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OUR VIEW

Where does EOTEC go from here?

For most people, the first Umatilla County Fair at the new EOTEC fairgrounds was a resounding success. For many behind the scenes, it was a complete miracle.

The fair and Farm-City Pro Rodeo went off with only a few hitches and most attendees appreciated the new, more spacious facilities. This is all the more impressive when you remember the stressful moments that peppered the last few years, which became heightened when the calendar flipped to 2017 and construction was still significantly behind schedule.

At that time, the fair was without a manager, EOTEC was without a general manager and the EOTEC board had reached out to the community for millions in private donations to get the first phase of construction finished on time. They also asked for additional checks from the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County.

Local crews — both professional and volunteer — deserve a ton of credit for the work they did to get the fairgrounds ready. That work ranged from heavy industrial construction to last-minute tidying up of the grounds. Those who donated financially to the effort deserve credit too — the facilities could not have been built on time without that additional funding.

So kudos for a successful first act. But the ultimate success of EOTEC will hinge on how long it can remain successful outside of fair week, and how it can avoid annual asks for cash from its co-owners, the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County.

From this day forward, the facilities

will begin to age. Before the calendar flips too many more times, maintenance will become an issue, and there is no mechanism in place to fund that necessary work. Volunteers must remain engaged, just as they did for generations at the old grounds.

We're glad Nate Rivera is taking on the position of interim EOTEC director. His tested leadership will certainly be good for the organizational planning and structure at this crucial phase. Because this multi-million dollar enterprise still needs to develop both a budget and business plan.

But Rivera has another full-time job, and board chair Byron Smith does, too — Hermiston city manager. That Smith spent almost half his time this year working on EOTEC issues should show how complex this project was, and how many important decisions had to be made late in the game.

Millions of dollars and thousands of volunteer hours were not spent for a one-off show. The vision for this project was much larger than simply moving the fair up the hill. Now that we have a real-life glimpse of what that vision is, it's up to the stakeholders to leverage the initial effort and fulfill the promise of a sustainable and solvent event venue.

As well as things have gone at the fair this week, we must remember that is the tip of the iceberg. The fairgrounds can no longer exist as an annual passion project. The county and city now co-own a trade and event center built on its residents' donation of both sweat and dollars. They must make good on that investment with a sound plan that allows it to flourish.



OTHER VIEWS

A West Coast plea to an unstable president

You may very well hate us. After all, you were rejected by a margin of nearly 5 million votes in the three states on the West Coast mainland, where more than 1 in 7 Americans live. We are the reason you lost the national popular vote by such a historic margin. Since you've been president, you've never set foot in our time zone.

But now our very existence is in your hands. Look at a map, that circle from North Korea outward. There's Guam, a U.S. territory, threatened this week with a pre-emptive strike, at 2,100 miles. Then comes Alaska, which is closer to the nuclear-armed hermit nation, at just over 3,000 miles, than it is to Washington, D.C.

Farther out, Seattle; Portland, Oregon; San Francisco and Los Angeles may all be within range of missiles that North Korea tested last month. It looks as if the North could fit a nuclear bomb the size of a garbage can to one of those missiles, though whether it could survive re-entry is another matter.

Are we scared? Unnerved? Well, yes, a little. I'll let Leon Panetta, the wisest of West Coasters and former secretary of defense, speak for us:

"You've got two bullies chiding each other with outrageous comments," he told Politico this week. He worried that the bully in Pyongyang may feel that the bully in Bedminster may feel that the bully in Pyongyang is "attacking his manhood," an age-old trigger for war. The similarities between the two of you are unavoidable: the preening, the insecurity, the pathological narcissism, the chronic lying, the bad haircuts.

Of course, you never had your uncle executed or ordered the assassination of a half-brother, as Kim Jong Un did. But we sometimes can't tell the statements between the two of you apart. Was it Kim or your magnificence who said you would turn the other's capital city into a "sea of fire"? Or force the other's country to suffer "fire and fury like the world has never seen?"

It doesn't make for an easier night's sleep here on the humidity-free West Coast that one of your top advisers, Sebastian Gorka, has been trying to sound like you, ratcheting up the my-nukes-are-bigger-than-yours brinkmanship. "We are not just the superpower," he said. "We are now a hyperpower." If only he were talking about a Marvel Comics character.

And it's equally unsettling that your evangelical adviser, the Texas pastor Robert Jeffress, is now giving you cover from the Bible. "God has endowed rulers full power to use whatever means necessary — including war — to stop evil," he said, speaking for God.

This is not "The Celebrity Apprentice." The

huff-and-puffing could easily escalate into the slaughter of millions of people. Seoul, with a metro population of 26 million, is as close to its enemy in the north as Washington is to Baltimore.

When President Barack Obama kidded you at the White House Correspondents' dinner in 2011 for having to make a decision after your steakhouse team failed to impress, he said: "You fired Gary Busey. And these are the kind of decisions that would keep me up at night. Well handled, sir."

At the time, Obama had just authorized the raid, after dutiful and reasoned deliberation, to take out Osama bin Laden. At that same dinner, he ended on a serious note, asking everyone to "remember our neighbors in Alabama," recently devastated by storms.

That would be the Alabama where Obama got barely 39 percent of the vote in 2008 — about the same percent you received in Washington and Oregon. Once the election is over,

as he and nearly every occupant of the White House has learned, you are the president of all the people. Your default mode is to threaten and sue and demean and lie — as you've done your entire career. You even sue comedians, as you did Bill Maher after he compared you to an orangutan's spawn. And this week, your first major statement after threatening nuclear war was to lie about how you had upgraded our nuclear arsenal.

