

**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 Keystone RV Company, Lippert Components, Kirby Nagelhout Construction, Pendleton Plumbing, Pendleton Electric, Sheeting Painting and other volunteers who helped remodel a bathroom for a Pendleton single mother of a disabled daughter.



Courtney Bissinger had been trying to secure state assistance to repair her broken shower, so she did not have to bathe her daughter in unsafe conditions. But Keystone RV said a state contractor denied the assistance, so it and other businesses and individuals stepped in to help.

Bissinger's entire bathroom was redone, and the door to the tub was expanded 12-inches to make it easier to bathe 4-year-old Ember. The entire bathroom was expanded by 16 inches as well.

The renovation looks great and works great, so we offer appreciation to local businesses for helping a person in need.



Bath before



Bath after

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**

## Westland users have reasons to oppose central water project

As the quiet majority, the Patrons of Westland have grave concerns about the management of Westland Irrigation District.

What might we be concerned about? The last time there was a major water project in 1987, the senior water rights holders' McKay allotment went from 3.5 acre feet to 2.3 acre feet and our cost went up, while Teel, the junior water rights holders as the Limited Water Users, ended up receiving the benefit.

A short history: The detriment to Westland started when dry land wheat farms from Teel drilled wells. The wells dried up. Teel tried to get rights to McKay, and this was denied numerous times. So Teel came to Westland. Teel got their Umatilla River water delivered with the flood water delivery contracts in 1984.

A boundary expansion was proposed by then manager, doubling the site of the district with the same amount of water, to include Teel inside the boundaries, despite a letter from OWRD on January 28, 1986, that cited serious concerns and violation of state law. In 1987, Teel became the limited water users to get access to McKay.

Teel took control of the Westland Board. Westland senior rights holders' McKay allotment decreased and irrigation season shortened after the senior water right holders went from flood to sprinkler at their own expense. (Records are available to verify this history.)

With that, the senior water rights holders in Westland need to have a full season of water as we had in the past. Stop the prevention of people from knowing the facts through destruction of records, as noted in the October 6, 1991, Oregonian article, "The Umatilla River Blues." Also, patrons shouldn't have to put in a public records request to receive meeting agendas, draft minutes and board packets prior to meetings.

The Central Project was first discussed with patrons on March 31, 2015. We were excited to have ability to purchase more water. To our disappointment, though, we were repeatedly told by Westland: You can buy the water, but we may not be able to deliver it to you.

Our property is located in the middle section of the Westland canal system, so this didn't make sense; the new water could only be delivered to the main canal, where the Teel Irrigation District is located.

We are for an affordable exchange project from the Columbia that will work in collaboration with CTUIR and the Bureau of Reclamation. We are not for more water to benefit a select few large farmers — the juniors Teel — at the expense of Westland via a project of misconception.

**We were told you can buy the water, but we may not be able to deliver it.**

The patrons voiced their opinion by electing two new directors in the fall of 2016 — the first time ever voting for plaintiffs who purchased the Oregon Hereford Ranch in 1976.

Furthermore, why did the district notify the patrons on August 23,

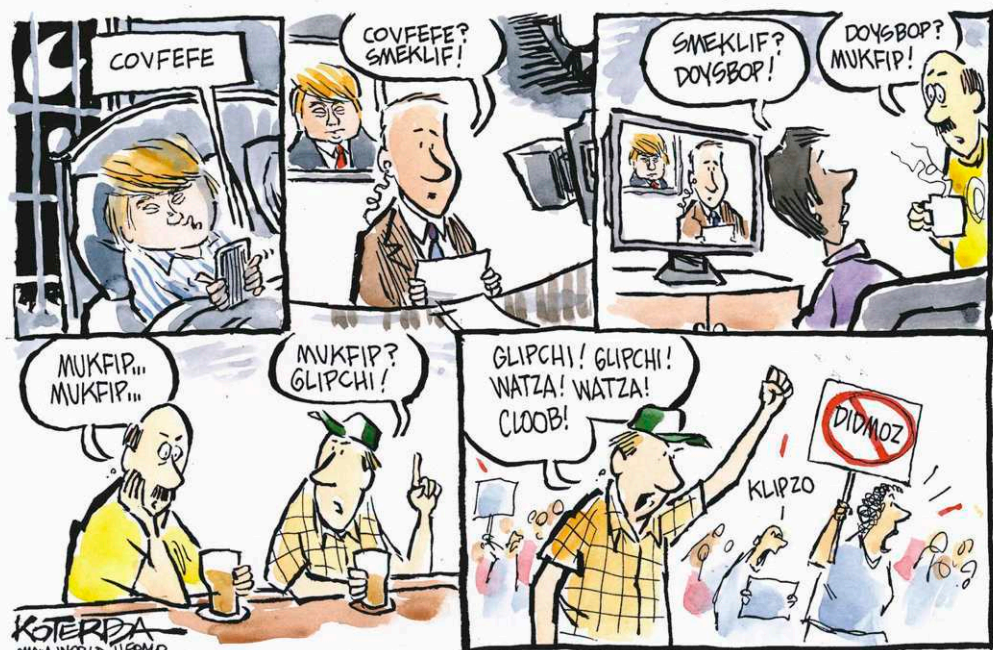
2016 "it is likely the district will need to increase assessments to cover the cost of defending the suits" — neglecting to mention there is an indemnification clause in the limited water users contracts, holding senior water rights harmless from cost of all claims, losses, damages, causes of action or suit arising.

