

EAST OREGONIAN

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KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

MARISSA WILLIAMS
Regional Advertising Director

MARCY ROSENBERG
Circulation Manager

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MIKE JENSEN
Production Manager

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the prison superintendents who are passing the keys of the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution from one woman to another.

Jeri Taylor is currently the director of the Pendleton prison, a place where she worked since it was a state hospital. Taylor is set to retire after a long career in which she worked her way up the corporate ladder in a male-dominated field.

A prison is a working environment where strong leadership is critical. The work is difficult and dangerous, and culture and morale are important so that staff stick out the tough parts and find ways to succeed.

Taylor made a positive one and all signs are that Amsberry learned from her mentor and can continue to keep EOCI headed in a positive direction — hard to do in a place that has its fair share of negativity.

A kick in the pants to Republican Senators who have secretly created their health care bill, which was dropped on the world Thursday and may be pressed into law as early as next week.

Health care is a life-and-death issue for many Americans. It makes up one-sixth of our country's economy. It is as complicated as can be, with tentacles spreading out into not just public health and mental health, but into Medicare and Medicaid, the budget deficit and into the country's tax structure, hospitals and hospice, and into the wallet of every man, woman and child in the country.

Donald Trump oversimplified the problems with Obamacare during his campaign, touting his ability to painlessly fix the system. He had an about-face after being sworn in — "Nobody knew health care could be so complicated!"

Since that's the case, a total remake of how it works should undergo a long, public process that allows a lot of time for our representatives to debate the myriad issues.

It's disappointing that Republicans used their power to abuse the system when crafting this important law. It's our hope that the necessary three (or more) Republican senators show the backbone to insist on deeper debate.

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.

YOUR VIEWS

How lame to blame sports loss on the cheerleaders

How can cheerleaders cause a sports team to lose a game? (Coach resigns after parents blame cheerleaders for loss, page A3 in June 21 EO) Maybe get a technical or two and then your team loses.

Parents make excuses to not blame the coaches and players. What's wrong with saying we got beat by a better team and not make up any excuses?

The basketball finals score was 57-54, the Downey brothers from Santiam scored 54 of their 57 points. We have gloated on (our team) all season and when they lost we make up a reason why: Cheerleaders made them lose.

Did the cheerleaders play varsity football or basketball on the boy's team? No. What's wrong with saying we got beat by a better team and not make up any excuses?

How many of us have played basketball and football and while playing ever knew what the cheerleaders were doing? Zip, nothing, notta, no clue. As a player, when do you have time to watch the cheerleaders while playing?

If I was the mother of the cheerleading coach and also working for the same school district that your daughter works for I would support my daughter as a parent wholeheartedly. Administrators are supposed to be professional and handle complaints with an open mind and not my way or the highway.

What's wrong with letting Aleta Lemmon work until her retirement date and be gone? I feel the administrators could have handled this more professionally and with less drama and more thoughtfulness.

Rick Rohde
Pendleton

with humility and compassion for all those involved. Some individuals have too much power and ultimately affect all those who work under them.

Art Derbyshire
Hermiston

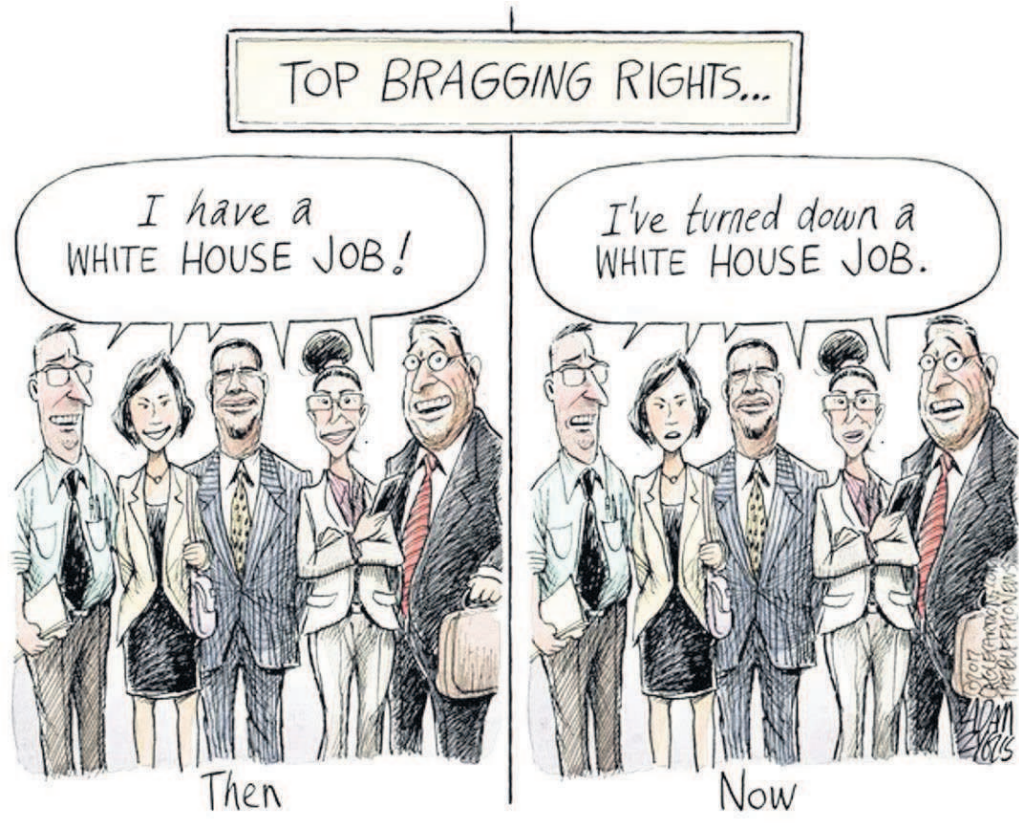
Pendleton city isn't involved in corruption

The mayor has been offended by my recent letters to the editor that in his opinion include charges of corruption — his words, not mine. Charges were leveled by me in regards to the Pendleton Development Commission awarding grants that benefit his circle of friends.

