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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the remarkable network of volunteers who have made the Round-Up work each and every year for more than a century.

It's kind of incredible when you think about it. For generations, individuals and families have given hours and hours and hours to the cause, with little remuneration other than the knowledge that they are helping thousands of people learn Pendleton is a great place to be.



Both Happy Canyon and Round-Up directors spend every waking hour on their feet this week. And they've sacrificed their time at countless meetings and work parties all year long.

Volunteers have painted signs, mopped floors, done complicated electrical work and driven clear across the West to promote Pendleton. Members of service clubs

are spending a few hours — during the most exciting time to be in Pendleton — cooking burgers or pouring beers. Pendleton teachers, gifted with a week off school, are spending long days serving hot dogs and raising money for the school's sports teams and extracurricular clubs. Generations of families have perfected the same parts in a night variety show that goes as far back as they can trace their bloodlines. Pendleton residents buy tickets, open their homes to countless friends and relatives, and sing and dance and whoop and holler — all in the name of a good time.

They are the reason we have a hat to tip in the first place.

Yet we must administer a harsh kick in the pants to the Main Street Cowboys for allowing blatant racist garbage to be sold downtown, sully the reputation of their organization, the city of Pendleton and the Round-Up.

The vendor is selling plenty of radical political items, including versions of the Confederate flag. And for those who lack all subtlety, there are Confederate flags for sale with "redneck" emblazoned on them — as if you didn't already know.

After multiple complaints, the Main Street Cowboys doubled down on the nastiness and division, festooning one of their golf carts with the merchandise and driving it up and down the street.

That flag, first flown in 1861 by the Confederate army during war against the United States, is a mockery of what this country stands for. It is part of our nation's history, as are Klu Klux Klan hoods, the Dawes Act and signs declaring "Whites Only." None of which should be celebrated in front of a children's museum, in sight of music and magic shows geared to families.

But it's not just anti-American, racist memorabilia on display. The booth also has all kinds of politically motivated flags — but none in support of Black Lives Matter. That's because the owners of the shop said "only black people destroy their own neighborhoods" and compared the organization to the Islamic State.

There's nothing illegal about selling the flags and the couple has every right to display and hawk them online and in their store. But Pendleton and the Main Street Cowboys have every right — and the obligation — to say they aren't appropriate at a free, supposedly family-friendly festival.

You'd think the Round-Up and the city of Pendleton would have something to say about it, since the presence of the high-flying symbol of hate reflects poorly on them, too.

The Main Street Cowboys are old white men who have seen their numbers decline precipitously in recent years. Where the Round-Up and Happy Canyon have adapted and re-energized, expanding the Pendleton experience, the Cowboys have failed.

"We're dying off and there's nobody to replace us," member Paul Gadaire told this newspaper last year.

There's little wonder why.

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.



LETTERS POLICY

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OTHER VIEWS

How Trump can win

Like a star-crossed baseball team trying to close out a pennant, Hillary Clinton holds an advantage in the race for president that feels real yet not at all reassuring — for her partisans or for Trump fearers worldwide. "She just has to hang on" seems like the dominant emotion among her backers, and for that matter among her staff, who handled her ground zero meltdown like a front office desperately trying to minimize the seriousness of a star pitcher's injury. "Just a bruise ... OK, a muscle pull ... we just took him out as a precautionary measure ... he'll make his next start ... OK, fine, he's on the disabled list."



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

Unlike the 1978 Red Sox or the 1951 Dodgers, Clinton is still a good bet to hang on.

But last month, amid the Khan affair, it seemed as if Trump might simply plunge permanently into McGovern-Goldwater territory, leaving the actual election as a mere formality. Instead he has stayed alive, closing back to within a few points in the polling average. His odds are still poor, in the most plausible scenarios he loses — but he still has a path, and here's what he needs to walk it.

First, Trump wants this to stay a four-way race. In national polling, his ceiling is close to Hillary's floor — he peaks in the low 40s, she peaks close to 50 percent. This suggests that there are more true #NeverTrump than #NeverHillary voters, and that a section of voters (especially millennials) have rejected him pre-emptively but are still considering non-Clinton options. In which case not only Jill Stein but also probably Gary Johnson are likely to take more votes from Clinton than from Trump.

If they drop — as third party candidates tend to do — toward statistical insignificance, then Trump will need to win over a lot of undecideds who plainly don't want to vote for him. But this is a weird year, and they may not drop. If Johnson can equal John Anderson in 1980 and Stein can equal Ralph Nader's fateful 2000 run (and they're polling at roughly those levels today), then you can imagine a final line like Trump 44, Clinton 43.5, Johnson 7, Stein 3 — the stuff of Democratic nightmares, but for the Trump campaign a still possible dream.

