

EAST OREGONIAN OPINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



■ A tip of the hat to action this past week to improve mental health services in Eastern Oregon.

Spurred in part by concerns raised by law enforcement professionals throughout the area, Greater Oregon Behavioral Health Inc. (GOBHI) put Lifeways Inc. on notice for what it called substandard mental health services.

GOBHI CEO Kevin Campbell requested that Lifeways hire an outside consultant to oversee the program and help make necessary improvements.

The first meeting between the two organizations since Campbell went public is scheduled for Friday. It's good timing because Lifeways is welcoming a new CEO, and may have a window to make some long-overdue changes to policy and personnel.

We don't know what will come out of these new plans and demands, but the fact that mental health services are being talked about and wrestled with publicly is a step in the right direction.

Refocusing law enforcement, the medical community and local government on the importance of

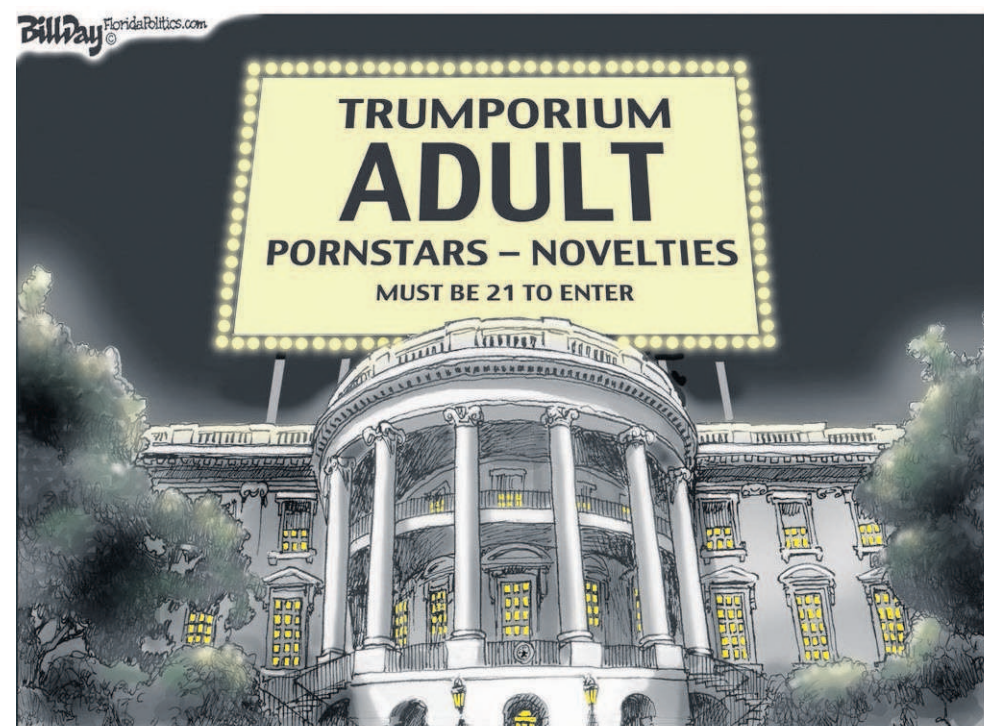
this issue is critical, and we're happy that services here are going under the microscope.

■ A kick in the pants to how low Donald Trump has dropped the expectations of moral conduct of the President of the United States, and for those who don't seem to care.

Share this list with your 2015 self and see if it matches your expectations of the presidency. He has cheated on all his wives, judges everyone — even his own children — by their appearance, has no friends, lies about giving money to charity, insults everyone, etc., etc.

The report this week in the *Wall Street Journal* that Trump cheated on his wife, first lady Melania, in 2005 just months after she had given birth is only the latest revelation in the tabloid presidency. The woman in question is porn star Stormy Daniels. Trump's lawyers paid her \$130,000 during the election not to tell her salacious story to the media. Since that payment, Daniels denies the tryst ever took place.

