

Quick takes

Milton-Freewater officer arrested for assault

This cop is one of the nicest cops I know of. He goes out of his way to make a difference.

— Carson Chester

We'd have far fewer cases in this country if other agencies held their own accountable as well.

— J.J. Bell-Bronson

Hermiston considers building bigger, new schools

No way I will vote for any more school bonds. I can hardly pay my property taxes now. There is a limit as to what the average person can afford.

— Joyce Anderson

With more than 300 new students enrolled, what do you all suggest be done? Rocky Heights is 53 years old, unsecured campus. The school is severely overcrowded even with the modulars.

— Judy Hartley

They need to find a different revenue for funding. No more tax increases for homeowners or small business.

— Debbie Pettey

This is the problem with today's society. Everybody wants more for our children yet anytime someone suggests an increase in taxes everyone is suddenly against it.

— Maegan Bennett

No more schools, period.

— Justin Clark

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

Past elections have also been messy

By ALLEN BEST
Writers on the Range

As we stagger through this year's uninspiring presidential campaign, it might help to look back at the election of 1856, when, for the first time, the West yielded a presidential candidate. His name was John Charles Frémont, and he was a big name in his day. He still is: From Colorado to California, we have rivers and mountains named Fremont as well as towns, counties, parks and streets.

Besides being famous, he was daring, and not unlike today's presidential candidates, deeply flawed.

Frémont led four expeditions to the West in the 1840s. He had married well, partnering with Jessie Benton, the daughter of Missouri Sen. Thomas Hart Benton, who ballyhooed westward expansion. Boosted by his father-in-law's influence, Frémont in 1842 launched his first expedition with mountain man Kit Carson as a guide. It was a partnership based on ambition: Carson needed Frémont to make him famous, a favor he returned by keeping the tenderfoot mostly out of trouble as they explored the region.

In a 2001 book called *A Newer World*, the superb mountaineering author Michael Roberts chronicled the lives of the two men, principally through the lens of these expeditions. Roberts says he admires Kit Carson, but his praise for Frémont is more reserved. You understand why after you've read Roberts' account of a climb in what is now Wyoming — a mountain that Frémont thought was the highest peak in the Wind River Range. Fremont refused to share the glory of that first ascent with Carson; instead, he permitted a lesser light of the expedition, Charles Preuss, to accompany him to the top.

And yet Frémont and Carson crossed the continent together repeatedly. A pivotal year

was 1846. U.S. troops were dispatched to defeat Mexico and, in the process, secure the Southwest for the expanding American empire. Ulysses Grant, then a lieutenant serving in the Mexican-American War, described that conflict late in his life as "one of the most unjust ever waged by a stronger against a weaker nation."

But while Grant dodged bullets in Mexico, Frémont defied orders and lingered in California. Finally, at Los Angeles, he got in on the conquest. The Mexicans had no wall to protect them against Northern invaders. There's a shameful asterisk in the tale of Frémont's bold ambitions for American's manifest destiny. The Americans seized three Mexicans near San Francisco Bay. None of them were fighters; they just happened to live there. Kit Carson inquired as to what should be done with them.

"I have no use for prisoners," Frémont said, according to first-hand accounts. "Do your duty."

Carson, who had recently wed his beloved Josefa Jaramillo, a Mexican resident of Taos, followed orders and shot the three Mexicans. Later, in the 1856 presidential election, the executions became an issue. Frémont, according to Roberts' account, disavowed any part in the killings.

The worst was yet to come. Frémont's father-in-law had in mind a railroad that would cross the West on the 38th parallel. So Frémont set out in the winter of 1848 to scout the route.

His timing could not have been worse. The route was bewildering — across the steepest, most rugged ranges in the Rocky Mountains, now in today's Colorado. After crossing the Sangre de Cristos, Frémont and his men then faced the huge San Juans.

They literally got in over their heads in snow.