We West Coasters can't go our separate way on nukes, as we're doing on climate change, vowing to adhere to the Paris accord even as you turn your back on the rest of the world. We don't have a shield. We don't control the nuclear code.

Sanctions, like those just approved by the United Nations, are a good deterrence. You need to work with China. It will take more than "the most beautiful piece of chocolate cake," more than calling President Xi Jinping of China a good guy one day, a bad guy the next. Diplomacy is hard. But it beats the alternative.

I know you don't read. But somebody on your staff — perhaps the well-read defense secretary, James Mattis — could summarize "The Guns of August," by Barbara W. Tuchman. She details the missteps, the idiocy of powerful men with powerful weapons, leading the world into a war that would kill 17 million people. The path to destruction, to mass murder, to horror is there. So is the way out.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for *The New York Times*, first as the *Pacific Northwest* correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter.



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

We West Coasters don't have a shield. We don't control the nuclear code.

OTHER VIEWS

A curmudgeon's take on the solar eclipse

Have you purchased your \$500 bottle of Solar Red Wine?

It's one of countless products created to cash in on the total solar eclipse that will cut a swath 60 to 70 miles wide from Oregon to South Carolina on August 21.

Savvy shoppers can also obtain solar eclipse playing cards, solar eclipse neckties, solar eclipse dresses, glow-in-the-dark cakes and Darkest Hour black cherry soda. Festivals and tours? Oh, yeah! Discovery Channel may even throw together a last-minute "Things The Moon Blocks Your View Of Week," complete with Michael Phelps racing a simulated Buzz Aldrin.

My son Gideon's school is busing students to Nashville to get a better view of the eclipse. I hope the Music City crowd obeys safety warnings and does not generate new stereotypes of the city. ("I'm a-pickin'." "And I'm a-grinnin'." "And I'm a-gettin' my retinas burned beyond repair!")

Yes, NASA and a legion of optometrists are cautioning amateur astronomers not to view the eclipse without certified eye protection. Unfortunately, no one has run an algorithm to determine how many nitwits will flip a car while texting their destination, fall off a cliff while taking a selfie or receive ricochet wounds while shooting the roof out of a Porta Potty so as not to miss a second of the eclipse.

Heartwarming essays predict this rare celestial event will bring people together. Well, maybe. ("Isn't it amazing how God set this up like clockwork?" "God? This is just the way quantum physics has ordered the universe since the Big Bang." "Star Trek could work wonders with a solar eclipse storyline." "But Star Wars could do it better." "Tastes great." "Less filling." Etcetera.)

Luckily, the total eclipse will be confined to the United States and won't



DANNY TYREE
Comment

upset those primitives who think the sun is being devoured by a giant armadillo, instead of "the Electoral College and stuff."

Aren't you glad we Americans don't have those superstitions? ("Looking forward to the festival, but couldn't it be rescheduled? My horoscope says the 21st is a bad day for me.")

Forgive me if I'm "once burned, twice shy" about all the hullabaloo. I spent most of my youth awaiting the glorious 1986 visit of Halley's Comet. Where I lived, it wound up being a tiny smudge in the sky. It wasn't politically correct; but believe me, I did some "heavenly body" shaming. 31 years ago, the comet that had heralded the birth of kings and the fall of empires was more like the "your turn signal is still on" warning.

Granted, I'm looking forward to seeing videos of the confusion and anxiety experienced by pets and wildlife when the sun is blotted out in the middle of the day. As a recently translated Hebrew scroll reveals, "God don't need no laser pointer."

I try not to be swayed by a NASA spokesman who assures us, "This eclipse will be an unforgettable, transcendent event — the sort of experience you'll cherish regaling your grandchildren with someday. Unless you die prematurely or suffer memory loss due to dementia or become infertile because of constant use of a laptop computer or get turned down by the adoption agency for something you posted on Facebook in '02. Oh, let's just forget your theoretical grandchildren! Pop open that \$500 bottle of Solar Red Wine and enjoy what time you have left, you poor doomed losers."

Danny welcomes email responses at tyreetyrades@aol.com and visits to his Facebook fan page "Tyree's Tyrades." Danny's weekly column is distributed exclusively by *Cagle Cartoons Inc.* newspaper syndicate.

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication. 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. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

YOUR VIEWS

Why is city kicking out its own programs for REACH?

Pendleton city manager Robb Corbett recommended to city council in a workshop that REACH take over the Pendleton Recreation Center for their program.

I don't deny it could be a good program. My questions: Why is a government agency being used to house an outreach program? Why have Parks and Recreation programs been displaced for this program?

It seems unacceptable that the city will lose revenue for an outreach program. It is known the church founding the outreach is the city manager's place of worship. It is known the REACH "board of directors" are made up of members of the church, not a mix of members of the community who have a vested interest in the success of the program. And there was no clarification at the meeting regarding REACH actually having any secured funds, only an understanding that many people will be vying for the funds.

How will they be able to fund the lease of the building and fund programs such as meals two to five times a week? Is the outreach

program going to have a lease with the city at a fair market rate that will recoup funds going to be lost from, for example, birthday parties and foundation room rentals?

It is unfortunate the Parks and Recreation employee has been displaced from their office, and has had to find other venues for programs established. Gymnastics moved to the Vert Auditorium — that isn't the purpose the Vert was built to serve. Why should city programs have to be housed at school facilities when there is a facility owned by the city that should be used?

It is very upsetting. Why is council just now being made aware of this? Shouldn't this have gone before the Parks and Recreation Commission instead of the city manager just doing it?

Unfortunately, I have heard a lot of upset in the community. Why is one church allowed to take over a building over the city programs? As a taxpayer I am concerned how the city will recoup revenues lost.

It would be appreciated if the community could get answers.

Cody Cimmiyotti
Pendleton