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OUR VIEW

Zinke, Perdue listen and break tradition

Farmers and ranchers throughout the West are accustomed to periodic visits from cabinet officials from Washington, D.C. These tours have been standard operating procedure for administrations of both parties since before the New Deal.

So it wasn't surprising when Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue and Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke visited Idaho together June 2.

Bigwigs from Washington always come to town for a reason, usually to deliver the administration's talking points as they relate to a particular audience.

And Perdue and Zinke followed tradition. They came to Boise State University to vow that their two departments will partner closely with states and communities on land management and other issues.

"We're here to make that commitment to you today," Perdue said. "We're (here) talking direct, eyeball-to-eyeball. We're going to make a (change) in the way we do business."

Of course they are. Everyone, Democrats and Republicans, promises big changes, something new and better. For eight years Tom Vilsack, an affable Iowan who served as President Obama's ag secretary, brought the administration's message

of hope and change as it applied to rural issues.

You don't fly 2,500 miles to tell a crowd that nothing is going to change.

No surprises here. We'd be willing to write it off as business as usual, a harmless, fairly upbeat encounter that carried with it no real expectations. But, they also did something a little different, something they're still talking about in Idaho.

In a closed-door meeting with 10 producers before the Boise State event, Perdue and Zinke didn't make speeches. They listened. "They just didn't have an agenda. They truly wanted to listen to us," said Aberdeen potato farmer Ritchey Toevs. "It was a pro-producer meeting. It was a completely different experience than I've ever had."

It's not just the farmers and ranchers who are talking. Gov. Butch Otter, a seasoned political hand who has attended these kinds of events for years, was surprised.

"They sat there for a solid hour and listened to 10 different producers," Otter told the Capital Press. "In every case, both the secretaries ended up with one question — 'What can we do to help you?' That's refreshing."

Indeed. It will be even more refreshing if they deliver.

It's not just farmers and ranchers who are talking.

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.

CULTURE CORNER



Nautilus Magazine

Rock climber Alex Honnold allowed neuroscientists to map his brain — to surprising results.

A peek inside Alex Honnold's brain

Forget what the commercials tell you: Alex Honnold is the most interesting man in the world.

He recently free climbed El Capitan, the vertical cliff in Yosemite National Park. Free climbed, as in without a rope. Or a net. Or help from anyone else.

His accomplishments have been profiled earlier this month in the *The New York Times* and *The New Yorker* magazine, and his El Capitan feat will soon be immortalized in the pages of *National Geographic*.

But now is a good time to look back at this August 2016 article from *Nautilus*, where Honnold allowed neuroscientists a peek into how his

mind works. Is his brain broken? Is it missing something essential that keeps the rest of us alive? Or is it advanced far beyond his fellow man, allowing him to accomplish what we would never try?

We won't give away too much, but the results are fascinating. So, too are the quotes from Honnold and hearing him describe how and why he does what he does. If you have a mountain to climb in your life — literal or metaphorical — reading about how the very best get to the top can be very revealing.

Find it by typing "Alex Honnold + Nautilus" into Google.

— Tim Trainor, opinion page editor of *The East Oregonian*

YOUR VIEWS

Boutique an improvement over previous airline

Taking four flights between Pendleton and Portland on Boutique Air has been a smooth experience — consistently good quality and no-muss, no fuss among agents or pilots. Boutique service is more professional than that of SeaPort Airlines, which preceded Boutique.

Boutique has a first-rate terminal building just yards from the long lineup of airlines at Portland International. And travelers going just to Portland are not subject to body searches. Seats

in the eight-passenger cabin are an improvement over the SeaPort seating.

Flights I have taken have been mostly full. I appreciate the Boutique schedule: three flights daily Pendleton-to-Portland and three daily Portland-to-Pendleton.

Boutique is supported partly by federal funds servicing rural parts of the country, and the amount of support depends partly on numbers of seats sold. This airline does not meet all of Umatilla county's transportation needs, but it is an important service.

Mike Forrester
Pendleton



OTHER VIEWS

Only mass deportation can save America

In the matter of immigration, mark this conservative columnist down as strongly pro-deportation. The United States has too many people who don't work hard, don't believe in God, don't contribute much to society and don't appreciate the greatness of the American system.

