

# EAST OREGONIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# All kinds of visitors descending on Eastern Oregon

Millions of crickets are eating their way through Arlington. Pyrosomes are filling the waters off the Oregon coast in incalculable numbers. Rainbow-clad hippies are descending on Seneca. Perhaps even aliens will visit from outer space on Saturday, the 70th anniversary of Kenneth Arnold's unexplainable sighting.

Oregon — especially Eastern Oregon — sure feels like a crowded destination these days. Lots of events, both planned and thrust upon us, are bringing hordes of organisms to our usually quiet corner of the planet.

Summer officially starts today and that means tourist season is hitting top gear. In Pendleton, prepare for big crowds for Bike Week and Pendleton Whisky Music Fest as well as a little thing called the Round-Up when September comes around. In addition, the total solar eclipse in August is likely to fill campgrounds and hotel rooms and roads all across the region.

Eastern Oregon will get busy, giving us opportunities to prosper but also to cause problems. The Mormon crickets are causing havoc and crop devastation in northwest Morrow County. The pyrosomes are confusing scientists. The Rainbow Family is putting the environment at risk by gathering in numbers too large for the forest to handle. The flying objects overhead remain unidentified.

The paying festivalgoers, however, we know how to deal with. Pendleton Bike Week is building off a steady stream of increasing participation, Whisky Fest is coming back for year two with a larger-drawing band, the Round-Up keeps on chugging along. The eclipse could be a godsend, if the weather is as good as expected and people are well behaved.

Hundreds of thousands of people will likely drive hundreds of miles into the prime viewing zone, which thankfully graces Eastern Oregon with a thin stripe of totality. Gas stations, restaurants and hotels stand to make a windfall on the visitors, who may bring their own costs with them, too. Law enforcement and emergency services will be stretched thin.

We're not used to crowds out here, but our advice is to make the best of what is coming our way. Crickets might have little to offer, but people have pockets. We can empty those pockets here, enriching the local economy by being good hosts and businesspeople — selling some goods and filling up the gas tanks and bellies of passing travelers.

We can show off the wonderful place we call home, while making sure our visitors treat it with the proper respect. We don't need to show mercy to cannibalistic crickets, but for the rest we should strive for old-fashioned hospitality that can benefit hosts and visitors alike.

**Our advice: Make the best of the hordes that are headed our way. It's easier with people than the crickets.**

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

### Kitzhaber: What could have been

The Eugene Register-Guard

Last week's terse announcement by the U.S. attorney's office in Portland that no criminal charges would be filed against former Gov. John Kitzhaber or his girlfriend, Cylvia Hayes, is the coda to one of the most traumatic episodes in Oregon political history. Kitzhaber's resignation, just five weeks after being inaugurated to an unprecedented fourth term, denied him the place he might have claimed in that history. It also cut the trauma short, sparing the state what could have become the protracted ordeal of being led for years by a governor who was under criminal investigation.

If Kitzhaber could have avoided the allegations of influence peddling that forced him from office, he'd now be closing out the last full-length legislative session of his career with an eye toward leaving a legacy that would put him in the ranks of former Gov. Tom McCall. Unencumbered by re-election concerns and with the benefit of long experience in Salem, Kitzhaber might have been the one to forge a bipartisan consensus around the twin goals of bringing state spending under control and providing new tax revenue to restore Oregon's struggling education system.

But such a success could not have come from a governor who was the target of a federal criminal investigation. Though the allegations are fading from memory, they were serious and growing more numerous by the day. Kitzhaber's personal finances were tightly entangled with those of Hayes, who kept a desk in the governor's office and presented herself as Oregon's first lady. Hayes received more than \$200,000 in consulting contracts because of her political connections, and failed to report some of the income on federal tax forms. Hayes also directed state agencies to implement policies advocated by

organizations that had paid for her work.

