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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to the hundreds upon hundreds of volunteers in Pendleton, each of whom help make Round-Up Week everything it is.

That includes everyone who volunteers with the Round-Up itself, but the many others who give of their time at Happy Canyon, Main Street or the Indian Village, at parades and dinners and fundraisers near and far and all-year round. We also thank those who open their homes and hearts to help house the visitors that overwhelm our small town for one week each year.

It takes a village of 17,000 to put on this rodeo and everything that accompanies it. We tip our hat to all who help and contribute in their own way.

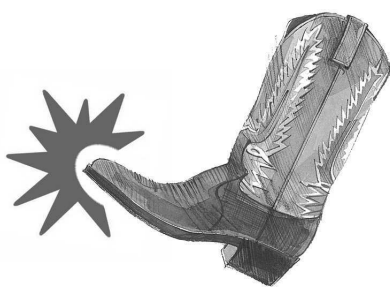
A kick in the pants to the dopey Portland protesters who were marching around their city last weekend, a few of whom were toting a Soviet flag.

From a town that has gone though its flag related issues — the Main Street Cowboys decided at the last minute to dis-invite a controversial Confederate flag vendor from its Main Street fun during Round-Up — we must kick the big city protesters for their own cultural faux pas.

There is no difference between parading around town with a Confederate flag or a Soviet one.

Both are failed states, brutally cruel regimes, and those marching behind their colors show equal amounts of historical ignorance, disdain for intellectual freedom and the sanctity of human life.

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.



YOUR VIEWS

Confederate flag clearly represents slavery

Donald Lien's Sept. 6 letter oversimplified the symbolism of the Confederate flag so egregiously that I feel compelled to correct his ahistorical claim that the flag at issue does not represent slavery or white supremacy.

While Lien correctly observes that what is commonly referred to as the "Confederate flag" was never officially adopted as the official flag of the Confederacy, the "stars and bars" were placed in the upper left hand corner of the official flag of the C.S.A. when they first officially adopted a "national" flag in 1863. It was a part of the official flag of the Confederacy. It has since been popularly adopted and come to symbolize the C.S.A. and, by implication, the causes for which that pseudo-nation stood.

Lien also correctly wrote that the southern states (self-identified in 1860-1861 as the "slaveholding states") seceded, which led to the Civil War. His analysis conveniently fails to identify the causes for secession. Allow the slaveholding states to fill this gap in their own words, as stated at the time of secession.

Several Confederate states provided contemporaneous justification for their secession. In their document entitled "A Declaration of the Immediate Causes which Induce and Justify the Secession of the State of Mississippi from the Federal Union," Mississippi unequivocally identifies slavery as the basis for their separation from the Union. "Our position is thoroughly identified with the institution of slavery — the greatest material interest of the world." South Carolina similarly identified the "increasing hostility on the part of the non-slaveholding States to the institution of slavery" as their primary basis for secession.

Any reasonable dispute about whether slavery was the primary cause for the Civil War is put to rest by the speeches given at the secession conventions and the "Declaration of Causes" statements issued at the time of secession. Given this proper historical context, to then argue that the contemporary symbol of the Confederacy does not represent slavery or white supremacy is a factually untenable proposition. Lien very simply argues that the lack of slave-related imagery on the flag itself means that it does not represent slavery, hatred, or white supremacy.

This is comparable to arguing that the Nazi flag does not speak to Holocaust atrocities because it does not contain Jewish imagery. Both claims are ridiculous. The decision to reject the vendor who chooses to sell the Confederate flag was the morally correct choice.

Micah Johnstone
Pendleton

Thorne a good choice for Westward Ho! marshal

Seems to me that the selection of the controversial Mike Thorne as grand marshal of the Westward Ho! Parade is worth comment. He has been a key figure on the northeast Oregon scene since the 1960s, and his political skills have both solved problems and rankled those who have felt stung by the wheat rancher's strong focus and analytical approach to issues.

Mike and Jill Thorne have tackled a long list of Pendleton problems and needs. Their influence has been felt through reinvigorating downtown buildings and tourism numbers and through effective teamwork at the Chamber of Commerce and Downtown Association. The Thornes have been relentless in pursuing Pendleton improvements. They have been all-in but with separate styles — he favoring a one-on-one approach and she summoning as many troops as possible.