The will of the people could have reached the same conclusion about the Central Project, potentially voting it down. Why was that opportunity denied, allowing for blame to be placed on the lawsuit instead?

The plaintiffs in the lawsuit will always have a clear conscience, reached by doing the right thing for the right reason. Fighting to not allow an irrigation board to take your water to do with it as they please, at their discretion and by the power of eminent domain — which is what the Westland attorneys are arguing.

The Westland Irrigation District Board has a fiduciary duty to the Patrons of Westland with 1903, 1907 and 1961 water rights to deliver the water resources to which each is entitled. Water delivery by priority: first in time, first in right.

Dixie Echeverria is one of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit, a small farmer in the district. She wrote this with support with a group called the Patrons of Westland.



POLITICS TODAY...

**OTHER VIEWS**

## Oh dear, the Trumps keep multiplying

The kids are not alright. Let's see now. Donald Trump's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, is under investigation for weird cloak-and-dagger meetings with the Russians. Ivanka just took a bunch of money from the Saudis for her favorite charity. Eric and Don Jr. are traveling the world to promote Trump hotels and golf courses while being looked after by the Secret Service on our dime.



**GAIL COLLINS**  
Comment

Tiffany is going to law school. If only the others were in law school.

Pop question: Who's your favorite mini-Trump? I'm sort of attached to Eric, the one who compared waterboarding to a fraternity hazing.

In theory, Eric and Don Jr. are supposed to be totally unconnected to the government, running the family business in a manner so separate from the president that they might easily be working in a totally different dimension.

Hahaha. "I do not talk about the government with him and he does not talk about the business with us. That's kind of a steadfast pact we made, and it's something we honor," Eric told Forbes earlier this year.

Then, Forbes reported, about "two minutes later" Eric volunteered that he'd still be making "profitability reports and stuff like that" to the president. He and Dad are, Eric added, "pretty inseparable."

Darned tootin'. Besides traveling the world to publicize Trump golf courses and hang out with potential investors, Eric and Donald Jr. are also working the political side of the street. The boys recently met with Republican leaders to discuss 2018 election plans. (Don Jr., by the way, is the one who was recently off shooting prairie dogs during their breeding season.)

Eric's wife, Lara, was at the meeting, too. More relatives! When she's not talking with Republican leaders, Lara is active in an animal rights group called the Beagle Freedom Project. It helps find homes for dogs that were used in scientific studies, which is commendable. On the other hand, one of its leaders spent six years in jail for harassing research workers.

Her father-in-law isn't really into pets, which is now looking like a good thing. Given the way he operates, if Trump had, say, a cocker spaniel it would probably now be deputy secretary of agriculture.

Lately, the Trump relatives we've been hearing most about are Ivanka, an official presidential adviser, and her husband, Jared, whose portfolio includes modernizing government and bringing peace to the Middle East. They recently accompanied the president on his overseas trip — the one that began in Saudi Arabia with fun festivities and the glowing orb.

While the Trumps were there, the Saudis and the United Arab Emirates announced they

were honoring Ivanka by donating \$100 million to a World Bank fund for women entrepreneurs.

