

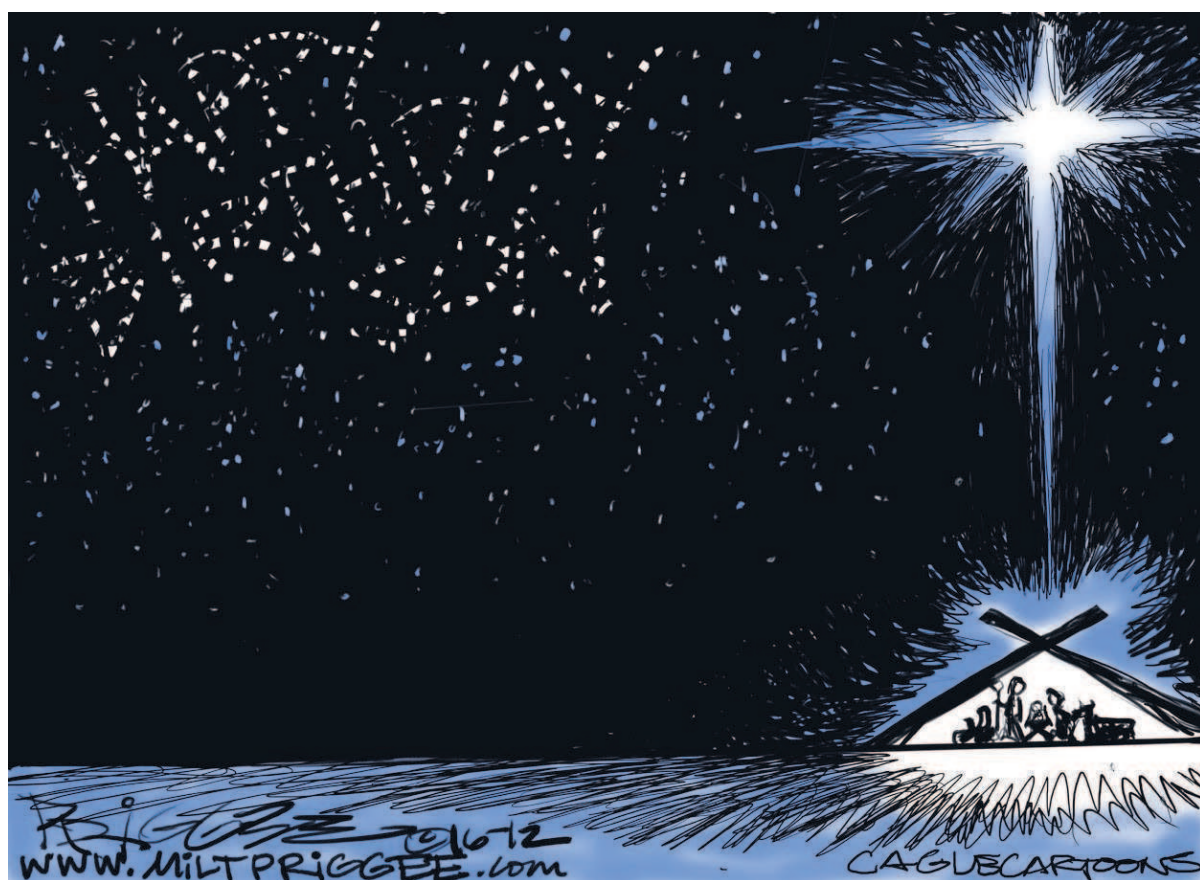
# Good news, great joy

At that time the Roman emperor, Augustus, decreed that a census should be taken throughout the Roman Empire. (This was the first census taken when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) All returned to their own ancestral towns to register for this census. And because Joseph was a descendant of King David, he had to go to Bethlehem in Judea, David's ancient home. He traveled there from the village of Nazareth in Galilee. He took with him Mary, to whom he was engaged, who was now expecting a child.

And while they were there, the time came for her baby to be born. She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped him snugly in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no lodging available for them.

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The Savior—yes, the Messiah, the Lord—has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David! And you will recognize him by this sign: You will find a baby wrapped snugly in strips of cloth, lying in a manger."

Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying,



**"Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased."**

— Luke 2:14

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When the angels had returned to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem! Let's see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about."

They hurried to the village

and found Mary and Joseph. And there was the baby, lying in the manger. After seeing him, the shepherds told everyone what had happened and what the angel had said to them about this child. All who heard the shepherds' story were astonished, but Mary kept all these things in her heart and thought about them often. The shepherds went back to their

flocks, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen. It was just as the angel had told them.

*Luke 2:1-20 (New Living Translation)*

After Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Judea, during the time of King Herod, Magi from the east came to Jerusalem and asked, "Where

is the one who has been born king of the Jews? We saw his star when it rose and have come to worship him."

When King Herod heard this he was disturbed, and all Jerusalem with him. When he had called together all the people's chief priests and teachers of the law, he asked them where the Messiah was to be born. "In Bethlehem in Judea," they replied, "for this is what the prophet has written:

"But you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for out of you will come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel."

Then Herod called the Magi secretly and found out from them the exact time the star had appeared. He sent them to Bethlehem and said, "Go and search carefully for the child. As soon as you find him, report to me, so that I too may go and worship him."

After they had heard the king, they went on their way, and the star they had seen when it rose went ahead of them until it stopped over the place where the child was. When they saw the star, they were overjoyed. On coming to the house, they saw the child with his mother Mary, and they bowed down and worshiped him. Then they opened their treasures and presented him with gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh. And having been warned in a dream not to go back to Herod, they returned to their country by another route.

*Matthew 2:1-12 (New Living Translation)*

## EAST OREGONIAN

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## Merry Christmas to our readers

It's been an interesting year for news media to say the least.

