

EAST OREGONIAN

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KATHRYN B. BROWN

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DANIEL WATTENBURGER

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OUR VIEW



In this Sept. 5 file photo, the Eagle Creek wildfire burns on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge near Cascade Locks.

Back to school, for children and adults

You certainly noticed the change in post-Round-Up weather: cool mornings and nights, gray and cloudy skies, and even some steady sprinkles of rain. Add football back to television and local stadiums on Friday nights, and it becomes clear that autumn has returned to Eastern Oregon. We all know fall is the season when children and teachers head back to class, but we recommend adults take the opportunity to do their own learning as well. Luckily, there are local and national opportunities for all of us — no matter our age — to continue to gather knowledge. One local option is to attend “Era of Megafires” Wednesday at 6:30 p.m. at the Vert Auditorium, Pendleton. This free multimedia presentation delivers critical information and thoughtful discussion on wildfires that have done so much damage in Oregon and throughout the West this summer. The presentation blends hard data with personal stories, graphics and video clips about the effects these fires have on the landscape. It serves as a call to action for local agencies and communities to boost fire resiliency while also returning fire to its natural role in the forest. Given this destructive summer,

and the destructive summers soon to follow, Oregonians owe it to themselves and their school-age children to be knowledgeable about forest and fire science. Tonight’s presentation delivers critical information. Another opportunity to learn via gripping narrative, interviews and film is via Ken Burns’ documentary “The Vietnam War,” which debuted Sunday on PBS. The 10-part, 18-hour documentary is getting rave reviews as an important dissection of how America entered and became enmeshed in a war no one wanted — a war that did so much damage and impacted so many lives. Directed by Burns and Lynn Novick, it includes testimony from nearly 100 witnesses. And if you missed the first few episodes, you can find them in their entirety on pbs.org. People who witnessed the war or had loved ones changed by it can benefit from viewing it through the lens of history and crisp editing. But those who are unaware of the continuing effects of the war, its effect on politics, culture and current events, may be able to learn even more. Tune in nightly, and help learn from the mistakes of history, and from the courage found therein.

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.

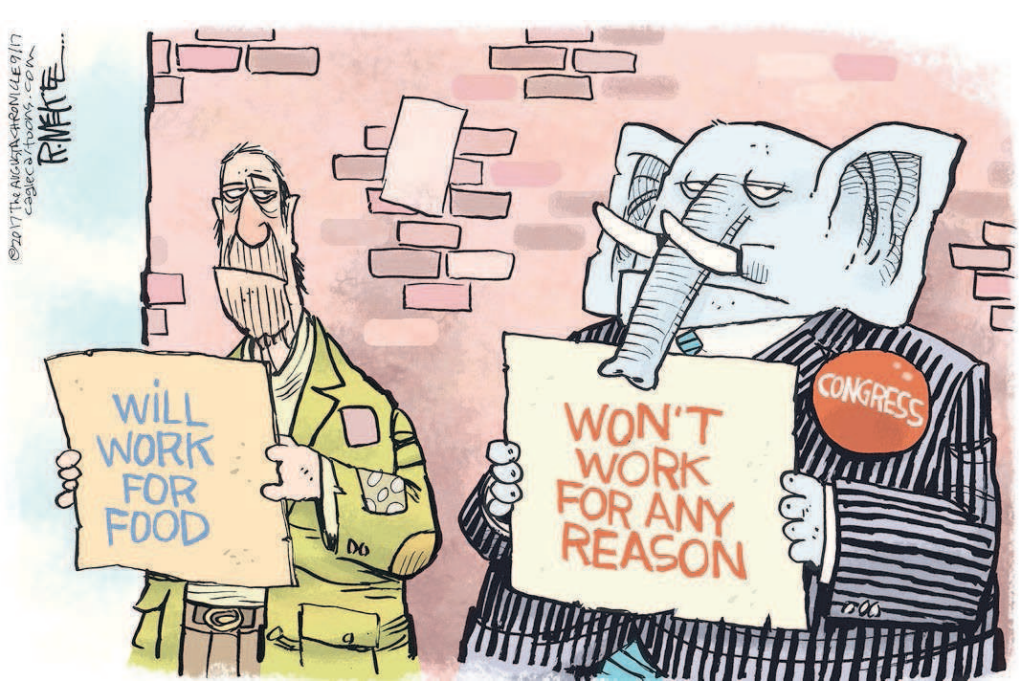
OTHER VIEWS

We the people should celebrate U.S. Constitution: 230 years and still going strong

