

# 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**  
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**JANNA HEIMGARTNER**  
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## OUR VIEW

# Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to Kathleen Mollinedo, the 13-year-old girl who spent a night lost in the woods near Tollgate, and the Umatilla County Search and Rescue team for bringing her back safely.

Mollinedo deserves a tip for her cool-headed response in a dangerous situation. She said she was away from camp climbing a tree when she fell, rolled down a hill and became disoriented. She walked away from camp instead of toward it, but soon realized her mistake.

Instead of panicking and continuing to wander the wilderness, making a search more difficult, she found a clearing and stayed put. She listened for voices and shouted whenever she thought she heard something. She slept under a tree once the sun went down, but returned to the clearing at sunup where she was found later that morning.

Getting lost in the woods can be frightening, and at night it becomes particularly dangerous. Mollinedo did the exact right thing and the local search and rescue unit was able to find her. That's a win all around, and a good example for any stray camper to follow.

**A kick in the pants to the faltering fireworks show in Pendleton.**

Seasonal celebrations are often taken for granted, with a small handful of people doing a whole lot of work for the community at large to enjoy. Such is the case with the Fourth of July fireworks show, which has been passed around among organizations and most recently taken on by the Eagles and most specifically by member Becky Marks.

Marks and the Eagles helped rally the event in 2015 after it was nearly canceled, and took the lead in 2016 as well. But she told the club she wouldn't be in charge of the 2017 show.

Now, with only a few days left until the Fourth of July, word is out that there will be no fireworks. And that's a shame.

But it's up to the citizens of Pendleton to decide how to move forward. It's no small feat to raise \$10,000, and there are certainly plenty of valuable places to donate our hard-earned dollars.

We nevertheless believe it's an event that can be accomplished without funds from the city. If Hermiston, Stanfield and Lone can put on a fireworks show, Pendleton should be able to make it work, too.

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

# Health care changes must be a bipartisan effort

By Aurora (Colo.) Sentinel

Two things are easy for everyone to agree on: Obamacare was a noble idea that isn't working, and what Republicans are pitching as a replacement is far worse than Obamacare.

Beside those certainties, American health care reform is chaos.

How American health care works — or more accurately, doesn't work — is vastly complicated and exasperating. It's a hodgepodge of philosophies, regulations, laws and endless contradictions. Obamacare was an attempt to reduce the individual costs of health care and force insurance companies to deliver value and fairness. It was doomed from the beginning because it tried to create a better system for consumers without structurally changing it. Without regulating costs and controlling premium hikes, suppliers endlessly hiked prices and insurance companies demanded higher premiums. While Obamacare infinitely improved how consumers were treated by insurance companies, fewer people in the vast middle class can afford it any more.

Trumpcare, as proposed by House and Senate Republicans, only makes an increasingly bad health care system dangerously worse.

Numerous outside experts and analysts agree that it would immediately make health insurance more expensive for Americans who are already struggling with the cost of Obamacare. If you're between the ages of 50-65, you'll pay more than anyone, and you'll pay much, much more than you do now. If you don't pay, your employer will, putting millions of American jobs at risk as companies struggle with these costs just like citizens are.

Trumpcare would not only push people out of insurance immediately, it would result in better than 20 million Americans becoming uninsured above what uninsured predictions are with Obamacare. Who's demanding "no" votes on this bill? Just about every single organization of doctors, nurses, technicians, hospitals, the AARP, myriad patient-advocate groups and almost every health-insurance company.

The only winners with Trumpcare are the very rich.

Setting aside the ethical quagmire Trumpcare unleashes, here's what

Congress must deal with to come even close to solving the problem:

There are millions of Americans who pay nothing or relatively little for health care each year. The country spends about \$600 billion a year just on Medicaid spending. On top of that, hospitals provide about \$40 billion a year in "uncompensated" care to sick people who don't have insurance or Medicaid. And on top of that, hospitals report that they lose another \$60 billion a year or so from Medicaid and Medicare reimbursement rates that are well under actual costs.

It means that we continue to play a shell game on how to pay for about \$700 billion in health care for people who can't or don't pay.

While many Republicans say they don't want to offer free care through Medicaid to so many poor people any more, it's not that simple. Besides being cruel, the notion is naive. What many Republicans fail to admit is that the nation's uninsured and poor have long received health care and will in the future. Federal law demands that hospitals treat emergency patients even if they can't pay.

