

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

## See something, say something

It doesn't take a medical degree to do CPR, and that's the point.

If only surgeons and doctors knew how to help the victim of a heart attack, many more people would die of heart attacks.

But because nearly one in five Americans are trained to see the signs of cardiac arrest, resuscitate the victim and call in trained professionals to take over care, everyone around them is safer. Same goes for basic first aid and the Heimlich maneuver.

But when it comes to mental health care, we don't have the same attitude. Too many people feel unprepared to step into someone else's psychotic breakdown or depression or capable of administering life-saving measures that don't involve chest compressions. And even if they're willing, they may worry they won't have the right words.

But just like in a heart attack, providing aid doesn't mean solving the problem. It means administering the necessary help until the victim can get complete treatment from a professional.

That's the idea behind QPR training, which the Umatilla County Health Department and Good Shepherd

## Who to call

- National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255
- Umatilla County Crisis Line: 541-240-8030
- Spanish Language National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-888-628-9454
- SafeOregon reporting line: 844-472-3367
- Crisis Text Line: 741741
- Military Helpline: 888-457-4838 or text MIL1 to 839863
- Alcohol and Drug Helpline: 800-923-4357 or text RecoveryNow to 839863
- OregonYouthLine.org: 1-877-968-8491 or text "teen2teen" to 839863
- The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ youth): 1-866-4-U-TREVOR
- Native Youth Crisis Hotline: 1-877-209-1266

Medical Center hosted in February. If more people take on the role of "gatekeepers," trained to recognize and respond to those suffering a mental health crisis or having suicidal thoughts, we will create a network of support that will decrease the number of suicides.

It's a three-step process of



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Prevention Education Specialist Amanda Walsborn, with Umatilla County Public Health, teaches a QPR suicide prevention training Thursday at Good Shepherd Medical Center in Hermiston.

questioning, persuading and referring.

The first step is to be frank and direct, especially about suicide. Amanda Walsborn, the prevention education specialist for Umatilla County Health, explained during the training that you can't plant the idea of suicide in someone's mind by talking about it. Either they are or they aren't considering it, and by bringing it to the open you are bringing it out from the dark.

The signs might not be obvious, but if someone exhibits sudden shifts in demeanor or mood, talks about what life would be like if they were gone

or shows an interest in getting rid of personal belongings, it's a good time to broach the subject.

The next step is to persuade, to explain that help is available and that their life is important to you and others. It's important to speak in positive terms, and not demean the person for considering suicide.

The last step is refer, knowing where to get the person the help they need. See the "Who to call" sidebar for some numbers to call for immediate help.

For more information on upcoming trainings on suicide prevention, contact Walsborn at 541-278-5432.

## OTHER VIEWS

## The chaos after Trump

What happens to U.S. politics after Donald Trump? Do we snap back to normal, or do things spin ever more widely out of control?

The best indicator we have so far is the example of Italy since the reign of Silvio Berlusconi. And the main lesson there is that once the norms of acceptable behavior are violated and once the institutions of government are weakened, it is very hard to re-establish them. Instead, you get this cycle of ever more extreme behavior, as politicians compete to be the most radical outsider. The political center collapses, the normal left/right political categories cease to apply and you see the rise of strange new political groups that are crazier than anything you could have imagined before.

If the United States follows the Italian example, by 2025 we'll look back at Trump nostalgically as some sort of beacon of relative normalcy. And by the way, if America follows the Italian example, Trump will never go away.

Silvio Berlusconi first came to power for the same reasons Trump and other populists have been coming to power around the world: Voters were disgusted by a governing elite that seemed corrupt and out of touch. They felt swamped by waves of immigrants, frustrated by economic stagnation and disgusted by the cultural values of the cosmopolitan urbanites.

In office, Berlusconi did nothing to address Italy's core problems, but he did degrade public discourse with his speech, weaken the structures of government with his corruption and offend basic decency with his Bunga Bunga sex parties and his general priapic lewdness.

In short, Berlusconi, like Trump, did nothing to address the sources of public anger, but he did erase any restraints on the way it could be expressed.

This past weekend's elections in Italy were dominated by parties that took Berlusconi's excesses and turned them up.

The big winner is the populist Five Star Movement, which was started by a comedian and is now led by a 31-year-old who had never held a full-time job. Another winner is the League, led by Matteo Salvini, which declined to effectively distance itself from one of its former candidates who went on a shooting rampage against African immigrants. Berlusconi, who vowed to expel 600,000 immigrants, is back and is now considered a moderating influence. The respectable center-left party, like center-left parties across Europe, collapsed.

Italy is now a poster child for the three big trends that are undermining democracies around the world:

First, the erasure of the informal norms of behavior. As Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt argue in "How Democracies Die," democracies depend not just on formal

DAVID BROOKS  
Comment

constitutions but also on informal codes. You treat your opponents like legitimate adversaries, not illegitimate enemies. You tell the truth as best you can. You don't make naked appeals to bigotry.

Berlusconi, like Trump, undermined those norms. And now Berlusconi's rivals across the political spectrum have waged a campaign that was rife with conspiracy theories, misinformation and naked appeals to race.

Second, the loss of faith in the democratic system. As Yascha Mounk writes in his book "The People vs. Democracy," faith in democratic regimes is declining with every new generation. Seventy-one percent of Europeans and North Americans born in the 1930s think it's essential to live in a democracy, but only 29 percent of people born in the 1980s think that. In the U.S., nearly a quarter of millennials think democracy is a bad way to run a country. Nearly half would like a strongman leader. One in 6 Americans of all ages support military rule.

In the Italian campaign, we see the practical results of that kind of attitude. Voters are no longer particularly bothered if a politician shows dictatorial tendencies. As one voter told Jason Horowitz of *The Times*: "Salvini is a good man. I like him because he puts Italians first. And I guess he's a fascist, too. What can you do?"

