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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
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OUR VIEW

Umatilla school bond a wise investment

When the issue of school bonds come up, the general public is of two minds.

Yes, we need to have adequate facilities to educate our kids. No, we don't want to pay more taxes to get them.

Those thoughts are diametrically opposed. State funding for schools doesn't cover capital improvements. It hardly covers the day-to-day needs of our education system, but that's another issue.

School districts are left to convince their local

constituents to fund new buildings, major upgrades and other facilities.

The state has pitched in some help recently, offering matching bonds for qualifying districts, and voters in Milton-Freewater, Athena-Weston and Echo have taken advantage. While many vote no on new taxes as a matter of principal, it's difficult to leave millions of dollars sitting on the table when there are visible needs in local schools.

Umatilla voters now have the chance to get \$4 million of those

state dollars for themselves, and we suggest they take it.

The school district has put a \$10.5 million bond on the ballot, but that sticker shocker likely won't hit a pocketbook — the payments

will begin after the current bond comes off the books in 2023 and go until 2035.

The rate is about \$3.13 per \$1,000 in assessed value.

It's a longterm investment. But in a community like Umatilla, which has recently become very active in investing in its image, it's a smart

one. The school buildings need new roofs and HVAC systems (which will save operating costs), better security (which will give parents better peace of mind) and a little room to grow at McNary Heights.

Not every school bond gets an automatic thumbs up from us, and should be considered carefully. But the district has made great strides in providing a quality education for its students and should be able to do that educating in a safe and comfortable environment.

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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

The epidemic of worry

We've had a tutorial on worry this year. The election campaign isn't really about policy proposals, issue solutions or even hope. It's led by two candidates who arouse gargantuan anxieties, fear and hatred in their opponents.

As a result, some mental health therapists are reporting that three-quarters of their patients are mentioning significant election-related anxiety. An American Psychological Association study found that more than half of all Americans are very or somewhat stressed by this race.

Of course, there are good and bad forms of anxiety — the kind that warns you about legitimate dangers and the kind that spirals into dark and self-destructive thoughts.

In his book "Worrying," Francis O'Gorman notes how quickly the good kind of anxiety can slide into the dark kind. "Worry is circular," he writes. It may start with a concrete anxiety: Did I lock the back door? Is this headache a stroke? "And it has a nasty habit of taking off on its own, of getting out of hand, of spawning thoughts that are related to the original worry and which make it worse."

That's what's happening this year. Anxiety is coursing through American society. It has become its own destructive character on the national stage.

Worry alters the atmosphere of the mind. It shrinks your awareness of the present and your ability to enjoy what's around you right now. It cycles possible bad futures around in your head and forces you to live in dreadful future scenarios, 90 percent of which will never come true.

Pretty soon you are seeing the world through a dirty windshield. Worry dims every sunrise and amplifies mistrust. A mounting tide of anxiety makes people angrier about society and more darkly pessimistic about the possibility of changing it. Spiraling worry is the perverted underside of rationality.

This being modern polarized America, worry seems to come in two flavors.

Educated-class anxiety can often be characterized as a feeling overabundant of options without a core of convicting purpose. It's worth noting that rich countries are more anxious than poorer ones. According to the World Health Organization, 18.2 percent of Americans report chronic anxiety while only 3.3 percent of Nigerians do.

Today, when you hear affluent people express worry, it's usually related to the fear of missing out, and the dizziness of freedom. The affluent often feel besieged by busyness and plagued by a daily excess of choices. At the same time, there is a pervasive cosmic unease, the anxiety that they don't quite understand the meaning of life, or have not surrendered to some all-encompassing commitment



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

that would bring coherence and peace.

Many affluent people use money to buy privacy, and so cut themselves off from both the deep relationships that could give them purpose and the neighborly support systems that could hold them up if things go south.

This election has also presented members of the educated class with an awful possibility: that their pleasant

social strata may rest on unstable molten layers of anger, bigotry and instability. How could this guy Trump get even 40 percent of the votes? America may be not quite the country we thought it was.

Among the less educated, anxiety flows from and inflames a growing sense that the structures of society are built for the exploitation of people like themselves. Everything is rigged; the rulers are malevolent and corrupt.

It is a well-established fact that people who experience social exclusion have a tendency to slide toward superstitious and conspiratorial thinking. People who feel exploited by, and invisible to, those at the commanding heights of society are not going to worry if their candidate can't pass a fact-check test. They just want someone who can share their exclusion and give them a better story.

Anxiety changes people. We've seen a level of thuggery this election cycle that is without precedent in recent American history. Some of the anti-Trump demonstrators seem more interested in violence than politics. Some of the Trumpians are savage.

David French wrote a shocking essay for *National Review* describing the appalling online abuse he suffered because of his anti-Trump stance. His anonymous assailants Photoshopped pictures of his daughter's face in a gas chamber and left GIFs of grisly executions on his wife's blog.

Some of the things that have made us vulnerable to this wave of anxiety are not going away — the narratives of fear, conspiracy and the immobilizing stress. America's culture may be permanently changed for the worse.

But the answer to worry is the same as the answer to fear: direct action. If the next president starts enacting a slew of actual policies, then at least we can argue about concrete plans, rather than vague apocalyptic moods.

If you're worrying, you're spiraling into your own narcissistic pool. But concrete plans and actions thrust us into the daily fact of other people's lives. This campaign will soon be over, and governing, thank God, will soon return. Hakuna matata.

David Brooks is a columnist for the *New York Times*.



