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Vivian Larson plays the piano recently for the lunch crowd at the Pendleton Senior Center.

Cities and seniors

The life of a modern senior citizen is different from those who came before them. Americans are living longer, and living differently than their preceding generations. So it's only right that senior centers — where older Americans gather for social interaction, friendship and fellowship — change, too.

In Umatilla County, the cities of Hermiston and Pendleton have taken different tacks to modernizing their senior centers.

The city of Hermiston has taken a more active and supportive role in finances and administration. The city helped locate land for a new Hermiston Senior Center after their old property was given to the school district. And while the center is not flush with funds, the city finding new space and donating dollars has put it on more secure, stable footing. That's partly due to the 50-year lease of the site from Hermiston School District, a \$2 million Community Development Block Grant from the federal government and \$750,000 from the city of Hermiston.

Yet those partnerships and collaborations have their drawbacks — the seniors will have to share their facility with other city programs in the future, something many Hermiston seniors are wary about. They do not want to get pushed out, and made clear their desire for their own space. The new building is planned to open in spring 2018, and this newspaper will be sure to document how those

issues work out.

Pendleton seniors are in the opposite position. They have all the time and space they need, but their funding is unsecured.

Its senior center is a free-standing nonprofit, which is a conduit for state and federal loans, and also operates off an endowment. But that longterm trust fund reservoir is drying up faster than it is being replenished. The senior center closed for more than a month earlier this summer, due to a lack of adequate staffing. And the future of the center remains in question.

This is all the more serious because of the changing nature of fraternal organizations. Once a stalwart home where multiple generations can interact — offering companionship, support, and a community purpose — they are disappearing throughout the country in favor of new ways of socializing, most of which are now online.

As much of that aspect of our lives moves to the internet, we must remember the power of human touch and human interaction. And to make sure those who cared for us are cared for in their old age. There are many ways of doing that — via critical financial support, volunteering our time, and allowing seniors the ability to make their own decisions. But municipalities and individuals should look for best practices, learn from their neighbors, and make sure their local senior center is thriving and financially secure.

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

Remembering and learning from tragic UCC shooting

The (Medford) News-Review

At long last, nearly two years after the tragedy that struck Umpqua Community College on Oct. 1, 2015, the police released their investigation records about the incident.

For some, the records help provide some answers to the lingering questions about why this horrible event happened. For them, perhaps, it offers a sense of closure. For others, unfortunately, it may reopen old wounds.

We want to once again offer our condolences to all those who suffered injury and loss and trauma that terrible day. And to express our gratitude for the immense bravery of our law enforcement and first responders, along with all those who stepped in to help in the aftermath. Many lives were lost that day, but many also were saved.

To the brave officers who took out the shooter at grave risk to their own lives, we thank you. To the people who pulled out the survivors, rendered aid, transported them to and treated them at local hospitals, we thank you. To all the people who counseled the traumatized, we thank you too.

We also are grateful to the investigators who looked into every aspect of this case. Going through their records, our staff members were able to gain a better understanding of what motivated the killer, of the heroic actions through which he finally was stopped, of what the survivors experienced.

For those seeking answers, we've done our best to provide them and will continue to do so. For those not willing to reopen old wounds, we understand if

you set down the paper for a few days and look away. That's OK too.

Some of our readers and others in the community questioned why we chose to name the shooter. In part, the answer is that we are, as journalists, obligated to report the facts and record the history of our time. We understand that some feel to use the name somehow glorifies the shooter or gives him what he wanted.

We disagree.

The shooter hoped that after he murdered his classmates he would join a demon hierarchy in hell. Somewhere in the deep recesses of his mind, the line blurred between severe mental illness and pure evil.

Speaking his name won't change that. Fearing his name won't prevent the next shooting down the line.

Looking the truth square in the eyes, understanding as best we can what happened here — that might help prevent the next one. But there are no guarantees.

The truth is that a very mentally ill young man, one who may have been molested in a church, one who felt he would never have friends, one who identified himself as part black but who hated black men, and one who believed demons spoke to him was able to fill his home with guns.

And one terrible day, he used some of them to murder nine people.

The truth is also that we all wish this had never happened in our beautiful community. And that the real Roseburg was revealed not in the shooter's actions, but in our response to this tragedy.

In the end, the only thing that can defeat the darkness is light.

OTHER VIEWS

Crime and immigration: What's in the Dream Act

Commentary on the DACA controversy frequently notes that the nation's nearly 700,000 so-called Dreamers are a law-abiding group. But a new bill to give DACA recipients full legal status, sponsored by Republican Senators Lindsey Graham and Jeff Flake and Democratic Senators Richard Durbin and Charles Schumer, would allow newly legalized Dreamers to have many run-ins with the law — arrests, charges, convictions — and still receive benefits. Schumer, the Democratic leader, is demanding quick passage.

