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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat; kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to our new neighbors.

You have hopefully met many of them this year, and you definitely met a few this week. People who moved to one of our Eastern Oregon communities in the last year have appeared on our front page all week long, and we will finish the annual series tomorrow.



The stories are among our favorites each year, when we get to ask people from all over the world how they ended up in our little corner of it. And it always makes us proud when a consistent through line in their stories is how kind and welcoming people here are, and how quickly newcomers were able to feel comfortable and included.

Being good hosts of a welcoming nature is a key attribute in everyone's life. Not only is being a good neighbor a clear moral requirement, but it helps us continue to be a growing, blossoming region. As the saying goes, if you ain't growing, you're dying.

Obviously we can't document everyone who moved to the area, and we know many others out there who have brought their own individual spice to the Eastern Oregon stew. We appreciate and welcome all of you, and tip our hat to everyone who chose our neck of the woods to be your neck of the woods.

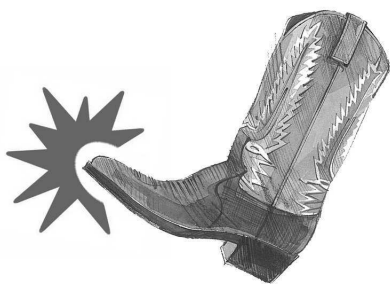
A kick in the pants to these still-snowy streets, especially in Pendleton.

We include below two photos taken at the same time Thursday in Hermiston and Pendleton. And while Pendleton did get a couple more inches of precipitation on Sunday and Monday, the condition of the streets three days after the last measurable snowfall is night and day.

Night in Hermiston, where you can see the black asphalt of a clear city street. And day in Pendleton, as snow carpets all of the city's commercial byways, and remains piled up much higher along our residential roads.

And we understand that Hermiston was a few degrees warmer and more than a few degrees flatter.

And we also understand that winter happens, and we enjoy the Eastern Oregon tradition to delight in the temporary gridlock that comes when Mother Nature demands her notice. But eventually we all have to get back to being productive members of society, and Pendleton's inability to clear its roads and sidewalks impairs that.



EO photo

The intersection of Southeast Third and East Main in Hermiston Thursday afternoon.



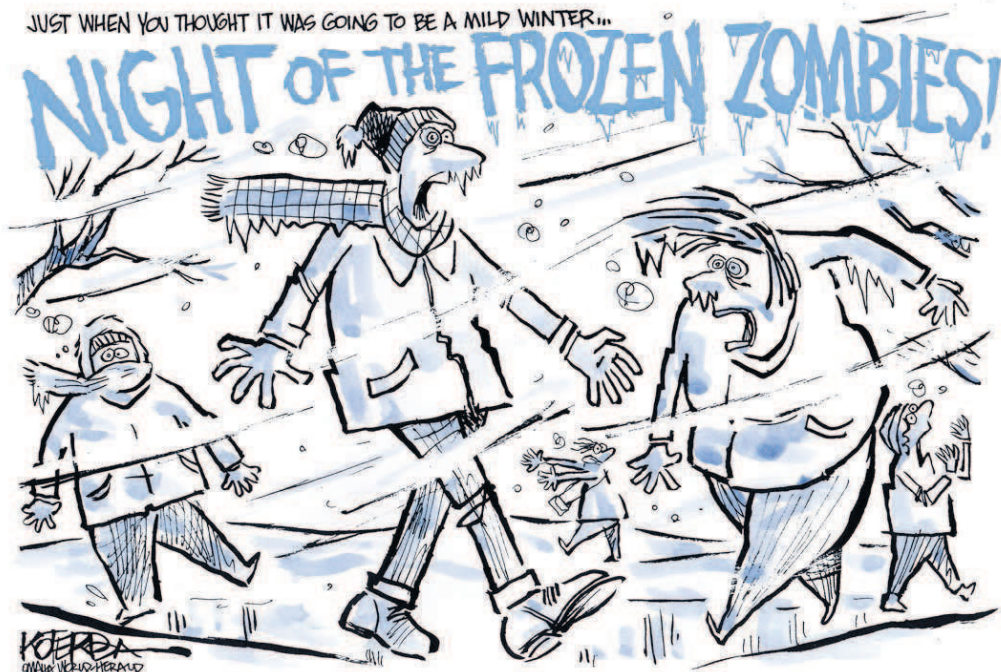
Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The intersection of Main Street and Dorion Avenue at roughly the same time Thursday in Pendleton.

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



OTHER VIEWS

The dangers of Trump delirium

To travel the liberal byways of social media over recent weeks was to learn that Donald Trump was on the precipice of axing Robert Mueller and was likely to use the days just before Christmas, when we were distracted by eggnog and mistletoe, to lower the blade.

Christmas has come. Christmas has gone. Mueller has not.

To listen to Nancy Pelosi and other Democratic leaders, the tax overhaul that Trump just signed into law is no mere plutocratic folly. It's "Armageddon" (Pelosi's actual word). Their opposition is righteous, but how will millions of voters who notice smaller withholdings from their paychecks and more money in their pockets square that seemingly good fortune with such prophecies of doom on a biblical scale?

Some of these Americans may decide that the prophets aren't to be trusted — and that the president isn't quite the pestilence they make him out to be.

I'm not minimizing Trump's capriciousness or cupidity. He could yet fire Mueller, the special counsel. Some conservatives' intensifying attacks on the counsel and the FBI are clearly grist for that.

And the tax bill is indeed a messy, fiscally reckless means for Republican lawmakers to please their donors and crowd that they are getting big things done.