The Quincy (Ill.) Herald-Whig

Constitution Day generally passes with little fanfare each year. None of the trappings of a major holiday — fireworks displays, local and national celebrations — is accorded to Sept. 17. The Fourth of July, which celebrates our Declaration of Independence, receives considerable attention, as a significant date in our nation’s history certainly should. However, we wish there was more celebration on the day devoted to the U.S. Constitution. Eleven years after the American colonies declared their independence from Great Britain, there was no president, no Congress and no Supreme Court. Then, on Sept. 17, 1787, the delegates to the Constitutional Convention met to sign the document they had created. “We the people ...” was more than just the introductory phrase to that remarkable document. It spelled out the revolutionary idea that ultimate power resides in this nation’s citizens, and not its government. In just over 4,000 words, the Constitution set forth a new form of government. A republic with three co-equal branches of government was formed to provide checks and balances against abuses. The legislative branch was created so that in one chamber the

representation was based on population, while the other chamber offered every state equal power. Four more years would pass before the first 10 amendments to the Constitution spelled out personal and individual rights. That landmark is noted on Bill of Rights Day, Dec. 15. Other amendments have been added as the nation has grown and changed. On the 230th anniversary of the U.S. Constitution’s signing, the United States is the pre-eminent world power as much for its ideals as for its military and economic might. Those ideals of individual liberty, personal freedom and the responsibilities of citizenship still shine. Most important, it is incumbent on those who know this simple, yet powerful document to pass along that knowledge so that the Constitution will survive for another two centuries. Its framers clearly recognized that new threats to freedom arise with each new generation. Benjamin Franklin, one of the signatories, hinted at the challenges ahead when asked whether the convention had decided on a republic or a monarchy. “A republic, if you can keep it,” Franklin said. It is true that the U.S. Constitution has guided and shaped this nation. But we, the people, are the only ones who can ensure that it remains the law of the land.



OTHER VIEWS

Over DACA, an acute case of Trump panic syndrome

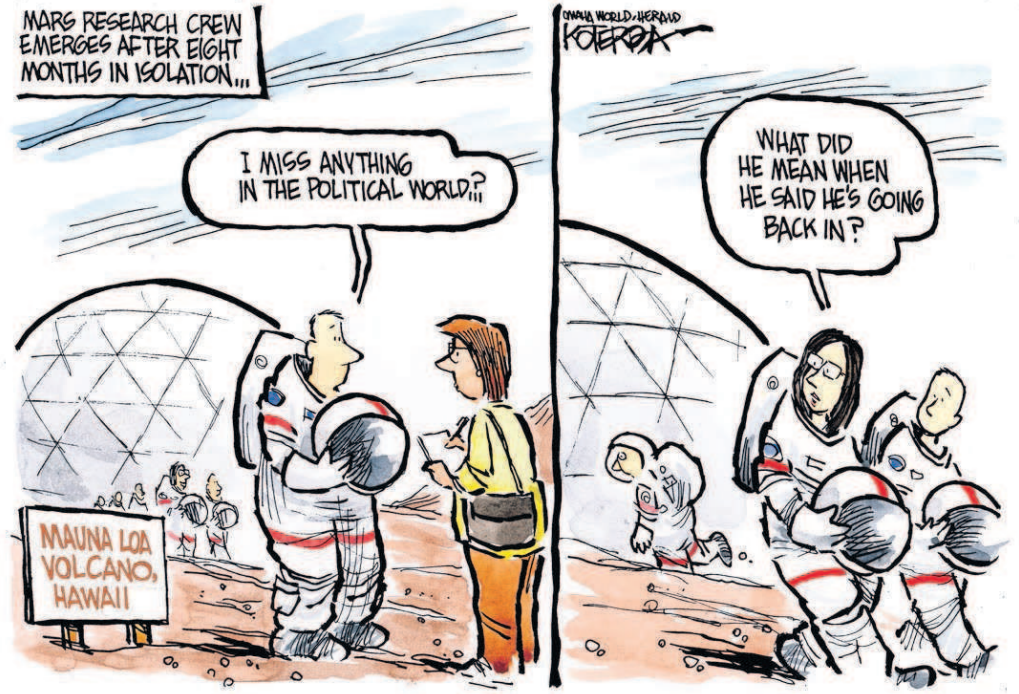
The entire politico-media complex had a nervous breakdown last week over President Trump’s position on DACA. Lawmakers, journalists and activists jumped to all sorts of conclusions when Senate Minority Leader Charles Schumer and House Minority Leader Nancy Pelosi announced that over dinner at the White House on Sept. 13 they reached an “agreement” with the president over the future of 700,000 illegal immigrants in the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program. There was reason to be skeptical — after all, the story was coming from just one side. But skepticism was in short supply, and even some of those who realized the information was sketchy couldn’t keep themselves from speaking up. Some Trump supporters instantly assumed the president had sold them out. Some Trump opponents instantly mocked Trump supporters for ever believing his promises. Democrats wondered what Schumer and Pelosi were doing with the hated president. Many spoke without enough knowledge to draw any conclusions, or even early conclusions. The two parties most to blame were Schumer/Pelosi and the Associated Press. After the White House dinner, the Democratic leaders released a statement saying of their meeting with the president, “We agreed to enshrine the protections of DACA into law quickly, and to work out a package of border security, excluding the wall, that’s acceptable to both sides.” A reasonable reader would conclude that the two sides had reached a deal on DACA, with just the border security measures to be worked out later. But the AP took things a step further, suggesting a done deal. At 9:55 p.m. Sept. 13, the news agency tweeted: “BREAKING: Schumer, Pelosi announce deal with Trump to protect young immigrants; will include border security, but no wall.” That was ahead of where things actually stood, but, coming from the AP, it was instantly accepted as fact. All hell broke loose. Writing on the basis of the AP tweet, Republican Rep. Steve King, an immigration hawk, tweeted, “If AP is correct, Trump base is blown up, destroyed, irreparable, and disillusioned beyond repair. No promise is credible. By 11 p.m., Breitbart News ran the headline “AMNESTY DON” above “REPORT: Trump caves on DACA.” Sean Hannity was skeptical, but still jumped in. Responding to a Twitter follower who said Trump is “really pissing off his base right now,” Hannity rushed to point the finger at the Republican Party. “If reports true 100%,” Hannity tweeted. “I blame R’s. They caused this. They wanted him to fail and now pushed him into arms of political suicide--IF



