

EAST OREGONIAN

Founded October 16, 1875

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the volunteers who spent Saturday preparing the new Umatilla County Fairgrounds for its first big show, and those putting in extra hours this week getting ready to welcome the crowds next week.



Moving is never easy, even if it's from a smaller place into a bigger one, and putting on a fair and rodeo is a monumental task in itself. We're watching all the pieces come together this week and hoping the first year in the new home is a success.

One thing to keep in mind: This will be a learning experience for everyone. With so many organizations getting used to the new fairgrounds at the same time, there will be plenty of bumping elbows and bouts of confusion. A good dose of patience and understanding will go a long way.

We look forward to seeing the new facility put to use. Make sure to stop by and visit the *East Oregonian* booth in the air conditioned event center.

A tip of the hat to the Pendleton Air Museum finding a home downtown.

The Pendleton airport has a rich aeronautical history, including acting as training grounds for both the Doolittle Raiders during World War II and the all-black Triple Nickles smokejumping unit. A permanent home for the nearly 30-year-old museum is well warranted, and putting it in historic downtown near the Underground Tours and the Heritage Station Museum is a good move. At least until it gets some wind beneath its wings.

We look forward to touring the WWII-centric exhibits in the coming months, and the possibility of a larger location telling the history of the National Guard Chinook training facility, agricultural crop spraying and, hopefully one day, the emergence of the drone industry.

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

Tell Walden not to sell the sky to the airlines

By KRIS CRAIG

Efficiency, compassion, timeliness, and integrity: These are all words that nobody in their right mind would ever associate with today's airline industry. And yet, just recently, a House panel voted to put the major commercial airlines in charge of air traffic control nationwide.

Here's how this brilliant idea works:

All air traffic control, both in terms of safety and the collection of fees, would be handed over to a private corporation that the major airlines largely control. This basically places the sky itself under the authority of the same geniuses who brought us such innovations as "non-internet booking fees" and dragging customers off of overbooked flights. Only an abject fool would entrust the people responsible for one of America's most failed industries with such unchecked power.

Privatizing might sound like a good conservative idea, but consider who the government wants to sell to: The airlines. You know, the people who needed government bailouts because of their ineptness. Who better to manage the sky over our heads than a bunch of buffoons who couldn't even manage their own businesses without taxpayer-funded bailouts?

Another problem is that the same airlines that brag about inventing new fees to compensate for a fundamentally broken business model would essentially have the power to collect from anyone who wants to fly, including licensed pilots in their own private planes, which groups like the Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association strongly oppose. If you were to charter a private flight out of La Grande/Union County Airport, for example, either you or the pilot would still be on the hook for whatever fees the airlines demand.

Unsurprisingly, the major airlines are willing to pay large sums of money to "persuade" members of Congress to let them have their way yet again. That's why it's important for voters to examine their representatives' campaign contributions and make sure they're held accountable. Whenever anyone criticizes our politicians for being on the take, the politicians always respond by insisting that campaign contributions don't have any effect,

whatsoever, on how they vote. The fact that they always seem to vote the way their biggest donors want is purely a coincidence.

So here's my preemptive response to that argument: Prove it, Mr. Walden. Prove it by voting against any legislation that would hand

over our public skies to the airline industry. Prove it by standing up for your constituents instead of the special interests who so eagerly line your pockets. If you're still not convinced, imagine what the world might look like with the airlines in charge of everything.

To be fair, there are some things that the airline industry might do well. They would be uniquely qualified to oversee our nation's prisons, for example. After all, if anyone knows how to herd people like cattle into a small, overcrowded space and make them wait an excruciatingly long period of time, it's the airlines. On the other hand, even prisoners are allowed to use the bathroom ... I could go on, but I believe I've made my point.

Regardless of your ideological views on government and privatization, handing control of our skies over to the big airlines is about as bone-headed a move as Congress could make. That is why I urge you to call Congressman Walden at 202-225-6730 and tell him not to outsource our safety to the airline industry.

Kris Craig is a columnist who lives in College Place.

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.



OTHER VIEWS

Can people change after middle age?

I sometimes read that people don't change much after middle age. But everyday experience contradicts this on a weekly basis.

For example, this week in Shreveport, Louisiana, I met two guys in their 60s named Bo Harris and Mike Leonard. Bo was a football star at Captain Shreve High School. During his junior year, the school was integrated, but in the worst possible way.

The black players, whose high school was closing, were told to watch the existing team practice through a chain-link fence. Words were exchanged and Bo went out and pinned one guy, who had a broken bottle in his hand, up against the wall before administrators intervened.

Racial tensions ripped through the school, and for his own safety Bo was told to come to school only for the classes he absolutely needed for graduation.

He went on to play linebacker at LSU and wasn't always a gentle soul. "Anger was a resource I called upon on the field" — and sometimes off it.