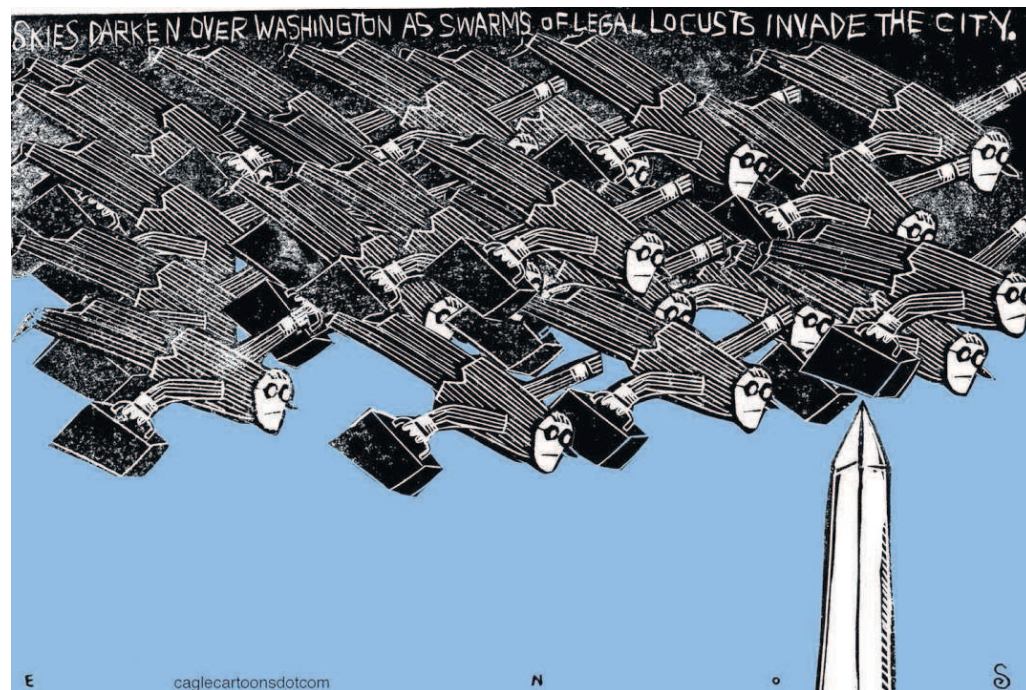
But Kitzhaber could have held on — and a more stubborn, or less realistic, governor might have. The Legislature has no process for impeachment, even if grounds exist. The only way to remove Oregon's governor is through a recall election, a time-consuming and distracting process better designed for delivering a political verdict than a judgment of guilt or innocence. If there were no recall or if Kitzhaber survived a recall vote, Oregon would have spent the last 28 months in a state of political paralysis. The 2016 elections for legislative and statewide offices would have been all about Kitzhaber.

The U.S. attorney's office undoubtedly recognizes that its investigation could have consigned Oregon government to a protracted period of unproductive churn. But the length of the investigation — in which the FBI, the IRS and the U.S. Department of Justice also took part — is evidence of its complexity.

The investigation was halfway through when the U.S. Supreme Court decided, in a case involving a former Virginia governor and his wife, that public officials can't be convicted of corruption without solid proof of an exchange of goods for services. Even with such a high standard in place, the Kitzhaber-Hayes investigation continued for a year.

A spokesman for Kitzhaber and Hayes calls this "exoneration," and they are entitled to make that claim. But they can't say they were vindicated. There's a difference between being cleared of wrongdoing and being found to have been in the right all along. A combination of hubris and recklessness brought Kitzhaber down, and the U.S. attorney's decision doesn't change that. There is tragedy, for Kitzhaber and for Oregon, in such a fall. But the worst possible outcome — a legal and ethical cloud over most of Kitzhaber's fourth term — was avoided.

## OTHER VIEWS



# Let's not get carried away

I was the op-ed editor at *The Wall Street Journal* at the peak of the Whitewater scandal. We ran a series of investigative pieces "raising serious questions" (as we say in the scandal business) about the nefarious things the Clintons were thought to have done back in Arkansas.

Now I confess I couldn't follow all the actual allegations made in those essays. They were six jungles deep in the weeds. But I do remember the intense atmosphere that the scandal created. A series of bombshell revelations came out in the media, which seemed monumental at the time. A special prosecutor was appointed and indictments were expected. Speculation became the national sport.

In retrospect Whitewater seems overblown. And yet it has to be confessed that, at least so far, the Whitewater scandal was far more substantive than the Russia-collusion scandal now gripping Washington.

There may be a giant revelation still to come. But as the Trump-Russia story has evolved, it is striking how little evidence there is that any underlying crime occurred — that there was any actual collusion between the Donald Trump campaign and the Russians. Everything seems to be leaking out of this administration, but so far the leaks about actual collusion are meager.

There were some meetings between Trump officials and some Russians, but so far no more than you'd expect from a campaign that was publicly and proudly pro-Putin. And so far nothing we know of these meetings proves or even indicates collusion.

