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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

Tip of the hat to the city of Hermiston, which is sprucing itself up for the holiday season with a spruce tree.

The 32-foot evergreen is now temporarily — but hopefully firmly — implanted in Second Street near city hall, and will be the focal point the city's month-long Winter Festival.

That festival runs from Dec. 1 to Dec. 23, and includes live entertainment and light shows Thursday-Saturday evenings.

It's a great way to get people downtown to check out shops, mingle with neighbors and get into the holiday spirit.

The city has reached out to civic groups and individuals to pitch in with decorations and cheer, creating the from-the-ground-up kind of event Hermiston is known for.

Larry Davidson, a Hermiston man who previously lived in both Milton-Freewater and Pendleton, donated the tree. The man and tree who have roots in much of Umatilla County deserve a hat tip in their direction, too.

Now let it snow.



A tip of the hat to our local House Republicans, who this week were appointed to important positions in the Republican caucus.

In just his second term, Greg Barreto will be the second most important person in the House's minority party, backing up GOP leader Mike McLane.

In addition, Greg Smith, our other local representative in the House, was named head of the GOP budget committee. With local representatives holding vital roles in the session — albeit in

Oregon's currently powerless party — our region has a better chance of getting its issues heard, addressed and solved.

Good luck to both representatives in doing so. This session, where dollars will be few and responsibilities many, will be exceedingly difficult.

A tip of the hat to the Weston-McEwen TigerScots, winners of the state volleyball tournament earlier this month.

The team entered the tournament as the No. 5-seed, but beat three teams with better records on their way to the title. The girls only lost two sets at the tournament, both to No. 1 seed Culver in a 3-2 semifinal upset win.

The program has won the title three times since 2004, all under coach Shawn White, but this is the first for this group of girls, including all-tournament selections Sara von Borstel, Sarah Finifrock and Ali Schroeder, all seniors.



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

Before dismantling the ACA, a few words of caution

Minneapolis Star Tribune

The Affordable Care Act has been in the Republican Party's cross hairs since its 2010 birth. This week's election means that the party now has the political trifecta it needs to dismantle the law: Donald Trump will be in the White House, and the GOP controls the U.S. House and Senate.

That repealing some or all of the health-reform law is likely atop President-elect Trump's agenda does not excuse Minnesota

lawmakers from providing relief to consumers facing steep price hikes on the individual health insurance market for 2017. Gov. Mark Dayton has proposed a reasonable though costly \$313 million plan to substantially discount premiums. The lack of progress in setting a date for a special legislative session to enact this is reprehensible.

Minnesotans need to know now if help is coming for premiums due for Jan. 1 coverage.

The state aid issue must be settled swiftly, but sweeping post-election uncertainties mean a far more deliberative approach is critical in enacting other state-level changes. This week, the Minnesota Medical Association, the Minnesota Hospital Association and the Minnesota Council of Health Plans also urged a go-slow approach to react to what Congress and the new president will do.

Several reforms that have been prominently touted by Minnesota Republicans, who will likely control both state legislative chambers, don't address postelection concerns. There may not be a federal healthcare.gov marketplace to send Minnesotans to if

MNSure is shut down. The same problem holds true with a proposal to allow Minnesotans to access federal subsidies outside MNSure. There may not be any more federal subsidies for consumers — a regrettable reversal that would increase the uninsured rate.

Resurrecting Minnesota's former publicly-run high-risk insurance pool, which served high-cost patients denied insurance coverage, may not be so simple, either. Trump told the *Wall Street Journal* last week that he is open to keeping ACA protections for those with

pre-existing conditions. But if insurers still can't deny coverage, who would go into the high-risk pool? And how would this pool, or a similar but more workable "reinsurance" strategy, be paid for?