But the end of the world? Come on. That's not par-for-the-course hyperbole. It's peculiar-to-Trump hyperventilation, an understandable response to such an indecent president but quite possibly a tactical mistake. It could weaken the odds of hobbling him next fall, in the midterm elections, and of putting him far behind us in November 2020. And that's where I, for one, want him: in the rearview mirror, growing tinier and tinier as we zoom, pedal to the metal, toward a saner, more dignified horizon.

But I worry. When Trump's opponents react to so much of what he says and does with such unfettered outrage, that howl becomes background noise, and it is harder to make sure that his unequivocally foul maneuvers stand out from his debatably foolish ones. When we constantly conjure the direst scenarios, we risk looking like ignorable hysterics — and bolstering his grandiose claims of martyrdom — if events unfold in a less damnable fashion.

Fury isn't strategy, and there's no need to extrapolate beyond the facts already in our possession.

Take the inquiries into the Trump campaign's dealings with Russia. They could screech to a halt tomorrow and we'd be left with more than enough evidence of corrupt business dealings, conflicts of interest, shady



DAVID LEONHARDT
Comment

back channels, awful judgment and outright lies among Trump's intimates to present voters with a powerful case against his fitness for office.

But by obsessing over clear "collusion" and insisting on visible puppet strings by which Vladimir Putin controlled Trump, we have set the bar dangerously high. Mueller's ultimate findings could be plenty ugly and still be deemed underwhelming.

Our overreach is everywhere. Some of those social-media threads forecasting Mueller's pre-Christmas firing went further, envisioning street protests that would prompt a brutal response from government forces just itching for the chance. I spotted the phrase "martial law."

Much of the tax-overhaul pushback, which painted the whole of the legislation as an abomination, didn't acknowledge that Democrats themselves had long favored corporate-rate reductions. Nor did the ferocious back-and-forth over Trump's declaration of Jerusalem as Israel's capital make clear that many politicians before him had proposed the same step. That doesn't make it prudent, but it does challenge the portrayal of his decision as some ploy beyond the pale.

The issue here is credibility and not giving the president ammunition to discredit opponents as overwrought, ahistoric partisans in a state of indiscriminate freak-out. When we answer melodrama with melodrama, we're playing his game, by his rules, and he wins. Better to patrol our language and pick our issues, so that crucial areas of focus — the demoralization of our diplomatic corps, the stacking of the judiciary, the transformation of the presidency into a marketing scheme — aren't lost in the welter and the whirl.

"I can't be the car alarm that always goes off," John McCain reportedly said to a friend this year, explaining his own strategy for tempering Trump. "If I am, I'm not effective." There's wisdom in that.

All signs right now point to enormous gains for Democrats in the midterms; I'd be very surprised, based on the country's present mood, if they didn't take control of the House. But establishing that check on Trump is much too important to be jeopardized in the slightest. And our Trump-induced delirium indeed jeopardizes it, pumping up his impassioned adversaries at the risk of confusing and alienating dispassionate Americans in the middle.

They needn't be convinced that he's all Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. But a singularly miserable jockey? That's an easy sell. And it's probably a surer way to eject him from the derby.

David Leonhardt is an op-ed columnist for The New York Times.

"I can't be the car alarm that always goes off. If I am, I'm not effective."

— John McCain, U.S. Senator, on Donald Trump

YOUR VIEWS

Pendleton's roads need better

As a taxpayer and member of this community, I would like to know why the city hall and library parking lots got plowed on Christmas Day, when they were not open, and this city cannot plow the streets?

After numerous phone calls and inquiries about why this city doesn't plow the streets, I have come to the conclusion that they do not want to. I have been told that the city has a plow but will not plow the streets of snow because of the numerous complaints by residents about their driveways being blocked by snow berms. There is an easy solution to this problem and that is pile the snow in the middle of the streets and leave the intersections open. Lack of snowplowing slows the response of emergency vehicles.

This just goes to prove that this inept city management does not care about the city or its citizens who pay their wages and salaries. If you remove the snow faster, the streets will be thawing out faster — less likely to freeze and have them crumble. Our streets are in major need of repair because the city has not taken the time to prevent damage, but they can build a road to nowhere that no business has invested in moving to Pendleton.

I would like to request that every person that reads this letter to the editor call the city and express your dismay with the action of not plowing snow off the streets. When the next election comes around vote, please elect new people into office for the city council and mayor positions.

Mike Clark
Pendleton

Can't support Walden, tax plan

The recent passage of the tax scam, heralded by our own Congressman Greg Walden, is really a plan to appease corporate and filthy rich donors even though it is reported to increase the deficit by \$1.46 trillion and throw millions off health insurance.

With the puppet strings attached to those donors for their financial support, we cannot believe that U.S. Rep. Walden is really concerned about the middle class or his Oregon constituents. It appears that our congressman has become so comfortable selling out to the Washington special interest lobbyists that he has accepted his role of being one of the major puppets in this tax scam tragedy of epic proportions.

The tax scam tragedy isn't really about "tax relief" with a purported benefit of saving \$1,300 a year (\$108 per month) for a family of four, it is a tragedy about a tax scam that is designed to destroy our health care, our education system, the middle class, and our democracy as we know it.

To pay for this tragedy, the selling out to the filthy rich and corporations, with a debunked trickle-down economics theory is not new. It has been tried before. It didn't work then and it won't work now no matter how good the actors — Greg Walden and the other Republicans — are at playing their roles.

The short-term "advantages" will cost the middle class the most, but because Rep. Walden has sold his vote, he will pay when he is voted out in November 2018.

Beverly Sherrill
The Dalles