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OUR VIEW



Cincinnati's Over-the-Rhine neighborhood

Redux Photos

Portlandization of America

A recent journey to visit a newly born niece in the Midwest illuminated the ongoing Portlandization of American cities.

I traveled to Cincinnati, Ohio, where the downtown residential district is in the midst of monumental upheaval and gentrification. Called Over-the-Rhine, it is the largest historic district of its kind, built when Cincinnati was a thriving metropolis and Western boomtown that attracted mostly German immigrants.

The neighborhood is a classic expression of American expansion in the 19th century, bold and wealthy, mixing classic architectural styles with the raw materials of a new world. Walking it, you can sense how builders and residents were trying to balance their desire to use European and colonial culture to "tame the West," while trying at the same time to show those stuffed shirts back East a new way of doing things.

But hard times came to American innercities. First the automobile, which made "walking distance" a remnant of the past. Then postwar prosperity and more new technologies, which fueled expansion and growth and globalization. To capture the movement, America homogenized with national brands, chain restaurants and stores, and cookie-cutter homes in cookie-cutter suburbs.

Cities suffered. Over-the-Rhine fell into disrepair. Those who had the resources to leave did, and it became one of the nation's poorest and most dangerous neighborhoods — the site of race riots in 2001.

Things have changed again, however, and America's innercities are in resurgence. Downtown living has been revolutionized, due in no small part to the Portlandization of America. For good or ill, the quirks of the Rose City are being exported to cities across the country.

Cincinnati is one. It purchased streetcars from the city of Portland, and its downtown parks and markets now include the "Portland loo" — a public toilet developed in Portland. Over-the-Rhine — just a decade ago filled with drugs and violence — is now home to donut shops, brunch restaurants, breweries and trinket stores, the aesthetics of each are remarkably similar to Portland.

The historic but dilapidated



TIM TRAINOR
Comment

residences that you couldn't pay people to live in are now selling for millions. And the poor black families who called the neighborhood home for decades are being forced farther from town, where public resources are harder to access.

There are some benefits to rebuilding in Portland's image. Reinventing American cities is important to stop the ugly sprawl of resource-intensive, farm-gobbling suburbia. And Portland has led the way in what young people want in an urban environment — green spaces, bike lanes, walkable streets, public transportation, local food and drink and arts. If that's what the market is asking for, cities should look to meet that demand. Cincinnati is.

Yet that template can be bland and shallow, too, little different from the line of chain restaurants at every highway exit or tract homes built on hundreds of cul-de-sacs. As dirty, gritty, real places are replaced by Portlandia-chic — both in Portland and elsewhere — something is irretrievably lost.

Meanwhile, rural identity remains unblemished. It stands out everywhere in America, refreshingly free from the fads and pressures facing urban centers.

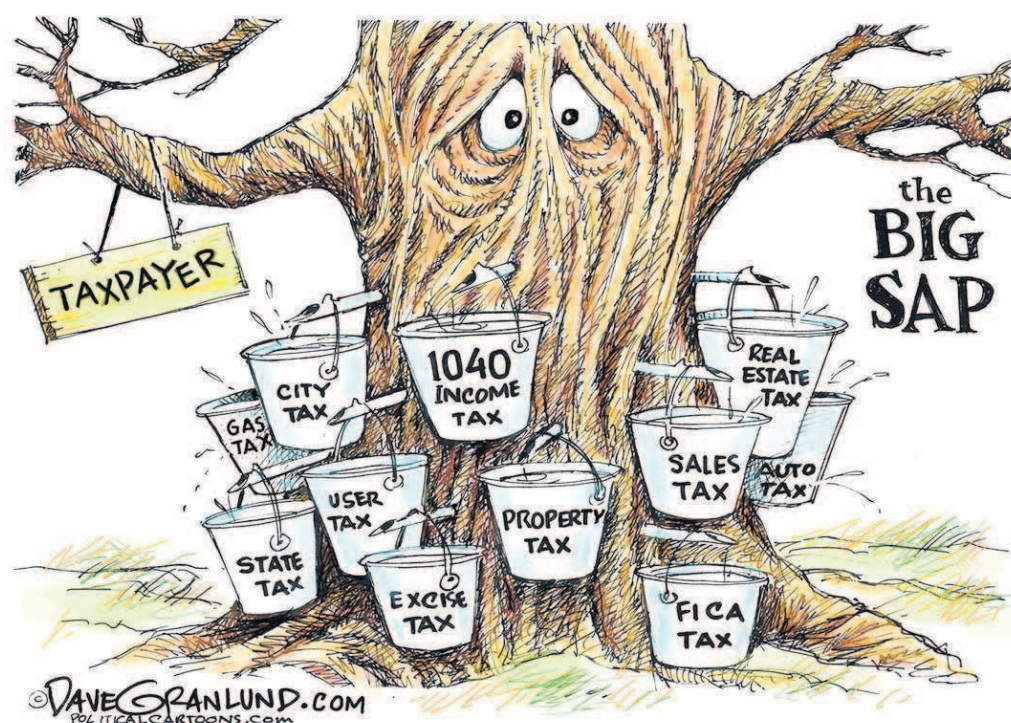
From Cincinnati we drove east, up the Ohio River Valley, into the coal country and factory towns of Kentucky and Appalachia.

