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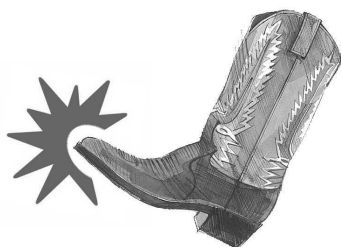
OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A kick in the pants to the three out of every four eligible voters who failed to return their ballots to be counted in Tuesday's election.

In Umatilla County, only 26.3 percent of those registered participated in the election. In Morrow County the return rate was even lower — 23.8 percent.

We understand why fewer people would return ballots in May than in a major fall election. And depending on your district, this year's ballots were particularly devoid of important, contested races. If you live outside of Hermiston's school district or Pendleton's city limits, for instance, you had little to vote for or against — and the races you had the opportunity to chime in on were limited to a data district, a cemetery board or a water control district. Not the kind of political issues that people are champing at the bit to spend a stamp on.



But voting does matter, and Oregon makes it so easy on us, so we should get in the habit of returning each and every ballot to have our views counted.

In Pendleton, the returns were enough to pass a \$10 million fire bond. Perhaps the depressed vote tally was even helpful — it allows those heavily motivated, whether for or against an issue, to have more impact. That same phenomenon was bad news for the Hermiston School District, however, which saw its \$104 million schools bond defeated.

We respect the will of the voters, whoever they choose and what they decide. But the higher the voter turnout, the closer the result is to true democratic expression. That's a goal to aspire to.

A tip of the hat to the beginning of "construction season" in Eastern Oregon.



Yes, you read that right, and we had to grit our teeth while writing it.

But all the barrels and cones and "Slow down" and "Construction zone" signs you're seeing do mean progress — eventually.

In Pendleton, major work is getting done on Westgate, and big projects are starting up on the ramps to and from Interstate 84 in the city.

Even more heavy construction is underway in Hermiston, much of it centered in the vicinity of where highways 395 and 730 merge. Delays will be part of the daily commute through the area in the short-term future, according to

Oregon Department of Transportation.

But the delays will give way to faster, smoother, safer traveling once the construction is complete and finished. Let's begin counting down the days.

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

Malware attack an indirect public service announcement

The Los Angeles Times

The particularly nasty computer program dubbed "WannaCry" that attacked hospitals, businesses and government agencies around the world this past weekend was like a cybercrime highlight reel, a compilation of by-now familiar elements — conscience-free cybercriminals, an obscure vulnerability in Microsoft Windows, older and ill-maintained corporate computer networks and computer users tricked into opening booby-trapped email attachments — that played out on an epic scale.

What's different this time is that the hackers apparently had considerable help from the U.S. government. They used a stolen tool reportedly developed by the National Security Agency to exploit a hidden weakness in the Windows operating system and spread their ransomware far and wide.

The tool was one of many linked to the NSA that were leaked online last year, then finally decrypted in April for use by anyone with the requisite coding skills.

It's tempting to howl at the NSA for not alerting companies like Microsoft when its researchers find vulnerabilities in their products. The reality, though, is that doing so would reduce the effectiveness of cyber tools that have become an integral part of modern efforts by agencies like the NSA to

fight terrorism, international criminal organizations and rogue states. What's needed is a better effort to determine if and when a vulnerability discovered by the feds represents too great a threat to keep it secret from the potential victims. That's a difficult balance

to strike, and the decision shouldn't be made solely by the executive branch without the input of independent experts and, potentially, lawmakers.

The even more important lesson here is that years, even decades of warnings from security experts

simply aren't getting through to the public. WannaCry should not have reached disastrous proportions — Microsoft released a patch that could close the vulnerability in March, well before the NSA's tool was decrypted. Yet tens of thousands of computers weren't updated, allowing the malware the room it needed to spread.