To say the most, it's been a year that has shaken the very foundation of journalism, which is the foundation the *East Oregonian* was built on.

It didn't happen all at once, of course. The slow erosion of trust in the media has been sliding for years as U.S. citizens find themselves

with a dizzying array of options and see contradictions among them. Any miscalculated figure or missed angle on the part of a journalist can become proof of malfeasance. And if all journalism is just a random grab of information rewritten through a biased lens, why not subscribe only to the reporting and analysis that affirms what you already believe?

If you're taking the time to read this on Christmas weekend, we thank you. We are glad to know you care about what's going on in your city, your county, your country and your world. And we're glad you give us the chance each day to prove that we have you, the reader, in mind as

we report and analyze the news.

We hope to challenge you in the new year on this page with alternate

opinions to the ones you hear every day. We also hope to articulate the opinions you hold dear in a way that helps you understand the issues of the day. And we hope to hear from you in letters to the editor to share your perspective.

On the news

pages, we're always looking for ways to better explain life and issues in Eastern Oregon. Our reporters and editors are eager to prove this paper is worth the investment of your money, but also your time. We hope that every new edition that hits your doorstep is full of information useful to your life presented in a way that shows we have your best interests in mind.

It's a big task. And we know the world is changing.

We hope today's edition is one of hundreds of small gifts you receive from us this year, and thank you for investing in what we do.

Merry Christmas.

**It's a big task to do good journalism, and be a good news consumer, in a changing world.**

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

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 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

### OTHER VIEWS

## Lessons learned from two battle strategies

President Barack Obama and Gov. Pat McCrory of North Carolina don't agree on many policy questions. But they have found themselves facing a similar political situation this year. And their very different reactions capture the deep—and alarming—differences between our two political parties right now.

Both Obama and McCrory essentially had their accomplishments on the ballot. McCrory, a Republican, was running for re-election. Obama wasn't, but his chosen successor was running against a candidate who had personally demeaned him and promised to repeal his agenda.

As you'd expect, Obama and McCrory each campaigned hard. There, however, the similarities stopped. The differences have played out in three acts.

In the first act, before Election Day, Obama was faced with evidence that Russia was trying to help Donald Trump win. Obama erred on the side of nonpartisan caution, opting not to announce the CIA findings on Russia's motives. He was willing to use the presidential bully pulpit to criticize Trump, but not the levers of presidential power to disadvantage him.

McCrory went so far using his levers that a federal appeals court unanimously slapped him back. It threw out legislation he had signed to restrict voting access, saying it targeted African-Americans with "almost surgical precision" and "discriminatory intent." Still, McCrory and his allies managed to take steps to make voting harder for many Democrats.

The mischief didn't keep him from losing narrowly, and in the second act, McCrory initially refused to accept the outcome. He invented stories of "massive voter fraud" and spent weeks refusing to concede.

Meanwhile, Obama—despite Russia's interference and Hillary's Clinton's popular-vote win—immediately congratulated Trump and announced "we are now all rooting for his success."

The third act is happening now. Obama has instructed his staff to help Trump's staff. McCrory has signed two bills that strip his successor, Roy Cooper, of some powers.

The justification—a much smaller, long-ago power grab by state Democrats—is laughable. *The Charlotte Observer* called the organizations and arrogant. *The News & Observer*, of Raleigh, compared them to a coup.

In sum: McCrory tried to change the election's rules to help himself; pretended he did not lose afterward; and is ultimately overturning some of the election's consequences.

If he were merely a rogue politician, this story would be a local one. But too many Republicans elsewhere have begun to ignore political traditions, and even laws, to exert



DAVID LEONHARDT  
Comment

power. While Democrats continue to play by more genteel rules, Republicans have subscribed to the Capone school of politics (as Sean Connery fans can recite): "They pull a knife, you pull a gun. He sends one of yours to the hospital, you send one of his to the morgue."

In several states, Republicans have changed laws to reduce Democratic voter turnout. After Obama's election, Mitch McConnell rallied Senate Republicans to oppose his policies—even if Republicans agreed with them!—to make Obama a failed president. This year, Republicans refused to fill a Supreme Court vacancy.

Calling out this behavior is difficult for anybody who's not a partisan Democrat, because doing so makes you sound like a partisan. We in the media, for example, have sometimes framed the events in North Carolina as a case of "partisan polarization."

That's akin to reporting Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait under a headline of "Tensions Between Iraq, Kuwait Escalate." It's ... not false.

Hard as it is, no one should be putting a thumb on the scale to pretend the Republicans' anti-democratic behavior is normal. I agree with Republicans on some issues, like the value of competition in education and the benefits of two-parent families. But I won't cheer any ill-gotten gains on those issues.

The most important thing now would be for sober Republicans to stand up to their party's radicalization, even if it meant leaving the party. Absent that, the big decisions fall to Democrats.

They need to understand that their opponents are changing the rules—and often benefiting. No, Democrats should not simply mimic the cynicism. For both moral and political reasons, they should defend small-d democratic values, which are, after all, American values.

But the party does need to get tougher. In Congress, the Democrats' threshold for working with Republicans should be higher than in the Bush years. The alternative would signal to voters, wrongly, that the GOP was the less partisan party, because it could pass bipartisan bills. Around the country, Democrats should fight every restriction of voting rights and build grass-roots organizations in all 50 states focused on little-guy economic arguments. Dreaming wishfully of demographic destiny won't cut it.

Anybody tempted to fantasize about inevitable Democratic victories should think ahead to 2020—when the McCrory playbook may well be used not just in a state election but a national one.

David Leonhardt is the managing editor of *The Upshot* for the *New York Times*, a website that focuses on politics, policy, and economics.