So (in my own opinion) the Rivoli Coalition and the Pendleton Downtown Association administration are evidently not, I repeat, not friends of the mayor. My mistake and I apologize for that. I would remind the colonel, with all due respect, that the title of the section in the East Oregonian that contained the letters is "opinion" and no charge of corruption was intended, just maybe bad judgment.

Kudos to the Umatilla Fire District #1 in Hermiston as they continue to lead the way with a new community paramedic program and construction of a training facility partially funded by a grant of \$438,000 from our own BMCC.

In other news, a "Tip of the Hat" is in order for the Pendleton School Board approving the renewal of the ASPIRE scholarship program administered by Jill Gregg.



OTHER VIEWS

Where did 'we the people' go?

A few days ago I was at a conference in Montreal, and a Canadian gentleman, trying to grasp what's happening to America, asked me a simple question: "What do you fear most these days?"

I paused for a second, like a spectator waiting to see what would come out of my own mouth. Two things came out: "I fear we're seeing the end of 'truth' — that we simply can't agree any more on basic facts. And I fear that we're becoming Sunnis and Shiites — we call them 'Democrats' and 'Republicans,' but the sectarianism that has destroyed nation-states in the Middle East is now infecting us."

It used to be that people didn't want their kids to marry one of "them," referring to someone of a different religion or race (bad enough). Now the "them" is someone of a different party.

When a liberal comedian poses with a mock severed head of Donald Trump, when the president's own son, Eric Trump, says of his father's Democratic opponents, "To me, they're not even people," you know that you are heading to a dark place.

So when I got home, I called my teacher and friend Dov Seidman, author of the book "How" and CEO of LRN, which helps companies and leaders build ethical cultures, and asked him what he thought was happening to us.

"What we're experiencing is an assault on the very foundations of our society and democracy — the twin pillars of truth and trust," Seidman responded. "What makes us Americans is that we signed up to have a relationship with ideals that are greater than us and with truths that we agreed were so self-evident they would be the foundation of our shared journey toward a more perfect union — and of respectful disagreement along the way.

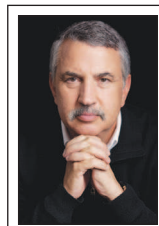
But when there is no "we" anymore, because "we" no longer share basic truths, Seidman argued, "then there is no legitimate authority and no unifying basis for our continued association."

We've had breakdowns in truth and trust before in our history, but this feels particularly dangerous because it is being exacerbated by technology and Trump.

Social networks and cyberhacking are helping extremists to spread vitriol and fake news at a speed and breadth we have never seen before. "Today, we're not just deeply divided, as we've been before, we're being actively divided — by cheap tools that make it so easy to broadcast one's own 'truths' and to undermine real ones," Seidman argued.

This anger industry is now "either sending us into comfortable echo chambers where we don't see the other or arousing such moral outrage in us toward the other that we can no longer see their humanity, let alone embrace them as fellow Americans with whom we share values."

Social networks and hacking also "have enabled us to see, in full color, into the innermost workings of every institution and into the attitudes of those who run them," noted Seidman, "and that has eroded trust



THOMAS FRIEDMAN
Comment

in virtually every institution, and the authority of many leaders, because people don't like what they see."

With shared truth debased and trust in leaders diminished, we now face a full-blown "crisis of authority itself," argued Seidman, who distinguishes between "formal authority" and "moral authority."

While our system can't function without leaders with formal authority, what makes it really work, he added, is "when leaders occupying those

formal positions — from business to politics to schools to sports — have moral authority. Leaders with moral authority understand what they can demand of others and what they must inspire in them. They also understand that

formal authority can be won or seized, but moral authority has to be earned every day by how they lead. And we don't have enough of these leaders."

In fact, we have so few we've forgotten what they look like. Leaders with moral authority have several things in common, said Seidman: "They trust people with the truth — however bright or dark. They're animated by values — especially humility — and principles of probity, so they do the right things, especially when they're difficult or unpopular. And they enlist people in noble purposes and onto journeys worthy of their dedication."

Think how far away Trump is from that definition. In Trump we not only have a president who can't lead us out of this crisis — because he has formal authority but no moral authority — but a president who is every day through Twitter a one-man accelerator of the erosion of truth and trust eating away at our society.

We saw that play out between Trump and James Comey, the FBI director.

There's an adage, explained Seidman, that says: "Ask for my honesty and I'll give you my loyalty. Ask for my loyalty and I'll give you my honesty." But Trump was not interested in Comey's honesty. He only wanted Comey's blind loyalty — delivered free because Trump thought he had the formal authority to demand it. "But true loyalty can't be commanded; it can only be inspired," said Seidman.

Alas, Trump is not going to get any better and the technology is not going to get any slower. It is imperative, in the short run, that some moral leaders emerge in the GOP and actually restrain Trump. But that's doubtful.

But the upside of today's political-technology platform is that leaders can come out of anywhere — fast. Look at the new president of France. In the long run, the only thing that will save us is if more people — no matter what age, color, gender or faith — build moral authority in their respective realms and then use it to do big, meaningful things.

Use it to run for office, start a company, operate a school, lead a movement or build a community organization. And in so doing you can help put the "We" back in "We the people."

Thomas Friedman, a New York Times columnist, was awarded two Pulitzer Prizes.