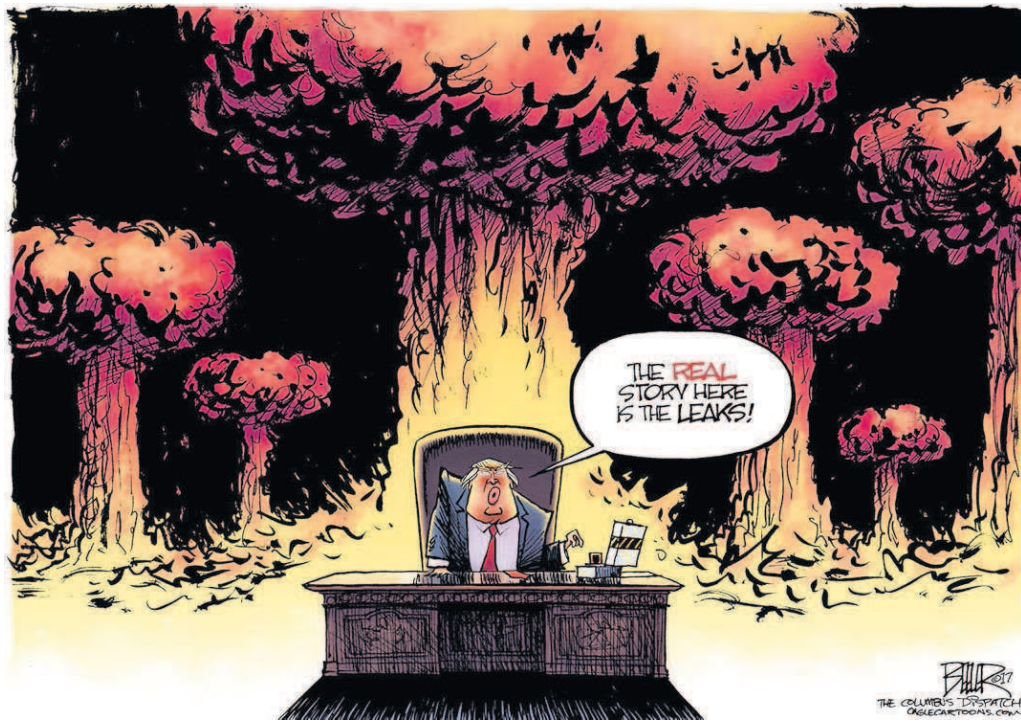
The problem could easily get much, much worse as more routine devices become smart, Internet-connected ones. Evidently we need stronger incentives not just for companies to release more secure products, but also for users to keep them updated and protect their data with encryption and backups. That's what the lawmakers and federal officials should be focusing on — not on trying to discourage consumers from using encryption on their smartphones, or on building stockpiles of malware based on vulnerabilities they alone have found.

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LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and policies. 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 city of residence and a phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

OTHER VIEWS



Trump and the tattlers

For a president so given to fantasy and fond of alternative facts, Donald Trump has been right about one thing all along: His government is a shockingly leaky vessel.

Thank heaven for that.

It's not judges or senators who will save us from the worst of Trump, which is most of Trump. His undoing will come from within. Be as cynical as you want about Washington — I certainly indulge myself — but there remain insiders with consciences, and some of them actually work for the president. They're willing to work against him if circumstances warrant it. Circumstances have been warranting it, and here we are.

What we're witnessing is astonishing. I don't mean Trump's actions — including the infuriating reports that he divulged highly classified information to Russian visitors and had asked James Comey to lay off Michael Flynn — though those do qualify. I mean how reliably these details reached journalists. I mean how reliably Trump's embarrassing or outrageous behavior always reaches journalists, as government officials use the very media that he demonizes to expose his recklessness, ridicule his cluelessness, warn Americans about his intentions and head him off at the pass.

This much leaking this soon in an administration explodes the norms of the White House every bit as much as Trump's own conduct does, and it's an indication more powerful than just about any other of what kind of president we have. He is so unprepared, shows such bad judgment and has such an erratic temper that he's not trusted by people who are paid to bolster him and who get the most intimate, unvarnished look at him. Some of them have decided that discretion isn't always the keeping of secrets, not if it protects bad actors. They're right. And they give me hope.

In one of those nifty and incredibly revealing confluences of news developments, the story about Trump's dangerously loose lips with the Russians came out on the same day that the hosts of "Morning Joe" spoke of Kellyanne Conway's privately admitted disgust for Trump, at least back during the campaign.

This was Conway they were talking about, the high priestess of hyperspin, who can look at the smallest droplet in the largest goblet and pronounce the glass half full. Even she saw the emptiness of Trump. Even she cringed. And if that's the case, there must be more cringing around the president than we realized.

