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**OUR VIEW**

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

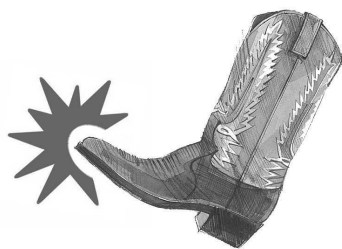
**A kick in the pants to the plan to sell the Elliott State Forest.** This is a bad idea — an idea that even Governor Kate Brown, who first came up with it — now opposes. Brown this month voted against that plan to sell the forest to a logging company and Indian tribe, but was outnumbered by Secretary of State Dennis Richardson, Republican and Treasurer Tobias Read, Democrat. Those three make up the State Land Board.

Though the sale would come with contingencies that ensure environmental protections and public access, it's still the sale of public lands to private hands. And that is not OK in Oregon, nor anywhere in the American West.

Could you imagine the backlash if it was a Republican administration that pushed this effort? Environmentalists would be suing right and left, Patagonia would be pulling out of Oregon and there would be thousands of protesters in front of the capitol.

And there has been some pushback. Read has received a steady stream of calls asking him to change his vote and keep the land in public hands. As he should.

Yes, the Elliott is not your average piece of public property. It has an unusual, probably outdated mission. It must be tweaked and reconsidered. But it is Oregon property — our property — and it should remain that way. And politicians, no matter their political party, who try to sell our property for a quick buck should feel the heat for doing so.



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.

**YOUR VIEWS**

## Citizens question Adams city council vote

From a concerned citizens' group in Adams: It is our belief that in June 2016, some of the city council of Adams at that time acted with impropriety and possible illegality (the matter is still under investigation) in the manner in which they voted on June 22, 2016 (ORS 192.670(1)). At this time they voted to adopt an ordinance given them by Umatilla County and to enter into an intergovernmental agreement with Umatilla County.

It is also our belief that the city council members acted without due diligence to understand the ordinance or its implications to the citizens. We do not believe that Umatilla County was in collusion with the 2016 Adams City Council, and at this time respectfully request that the Umatilla County commissioners cease and desist all activity on the part of Umatilla County against the citizens of Adams and to end their association with the intergovernmental agreement, the legality of which is now in question.

**James Pace, Patrick F. Christy, Jeana Drew, Kyle D. Beers, Annette L. Easley, Traci Powers, Travis Powers, Dan Pipkin, Jim Morris, Mary M. Patterson, Jacqueline Thompson, Samuel Spino, Iva Hasenbank, Connie Hasenbank, Mike Christy, Chris Hasenbank, Wendy Chase, James M. Rohde, Mark S. Easley, Joseph Powers, Kalyn Sloan, Christine P. Bauknecht and Mary Brown Adams**

## No easy solution for troubled trailer park

It is with gratitude that I write to thank you for shining a light on the situation at Locust Mobile Village. (Page A4, Feb. 17.) It was good to have an EO reporter at the recent meeting of the Milton-Freewater City Council.

Unfortunately, the reporter missed one of two major concerns of the council. So let's review the two topics briefly.

While the owner of Locust Mobile Village has steadfastly refused to make the necessary investment to solve her water quality problems for at least three decades, some of the neighboring property owners have solved the problem — and other neighbors are planning to do so. Why should steadfast refusal to meet health and safety regulations lead to someone else (federal government) paying to solve the problem? Shouldn't neighbors be reimbursed for the investment they've already made? How many additional property owners will be incentivized to not take care of their own private property issues because the state and the feds will fix it? Ultimately, the council might conclude that the benefits to the community outweighs the issue of federal dollars flowing to a private business simply because the owner

steadfastly refuses to meet regulations.

But the more important issue, which was not reported, is that solving the water quality problem is only a partial solution to the problems which exist at Locust Mobile Village. It would be a Band-Aid on a broken leg. Any "solution" to the problems at Locust Mobile Village which does not address the issue of sewage is not really a solution. And addressing that problem will be the expensive part of the "solution." If only safe water is provided but sewage has not been addressed, Milton-Freewater will be left holding the bag. And sooner or later the council will be taking heat to fix that problem for the property owner.