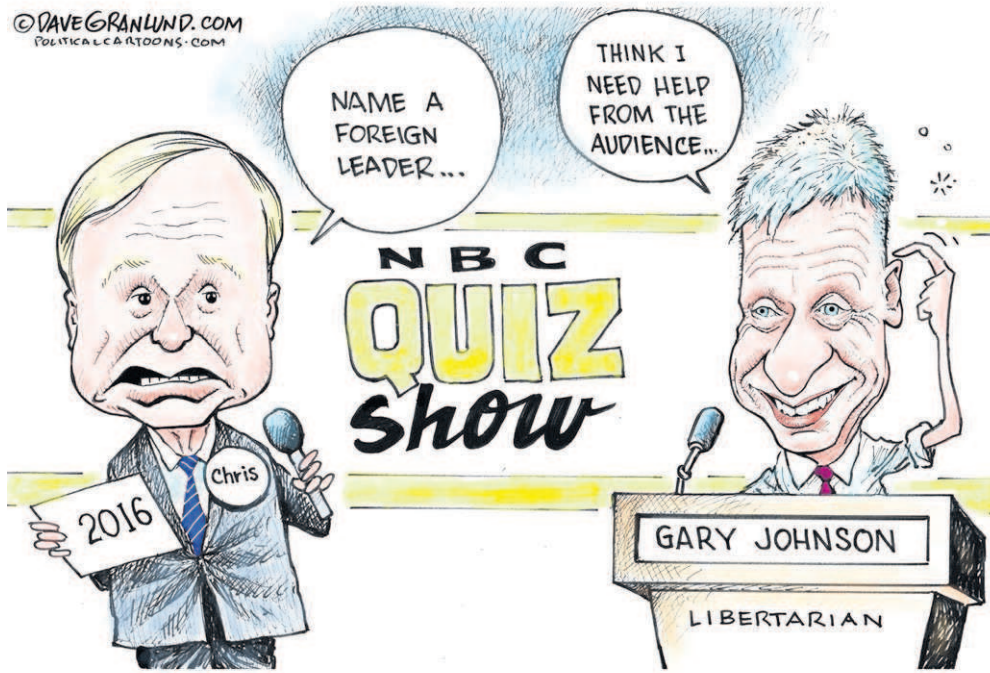
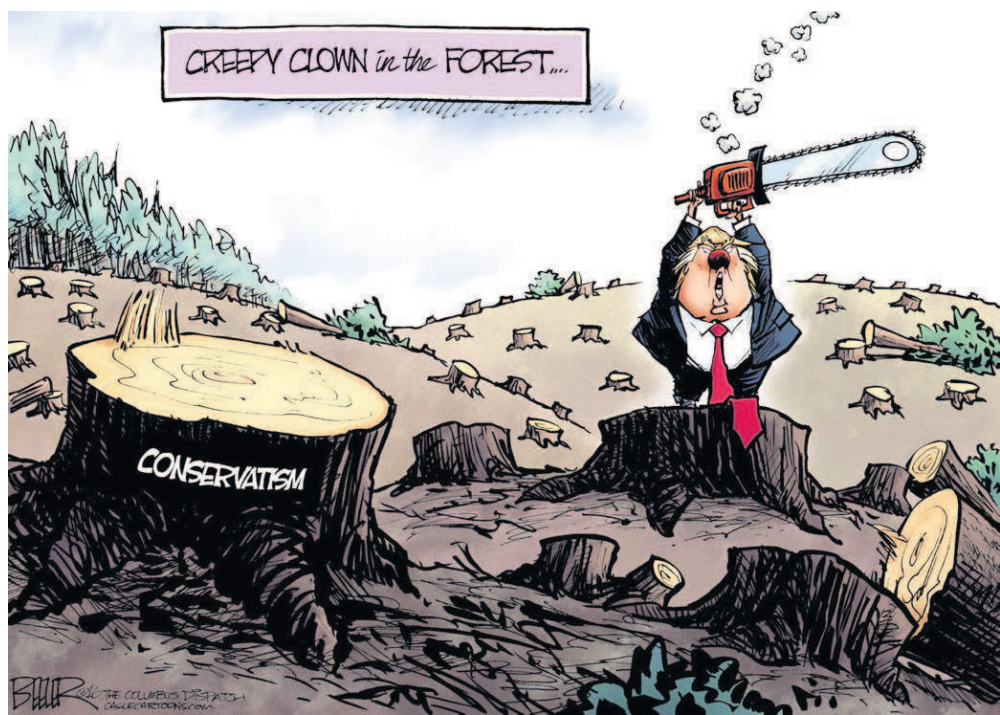
Reading Roberts' book, the word "idiot" comes to mind. Why didn't Frémont's men mutiny instead of traveling ever deeper into the range, which climbs above 12,000 feet? When Frémont finally turned back, his men were left to crawl, snowblind and starving, driven first to eat mules and then each other. Ten of them died. But once again, Frémont ducked responsibility. He blamed his guide, the fur trapper "Old" Bill Williams. Unlike Harry Truman, the buck never stopped with Frémont.

The election of 1856 was even more cruel and reckless than this one.

Yet Frémont, by then living in San Francisco, became the Republican Party's first presidential candidate. He faced a former president, Millard Fillmore of the Know Nothings, a party that opposed the immigration of people like my relatives, Germans dodging the draft in Prussia who came to America to clear forests in Illinois, and Catholics, of any origin. The eventual winner of the presidency was James Buchanan, who favored expanding slavery into the West. Frémont of the checkered past condemned the expansion of slavery, and because of that principled stand, lost the election.

Frémont was an egotist, and he was reckless with other people's lives. But here's what perplexes me: From my safe perch 160 years later, I think I might have voted for the despicable scoundrel. If you see parallels to this year's election, here's something to keep in mind. Four years later, we got Abraham Lincoln.

Allen Best is a contributor to *Writers on the Range*, the opinion service of *High Country News*.



Local government shouldn't compete with private business

By GALE MARSHALL

Should the city of Pendleton compete against established private business within the city of Pendleton? If so, should the city have in place in advance, policies or guidelines that regulate it so it does not unfairly compete with its own citizens and their private businesses?