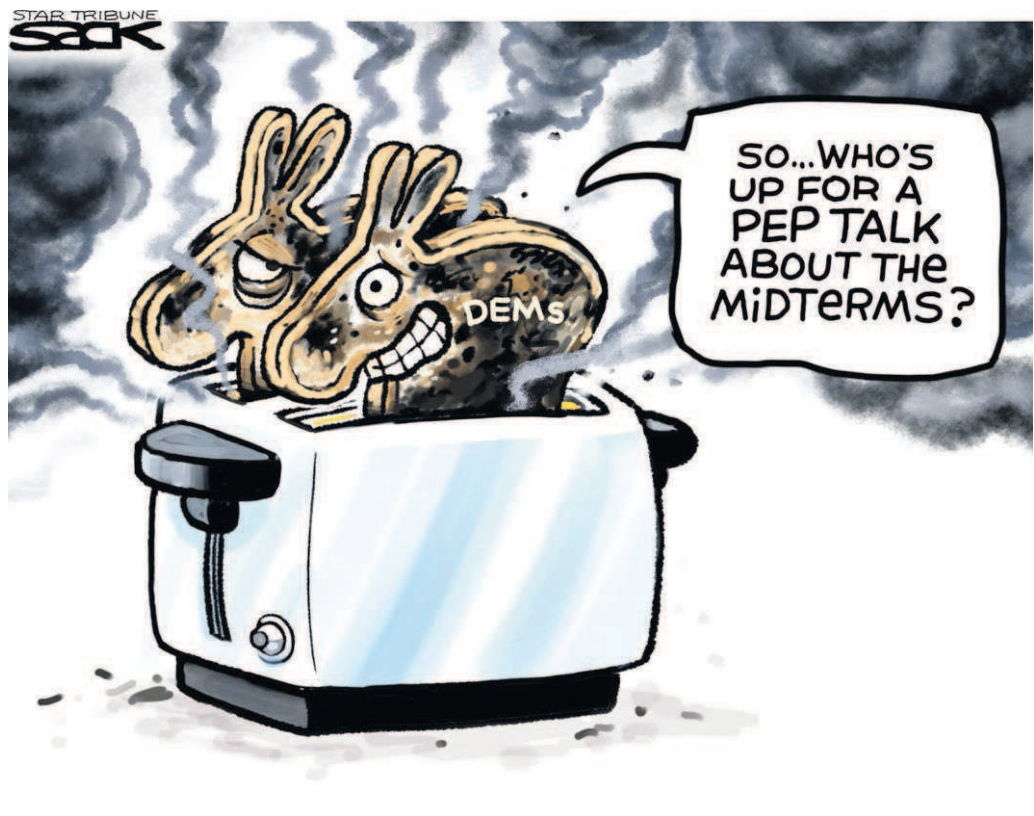
That brings up the biggest question of all: the level of future federal funding for public-health programs. These are substantial sums. Minnesota

received \$6.35 billion in fiscal 2016 for its medical assistance program. Another \$335 million helped pay for MinnesotaCare. It's premature to act until state lawmakers know how much they can afford to do.

Trump's broad call to roll back regulations could mean that states will take the lead in coverage and controlling costs. This could be a positive development in a dismal health-reform landscape. Providing quality, affordable care has long been a widely shared goal in Minnesota, which has a laudable history of public-private teamwork. It's now needed more than ever.

Lawmakers who campaigned on how much the ACA hurt consumers have a special responsibility to ensure that the law's rollback would not put coverage even further out of reach.

Trump's broad call to roll back regulations could mean that states will take the lead in coverage and controlling costs.



OTHER VIEWS

You must serve Trump

Of all the conservatives who opposed Donald Trump during his campaign for the presidency, his most vehement opponents were the men and women who had served in past Republican administrations, and particularly in the departments of State and of Defense. One hundred and twenty-two Republican foreign policy hands signed a letter denouncing Trump as a menace to U.S. values and world peace. George W. Bush's CIA director, Michael Hayden, suggested that Trump was a useful idiot for Russian interests. Both neoconservatives and realists — Robert Kagan and Paul Wolfowitz, Brent Scowcroft and Richard Armitage — indicated that they would vote for Hillary Clinton.

But now Trump will be the commander in chief, the leader of the free world, the man responsible for maintaining the rather frayed and tattered-looking Pax Americana. It's safe to assume that the figures who denounced him most vocally will not be in line for key positions. But for others, especially the many younger public servants who would normally staff a Republican administration, a hard question looms: If they fear how Trump might govern, can they in good conscience work for him?

The answer, for now, is that they can and should — and indeed, precisely because they fear how Trump might govern, there is a moral responsibility to serve.