They need to return whence they came.

I speak of Americans whose families have been in this country for a few generations. Complacent, entitled and often shockingly ignorant on basic points of American law and history, they are the stagnant pool in which our national prospects risk drowning.

On point after point, America's nonimmigrants are failing our country. Crime? A study by the Cato Institute notes that nonimmigrants are incarcerated at nearly twice the rate of illegal immigrants, and at more than three times the rate of legal ones.

Educational achievement? Just 17 percent of the finalists in the 2016 Intel Science Talent Search — often called the "Junior Nobel Prize" — were the children of U.S.-born parents. At the Rochester Institute of Technology, just 9.5 percent of graduate students in electrical engineering were nonimmigrants.

Religious piety — especially of the Christian variety? More illegal immigrants identify as Christian (83 percent) than do Americans (70.6 percent), a fact right-wing immigration restrictionists might ponder as they bemoan declines in church attendance.

Business creation? Nonimmigrants start businesses at half the rate of immigrants, and accounted for fewer than half the companies started in Silicon Valley between 1995 and 2005. Overall, the share of nonimmigrant entrepreneurs fell by more than 10 percentage points between 1995 and 2008, according to a Harvard Business Review study.

Nor does the case against nonimmigrants end there. The rate of out-of-wedlock births for U.S.-born mothers exceeds the rate for foreign-born moms, 42 percent to 33 percent. The rate of delinquency and criminality among nonimmigrant teens considerably exceeds that of their immigrant peers. A recent report by the Sentencing Project also finds evidence that the fewer immigrants there are in a neighborhood, the likelier it is to be unsafe.

And then there's the all-important issue of demographics. The race for the future is ultimately a race for people — healthy, working-age, fertile people — and our nonimmigrants fail us here, too. "The increase in the overall number of U.S. births, from 3.74 million in 1970 to 4.0 million in 2014, is due entirely to births to foreign-born mothers," reports the Pew Research Center.

Without these immigrant moms, the United States would be faced with the same

demographic death spiral that now confronts Japan.

Bottom line: So-called real Americans are screwing up America. Maybe they should leave, so that we can replace them with new and better ones: newcomers who are more appreciative of what the United States has to offer, more ambitious for themselves and their children, and more willing to sacrifice for the future. In other words, just the kind of people we used to be — when "we" had just come off the boat.

OK, so I'm jesting about deporting "real Americans" en masse. (Who would take them in, anyway?) But then the threat of mass deportations has been no joke with this administration.

On Thursday, the Department of Homeland Security seemed prepared to extend an Obama administration program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals, or DACA, which allows the children of illegal

immigrants — some 800,000 people in all — to continue to study and work in the United States. The decision would have reversed one of Donald Trump's ugly campaign threats to deport these kids, whose only crime was to have been brought to the United States by their parents.

Yet the administration is still committed to deporting their parents, and on Friday the DHS announced that even DACA remains under review — another cruel twist for young immigrants wondering if they'll be sent back to "home" countries they hardly ever knew, and whose language they might barely even speak.

Beyond the inhumanity of toying with people's lives this way, there's also the shortsightedness of it. We do not usually find happiness by driving away those who would love us. Businesses do not often prosper by firing their better employees and discouraging job applications. So how does America become great again by berating and evicting its most energetic, enterprising, law-abiding, job-creating, idea-generating, self-multiplying and God-fearing people?

Because I'm the child of immigrants and grew up abroad, I have always thought of the United States as a country that belongs first to its newcomers — the people who strain hardest to become a part of it because they realize that it's precious; and who do the most to remake it so that our ideas, and our appeal, may stay fresh.

That used to be a cliché, but in the Age of Trump it needs to be explained all over again. We're a country of immigrants — by and for them, too. Americans who don't get it should get out.

■
Bret Stephens won a Pulitzer Prize for commentary in 2013. He began working as a columnist at *The New York Times* in April.



BRET STEPHENS
Comment

On point after point, America's nonimmigrants are failing our country.



LETTERS POLICY

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