Second, Trump needs to turn out a lot of people (working-class whites, in particular) who rarely or almost never vote. In the primary campaign, Trump didn't usually outperform his polls, and there was little evidence of "Shy Trumpers" telling pollsters they were for Rubio or Cruz and then pulling the lever for Trump in secret.

But pollsters can never be certain about the composition of the electorate, and a November election throws up fewer obstacles to the casual voter than a primary campaign. (No caucusing, no party-registration requirements, everybody knows when Election Day is, etc.) Past celebrity candidates like Jesse Ventura and Arnold Schwarzenegger probably benefited from disaffected, usually apolitical voters' coming out for them, and there's no reason to assume it couldn't happen to some extent for Trump.

Here it's noteworthy that the best poll for Trump in this cycle, the USC Dornsife/Los Angeles Times daily tracking poll, includes a larger sample of people who didn't cast a ballot in 2012 but plan to vote in 2016 — and Trump is cleaning up with them. He's not cleaning up in the poll as a whole, but he does

often lead it, and when he does, his leads are in roughly the same territory as the four-way scenario just sketched above: Trump 44, Clinton 43; Trump 45, Clinton 42 ...

Which points to the third key to a Trump victory: He needs Clinton's potential support to be depressed, which means he needs outside events to raise constant doubts about her leadership, and beyond that about the entire political establishment that she embodies. Earlier this year I

called Trump's ideal event a "gray swan," as opposed to a black one — meaning that he wants a constant drippage of stuff that makes both Clinton and the larger elite seem clueless, feckless or corrupt, but not the kind of huge crisis that would change the basic shape of the campaign or make him seem like an untenable risk.

The weeks before the Republican convention were filled with gray swans — terror attacks in Europe, cop killings here at home, FBI Director James Comey's rebuke of the Democratic nominee — and

not surprisingly they were weeks when Trump sometimes led the polls (by, again, 44-43 or 43-42).

There have been fewer such events since, but Clinton's hidden-then-acknowledged pneumonia is a perfect example of what Trump needs. It's not a black swan, not a devastating illness that would force the Democrats to turn to the more electable Joe Biden. Instead, it just feeds into two of Trump's narratives: alpha-male power versus actual physical weakness (people with pneumonia are even more low-energy than Jeb Bush, after all), and bold outsider truth-telling versus reflexive elite cover-up.

We'll see how the national polls look when the pneumonia incident is baked in. But I wouldn't be shocked to see a few tied at, say, 43-43.

Now let me turn the screw a little further. The Electoral College is an unusual system, and Trump is an unusual candidate. He's likely to underperform among normal Republicans in many red states, where the white working class is already very Republican, by losing white suburban professionals who voted for John McCain and Mitt Romney. But he might overperform in Rust Belt states where the white working class is still a residually liberal swing vote, and where there are a lot of disaffected independents who sat out 2012. (That's probably how you can have state polls showing strikingly close races in Republican strongholds like Georgia and Arizona, even though Trump is quite competitive in swing states like Ohio.)

This unusual combination — underperforming but still probably winning Republican states, possibly overperforming in purple states — suggests a true black swan endgame: Not Trump 44, Clinton 43, but Clinton 45, Trump 43 ... except that Trump, with his Rust Belt strength, loses a lot of reliable deep-red votes he doesn't need and turns out just enough nonvoters in a few key swing states to take the Electoral College, 270-268.

No, it's not likely. No, don't freak out. But for this race to end with a huge Electoral College crisis is the kind of outcome everything that's happened in 2016 almost — almost — leads one to expect.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009.

YOUR VIEWS

Confederate flag is a symbol of hate and oppression

Someone is displaying Confederate flags on Pendleton's Main Street. Does this matter? Slavery is America's original sin, and the treatment of other minority groups by this country has been equally atrocious. The Confederate flag is a potent symbol of this history, as well as white supremacy and advocacy for suppression — and worse — of all minorities.

So now it is Round-Up week, a time we celebrate for hospitality, inclusiveness and community. And yet when we walk on Main Street we are compelled to see this deeply offensive symbol of hate.

So yes, this display of hate does matter, a great deal.

The vendors have cited their right of free speech to support their display and sale of

Confederate flags. And they are, of course, correct. But this is the right answer to the wrong question.

The vendor's hosts — in this case the city of Pendleton and the nonpartisan and nonprofit Main Street Cowboys — have a responsibility to assure that their vendors do not intimidate the citizens and guests of this fine community.

So because I don't support hate, I will not buy a flag.

And because I care about Pendleton and our guests, I respectfully request that the Main Street Cowboys consider having their vendor take down their display of this hateful symbol. The 'Greatest Free Show in the West' is better that the Confederate flag and should not facilitate its display on Main Street.

Andrew Picken
Pendleton