I purchased 24 acres of farm land in 1978 on the west end of Pendleton near the river and the freeway. I put it into the industrial zone. In 1983, the state of Oregon decided to close the state hospital. Many civic leaders, Mayor Joe McLaughlin and a liaison committee went into action to have that land become industrial development land for the city. In 1985, the state deeded approximately 73 acres of that land for use by the city for manufacturing or industrial purposes.

Now, years later, all of that land has been deeded to private industry except what I call a "remnant" 8.58 acre parcel. The 1985 deed from the state said: "In the event that the grantee (city of Pendleton), its accessors or assigns, shall cease to use the parcel conveyed for such purposes, then the ownership of the parcel conveyed shall immediately revert to the state of Oregon."

Over the 40 years that I have paid county taxes on my adjacent industrial land, I have made costly improvements to it, such as for sewer, roads, power and fencing. From 2003 I made additional investments to accommodate the needs of transport companies so they could lease my land. I did my leases at fair market value as established by 13 years of my leasing to them.

In fall 2015, city staff entered into a lease agreement with one of my largest customers, Horizon Transport Inc., seven months before their lease with me expired. My land was leased at fair market value, which achieved for me a modest return on my investment.

The city undercut me by leasing

its 8.58 acre remnant parcel to my customer at below fair market value. This undermined my lease and ended my ability to renew my lease with Horizon Transport. I would like to know why the city council approved this lease, which I believe unfairly competed with local private enterprise. The lease permitted the city to compete directly with me in an unfair way.

Further, the city's lease with Queen Bee allows the company, a subsidiary of Horizon, to rent space to private parties to store RVs and cars. A parking lot like this on city property is not "incidental to industrial and manufacturing." Yet city staff and the city council took action to lease this land in this fashion anyway, for a purpose other than what

it agreed it would be doing with the state. I believe the 8.58 remnant parcel, and perhaps the whole remnant parcel, is now in danger of being lost back to the state under what is called the reverter clause in the deed.

I moved my family here 40 years ago. I liked the participating, pioneering spirit that Pendleton had to offer. I still like and enjoy living here. The fact is that I love this town. Like other merchants and taxpayers, I want to see Pendleton continue to have the reputation of being a fair and transparent city.

Right now, while a lot of good and prospective things are happening in Pendleton, the city council has the reputation of not being business friendly and deals like this is one reason why. The role of city government should be to make policy that encourages private industry, not compete directly with it. All you have to do is listen to the citizens on the street to find out. The transparency cannot be achieved without informing and listening to its citizens. Constructive citizens such as Mike Forrester have pointed this out, and it's true.

Gale Marshall lives in Pendleton.

The price of pain in the U.S.

Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

There is big money in pain, which is why the makers of prescription painkillers seem so interested in ensuring that doctors keep prescribing opioids despite an addiction crisis that has claimed 165,000 lives in the United States since 2000.

An investigation by The Associated Press and the Center for Public Integrity, published last week in the *Journal Sentinel* and other newspapers, showed that even as drug makers claim to be fighting the prescription drug epidemic, they are using a 50-state strategy and handing out millions of dollars in campaign donations to weaken or outright kill legislation to limit the use of drugs such as OxyContin, Vicodin and fentanyl.

The AP and the center found that between 2006 and 2015, Big Pharma spent more than \$880 million nationwide on lobbying and campaign contributions. That was far more than advocates for a crackdown on prescription drugs could spend; it dwarfed what the gun lobby doled out over the same period.

The findings mirror reporting since 2011 by the *Journal Sentinel's* John Fauber and MedPage Today, which found that money from drug makers was a pervasive influence.

The solution is for legislators and physicians to show courage in the face of these pressures.

Legislators and Congress should take appropriate action to ensure that the drugs are available to those who need them but aren't overprescribed. And physicians, knowing the risk, should be more reticent in prescribing these drugs.

There is plenty of evidence that doctors have been overprescribing.

Sales of prescription opioids rose fourfold from 1999 to 2010, the investigation found. Purdue Pharma, which makes OxyContin, had about \$2.4 billion in sales from opioids last year alone, AP and the center report. And, all the while, deaths by overdose rose.

Opioids undoubtedly have a place in a sensible medical landscape, especially for cancer patients or end-of-life care. But studies show little evidence that opioids are effective for treating routine chronic pain. One study cited by the AP and the center from a hospital system in Pennsylvania found that about 40 percent of chronic non-cancer pain patients who received opioids showed signs of addiction.

"You can create an awful lot of harm with seven days of opioid therapy," David Juurlink, a toxicology expert at the University of Toronto, told reporters. "You can send people down the pathway to addiction when they never would have been sent there otherwise."

Lawmakers and physicians need to confront this scourge.

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. Senators

Ron Wyden
Washington office:
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244

La Grande office:
541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley
Washington office:
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753

Pendleton office:
541-278-1129

U.S. Representative

Greg Walden
Washington office:
185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730

La Grande office:
541-624-2400

Governor

Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

Senator

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-423
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

Representatives

Greg Barreto, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-38
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.GregBarreto@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us