

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
Regional Advertising Director

MARCY ROSENBERG
Circulation Manager

JANNA HEIMGARTNER
Business Office Manager

MIKE JENSEN
Production Manager

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to area emergency dispatchers, in this National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week.

We spotlighted a few of those dispatchers earlier this week in this newspaper. Their jobs are difficult, and the lives of Umatilla County residents often rely on their expertise and professionalism. Handling the stressful work of connecting people in need to proper services isn't a task everyone is up for.

These other-end-of-the-phone workers deserve as much credit as those on the front line, but the behind the scenes employees are not as apt to receive it. So the national week, celebrated in their honor, is a good time to

recognize their contributions and say thank you.

And of course, tip your hat.

A kick in the pants to another day and another bomb dropped on a poor country far, far away.

This one was the Mother Of All Bombs (yes, that's its nickname, derived from Massive Ordnance Air Blast, or MOAB), which contained 11 tons of explosives and has a blast range a mile wide. It had never been used in combat before it was dropped Thursday in the middle of the Afghanistan desert to destroy underground bunkers.

It seems strange that President Donald Trump, who ran on a slogan of "America First," would drop a bomb that cost \$314 million in such a forsaken corner of the world — and that on the heels of 59 Tomahawk missiles fired into Syria at a cost of about \$60 million.

The recent spate of bombings are an uncomfortable reminder that this country has been at war in Afghanistan for more than 15 years at a cost to American taxpayers of more than \$3.6 trillion. More than 2,300 American soldiers have been killed and more than 20,000 wounded in that time. To what end, we still do not know.

But for a president who routinely criticized the foreign policy mistakes of George W. Bush, Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton, Trump has disappointed in continuing to send money and mayhem abroad.

A tip of the hat to Rep. Greg Walden, a guy who hasn't been getting much of that treatment lately.

Walden, a Republican representative from Oregon's largest and most conservative district, has been taking the brunt of his constituents' anger at town hall meetings this week in The Dalles, Hood River and Bend.

We saw a little of that discontent when he toured Eastern Oregon last month, but that was before key events like the total collapse of the Republicans' health care bill (which Walden helped form) and the release of President Trump's budget blueprint. Armed with these, his constituents have detailed attacks to launch at Walden when he takes the stage.

Our tip to him is not for his role in crafting the DOA health care bill, but for being willing to stand in front of what quite closely resembles an angry mob and tell them not what they want to hear, but what he hopes to accomplish. That's the hard part of politics, and is too easily avoided by many politicians.

Whether you agree with Walden or not on any topic, you have to respect his willingness to face the music. Even if he has been dancing to some pretty questionable tunes recently.

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.

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

Would you like to buy Pendleton a bridge?

Remember that great deal the city of Pendleton made on the road to nowhere? Well, now we get a bridge. Not the Brooklyn Bridge, but the Eighth Street Bridge, and its coming to a Main Street near you. This is a Downtown Business Association project paid for by, yeah, you guessed it, you lucky taxpayers courtesy of your county commissioner, those guys who promised to quit frittering away money because they don't have the projected revenue to balance the next budget; and the Pendleton development commission. You know those guys better as your friends, the city council.

They did manage to get a substantial donation to help, but not enough to complete the project. So, that money you planned to spend at JC Penney? Send it to the city because they really need the help.

The big question is, whose names are going to be on the plaque?

Poor old Bob Patterson has a plethora of street projects stymied by the harsh winter weather. His failure to follow proper disposition

procedures for that historic Eighth Street Bridge has stopped the replacement project for a year. Remember the old saying, "time is money?" Want to bet the price of the bridge project just went up?

Remember before that utility tax, we had less \$400,000 a year left of our share of state and federal gas tax money to spend on street maintenance and repair? There was simply no additional money available. Well, guess what! The city has decided to buy a \$395,000 building up at the airport. A building they previously owned. It's amazing how easily they find money when it fits their agenda. Meanwhile, the old police station sits empty. Looks like we're going to get another building to maintain. So much for our number one priority of infrastructure maintenance and repair. Guess I'm still missing the "big picture."

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

Fire station important city infrastructure

The proposed new fire station is one important piece in upgrading Pendleton's infrastructure. As others have noted, the existing

station is more than half a century old, and does not meet basic industry standards. In addition, the new facility will reduce operating costs and improve services.

My hope is that the citizens of Pendleton will step forward and make this happen in the same way that we have supported improvements to our local schools. For these reasons, I will be voting for Measure 30-124 to provide funding to move forward with this project.