It's getting worse and worse. Last week in particular demonstrated that.

He gives his lieutenants lies to peddle, creates avoidable messes and then rails if underlings don't grab their mops and clean up with sufficient cheer and success. Aides will suck up a whole lot for proximity to power,



FRANK BRUNI
Comment

and partisans will make enormous compromises in the name of the team. But at the end of the day, they're human. They have limits, dignity and the mobile phone numbers of dozens of reporters.

Trump should understand that. He's always telling us how smart he is but showing us the opposite, and as our parents always warned us, actions speak louder than words.

Foolish: to demand such fierce loyalty from the people around you but give precious little in return. It loosens their lips.

Foolish: to continue to treat the Russians with a double scoop of courtesy — here, guys, take a gander at this Islamic State intelligence! — amid a continuing investigation into, and intensifying suspicions about, your exact degree of coziness with Moscow.

All of this came from within, and much of it reflects a concern for country — and the truth — that's greater than any concern for Trump.

If he was wagering that his words to the Russians would never leave the room, well, that's proof of yet more foolishness. With Trump, everything has been leaving the room, by some route or another. If he hasn't learned that yet, he's uneducated.

There are people around Trump who see him for who and what he is. There are people who work in his administration not because they have high hopes for him but because they have modest hopes that they can bend things in a better direction or mitigate damage. None of them were setting themselves up to be moles. But some are playing that part.

And so we knew, even before Trump sat down with NBC's Lester Holt, that the White House was spinning a fairy tale about why the president fired Comey. We knew about possible policy changes regarding climate change and LGBT rights before Trump was ready to publicize them, because aides checked and balanced him with leaks to the media.

We discovered this week that an administration official had presented to Trump, and that he believed, a fake cover of a Time magazine from the 1970s that warned of an impending ice age. And we were briefed on his imprudent conversation with the Russians.

All of this came from within, and much of it reflects a concern for country — and for truth — that's greater than any concern for Trump. Foolish: the failure to account for some aides' decency and patriotism.

"Don't be tattletales" was another caution from our parents, but it was imperfect — or at least incomplete. Sometimes tattling is all that keeps danger at bay. Swampy as Washington can be, it still harbors creatures who understand that.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for The New York Times since 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995. Over his years, he has worn a wide variety of hats, including chief restaurant critic and Rome bureau chief.

YOUR VIEWS

Fire station bond will be more expensive than claimed

Congratulations to Pendleton public safety committee. I hope everything progresses on schedule. I will still get the last laugh this fall when property taxes come out. No one will be paying 14 cents per thousand dollars of assessed value.

Rex Morehouse
Pendleton

Renewable fuel standards are good for fuel industry

Our company has been family owned since 1961 and we've seen many changes to the fuel industry over the past six decades — from what it's used for to how it's made — including innovations in clean energy that have benefited our customers, our industry and our economy.

These include clean fuel standards phased in by Congress since 1990 and accelerated by the Renewable Fuel Standard, which added biofuels to the mix. These standards prompted the creation of reformulated gasoline blends that burn more cleanly than conventional gasoline, reduce greenhouse gas emissions and displace toxic gasoline additives that

pollute the air we breathe. For example, ethanol boosts the octane content of fuel for better performance, filling a role that formerly belonged to an additive called MTBE, infamous for poisoning groundwater supplies.

While we represent only one small fraction of the fuel market at Campo & Poole Distributing, we are tremendously proud to provide Oregon consumers with increasingly earth-friendly fuels that cut our dependence on foreign oil and support jobs in agricultural states like Oregon, where biofuels are produced from renewable farm crops. At the same time, our location near the border with Idaho means that we must deal with two sets of rules, instead of one, so we are acutely aware of how regulatory uncertainty can stifle innovation and investment.

That is why we strongly urge Congressman Walden and leaders in the new administration to reject ongoing efforts to alter the RFS or rewrite fuel standards to boost profits for a handful of oil refineries. Retailers and distributors have worked hard to bring new, clean fuel options to our customers under the existing law, and changes to the RFS would destabilize those investments, putting Oregon's economic engine and natural beauty at risk.

Ken Poole
Ontario