart attack, or maybe it's just your house burning down, don't worry — we will have a new fire house with all new equipment. You just need to be patient because for only \$10 million you will have to wait longer for emergency services.

If that don't sound right to you it is because it's not. When seconds count, comfort and luxury are more important than response time, it seems ... I won't even get into the financial burden that will be solely put on the backs of taxpayers again. A modest firehouse in a secure location

is the only way to be safe and not gouge the taxpayers. They will build a new fire station no matter what; it will be nice no matter what. They will get new equipment no matter what. If built at the right location, with a design more fitting for Pendleton, and knowing when and how to buy new equipment, a new fire station would have better response time and also cut the price tag in half.

To anyone who has been put in an emergency situation or has needed the emergency services, you know what a yes vote for this new fire house will mean for Pendleton. For those of you who have not been in an emergency situation, do you really want to find out how long 30 seconds really is? This is one city project where you will get less for more.

Chris Hallos
Pendleton

Awash in money and success, brighter times are ahead

A rescue program for the Parks Department playgrounds is taking shape. From a totally unreliable source deep within city hall comes this startling revelation: With

the successful completion of the Main Street statue program, it's rumored that the current president of the Arts Commission will be asked by the new administration to assume command of the Parks Commission.

Evidently, with the Arts Commission being flush with cash, rumor has it that they have turned their attention to a repair and maintenance program for the clock in the tower at the Umatilla County Courthouse, allowing the county to divert more resources to the city of Hermiston in support of the EOTEC center and the construction of the new rodeo arena.

In another prudent move, an espresso bar will be added to the new fire station and all personnel will receive barista training to supplement the cooking skills that firemen are famous for. You'd appreciate this move if you had to wrestle an oversized emergency vehicle around that rather small Starbucks parking lot!

On another front, it looks like the UAV program is starting to bear fruit, and the street lights on Main Street have finally been repaired just in time for Round-Up. Brighter times ahead!

Rick Rohde
Pendleton