Scott Fairley of the governor's office asked the council for two things to describe why we objected to the "solution" offered by the state and to commit to reconsider if our objections could be addressed. We forthrightly provided the information requested and we committed to reconsider if a better solution is formulated.

Please continue to shine light on deliberations involving the proper use of public funds and the development of holistic solutions to problems, OK?

**Ed Chesnut  
Milton-Freewater city councilor**

## Take time to select new Pendleton superintendent

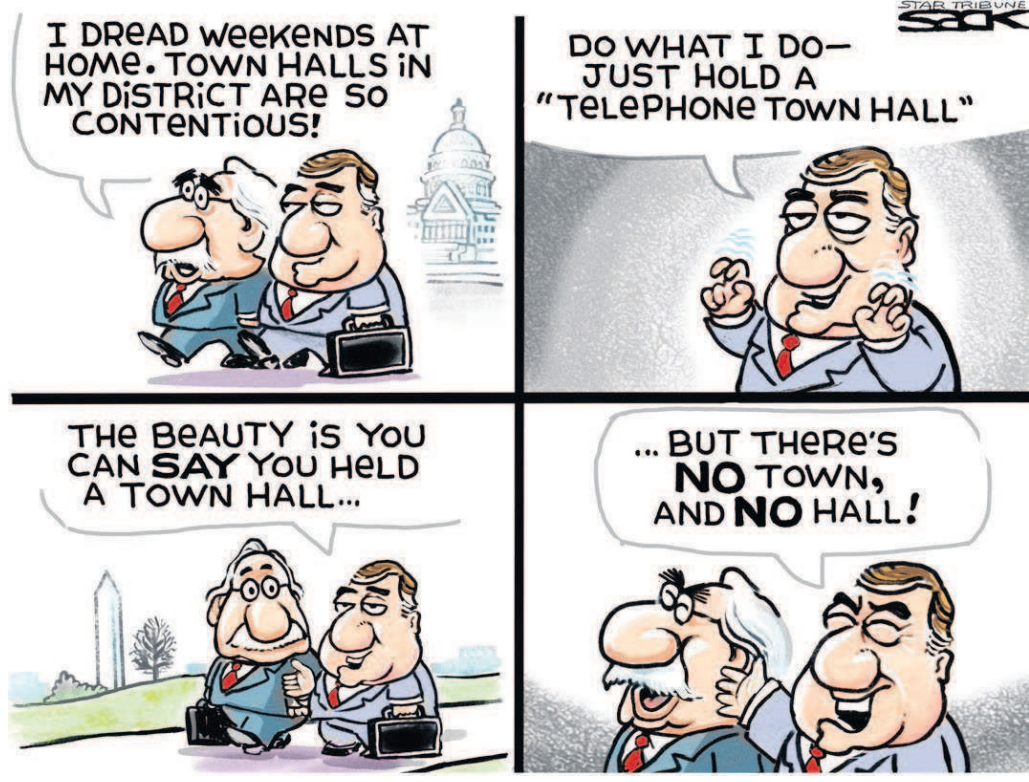
Dave Krumbein's advice on searching for a new Pendleton school superintendent makes a lot of sense to me — hire an interim superintendent to give school board members time to do a thorough search instead of following an arbitrary schedule.

Now that Andy Kovach is on the way out of the superintendent job after seven months, the school board has adopted a schedule that calls for closing the application period March 24, a deadline of April 24 for initial interviews and selection of finalists and deadline of May 2-4 for second round of interviews and selection of the new superintendent. The problem is that finding the right match for this district and its quality-conscious patrons is hard enough without imposing deadlines.

Krumbein, a veteran member of the Pendleton School Board, said he worries about the possibility that hiring by a set of dates could force board members to settle on an inadequate applicant. To me, a sad refrain in the field is to see a new hire fail in the job and hear the selection committee say, "Well, his or her application was the strongest in our stack on hiring day."

School board members have a big job in scouring the schools for the qualities that have been important to people of this district. They need time to do that thorough job with the help of an interim superintendent.