Mike joined Bo on the LSU football team a few years later, though they didn't get along. Mike's father, who died when he was 14, had the bigoted attitudes of the time and place. Mike was raised in that tough guy culture. Once, an LSU fan threw a whiskey bottle at Mike and hit him in the back. Mike charged the stands to take revenge.

Both went on to lead successful lives. Bo played for the Cincinnati Bengals for eight years before returning to Shreveport to work as a financial adviser. Mike created one of the city's most successful dental practices.

And things went on that way for a few decades. Until they didn't.

Bo joined a group of 14 guys who had breakfast together every week. The friendships opened his heart. Then in 2009 he was driving with his preteen son with a .45 automatic rattling around on the dashboard. Bo heard an explosion and felt a pain in his leg worse than anything he'd experienced in the NFL.

His son called 911 and drove the car to a place where they could be met by an ambulance. The EMT looked at Bo and said, "In all my years of doing this, I've never seen a guy as lucky as you." The emergency room doctor and nurse said the same thing. If the bullet had gone one way it would have hit an artery and killed him. If it had gone the other it would have meant amputation. Bo was left in his hospital room to think about life.

Meanwhile, Mike was prospering in the normal way, serving his patients, going to church and playing golf. But internally, he was troubled. He heard about Arnold Toynbee's theory of civilizational decline and worried about America. Personally, he felt unfulfilled. When he went to the Pearly Gates would St.



DAVID BROOKS
Comment

Peter really care how low his handicap was?

"In the dark recesses of my mind I didn't trust people enough to let them know what was going on." Then he was handed a book called "The Master Plan of Evangelism" and by Page 5 his life was altered.

Shreveport saw a lot of ugliness during the civil rights era. But it is fortunate today to have Community Renewal, one of the nation's most impressive community-building groups. Community Renewal builds settlement houses for kids in crime-ridden communities. It sponsors over 1,500 Haven Houses in neighborhoods rich and poor where volunteers sponsor activities and build relationships. It's one of the most successfully integrated organizations I've seen.

Mike pulled out of his dental practice at age 49 and works at Community Renewal, often without pay. Bo heard about the organization from a member of his breakfast group and is now a volunteer and donor. When I sat with Bo and Mike after the staff and volunteer meeting on Monday, three things struck me, which often strike me about people who have transformed their lives for the final lap.

First, they've gone through a sort of moral puberty, as if a switch turned. They've lost most of their interest in egoistic calculation and some sort of primal desire for generativity has kicked in.

Second, they have what Baylor's Paul Froese calls existential urgency, and obsessive connection to a social problem. When Gallup asked people around the world in 2007 if they felt a sense of meaning in their lives, Liberia came out as the nation where most people felt they led meaningful lives and the Netherlands came out last. It's not that life is always easy in Liberia, but people are gripped by an urgent and communal desire to address the problems around them.

Finally, they speak in the middle voice. Sometimes we speak in the passive voice, when things are happening to us. Sometimes we speak in the active voice, when we're lecturing and taking charge. But mature activists speak in the middle voice, which is receiving and volleying, listening and responding, the voice of equal and intimate relationship.

Mike says his younger self would have looked at his current self as some sort of crazy person. "I was unused to crying all the time." But leaving the practice "was the greatest decision I ever made." People change all along the way.

David Brooks has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and he is currently a commentator on "The Newshour with Jim Lehrer."

YOUR VIEWS

Economic growth doesn't come to those who wait

City officials have touted the savings in time and money by upgrading all their computer software in public works. Now we need \$503,000 to gather data for our street, sewer and storm drain systems to establish a database of some sort. That includes counting and evaluating street signs and their reflective condition, and also counting trees. Looks like we'll be sending most of that money to an engineering firm in La Grande. Now here's the good news: It's already in the budget except for about \$95,000.

They've come up with a simple solution. Rather than cut the giveaways like the Downtown Business Association or Rivoli Theater restoration, it'll be coming out of the street maintenance fund so we can still pay for the more important stuff like moving the Eighth Street bridge to Main Street. Perhaps we could keep some of that money in Pendleton if the city could get those people that are leading the charge to get listed in the Tree City

USA program to volunteer to count all those trees. With the popularity and community support behind this program, getting those trees counted should be no problem.

Have you heard of Project Pearson? It's the code name for a high tech company looking to possibly locate in the area. According to Bill Elfering, it would bring 120 to 200 good paying jobs. However, don't look for it here in Pendleton. It's a high power consumer, which, due to the short-sighted leadership and lack of support from Pacific Power in the past, has left us holding the short end of the stick when it comes to sufficient power availability for industrial development.

I guess it looks like we'll just have to depend on the success of the drone program, and of course the Rivoli Theater restoration, for our economic future. The way we continue to source business outside the community for city projects will insure a steady outflow of capital needed for economic prosperity, and leave us with lousy streets.

Rick Rohde
Pendleton