Mike Thorne is a natural economic development talent. In watching him from the journalistic sidelines, I've felt that Mike seems to have known instinctively that the best first step when you are under the gun is to feed your strongest assets and look for more of them. Other practices I have noticed: Look at a situation objectively, learn from others as you go from job to job. And when you see an organization struggling, include the secretaries, the assistants and the line workers when you ask staff members what changes they would like.

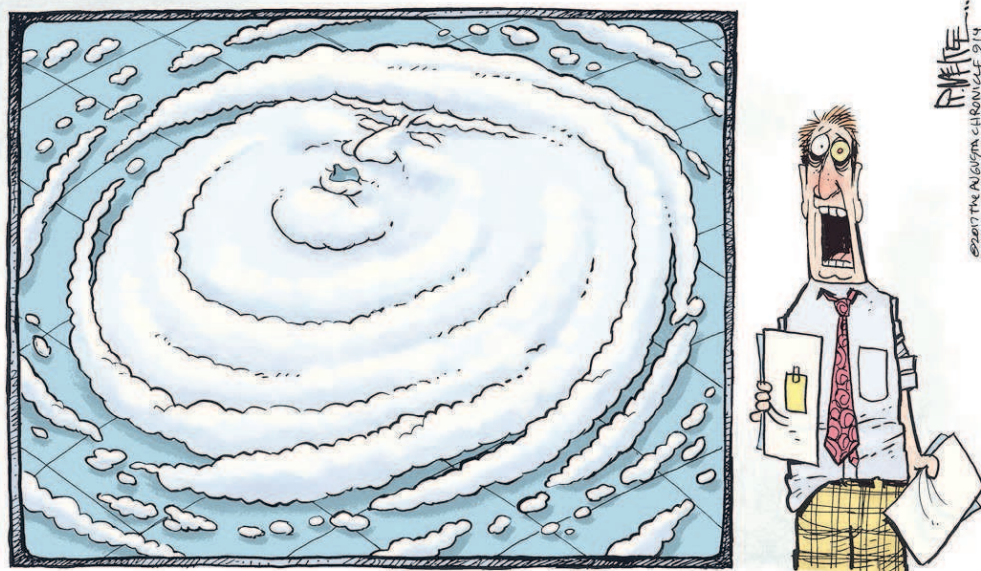
A list of accomplishments under Mike's name would include replacing Eastern Oregon Mental Hospital with EOICI, persuading the Krustez mill (Newly Wed Foods) to build in Pendleton and shepherding the Round-Up Centennial grandstand project on time and under budget, and improving the quality of management decisions at the Port of Portland.

Thomas Vaughan, director of the Oregon Historical Society a few decades ago, was known as one of the best politicians — persuading people to a common end — in Oregon. He used to say, "Make no small plans." Once you have confidence in your judgment, go for it.

There is plenty of room for discussion on the record of Mike Thorne. When it comes to a person who has been in the public eye as long as he has and with his laser focus, there are lots of witnesses and as much criticism as praise. But I think there is probably more agreement on the assertion that Mike Thorne has been one of the best politicians we have had.

I thank Mike and Jill Thorne for the effort they have put into Pendleton improvements. It's great to be on the same team with them.

Mike Forrester
Pendleton



"...AND NOW, WE'RE KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON HURRICANE DONALD, BUT WE DON'T KNOW IF HE'S MOVING TO THE RIGHT OR LEFT!"

OTHER VIEWS

Liberalism and the campus rape tribunals

Last week Betsy DeVos, the secretary of education, announced that the Trump White House would be revising the Obama administration guidelines for how colleges and universities adjudicate accusations of sexual assault.

There were protests outside her speech and spittle-flecked rants on Twitter, but overall the reaction felt relatively muted, at least by the standards of reactions to anything Trump-related or DeVos-driven.

Perhaps this was because enough people read *The Atlantic*, which chose last week to run a three-part series by Emily Yoffe on the sexual-assault policies in question. The series demonstrated exhaustively what anyone paying close attention already knew: The legal and administrative response to campus rape over the past five years has been a kind of judicial and bureaucratic madness, a cautionary tale about how swiftly moral outrage and political pressure can lead to kangaroo courts and star chambers, in which bias and bad science create an unshakable presumption of guilt for the accused.

It's also a cautionary tale with specific implications for cultural liberalism, because it demonstrates how easily an ideology founded on the pursuit of perfect personal freedom can end up generating a new kind of police state, how quickly the rule of pleasure gives way to the rule of secret tribunals and Title IX administrators (of which Harvard, Yoffe notes in passing, now has 55 on staff), and how making libertinism safe for consenting semi-adults requires the evacuation of due process.