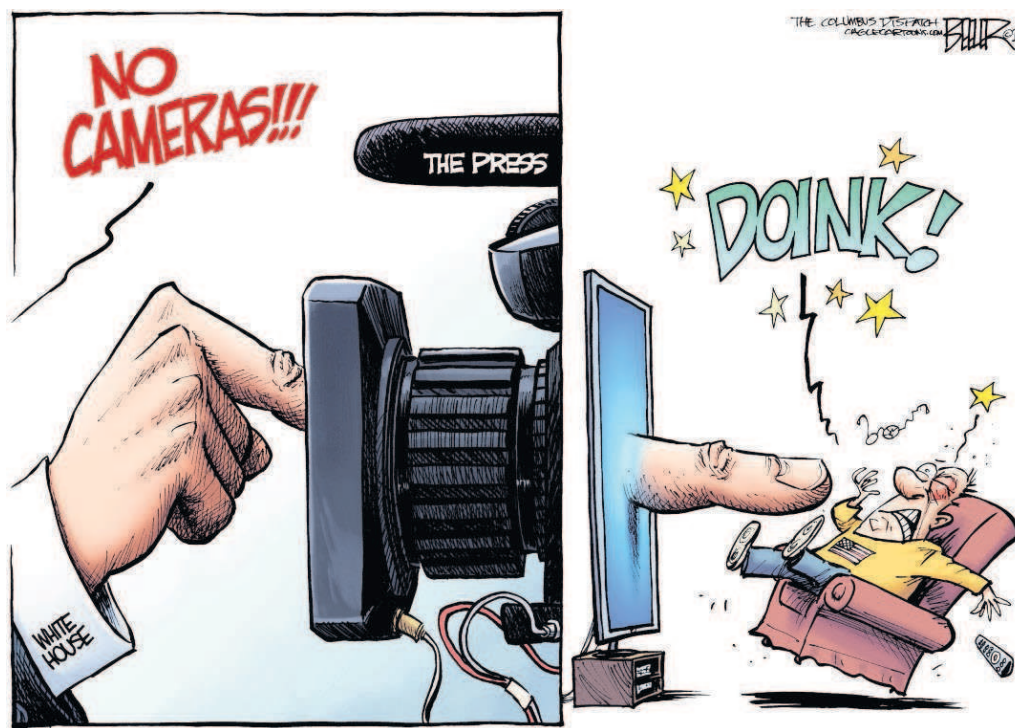
Nobody disagrees that treating people in emergency rooms is the most expensive and unproductive thing we can do. So by providing cheaper care to poor people before they end up in emergency rooms, everybody saves.

The way the system works now, even under Trumpcare, reducing or even ending Medicaid would only shift hundreds of billions of dollars in government spending on indigent care to the hospitals and providers, who would pass those costs onto paying customers.

Before Congress decides what it's going to do with Obamacare, we first must decide whether we will allow millions of people to die or flood emergency rooms because they lack health care they can't afford.

We would hope not. And if we don't, then Congress must prop up Obamacare to keep the system working. Jacking rates through the roof and forcing huge expenses onto an already shaky hospital system, especially in rural areas, is not only cruel, but it's political suicide for Republicans. The only way to create a compromise we can live with in the short term is through bipartisan negotiation. Moderate Republicans and Democrats are much closer on this issue than the spectrum of Republicans.

## OTHER VIEWS



# The president versus 'fake news'

Of those from whom little is expected, much is forgiven. And of those from whom much is expected, little is forgiven. Such are the standards by which Donald Trump's deliberate assaults on the news media need to be understood and feared.

I write this following Trump's latest tirades against the Fourth Estate, including an early morning tweet Tuesday denouncing "Fake News CNN" for having been "caught falsely pushing their phony Russian stories." That was followed 17 minutes later by a larger eruption, in which the president named NBC, CBS, ABC, *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times* as "all Fake News!"

And in case the message didn't penetrate, the deputy press secretary, Sarah Huckabee Sanders, denounced the "constant barrage of fake news" from CNN and touted a video in which conservative provocateur James O'Keefe secretly filmed a CNN producer (responsible for health stories), suggesting that the network's Russia coverage was ratings-driven.

"Whether it's accurate or not, I don't know," Sanders added about the video, lest there be any doubt about the White House's standards for accuracy.

CNN's sin is to have published a story, based on anonymous sourcing, which alleged that New York financier and Trump ally Anthony Scaramucci had ties to a Russian investment fund supposedly under investigation by the Senate.

The story failed to undergo CNN's usual vetting procedures and was later retracted. For good measure, the three journalists behind the story resigned and the network apologized to Scaramucci, who was gracious in accepting it.