BYRON YORK
Comment

TRUE.” Meanwhile, as Twitter lit up, Pelosi sent a relatively subdued note to her House Democratic colleagues. At the White House meeting, she said, “We agreed to a plan to work out an agreement to protect our nation’s DREAMERS from deportation.” “Agreed to a plan to work out an agreement.” That’s a classic Washington way of saying the parties haven’t agreed on anything but agree to keep talking in hopes of eventually reaching an agreement. Beyond that weak formulation, Pelosi, in her note, did not claim the two sides had agreed on anything. That didn’t stop the ruckus. Nor did much change when, the next morning, Trump made an attempt to quiet things down. “No deal was made last night on DACA,” he tweeted. “Massive border security would have to be agreed to in exchange for consent. Would be subject to vote.” Seeking to mollify supporters who saw him caving to Schumer and Pelosi, Trump added: “The WALL ... will continue to be built.” At the same time, Trump sounded positively Schumer-esque with another tweet asking, “Does anybody really want to throw out good, educated and accomplished young people who have jobs, some serving in the military? Really!” But even then, Trump said “BIG border security” would have to accompany legalization. Later, more members of Congress chimed in with reminders that a DACA deal, if there is to be one, will be made by lawmakers, and not just the president. What Schumer and Pelosi and Trump laid out were positions in a negotiation that will take place between House, Senate and White House. But on the night of Sept. 13 and the morning of the 14th, when hair was on fire across Washington and social media, there was no deal and nothing had been decided, except that everyone said they wanted a deal, which is what negotiators always say. In other words, the whole episode changed pretty much nothing. Anyone who followed Trump during the campaign knows he is headed toward some sort of accommodation for DACA recipients. And anyone who follows the Trump administration and Congress knows there will be showdowns on Capitol Hill over the wall and other border security and enforcement measures. That is where the DACA issue stood before the freakout of Wednesday night and Thursday morning, and that is where the issue stood afterward. All that panic for no reason. People are on hair trigger these days. They go off before they know what is going on. The DACA fiasco should be a lesson.

Byron York is chief political correspondent for The Washington Examiner.



LETTERS POLICY

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