YOUR VIEWS

Outdoor school teaches important lessons

Oregon voters have a chance to get kids out of the techno world and into the out-of-doors, where they can become acquainted with the wonders of the nature. Measure 99 will provide a week of Outdoor School for every middle school student, giving them hands-on science education that will build life skills and inspire them to learn and recreate in the outdoors. This ballot measure will not require any new taxes, but will dedicate 4 percent of unallocated lottery dollars to a permanent, stable source of funding for Oregon Outdoor School.

Twenty years ago, 85 percent of Oregon school kids had the chance for some sort of Outdoor School experience. Due to funding cuts throughout the state, that number has dwindled to 45-50 percent.

Hermiston Schools remain a success story. Some kids in that district have never been outside of the town. In fact, one teacher said that she often has kids ask, "What's in the mountains?" Thanks to dedicated teachers, sponsors and volunteers, these students spend three days in the Umatilla National Forest, observing and learning about soils, birds of prey, water conservation, wildlife, etc. It gives them a well-rounded education, and a chance to experiences things that are not available in a classroom setting. Per one student, "hands-on experiences help you to remember ideas later."

But, it's not all strictly scientific field studies — there's archery, camping, hiking, wading in streams, etc. What's more, there are kids who struggle in the classroom but who actually shine in the outdoor learning environment.

Fostering deep connections with the natural environment is at the heart of Blue Mountain Land Trust's mission. Programs like Oregon Outdoor School inspire the next generation of conservationists, natural resource scientists, hunters and recreators, and lay the groundwork for lifelong appreciation of all that our Blue Mountains have to offer. We strongly support giving all Oregon middle school students the opportunity to see science come alive through fun, hands-on activities in nature.

**Linda Herbert, vice president and board member
Chair, education committee
Blue Mt. Land Trust
Walla Walla**

Wait, what has Clinton done?

Lately we've been hearing a great deal about Hillary Clinton's many accomplishments and high qualifications for the presidency. Could someone point out one or two "accomplishments" and "qualifications"? Just one of each, perhaps?

**John Kaufman
Pendleton**

Job protection is paramount

Every citizen should subscribe to the newsletter at www.numbersusa.com

This week a federal judge in Florida has stated that visa holders "can" replace American workers without an employer being responsible to the American employees. Visa workers are brought into the states to supposedly hold jobs that American workers will not hold. This is not true. The employer does not have to pay Social Security taxes, Medicare taxes, or even withhold federal and state income taxes. This is more of the open borders that Obama and the Clintons want. Do you really want open borders, which allows legal discrimination against American workers?

Your job could be next ... Trump for 2016.
**Patricia Maier
Hermiston**

Integrity, leadership lacking in both candidates

George Murdock's viewpoint on the divisiveness of this election (*East Oregonian*)

Sat./Sun. Oct. 22, 2016) is right on target, including the media's lack of competent attention to issues rather than the sideshow of both candidates. I agree with Mr. Murdock's call that it is time to wake up and choose or expect leaders that have the qualities of leadership balanced with a decent sense of ethics, morality and integrity.

Statesmanship is more important than a candidate's sense of entitlement, pettiness or self-interest. In my opinion, neither presidential candidate offers the needed leadership necessary to move America forward to be a great nation.

**Jim Kutcher
Milton-Freewater**

After the fight

He left the house, slamming the door, screaming out of the driveway, this morning's fight with his wife vibrating his psyche. The miles to work gave time to ponder. It was the first serious argument for the newlyweds. And intense. Then, suddenly, it hit him: He would have to go back home to her tonight. Something had to be done.

Just so, when this bitter election fight ends, we have to live together again. Who sends the flowers and candy?

**Don Reese
Echo**

Growing Umatilla needs top-notch schools

I am writing in support of the Umatilla School District bond measure on the November ballot. This bond will allow the district to make needed improvements at all three schools in Umatilla — McNary Elementary, Clara Brownell Middle School and Umatilla High School.

The city of Umatilla is located at the confluence of the Umatilla and Columbia rivers, and is rich in the history of Lewis and Clark as well as the tribes of the Umatilla, Walla Walla, and Cayuse Indians. Umatilla is a natural transportation hub, as it is located near the river, the railroad, and two interstate highways. While our economic base has primarily been agricultural in the past, we are seeing more diversity these days due, in part, to our proximity to transportation.

Educating students in this busy area is the job of the Umatilla School District. Our administration is proud of our district; our staff is working hard, our students are learning and our community gives us wonderful support. The school district's purpose is to provide our students with a top quality public education so that they may become successful, contributing citizens of the future. We couldn't do this without the support of the Umatilla community — from businesses to residents to volunteers, we rely on our community's support for many programs and projects throughout the year.

Now, the Umatilla community has the opportunity to again support our school district by voting yes for the upcoming school bond on the November ballot. The school district is asking for \$10.5 million to fund important capital improvements at all three district schools. If the bond passes, the district will receive an additional \$4 million from the state, for a total of \$14.5 million. This is a wonderful opportunity for our community to pay \$10.5 million, but receive \$14.5 million for district projects. We don't know if or when this chance will come up again from the state.

The proposed bond will NOT increase taxes for Umatilla citizens; the new bonds are estimated to continue the same tax rate of the current bonds, just longer.

We are very thankful for the ongoing support of the Umatilla community. I encourage the Umatilla community to vote YES on this school bond — to protect our students, to protect our educational investments and send a clear message that the Umatilla community is dedicated to quality education.

**Shelley Kennedy
Umatilla School District board member**

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

"Around our region, I hear the same stories from Oregonians — the new health care law is simply not affordable. ... There is a better way to fix our health care system. I support a plan that would fix this mess with real, patient-centered reform that would lower costs, not raise them and give consumers more control over their health care, not less."

— Rep. Greg Walden, on Republican health care platform, detailed at better.gov