For the next four years, the most important check on what we've seen of Trump's worst impulses — his hair-trigger temper, his rampant insecurity, his personal cruelty — won't come from Congress or the courts or the opposition party. It will come from the people charged with executing the basic responsibilities of government within his administration.

This is particularly true in foreign policy, where presidential power has its fewest limits — where the chief executive can start wars with near-impunity, deal out death from the skies, rattle the global economy with an executive order, and decide with barely anyone else's input to launch a nuclear weapon. In foreign policy, too, the choices that presidential appointees have to make on their own, in diplomatic and military contexts, can have life-or-death consequences very quickly. So to the extent that Trump's approach to governance threatens world peace, that threat can be mitigated by appointees with experience and knowledge and magnified if their posts are filled by hacks and sycophants instead.

It may be, of course, that Trump wishes to fill the most important posts with sycophants. In which case anyone who goes to work for his State Department or Defense Department

risks being subject not only to his whims, but also to the whims of secretaries and undersecretaries who mirror his all-too-readily-apparent vices.

But here the Republican Senate has a crucially important role to play. Trump cannot appoint Cabinet officials without the approval of many senators who opposed or doubted him throughout the campaign — from Mike Lee and Jeff Flake to John McCain and Lindsey Graham. These

senators cannot force him to pick a secretary of state from the ranks of #NeverTrump foreign-policy hands. But they can look at his short lists and suggest names that would win confirmation easily (like Stephen Hadley for the Defense Department), while making it clear that other nominations (Newt Gingrich for secretary of state, say, or Sheriff David Clarke as head of Homeland Security) would be met with prejudice and voted down.

If this happens, if a layer of experienced leadership is established at the top, then it will signal to younger personnel that they can serve without fearing that the government they're entering has already been Trumpified, or that they will

be isolated if the man at the top goes haywire.

These men and women should not be ready to serve permanently, regardless of what their new boss does in office. If a Trump presidency lurches into naked authoritarianism — abusing executive authority in unprecedented ways, issuing immoral or illegal orders to the military — then there will be an obligation not to serve, but to resign. And the gray area between these two obligations will create a lot of territory in which Trump appointees could succumb to moral corruption, justifying their toleration for enormities on the grounds that "the greater good requires me to stay."

But unlike in the campaign, when Republicans who endorsed him early were effectively enabling his rise to power, at this particular moment there is no further rise to be enabled. Trump is the president-elect, he will be the most powerful man in the world, whether good people decide to go to work for him or not. So if he is willing to make some responsible appointments, the good of the world requires that responsible people accept them, in the hopes that the first potential evil of his presidency — incompetence, leading to instability, leading to disasters — can be avoided.

Other evils may await, but sufficient unto this day this one. So if he calls, answer.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. Previously, he was a senior editor at the *Atlantic* and a blogger for *theatlantic.com*.



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

There is a moral responsibility for conservatives and Republicans to serve a Trump presidency, even if they fear how he might govern.

YOUR VIEWS

Labeling and demeaning political opponents must stop

Dear George (Murdock), I read your recent opinion piece in the *East Oregonian* and was surprised at how different the tone was from what I see in our face-to-face interactions while working on projects together for the betterment of the community. I'd like to offer an alternative letter that I would have liked to have seen from our elected representatives:

While peaceful protests that allow for people to exercise their freedom of expression is an important part of our democracy, violence and destruction must be condemned in the strongest terms.

In the same spirit, as we discuss different views on policy and our new president works to enact changes that he and those who voted for him hope will bring greater prosperity to the country, we must condemn in the strongest terms the bullying, intimidation, harassment or marginalization of anyone based on their race, sex, gender identity,

nationality or economic status.

The use of labels and assumptions stops now. The divisiveness, name-calling and broad stereotyping of those we disagree with stops now.

Now is the time for our best selves to come together and do the difficult, honest work of identifying and understanding the common values that connect us, and truly educating ourselves about the issues facing those we disagree with. It's the time to confront our own misconceptions, biases, fears and the human impulse to be more exhilarated by outrage than by humility.

I have the privilege of dealing with people who hold a wide range of opinions, political positions, religious views and personal life experiences. And while I may disagree with some of them about how we get there, I know that they all hold the same hopes for the prosperity, health and happiness of their families that I do.

Robert Lavadour Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

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