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OUR VIEW

Hear women roar

The latter half of 2017 will be remembered as the time that women all over the globe drew a line in the sand.

No longer will sexual harassment be endured silently. No longer will abusers operate with impunity. No longer will men dominate discussion and decision making in board rooms, capitol buildings and households across the country. And no longer will the people who hear these stories demean the accusers, and pick through their lives like vultures in search of rotten meat.

Everyone in this country remains innocent until proven guilty. But the onus is now on those who have been accused of heinous acts — accused by people with nothing to gain but to bring some sense of justice.

It's an admirable, dangerous time.

Beware the court of public opinion. And beware a moral flattening — where years of predatory behavior require the same punishment as a poor choice of words or a momentary lapse. Or a thoroughly reported article is given the same weight as a Twitter accusation.

The sword is coming for people we admire for their art, or athletic prowess, or their control of a corporate board room, or for their political views that mesh so well with our own.

Beware then, too, the desire make sexual assault and harassment just another partisan division. Find no additional joy from the demise of an enemy, and do not give those who you admire unfair protection from claims of abuse. That's how this issue became so prevalent and so powerful in the first place.

Politics certainly did play a part in the arrival of this moment. Donald Trump's electoral victory, despite his deeply problematic relationships with women and his televised brags of sexual assault, helped usher in this age. Charlotte Alter of Time Magazine wrote during the campaign that "the 2016 election was a referendum on what

women could achieve and what men could get away with."

A majority of Americans will no longer stand by the results of that referendum, and want immediate action to remedy the situation. The 2.6 million-strong Women's March the day after Trump's inauguration put the pressure on.

That movement wasn't just about sexual harassment and assault. It's ultimately about a fair society in which all viewpoints are considered, and women are not held back when they choose not to play games with powerful men.

And that has made us look at our own back yard.

There is a noticeable dearth of female voices

in Eastern Oregon, and Morrow and Umatilla counties in particular. Umatilla County commissioners are all men (and, as far as we can find, have always been men). Morrow County just added Melissa Lindsay to their three-person board, but men have always been a majority there, too.

There has never been a female mayor in the history of Pendleton or Hermiston. Neither city has had a woman city manager. We have found no evidence that its city councils have ever had a majority of women. No woman has ever represented Eastern Oregon in the statehouse. Oregon has only elected one female U.S. Senator in its history. And five of Oregon's six current Representatives in the U.S. House are men.

These are deeply embarrassing, distressing statistics.

There are woman in positions of leadership in education and business in Eastern Oregon, but to have so many levers of power in the hands of men is dangerous and limiting. If we only include half of our population in important decisions, those decisions are bound to be half as good.

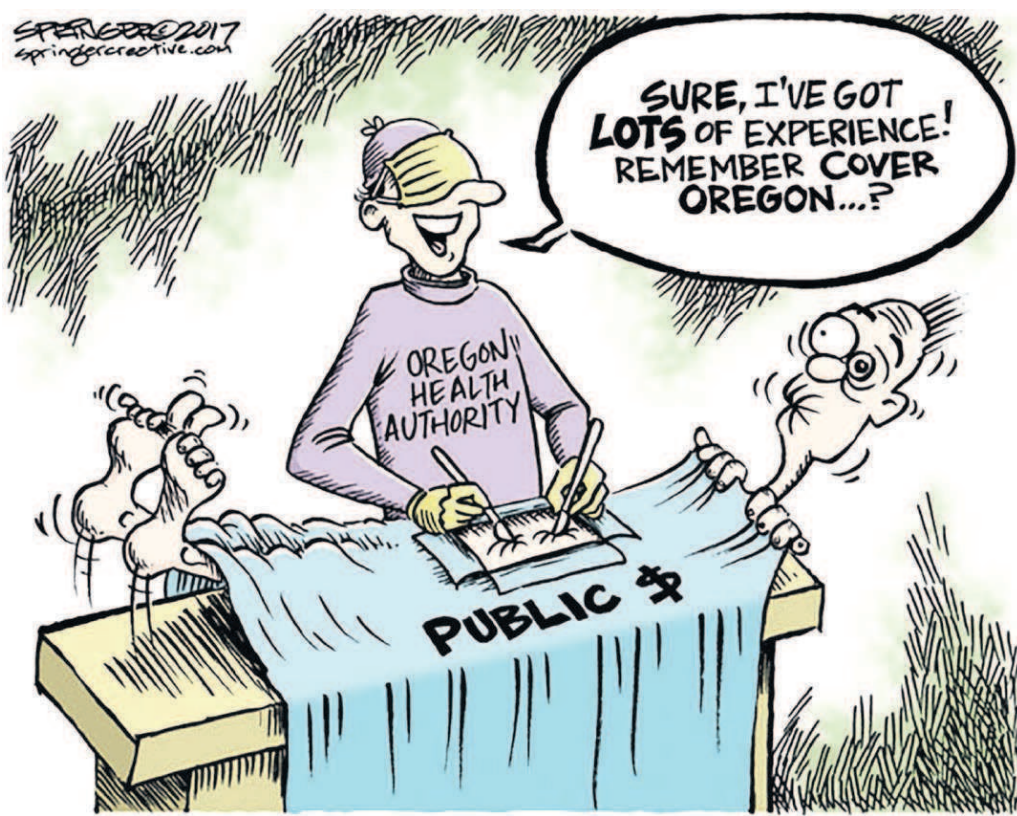
Eastern Oregon must do better. Women across the region should demand their rightful power and take it.