Dan Haug
Pendleton

Trump will cause a rural labor shortage

The U.S. House did not provide a lot of surprises this month — 40 bills got through, three to the president for signature, three were quickly signed into law and the balance are in the Senate waiting for action.

More notable are the actions that failed. This delusional, minority president is an embarrassment to his party. Twice his Muslim ban failed because our Constitution still provides "freedom of religion." As a nation that welcomes diversity,

religious prejudice is unacceptable. Although our Rep. Walden championed Trump's tax avoidance scheme referred to as "Trumpcare" and would repeal ACA, it found no support in the legislature and was canceled. Rep. Walden has a large constituency of ACA voters and would have lost health care coverage.

Trump's "white supremacy" attitude and policy of deporting Latinos has resulted in a severe labor shortage in the construction industry with supply not meeting demand and new housing prices being consequently increased. Latinos who have been U.S. residents for decades are fearful of leaving their homes, they have been targeted, deported and families separated. Labor shortage in agriculture and the food supply will be next.

While Trump's executive orders and tweets have inspired fear and confusion, his shell is beginning to show signs of cracking. This delusional, minority president is still entangled in claims of Russian collaboration.

Contact your representative and let him know you are a concerned voter.

David Ebbert
Enterprise

Hermiston can't rely on modular classrooms

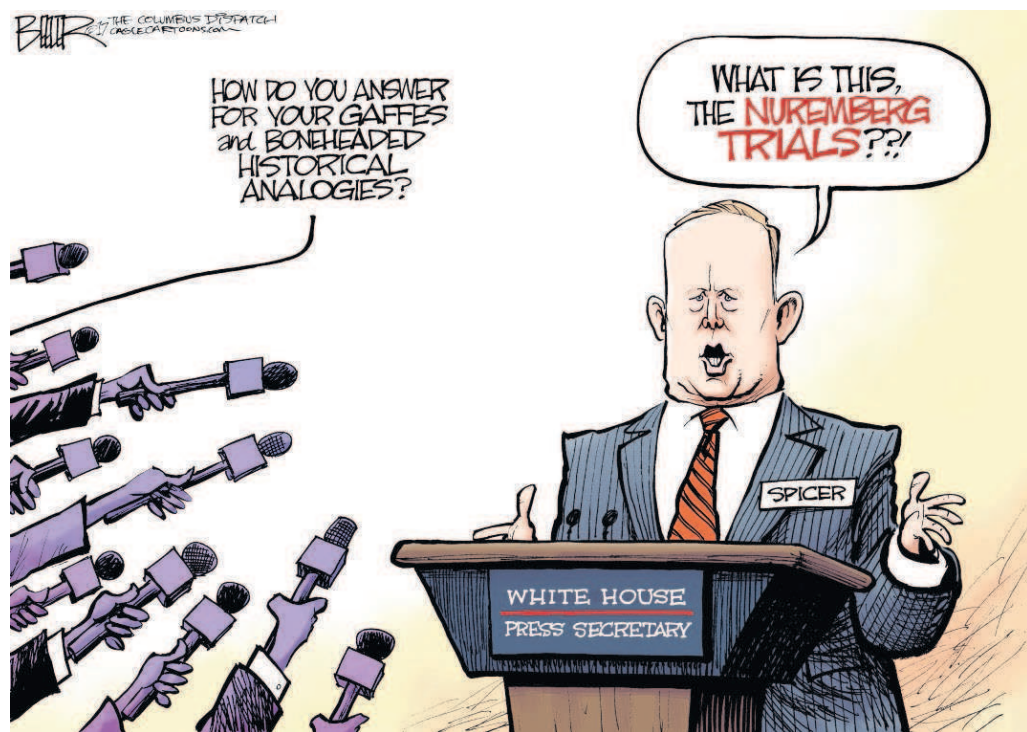
As a retired Hermiston School District/Rocky Heights teacher, I am writing in support of the upcoming school district bond.

As we all know, our community has grown incredibly in the past decade and our schools are not able to accommodate all of our children. We now have 34 portable modulars and at the rate estimated, we will have to add another 46 during the next six years. Our district is working hard to keep classroom numbers down but our lack of facilities makes this goal difficult.

Having children housed in portable modulars separate from the school building impacts actual classroom time spent on task and also child safety as students walk back and forth to the main building several times a day. Additionally, my own grandson's elementary lunch program must begin serving K-5 lunches by 10:30 a.m. and serve well past noon in order to provide all students an opportunity to eat in his overcrowded school.