**Mike Forrester  
Pendleton**



**OTHER VIEWS**

# This century is broken

Most of us came of age in the last half of the 20th century and had our perceptions of "normal" formed in that era. It was, all things considered, an unusually happy period. No world wars, no Great Depressions, fewer civil wars, fewer plagues.

It's looking like we're not going to get to enjoy one of those times again. The 21st century is looking much nastier and bumpier: rising ethnic nationalism, falling faith in democracy, a dissolving world order.

At the bottom of all this, perhaps, is declining economic growth. As Nicholas Eberstadt points out in his powerful essay "Our Miserable 21st Century," in the current issue of Commentary, between 1948 and 2000 the U.S. economy grew at a per-capita rate of about 2.3 percent a year.

But then around 2000, something shifted. In this century, per-capita growth has been less than 1 percent a year on average, and even since 2009 it's been only 1.1 percent a year. If the U.S. had been able to maintain postwar 20th-century growth rates into this century, U.S. per-capita GDP would be more than 20 percent higher than it is today.

Slow growth strains everything else — meaning less opportunity, less optimism and more of the sort of zero-sum, grab-what-you-can thinking that Donald Trump specializes in. The slowdown has devastated U.S. workers. Between 1985 and 2000, the total hours of paid work in America increased by 35 percent. Over the next 15 years, they increased by only 4 percent.

For every one American man ages 25 to 55 looking for work, there are three who have dropped out of the labor force. If Americans were working at the same rates they were when this century started, more than 10 million more people would have jobs. As Eberstadt puts it, "The plain fact is that 21st-century America has witnessed a dreadful collapse of work."

That means there's an army of Americans semi-attached to their communities, who struggle to contribute, to realize their capacities and find their dignity. According to Bureau of Labor Statistics time-use studies, these labor force dropouts spend on average 2,000 hours a year watching some screen. That's about the number of hours that usually go to a full-time job.

Fifty-seven percent of white males who have dropped out get by on some form of government disability check. About half of the men who have dropped out take pain medication on a daily basis. A survey in Ohio found that over one three-month period, 11 percent of Ohioans were prescribed opiates. One in eight American men now has a felony conviction on his record.



**DAVID BROOKS**  
Comment

This is no way for our fellow citizens to live. The Eberstadt piece confirms one thought: The central task for many of us now is not to resist Trump. He'll seal his own fate. It's to figure out how to replace him — how to respond to the slow growth and social disaffection that gave rise to him with some radically different policy mix.

The hard part is that America has to become more dynamic and more protective — both at the same time.

In the past, American reformers could at least count on the fact that they were working with

a dynamic society that was always generating the energy required to solve the nation's woes. But as Tyler Cowen demonstrates in his compelling new book, "The Complacent Class," contemporary Americans have lost their mojo.

Cowen shows that in sphere after sphere, Americans have become less adventurous and more static. For example, Americans used to move

a lot to seize opportunities and transform their lives. But the rate of Americans who are migrating across state lines has plummeted by 51 percent from the levels of the 1950s and 1960s.

Americans used to be entrepreneurial, but there has been a decline in startups as a share of all business activity over the last generation. Millennials may be the least entrepreneurial generation in U.S. history. The share of Americans under 30 who own a business has fallen 65 percent since the 1980s.

Americans tell themselves the old job-for-life model is over. But in fact Americans are switching jobs less than a generation ago, not more. The job reallocation rate — which measures employment turnover — is down by more than a quarter since 1990.

There are signs that America is less innovative. Accounting for population growth, Americans create 25 percent fewer major international patents than in 1999. There's even less hunger to hit the open road. In 1983, 69 percent of 17-year-olds had driver's licenses. Now only half of Americans get a license by age 18.

In different ways Eberstadt and Cowen are describing a country that is decelerating, detaching, losing hope, getting sadder. Economic slowdown, social disaffection and risk aversion reinforce one another.

Of course nothing is foreordained. But where is the social movement that is thinking about the fundamentals of this century's bad start and envisions an alternate path? Who has a compelling plan to boost economic growth? If Trump is not the answer, what is?

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in 2003. He is currently a commentator on PBS.

Slow growth strains everything else — less opportunity, less optimism and more grab-what-you-can thinking.



**LETTERS POLICY**

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