As for this White House, graciousness becomes it about as well as napalm becomes an igloo. And the president must have been relieved to have something to do with his thumbs other than twiddle them, as Mitch McConnell struggled to get a Republican majority for the Senate's health bill.

Yet before dismissing Trump's rants as evidence of his mental state, it's worth taking them seriously as proof of political acumen. On Monday, Gallup released its latest annual survey on confidence in institutions: It found that confidence in the presidency had fallen since last summer, to 32 percent from 36 percent.

That may be bad news for Trump, but it compares well against the 24 percent confidence level in TV news and 27 percent newspapers (although both are a bit up over a year ago). Among Republicans, just 14 percent of respondents had confidence in TV news, and just 12 percent in newspapers, but 60 percent had confidence in the presidency.

If nothing else, Trump has the bully's cunning to pick on a target more unpopular than he is. And like a bully, he knows that his mark suffers the additional weakness of



**BRET STEPHENS**  
Comment

being susceptible to moral reproach. Institutions with a conscience have a tendency to be weak. They set standards to which they are bound to fall short, and publicly hold themselves to account.

Preserving — even cultivating — a capacity for shame, they are easily shamed. The shameless, having none, are only too glad to participate in the shaming.

That's why it was a mistake of CNN to let the three journalists — veteran reporter Thomas Frank and editors Lex Harris and Eric Lichtblau — responsible for the Scaramucci story go. The political success of Trump's assault on the press depends on his conflation of mistakes with dishonesty, of fallibility with fakery.

Assuming no dishonesties were involved in CNN's actions, cashing the journalists does less to uphold the network's reputation for probity than it does to advance Trump's work. No news organization is going to pass an infallibility test, and advancing a perception that we should pass such a test merely sets us up for diminishing public regard. Journalistic honesty is better measured through corrections than dismissals.

That's a lesson that bears repeating now, as the White House's media vilification strategy comes to resemble a war on truth itself. I've noted elsewhere that Trump's notion of truth is whatever he can get away with, at any given moment, for any given purpose.

No serious news organization can stand for it, which is why this president and the press would be destined for an adversarial relationship even if their ideological leanings were more in sync. Call it the clash of epistemologies — truth as a construct of facts versus truth as a collection of wants and wishes. And never the twain shall meet.

In the meantime, the news media ought to take care not to underestimate the threat it faces from this White House. We have set ourselves up as guardians of Truth, a hard job in any circumstance, made additionally difficult by our inevitable errors in judgment and reporting, by an earnestness often mistaken for arrogance, and by our conviction that we are owed answers to whatever questions we wish to ask.

On the other side is a president who believes in none of this; who commands a following that believes in none of it; and who knows the power of holding the media accountable to its stringent standards and holding himself accountable only to his own.

How do you shame the shameless? You can't. But you can at least deny him the right to shame you. Something to consider over at CNN.

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

## YOUR VIEWS

### Walden stands up for farmers in Port of Portland issue

Most of us in Heppner aren't too concerned with the politics going on over in Portland, but I recently learned of one big issue that is going to affect all of us.

The EPA recently announced that they're going to be implementing a cleanup plan at the Port of Portland Harbor that will cost an estimated \$2 billion and take nearly 13 years to complete. Not only will the cost of that plan likely be passed onto Oregon taxpayers and ratepayers, but the plan includes dredging along 10 river miles near the Port, which could have a substantial impact on the movement of products through the Port of Portland.

As someone who relies on the Port to move products, I am concerned that the EPA didn't make any efforts to discuss their plan with farmers in Eastern Oregon. I am grateful, however, that Congressman Greg Walden is making an attempt to work with the EPA to develop a plan that will work for all of Oregon, not only those in Portland.

Charles Anderson  
Heppner

### Mayor should push back against bitter detractors

I commend John Turner for addressing the issue with Rick Rohde.

Rohde seems to get his pleasure in life by spreading ill will and discontent. His main means, as he shows by his retraction letter of June 23 is sarcasm, a savage and bitter form of humor usually intended to hurt or wound. This sarcasm invites conflict with others, present and future.

By his retraction he shows just how much his opinion is worth. In his failure to win a city council seat this showed just how much his opinion is respected.

Rohde has a good head on his shoulders but fails to give a balanced view. Perhaps if he could do this he could be elected to a city council position. As a fellow Pendleton citizen concerned for the common good, I call upon him to consider this.

Ron Gavette  
Pendleton

## 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.