That the escapade barely raises an eyebrow is a marker of just how



salacious the first year of Trump's presidency has been. That a U.S. president cheated on his wife with a porn star, paid her to shut up about it and faces no repercussions is quite a realization.

For many, these misdeeds are worth looking past, because of Trump's un-Hillaryness. They'll even pull out the quick Clinton equation — Bill did the same thing, right?

But Bill Clinton's affair with Monica Lewinsky and his blatant lie about it was

the sole focus of the media for months. It brought about impeachment. And "I did not have sexual relations with that woman" stands next to Nixon's "I am not a crook" as the epitome of presidential lies. We didn't accept either.

For some reason, we've lost our will to stand up to such garbage.

The people who support the president should realize that they are making themselves and the country susceptible to equally odious moral leadership (from both sides of the aisle) in the future.



YOUR VIEWS

Oregon cap and trade bill will reduce greenhouse gases

Soon the Oregon Legislature will be considering the Clean Energy Jobs bill. In a nutshell, this policy will provide a cap on pollution developed with the best science available and allowing a pricing schedule that is reasonably stable and flexible through time. The proceeds will be invested into clean energy and sustainable projects throughout all social, economic, and cultural strata. A minimum of 35 percent of proceeds will be invested to reduce pollution and climate impacts experienced by low-income and rural communities, communities of color and workers in Oregon. I urge you to become informed on this timely and important bill and then actively support it. I feel it moves Oregon and the nation toward addressing reduction of greenhouse gas emissions — a necessary first step if we are to provide a future climate on Earth wherein humans may thrive.

Carbon pricing has a lengthy history in Oregon dating back to 1997; therefore, the current legislature has access to sufficient information and available expertise in the field to analyze this approach known as a cap and invest. Oregon would be joining several other states in greenhouse gas reduction efforts. Knowledge gained by the states will guide development of national models for carbon pricing and resulting greenhouse gas reduction efforts.

At this point in time any delay adds to the cost and difficulty of implementation necessary to achieve the required reduction trajectory (another term to become familiar with — ask your senator/representative to explain the concept).

There is always uncertainty regarding effectiveness of any legislation but in this case the more troublesome uncertainty is how our climate responds to inaction. You must not think of this as Oregon acting alone and having little global impact but as Oregon trying to influence national efforts, which will have tremendous global impact on climate change.

It is the job of elected leaders to inform their constituents of potential threats to our way of life; unfortunately this has not happened. I find it worrisome that they have had annual briefings on this for decades and are unwilling to start a dialog with us regarding solutions. Please take a few moments to learn about the Clean Energy Jobs bill and let your leaders know that you are holding them accountable.

Charles LeBold
Union

Plenty of people read nutritional labels

I'm surprised and disappointed at the *East Oregonian's* view of the need to "plaster" labels on food products. I think you've underestimated and misunderstood your readers' opinion of the importance of nutrition labels. More people than you think want to know what they are putting in their bodies.

You said that you "believe most consumers primarily rely on another label — the price tag — more than all the others combined when they decide what to buy." I can't believe that you would base your opinion on a belief rather than research.

According to the FDA, half of all adults "always" or "most of the time" read the nutrition facts label. Thirty-nine percent "sometimes or rarely" look at the label, and 10 percent reported "never" reading it. These results seem more in keeping with what I've noticed anecdotally.

If people don't want to read the labels, they don't have to. Personally, I like comparing the amount of sodium, cholesterol and sugars in food products, and yes, I like to know from where the food originated. Then, I'll look at the price. Maybe I'll pay a little more for something healthier. Maybe not. But, at least I have the option of knowing what I'm buying and where it came from. Apparently, half the population feels similarly.

Connie Macomber
Pendleton

OTHER VIEWS

What we can learn from 's-hole' countries

Despite President Donald Trump's reported call to reject immigrants from "shithole countries," people from these countries actually have plenty to teach us.