Third, the deterioration of debate caused by social media. At the dawn of the internet, people hoped free communication would lead to an epoch of peace, understanding and democratic communication. Instead, we're seeing polarization, alternative information and the rise of autocracy.

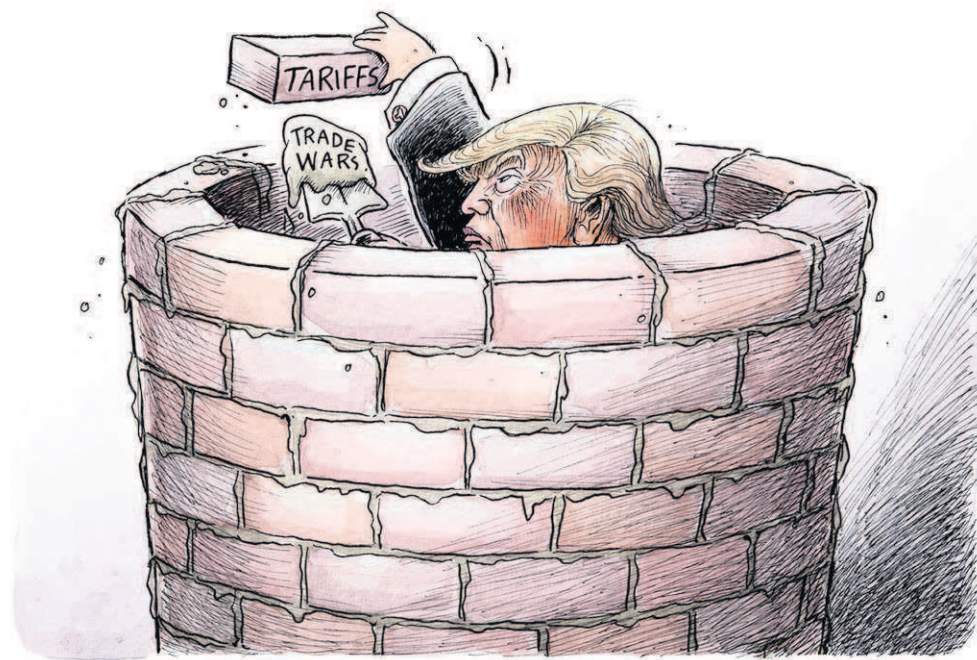
In Italy, the Five Star Movement began not so much as a party but as an online decision-making platform. It pretends to use the internet to create unmediated democracy, but as *La Stampa's* journalist Jacopo Iacoboni told David Broder of *Jacobin*: "In reality, the members have no real power. In reality, there is not any real direct democracy within M5S, but a totally top-down orchestration of the movement."

In Italy, as with Trump and his Facebook campaign, the social media platform seems decentralizing, but it actually buttresses authoritarian ends.

The underlying message is clear. As Mounk has argued, the populist wave is still rising. The younger generations are more radical, on left and right. The rising political tendencies combine lavish spending from the left with racially charged immigrant restrictions from the right.

Vladimir Putin's admirers are surging. The center is still hollowing out. Nothing is inevitable in life, but liberal democracy clearly ain't going to fix itself.

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in 2003.

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## YOUR VIEWS

### Walden is not conserving Oregon's best places

As a constituent of Oregon's District 2, I care deeply about environmental issues. I grew up at a time and in a part of the country that had few environmental safeguards. The landscape and the environmental health of that state still show it. It's a big reason I moved to the Pacific Northwest — that level of damage had not yet been done here and politicians, for the most part, represented the majority of citizens who wanted to prevent it.

However, Congressman Greg Walden cannot be included in that club, as indicated by the recently released League of Conservation Voters National Environmental Scorecard. The scorecard, established in 1970, represents the consensus of experts from about 20 respected environmental and conservation organizations who select the key votes on which members of Congress should be scored.

LCV tallies votes on the most important issues of the year, including energy, climate change, public health, public lands and wildlife conservation, and spending for environmental programs. By visiting [scorecard.lcv.org](http://scorecard.lcv.org) you can see every vote your House and Senate representatives made, with an explanation of the topic. It's also available in Spanish.

Walden voted in favor of the environment a mere nine percent of the time — his score for 2017 as well as over his political lifetime (starting in 1999). That's nine percent of 411 votes.

Because many of these votes addressed issues such as climate change, protecting people from dirty energy, and toxins and the public's right to know if they are at risk, I

have to surmise that Walden is a man who doesn't care much about his constituents, the planet, or the future our children will inherit.

Tracie Hornung  
Mt. Hood/Parkdale

### Listen to the students to protect life and democracy

Nowhere in America today is there a more impassioned, energetic and starkly realistic response to dire tragedy than by the students at Majorie Stoneman Douglas High School. When the power of the NRA, coupled with political cowardice, crashed down upon their lives with the murder of 17 fellow students, they, alone, experienced terrorism first hand. Their cries, as only those so afflicted must cry, was "NEVER AGAIN!" Sadly, some are patronized and others vilified for their courage and actions.

This wonderful youth, so hopeful, is symbolic of what proactive American attitudes could be. But it appears many don't give a damn, not just about guns, but democracy itself. Why not? The economy is excellent, unemployment low, stock market bullish, and now, the temporary tax reduction — a patronizing gift from the wealthy and corporations. Many feel comfortable — falsely.

Know there really is a destructive "elephant in the room" — Trump. He is consolidating dictatorial power evermore unimpeded, while vastly increasing his wealth. The rest of his act is smoke and mirrors. So hear the students! "Never again" is now! Get angry! Unite! There is no meaning after it is too late.

Leif Hatletsad  
Rogue River

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