There are few women in leadership positions in Eastern Oregon. That's unacceptable.

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.

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 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

Bridging the canyon across the holiday table

Could you spot the Trump supporter at the Thanksgiving dinner table? Maybe you were expecting a grump in a MAGA cap, obsessed with white meat. Or someone who started in with whataboutism and the Clintons once the Russian connection came up.

More likely, it was the silent pessimist stewing across from the sweet potatoes, part of the large majority of Donald Trump followers who believe life is worse today than it was 50 years ago. They are also more likely to think that the country can't solve its problems — that we're all doomed to a tribal apocalypse.

We knew this profile going into the election, thanks to a number of surveys showing that Trump Republicans had thrown in the towel on the big issues of the day. They don't trust diplomacy to ensure peace, nor do they believe more ethnic diversity is a good thing. In those two areas, thankfully, they are also out of step with majority sentiment.

Still, it's a wonder we're even talking. Contempt is mutual. A Pew survey from last year found that 45 percent of Republicans think Democrats are a threat to the nation's well-being. And a majority of Democrats say Republicans make them feel "afraid."

In the Trump era, we've reached peak domestic hatred. Though it has been building for years, Americans of differing political views despise each other to a degree not seen in the modern era. Never, even at the height of impeachment fever around Richard Nixon and Bill Clinton, did so much bile run through our waterways.

In 1960, just 5 percent of Republicans and 4 percent of Democrats said they would be upset if their child married someone from the other party. By 2012, nearly half of all Republicans and 33 percent of Democrats said they would not welcome an in-law of the other party into the family.

But here's one bright spot in the Divided States of Trump: In a strange way, he has also brought many of us together. Trump brings out the worst in his supporters, dragging them down to his adult day care center. By contrast, his opponents have become more inclusive. Because he is so singularly coarse and vulgar, so ill informed and small-minded, he has made people see the better side of those they had long written off.

Until this year, you were hard-pressed to find a Democrat to say nice things about George W. Bush — see Worst President Ever — or Mitt Romney, often cast as a heartless plutocrat.

Now barely a day goes by when some partisan on the left doesn't say he or she is



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

starting to rethink their view of W., who spoke out against the "nativism" and "casual cruelty" of the Trump era. Or to praise Romney as an old-fashioned gentleman. I count myself in that camp. Both of these men have stood up against the anti-constitutional, zero-sum, resentment presidency of Trump, while others in their party stand by meekly.

The Republican Sens. Bob Corker of Tennessee, Jeff Flake and John McCain of Arizona, and Susan Collins

of Maine are rightly hailed by Democrats for trying to put country above party. Or at the least, to call out Trump for having no sense of decency.

At the same time, talented polemicists from the red side of the spectrum — the quick-witted Republican strategist Rick Wilson, the tireless Jennifer Rubin of *The Washington Post*, the prose stylist Peggy Noonan of *The Wall Street Journal* — have found something to like in Democrats. This is Trump's doing, albeit not by design.

E Pluribus Unum has always been a fragile construct, undermined by the Original Sin of slavery. In 1856, Preston Brooks, a congressman from slaveholding South Carolina, physically attacked Sen. Charles Sumner of Massachusetts, an opponent of human bondage. Brooks fractured the other man's skull and split his nose with a walking stick. The assailant became a hero in the South. About the same time, Sen. David Atchison of Missouri urged his constituents to "kill every goddamn abolitionist in the district."