President Obama's original 2012 executive action creating Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals stipulated that to be eligible, recipients must have "not been convicted of a felony offense, a significant misdemeanor offense, multiple misdemeanor offense, or otherwise pose a threat to national security or public safety."

When Obama announced the criteria for renewing DACA status in 2014, "multiple misdemeanor offense" was changed to "three or more misdemeanors."

The Obama administration defined a "significant misdemeanor" as a crime with a maximum sentence of one year, or, regardless of length of sentence, "an offense of domestic violence; sexual abuse or exploitation; burglary; unlawful possession or use of a firearm; drug distribution or trafficking; or driving under the influence."

With the Dream Act of 2017, Graham, Flake, Durbin and Schumer have adopted much of the existing Obama-era criteria about crime, but in a way that would allow Department of Homeland Security officials to be much more lenient with newly legalized DACA recipients.

The Dream Act would exclude anyone who has been convicted of "any offense under federal or state law, other than a state offense for which an essential element is the alien's immigration status, that is punishable by a maximum term of imprisonment of more than one year; or three or more offenses under federal or state law, other than state offense for which an essential element is the alien's immigration status, for which the alien was convicted on different dates for each of the three offenses and imprisoned for an aggregate of 90 days or more."

The phrase "other than a state offense for which an essential element is the alien's immigration status" could excuse a lot of criminal activity. "It would grant status to illegal aliens who have been convicted of felony ID fraud or other crimes that could be considered to be related to their immigration status," noted Jessica Vaughan of the Center for Immigration Studies, which favors tighter restrictions on immigration. "You could

say human smuggling, document fraud, benefits fraud, false claims to citizenship, illegal voting, and many other felonies have an essential element that involves immigration status."

In addition, Graham, Flake, Durbin and Schumer throw in the phrase "for which the alien was convicted on different dates for each of the three offenses" when referring to misdemeanor convictions. Many crimes involve multiple charges. The Dream Act of 2017 would require a young Dreamer to have committed offenses on not one, not two, but three separate occasions, and been convicted of all before he or she is ineligible for legalization.

And maybe not even then, because Graham, Flake, Durbin and Schumer would also allow the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive any denial of legalization for those crimes, or for more serious crimes, "for humanitarian purposes or family unity or if the waiver is otherwise in the public interest." In other words, Department of Homeland Security can legalize whomever it chooses.

"These standards are significantly more lenient than other legal immigration categories," noted Vaughan. "Green card and temporary visa categories have stricter requirements for good moral character and criminal behavior."

The Dream Act of 2017 differs in other ways from DACA. For example, Obama's order applied to people who were under the age of 16 when they came to the United States. In the Dream Act, the age is 18. Obama required recipients to have been living continuously in the United States for at least five years. In the Dream Act, it's four years. Obama required that a recipient "be present in the United States on the date of this memorandum," that is, on June 15, 2012, when DACA was announced. The Dream Act has no similar requirement.

Graham, Flake, Durbin and Schumer introduced the Dream Act of 2017 back on July 20, before the current DACA controversy. Since then some other senators have signed on as co-sponsors: Republicans Cory Gardner and Lisa Murkowski and Democrats Kamala Harris, Dianne Feinstein, Catherine Cortez Masto, and Michael Bennet.

"We're ready to pass it," Schumer said recently, calling on Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell and House Speaker Paul Ryan to bring the bill up for a vote in Senate and House.

And just in case Congress is not ready, Schumer threatened to attach the Dream Act to must-pass legislation this fall. It could be a long fight.

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Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.

YOUR VIEWS

Umatilla County failing residents with addictions

I am a former employee of Umatilla County Human Services, the department in charge of addictions counseling and mental illness services within the county. Beyond that, I am also a mental illness patient myself and in recovery from substance abuse.

Our county is facing a serious issue right now in that UCHS is not acting in the community's best interest. In fact, having worked within the department, I can say it is doing more damage than good.

This is due to a severe lack of proper management, and unfortunately, unless the community makes its voice heard this will not change. When an addictions counseling center has a large percentage of addicts relapsing, there is a serious issue that must be addressed.

Patients are being forced to go through

multiple counselors — counselors who are passionate about helping people but are continually moved between clients and classes, unable to form any sort of healthy patient/counselor relationship, which is necessary when helping people with addictions.

Those in charge lack the capacity to lead, yet will do nothing to change the quality of care being offered. This is a disservice to our community and a missed opportunity to provide a much-needed service to the afflicted within our community.

To those in need of help, know you are not alone. There are people that are here to help you because we've lived it and come out alive. I urge all within that community with a voice to speak out and demand better care for yourselves and your loved ones. You deserve better.

Joe Cooney
Hermiston