We drove past the hamlet of Augusta, Kentucky, where Union soldiers crossed the river and fought house-to-house during the Civil War. We bought locally made ginger ale at a gas station. We window-shopped downtown stores that were selling T-shirts emblazoned with "COAL" in big gray letters. We saw an Amish horse and buggy waiting for cars to pass on a state highway.

Nationwide, rural America is much poorer than its urban counterparts. And the economic, population and cultural gulf is only getting wider. But rural America remains real and true and historic — built of itself and for itself.

As cities change, and globalization and Portlandization have their effects, the elusive country drive is a reminder that America's most unique and interesting places are far from city centers.

Tim Trainor is opinion page editor of the East Oregonian.



OTHER VIEWS

Schiff mum on what he saw at White House

Adam Schiff, ranking Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, has been sharply critical of the panel's Republican chairman, Devin Nunes, for visiting the White House to view classified documents that Nunes says show the Obama administration intercepted the communications of Donald Trump associates before the president took office in January.

Among other things, Schiff slammed Nunes for viewing the documents by himself and not sharing them with Democrats on the committee. So last week, White House counsel Don McGahn invited Schiff to come see the documents for himself. Schiff did so on Friday.

Now, both the Republican chairman and the Democratic ranking member on the Intel Committee have seen the documents. And now, the public has a chance to hear another assessment to balance Nunes' claim that he saw "dozens" of intelligence reports involving the incidental collection of Trumpworld figures in Obama administration intercepts, with the names of some of them "unmasked," and that none of it had to do with Russia.

In other words, Nunes suggested the Obama administration misused its wiretapping powers to gather information on the Trump team.

So with Schiff's visit to the White House, a chance for balance. But after viewing the documents, Schiff has gone nearly completely silent about what he saw. He has kept up his criticism of how Nunes came to view the material, but on what's actually in the documents, Schiff has said virtually nothing.

On Friday, immediately after viewing the documents, Schiff released a statement in which he declined to say anything about substance and repeated earlier criticisms of Republicans' handling of the matter.

"While I cannot discuss the content of the documents," Schiff said, "if the White House had any concern over these materials, they should have been shared with the full committee in the first place."

Schiff made no public comments on Saturday, and then on Sunday morning appeared on CNN, where Jake Tapper asked Schiff if, having seen the documents, "can you understand why Chairman Nunes might have some issues with the surveillance that was going on?"

"I can't go into the contents of the documents, Jake," Schiff said, before a quick pivot to Nunes' methods. "I can say I don't agree with the chairman's characterization, which is exactly why it's so important you don't share documents with just one person or even two people. They need to be shared with both full committees."

Continuing, Schiff said "the most important thing" about the documents is not what is in them but how they were handled:

"But the most important thing people need



BYRON YORK
Comment

to know about these documents is not classified, and it's a couple of things. First, the deputy assistant to the White House informed me when I went to see them that these are exactly the same materials that were shown to the chairman.

"Now, this is a very interesting point. How does the White House know that these are the same materials that were shown to the chairman, if the White House wasn't aware what the chairman was being shown?"

"And the second point was also made to me. And this is — I think was also underscored by Sean Spicer — and that is, it was told to me by the deputy assistant that these materials were produced in the ordinary course of business.

"Well, the question for the White House and for Mr. Spicer is the ordinary course of whose business? Because, if these were produced either for or by the White House, then why all of the subterfuge? There's nothing ordinary about the process that was used here at all."

All the talk about intercepts, Schiff said, was just an attempt by Trump and Republicans to distract from questions about Trump and Russia.

By that time, anyone interested in the substance of the issue — Do the documents show that Obama administration officials picked up Trumpworld figures in electronic intercepts and then identified them by name? — was entirely frustrated. Schiff appeared determined to say nothing about substance.

"I guess the question that Nunes is asking or suggesting that we should be asking in the media," Tapper said to Schiff, "(is) who unmasked these Trump advisers, and is it possible that any of this unmasking was being done for political reasons, instead of for legitimate ones?"