I'm not saying there shouldn't be an investigation into potential Russia-Trump links. Russia's attack on American democracy was truly heinous, and if the Trump people were involved, that would be treason. I'm saying first, let's not get ahead of ourselves and assume that this link exists.

Second, there is something disturbingly meta about this whole affair. This is, as Yuval Levin put it, an investigation about itself. Trump skeptics within the administration laid a legal minefield all around the president, and then Trump — being Trump — stomped all over it, blowing himself up six ways from Sunday.

Now of course Trump shouldn't have tweeted about Oval Office tape recordings. Of course he shouldn't have fired James Comey.

But even if you took a paragon of modern presidents — a contemporary Abraham Lincoln — and you directed a democratically unsupervised, infinitely financed team of prosecutors at him and gave them power to subpoena his staff and look under any related or unrelated rock in an attempt to bring him down, there's a pretty good chance you could spur even this modern paragon to want to



DAVID BROOKS  
Comment

fight back. You could spur even him to do something that had the whiff of obstruction.

There's just something worrisome every time we find ourselves replacing politics of democracy with the politics of scandal. In democracy, the issues count, and you try to win by persuasion. You recognize that your opponents are legitimate, that they will always be there and that some form of compromise is inevitable.

In the politics of scandal, at least since Watergate, you don't have to engage in persuasion or even talk about issues. Political

victories are won when you destroy your political opponents by catching them in some wrongdoing. You get seduced by the delightful possibility that your opponent will be eliminated. Politics is simply about moral superiority and personal destruction.

The politics of scandal is delightful for cable news. It's hard to build ratings arguing about health insurance legislation. But it's easy to build ratings if you are a glorified Court TV, if each whiff of scandal smoke

generates hours of "Breaking News" intensity and a deluge of speculation from good-looking former prosecutors.

The politics is great for those forces responsible for the lawyerization of American life. It takes power out of the hands of voters and elected officials and puts power in the hands of prosecutors and defense attorneys.

The politics of scandal drives a wedge through society. Political elites get swept up in the scandals. Most voters don't really care.

Donald Trump rose peddling the politics of scandal — oblivious to policy, spreading insane allegations about birth certificates and other things — so maybe it's just that he gets swallowed by it. But frankly, on my list of reasons Trump is unfit for the presidency, the Russia-collusion story ranks number 971, well below, for example, the perfectly legal ways he kowtows to thugs and undermines the norms of democratic behavior.

The people who hype the politics of scandal don't make U.S. government purer. They deserve some of the blame for an administration and government too distracted to do its job, for a political culture that is both shallower and nastier, and for fostering a process that looks like an elite game of entrapment.

Things are so bad that I'm going to have to give Trump the last word. On June 15 he tweeted, "They made up a phony collusion with the Russians story, found zero proof, so now they go for obstruction of justice on the phony story." Unless there is some new revelation, that may turn out to be pretty accurate commentary.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in 2003.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Pendleton development should look for return on investment

Looks like the Pendleton Development Commission has done it again — backed another loser.

The closure of the Pendleton Coffee Bean and Bistro is indicative of a problem all too common at city hall: public servants pretending to be business smart. With the majority having no experience in the private sector, they continue trying to create supply where there is no demand.

Perhaps an executive or associate director with practical experience as a successful business owner would be more appropriate to administer the PDC. Pipe dreams are great, but ignoring basic economic principles does nothing to improve the economic health of our community.

It's time for a transparent analysis program that rates the effectiveness of the entire PDC program at increasing the tax base of the Urban Renewal District properties for which it was intended verses the amount spent. Are we getting our money's worth?

It's doubtful that our children or even our children's children will ever see a return on our investment in a project like the Rivoli

Theater restoration, which is expected to cost between \$3-5 million and never turn a profit once completed.

The time has come to hold the PDC accountable and put an end to accepting an explanation from the administrator that the program has been very successful despite the closing of more downtown businesses in supposedly good economic times.

Unlike the drone program, which is year-round and shows continued success, the feeble attempt to attract core businesses to the downtown area with Christmas tree lights and those ridiculous speed bumps only tend to attract duplicate businesses that must cannibalize customers from each other in an attempt to succeed.

With auditoriums at BMCC, PHS and the Vert all needing funds for maintenance, I just don't see projects like the Rivoli Theater as a viable economic force in a healthy downtown economy.

The Pendleton Foundation Trust would better serve the community by providing bus stops and Roundup for public works rather than summer Christmas tree lights.

Rick Rohde  
Pendleton

## LETTERS POLICY

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