Rape and sexual assault are age-old problems. But the particular problem on college campuses these days is a relatively new one. For ideological reasons, the modern liberal campus rejects all the old ways in which a large population of hormonal young people once would have had their impulses channeled and restrained — single-sex dorms, "parietal" rules for male-female contact late at night, a general code emphasizing sexual restraint. Meanwhile for commercial reasons as well as liberationist ones, many colleges compete for students (especially the well-heeled, full-tuition-paying sort) by winkingly promising them not just a lack of adult supervision but also a culture of constant partying, an outright bacchanal.

This combination, the academic gods of sex and money, has given us the twilit (or strobe-lit) scene in which many alleged sexual assaults take place — a world in which both parties are frequently hammered because their entire social scene is organized around drinking your way to the loss of inhibitions required for hooking up.

It's a social world, just as anti-rape activists and feminists have argued, that offers an excellent hunting ground for predators and a realm where far too many straightforward assaults take place. But it's also a zone in which it is very hard for anyone — including the young women and young men involved — to figure out what distinguishes a real assault from a bad or gross or swiftly regretted consensual encounter.

This reality made many colleges shamefully loath to deal with rape accusations at all. But once that reluctance became a public scandal, the political and administrative response was not to rethink the libertinism but to expand the definition of assault, abandon anything resembling due process and build a system all-but-guaranteed to frequently expel and discipline the innocent.

A few years ago the injustice of this approach was defended on various grounds. Anti-rape activists suggested that false accusations of sexual assault were as rare as



ROSS DOUTHAT
Comment

unicorns, that alleged victims almost never lied or exaggerated or made mistakes of memory and judgment. Reasonable center-left types argued that broadening rape's definitions and weakening men's rights could instill a necessary sort of fear, a kind of balance of terror between male sexual privilege and a female right to accuse and be believed. A few of my fellow social conservatives agreed: If unreasonable rules and unfair proceedings discouraged men from

pursuing promiscuity and treating women badly, so much the better for both the women and the men.

None of these defenses looked persuasive once the new order took hold. False rape accusations are rare in many contexts, yes,

but bad systems generate bad cases, and a system designed to assume the guilt of the accused has clearly encouraged dubious charges and clouds of suspicion and pre-emptive penalties unjustly applied.

Meanwhile any balance of terror, as Yoffe points out in the third installment of her series, has turned out to be racial as well as sexual, since it is a not-much-talked-about truth that minority students seem to be accused of rape well out of proportion to their numbers on campus. So setting out to strengthen women's power relative to men has created

a cycle of accusation and punishment whose injustices probably fall disproportionately on black men.

As for whether the unjust system might nonetheless have some sort of remoralizing effect on male sexual behavior, I stand by what I argued a few years ago. Offering young men broad sexual license regulated only by a manifestly unfair disciplinary system imbued with the rhetoric of feminism seems more likely to encourage a toxic male persecution complex, a misogynistic masculine reaction, than any renewed moral conservatism or rediscovered chivalry.

Or to put it in the lingo of our time: *That's how you get Trump.*

Having gotten him, liberals lately have been arguing that any madness or folly or ideological mania on their own side pales in comparison with the extremism at work in Trump-era conservatism. This argument has force: With Trump in the White House the know-nothing side of the right has much more direct political power at the moment than the commissars of liberalism.

But it is also important to recognize that the folly of the campus rape tribunals is not just an extremism isolated in the peculiar hothouse of the liberal academy.

The abandonment of due process on campus was encouraged by activists and accepted by administrators, yes, but it was the actual work of the Obama White House — an expression of what a liberalism enthroned in our executive branch and vested with the powers of the federal bureaucracy believed would defend the sexual revolution and serve the common good.

It wasn't a policy from the liberal fringe, in other words. It was liberalism, period, as it actually exists today and governed from the White House until very recently. And any reader of *The Atlantic* who experiences a certain shock at what has been effectively imposed on college campuses in the name of equality and social justice will also be experiencing a moment of solidarity with all of those Americans who prefer not to be governed by this liberalism, and voted accordingly last fall.

Ross Douthat joined *The New York Times* as an Op-Ed columnist in April 2009. Previously, he was a senior editor at the *Atlantic* and a blogger for *theatlantic.com*.

LETTERS POLICY

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