Please join me in support of the HSD bond measure.

Francie Hansell
Hermiston



OTHER VIEWS

This age of wonkery

If you were a certain sort of ideas-oriented young person coming of age in the 20th century, it was very likely you would give yourself a label and join some movement. You would call yourself a Marxist, a neoconservative, a Freudian, an existentialist or a New Deal liberal.

There would be certain sacred writers who would explain the world to you — from Jung to Camus, Dewey or Chesterton. There would probably be a small magazine where the doctrines of your sect would be hammered out.

People today seem less likely to give themselves intellectual labels or join self-conscious philosophical movements. Young people today seem more likely to have their worldviews shaped by trips they have taken, or causes they have been involved in, or the racial or ethnic or gender identity group they identify with.

That has changed the nature of the American intellectual scene, the way people approach the world and the lives they live.

In his book, "The Ideas Industry," Daniel W. Drezner says we have shifted from a landscape dominated by public intellectuals to a world dominated by thought leaders. A public intellectual is someone like Isaiah Berlin, who is trained to comment on a wide array of public concerns from a specific moral stance. A thought leader champions one big idea to improve the world — think Al Gore's work on global warming.

As Drezner puts it, intellectuals are critical, skeptical and tend to be pessimistic. Thought leaders are evangelists for their idea and tend to be optimistic. The world of Davos-like conferences, TED talks and PopTech rewards thought leaders, not intellectuals, Drezner argues.

Intellectual life has fallen out of favor for several reasons, he continues. In a low-trust era, people no longer have as much faith in grand intellectuals to serve as cultural arbiters. In a polarized era, ideologically minded funders like George Soros or the Koch brothers will only pay for certain styles of thought work. In an unequal era, rich people like to go to Big Idea conferences, and when they do they want to hear ideas that are going to have some immediate impact — Jeffrey Sachs' latest plan to end world poverty or Amy Cuddy's findings on how to adopt the right power stance.

Drezner does not call this a decline, just a shift (let us not underestimate how silly and wrong some of the grand, sweeping intellectuals could be). But I am struck by how people's relationship to ideas has changed.

In the first place, public thinkers now conceive of themselves as legislative advisers. Drezner writes a book called "The Ideas Industry," but he is really writing about public policy. When George Orwell, Simone

de Beauvoir or even Ralph Waldo Emerson were writing, they were hoping to radically change society, but nobody would confuse them with policy wonks.

Second, there was a greater sense then than now, I think, that the very nature of society was up for grabs. Call it a vestige from Marxism or maybe Christianity, but there was a sense that the current fallen order was fragile and that a more just mode of living was out there to be imagined.

Finally, intellectual life was just seen as more central to progress. Intellectuals establish the criteria by which things are measured and goals are set. Intellectuals create the frameworks within which politicians operate. How can you have a plan unless you are given a theory? Intellectuals create the age.

Doing that sort of work meant leading the sort of exceptional life that allowed you to emerge from the cave — to see truth squarely and to be fully committed to the cause. Creating a just society was the same thing

as transforming yourself into a moral person.

For Orwell, this meant being with the poor and the oppressed — living as a homeless tramp in England, a dishwasher in Paris, getting shot through the neck as a soldier in the Spanish Civil War. It meant teaching himself how to turn political writing into an art form.

For Italian Communist Antonio Gramsci, it meant committing fully to ideas, even if it meant years in prison, and doing the rigorous mental work required for a life of hard thinking. He was as left as can be, but he believed in traditional school curricula, the tough grinding of learning Latin and Greek grammar.

"It will be necessary to resist the tendency to render easy that which cannot become easy without being distorted," he wrote.

It also meant joining a tradition and a team. There were a whole set of moral tests involved with obedience to the movement, breaking ranks when necessary, facing unpleasant truths, pioneering a collective way of living, whether feminist, Marxist or libertarian.

The 20th century held up intellectuals like that, and then discredited them — too many were too wrong about communism and fascism. But we have probably over-adjusted and deprived a generation of a vision of the heroic intellectual. It is good to have people who think about North Korean disarmament. But politics is most real at a more essential level.

David Brooks became a New York Times Op-Ed columnist in September 2003. He has been a senior editor at The Weekly Standard, a contributing editor at Newsweek and the Atlantic Monthly, and is currently a commentator on PBS.

YOUR VIEWS

The big question is, whose names are going to be on the plaque?

Poor old Bob Patterson has a plethora of street projects stymied by the harsh winter weather. His failure to follow proper disposition