Perhaps you remember a presidential debate last fall in which Trump denounced the Clinton Foundation for accepting money from conservative Arab nations like, um, Saudi Arabia. ("You talk about women and women's rights? So these are people who push gays off buildings. These are people that kill women and treat women horribly. And yet you take their money.") Ah, well.

Jared's current issue is the mysterious back channel he attempted to set up with the Russians. Like so very many things involving this administration, it's a controversy in which the most positive interpretation is that he had no idea what the hell he was doing.

In December Kushner met with Sergey Gorkov, the head of a Russia bank, to talk about setting up a special communication system, apparently so he could talk without U.S. intelligence overhearing.

It had to be disastrous in some way, since Mike Flynn was involved. Among the possible explanations:

A) The incoming administration had directed a 36-year-old real estate developer with no government experience to solve the Syrian crisis while keeping the whole thing secret from everybody except Vladimir Putin.

B) Jared was trying to do a favor for his sister-in-law Lara by setting up a channel to smuggle abused beagles out of Russia.

C) This is something about Russian money backing Trump businesses.

I am of course going for the beagles. But feel free to be cynical.

"We know Kushner's business operations are in constant need of loans and investors. It's highly suspicious," said Fred Wertheimer of the good-government group Democracy 21.

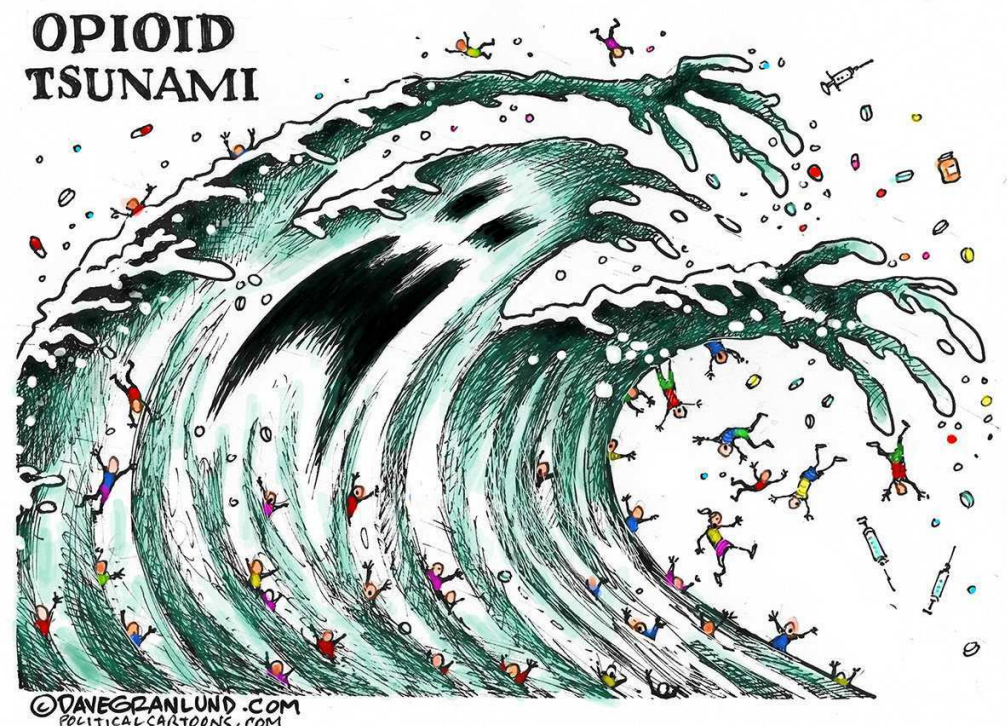
He used to specialize in campaign finance reform, but now Wertheimer lives in a world where a president's daughter joins Dad at a dinner with the Chinese president the very same day she receives trademark rights for selling Ivanka Trump glitz in China.

And speaking of sleazy contacts with foreign investors, last week Senate Judiciary Committee chairman Chuck Grassley called for an investigation into "potentially fraudulent statements and misrepresentations" made by a Chinese company promoting deals that seemed to involve U.S. visas for financiers who made big investments in a luxury condo project in New Jersey.

The condos are being developed by Kushner Cos. and were being marketed by Jared's sister. Yes! There's no end to them.

Stay the course, Tiffany.

Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board and later as an Op-Ed columnist. In 2001 she became the first woman ever appointed editor of the Times's editorial page.



©DAVEGRANLUND.COM POLITICAL CARTOONS.COM

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