"Well, first of all, I can't talk about, as I mentioned, the contents of any documents," Schiff said. "So at this point, I can't say whether anything was masked or unmasked improperly."

Schiff then pivoted again to criticize Republican procedures.

Monday morning, Bloomberg's Eli Lake reported that former Obama national security adviser Susan Rice "requested the identities of U.S. persons in raw intelligence reports on dozens of occasions that connect to the Donald Trump transition and campaign, according to U.S. officials familiar with the matter." If that is accurate, it seems unlikely that the "most important" thing about the documents is how they were handled.

After seeing the documents with his own eyes, Schiff had a chance to shed some light on what has become a key question in the Trump-Russia matter. He didn't take it.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Fact checking Rep. Greg Walden

Before the whole Republican health care plan crashed and burned, I had attended a town hall meeting in Weston with Rep. Greg Walden.

Rep. Walden came across pretty smooth, like a thoughtful congressman who really cared about the folks he represented. He talked about the exciting health care plan he had helped formulate (he claimed). It was much better than Obamacare, you would have more insurance options, great coverage, lower premiums and tax credits that would really help offset the costs. It would have many of the same benefits that Obamacare had. Plus it would save the government billions of dollars. Someone asked what health plan he had. He said he was stuck with Obamacare and it cost him \$800 plus dollars a month and had a high deductible.

In the ensuing days I did some fact checking, plus his health care bill played out over the next few weeks. He does have an Obamacare plan but he has many options. The option he alluded to cost \$800 but he pays only \$200 and taxpayers

pay the rest. He also gets lots of perks with it, like free visits to any veterans' hospital and many doctor offices in Washington, D.C. Plus he qualifies for the plan even after he retires (which may be sooner than he planned).

He also never mentioned that the government would not save anything on his plan because billions and billions of dollars would go to the very wealthy in windfall tax saving. When his plan was picked apart by many health organizations and fellow house representatives and senators, it proved to be a total sham that would have kept seniors, lower income and rural folks from being able to afford any plan. There was no allowance for inflation, and no guarantee insurance companies would even be available in rural areas.

Rep. Walden still supported the bill. After it failed to get the House votes it needed to pass, the bill was reworked and compromised in many ways that made it even worse and unaffordable for seniors and lower income folks. Rep. Walden still supported it.

You have to wonder who Mr. Walden answers to. It sure as heck

isn't the senior citizens and rural folks that make up his constituents. Is he so engrossed in wanting to be someone in the House of Representatives that he forgot why he is there? If you attend any of his town hall meetings, do some fact checking. He has been in politics long enough to be able to make things sound better than they may be.

David Lange Pendleton

Investing in education pays off down the road

Private investment follows public investment. This is true with infrastructure. This is true with educational facilities.

The Erie Canal opened the early American frontier. The Transcontinental Railroad unified the nation. The Interstate Highway system gave access to markets. Rural electrification brought light and energy to a world that labored in darkness. Irrigation systems increased food production. Telecommunications systems facilitated the flow of information.

Educational facilities open the frontier of the mind of a child.

Schools are where the sharing of ideas brings people together and provides access to concepts that were previously unknown. School teachers bring light and energy to the ignorant and benighted. Classroom instruction increases the productive capacity of individuals who can choose to become part of a well informed populace.

Prosperity is directly connected to an informed populace.

I'm voting for the Hermiston School Bond because there is no better public investment than schools, no greater return on investment than learning, and no better way to insure private investment than through a well-educated workforce.

Kim B. Puzey Hermiston

Pendleton needs a better fire station

I'm proud of a lot of things in Pendleton. I'm proud of our schools, our college, our hospital, our city hall/library building, our downtown, our police and last but not least our firefighters.

Having been a part of this

community for my entire adult life, I have watched our citizens evaluate and approve bond levies for services we value. Maybe we didn't use each of the services, but we approved them for the betterment of our community.

It is time to acknowledge that we need a new fire station, better training capabilities and newer and better equipment for these men and women who are our protectors in so many ways. In addition, a new facility will be more efficient and provide cost savings to operate.

Frankly, God forbid, when your smoke detector goes off at 2 a.m., or your grandchild has a bad accident in the back yard. "Who ya gonna call?" I'm going to call 911. Actually I've done it before. What a blessing it is to have someone dedicated to rush to our crisis and take over. If this hasn't happened to you, count your blessings. But you can rest assured they are only a phone call away.

We truly need new facilities and equipment. Bond rates are at a historic low. Now is the time. Please join me in voting yes for this valuable service we need.

Bill Bridges Pendleton

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