Let's start with a quiz: Which country was the first in the world to ban government discrimination against gays in its constitution? Norway, New Zealand or South Africa?

Answer: It's the so-called s-hole country, South Africa. It also bans discrimination based on gender and disability. Someday all the world will be so enlightened.

Here are other examples we can learn from:

1. Sierra Leone's president has committed the country to providing free health care for children under 5 and for pregnant women, including prenatal care and deliveries, although care still lags. Meanwhile, in America the issue doesn't get such high-level attention, so American women die in childbirth at five times the rate of British women.

2. Kenya is way ahead of the U.S. in mobile money. It's easy in Kenya to transfer money by cellphone and to use a phone as a bank account. Nearly everyone has a mobile phone, and 88 percent of Kenyan mobile phone users also have mobile money accounts. Kenyans don't understand why Americans are so backward in telecommunications.

3. Rwanda may eliminate cervical cancer before America, for Rwanda vaccinates virtually all girls against the human papillomavirus, which causes cervical cancer. By also employing screenings for older women who were not vaccinated, it aims to eliminate cervical cancer by 2020. In contrast, only 65 percent of American girls get vaccinated for HPV, and a woman dies every two hours in the U.S. from cervical cancer.

"I wish parents in the U.S. worked as hard as those in Rwanda to get their daughters vaccinated, so that they will never need to know the horrors of cervical cancer," says Dr. Seth Berkley, chief executive of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance.

4. Understanding the importance of languages in a globalized world, many Kenyans speak English, Swahili and a tribal language, and polyglots are common throughout Africa. In contrast, there's the old joke: If somebody who speaks three languages is trilingual, and one who speaks two languages is bilingual, what do you call someone who speaks one language? An American.

5. African health officials have strongly promoted breast-feeding to make sure that babies get the healthiest possible start in life. So while 20 percent of American

babies are exclusively breast-fed for the first six months of life, the figure is 42 percent in sub-Saharan Africa. In Rwanda, it's a stunning 87 percent.

6. African governments have conscientiously followed recommendations of the World Health Assembly to curb infant formula marketing that discourages breast-feeding; the U.S. has not. In this respect, suggests Shawn Baker of the Bill and Melinda Gates

Foundation, "The U.S. might benefit from technical assistance from Botswana."

7. Nigeria ensures that 93 percent of households get iodized salt, to reduce iodine deficiency that causes mental disability as well as goiters. In the U.S., only a bit more than half of salt sold to households is iodized, and iodine deficiency is becoming more common.

8. At a time when much of the rich world has turned against refugees, Uganda has quietly accepted more than one million South Sudan refugees. Likewise, the Diffa region of Niger is heroic in taking in refugees from northern Nigeria, and it now resettles refugees at extraordinarily high rates, helping the newcomers rather than demonizing them.

9. In the latest Freedom House index, the U.S. fell in the rankings of freedom and democracy and is now outranked by two African countries, Cape Verde and Mauritius. Both manage multiracial societies in a way we can learn from.

10. The fastest-growing economy in the world is Ethiopia's, according to the World Economic Forum, with Tanzania's and Djibouti's also in the top six. They are all growing more than twice as fast as the U.S. economy.

11. The Trump administration could learn something about diplomacy from Botswana, which asked the U.S. to please clarify whether the U.S. considers Botswana a shithole. No bluster, no military threats, no rude tweets — but the point was made.

12. Immigrants to the U.S. from Africa show a passion for education that can inspire us all. Sub-Saharan African-born immigrants are likelier to earn a college degree (39 percent) than native-born Americans (31 percent).

"Africa, like any continent, has its problems," notes Ken Roth of Human Rights Watch. "But it also has its areas where it excels. We diminish ourselves when we dismiss entire nations with an epithet rather than open ourselves to the positive examples they set."

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof, a columnist for *The New York Times* since 2001, won the Pulitzer Prize twice.

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