The Big Sort — documented in a groundbreaking 2008 book of the same name — gets much of the blame for a landscape of ideological silos. Liberals are more urban, conservatives less so, and the twain seldom meet.

It's one thing to be drawn to the like-minded, birds of a feather. It's another to see the other birds as vile. For this, you can blame the right-wing press, which has built a profitable industry on hatred of a caricatured "other." Thus, Rush Limbaugh says "feminism was established so as to allow unattractive women easier access to the mainstream of society."

In this biosphere, the birtherism lie was nurtured until it produced a candidate, and a president. But as bad as things are, a majority of Americans, an increasingly bipartisan pool, are appalled at the monstrosity of Trump's presidency. Pass the gravy, friend!

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.

We've reached peak domestic hatred.

YOUR VIEWS

Eastern Oregon is being carved up for Idaho's benefit

A travesty is happening in Eastern Oregon and it seems there is no way to stop it. The Boardman to Hemingway power line proposed by Idaho Power, of all companies, is on the path to approval. We in Oregon are about to let an Idaho company gouge a 250-foot wide path 300 miles through our forests and desert in sparsely populated Eastern Oregon.

A number of people, very few really, are learning the rules of the bureaucratic maze and are fighting back. It is easy to get discouraged in this effort against a large professional company. With so few people in Eastern Oregon, B2H has remained pretty much under the radar of those in the rest of Oregon, who ought to be mad as heck.

The Oregon Public Utilities Commission receives, every two years, from Idaho Power an Integrated Resource Plan. This plan has included B2H, and Idaho Power makes it the least cost, least risk portfolio of resources for the next 20 years. The commissioners have a very good staff who they depend upon to make recommendations for changes. As members of the public, we can scream and holler, but emotion has no effect — the rules take precedence. So, this year we are

asking the commission to require Idaho Power to analyze other resources like battery storage, solar, and more accurately determine the effect of demand response and energy efficiency, in order to eliminate the B2H.

The Oregon Energy Facilities Council determines the route of the power line on private property in Oregon. Another set of 25 rules — another technical exercise for the few against the large staffed departments at Idaho Power. We challenge the "need." Our basic objection is that by the time the power line is built it will not be needed.

Even with sage grouse, Oregon Trail, and salmon being damaged, a trail of 190-foot high towers will scar the Eastern Oregon landscape. The ironic part is an Oregon government council and commission may approve an Idaho company to do the damage. This would never happen in the Willamette Valley.

Gail Carbiener
Bend

Symphony orchestra keeps Pendleton tapping its toes

If you worry that things in Pendleton are too slow, think about dropping in on the Oregon East Symphony concerts at the Vert Auditorium for great music and a roomful of enthusiasm.

Keeping a 50-member orchestra going in northeast Oregon is not for sissies: competition with other orchestras, seeing grant money decline, asking guest musicians to travel. A recent article made the Vert out to be in such bad repair that a friend called from Portland to ask if events were still being held there. Anyone who attended the Nov. 5 season opening concert got some assurance and their money's worth.

Music Director Beau Benson, connected to the music program at Baylor University in Texas, is in his fifth year with Oregon East Symphony. The opening concert drew an audience of 250, including 15 who were invited as part of a "Take a Friend to the Symphony" promotion. Benson blends familiar concert pieces with those newer to the audience. Another blending: 53 musicians on stage, two-thirds of whom came from Walla Walla, Boise, Vancouver, etc., and one-third of whom were local.

There was an air of enthusiasm over the Nov. 5 concert despite tough economic conditions for symphonies. A few days before the concert, the orchestra played in front of fourth grade children. And four young musicians from Oregon East Symphony's youth program played the last two numbers onstage with the older musicians.

Remaining concerts this year and next are Dec. 10, Feb. 10, March 10 and April 21. The OES office is in the basement of the Vert.

Mike Forrester
Pendleton

New four-way stop should include lighted signs

I'm glad to see that there will finally be a four-way stop on Feedville and Edwards. But one thing needs to be added: The stop signs with the flashing lights should be used. There will be fewer excuses for drivers who still run the signs to use. It makes the visibility excellent for daylight and nighttime driving. One life saved is worth the cost.

While I'm at it, I would also like to suggest the same signs with cross walking flags, crossing lights and crossing lanes available for pedestrians. When a pedestrian needs to cross Highway 395 safely, where there is no crossing within a block of normal traffic crossings, this allows a safe place to cross with a shortened time for flow of traffic. This is better than issuing crosswalk tickets or vehicles hitting people. Just a thought.

Bernie Sanderson
Hermiston