

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to all students nationwide (and especially locally) who walked out of class in protest and remembrance Wednesday.

They took a risk and achieved their goal — to once again get the nation talking about school safety, and to have their voices remain part of a conversation that the nation has not been able to have without their pressure.

The haters were out in full force, using their time to be mean to children on the internet. Those kinds of people thrive in the swamp of social media, which amplifies their nastiness and vitriol.

Everyone should know by now there are people who disagree with them on every issue, but it's despotic to tell those on the other side — no matter their age or experience — that they should just shut up. That their opinion doesn't matter. That they shouldn't speak.

Students must remember that there is a world far from the social media trolls. That's a place where actions matter, votes matter, and discussion and debate is necessary to building a better world. Protest is in the great democratic tradition, bullying and belittling is part of a more disgusting tradition.

We are in a moment of cruelty and name calling. And it's not one-sided

either. Though our documentation of the protests inspired plenty of nasty responses online, we also received complaints of our coverage of a gun show in Pendleton the weekend prior. That crowd thought we gave undue promotion to gun sales in our community — because they disagreed with it, they didn't want to hear about it.

We're in that bad of a moment, when you can curate your world and attack everything that doesn't fit your vision. But facts are facts and knowledge is helpful, even when it's about something on which you disagree.

We salute those who want to know more, want to know what others think, and want to use the best information to arrive at the best possible solution.

A tip of the hat to the city of Hermiston and Umatilla County for negotiating an agreement on the future of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

The project wouldn't have gotten off the ground without support from both entities, and both contributed a lot of dollars and energy.

But now that the construction is done and the dust has mostly settled, it doesn't make sense to have any unnecessary cooks in the kitchen.



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

A group of Pendleton High School students walked out of class at 10 a.m. Wednesday to participate in a nationwide student rally against gun violence.

The county, and specifically commissioner George Murdock, approached the city about handing over ownership and control along with some continued financial commitments and a few incentives.

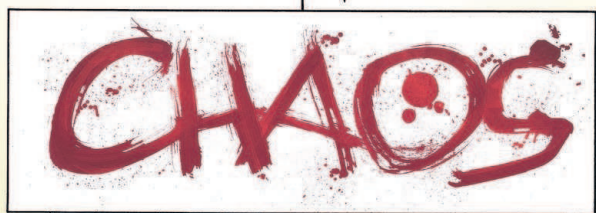
It was a reasonable package, and it appears both entities got what they wanted. The city inherits a brand new facility and full autonomy to develop it however it sees fit, the county is cutting its own risk in the venture while keeping the venue for its annual fair.

A tip of the hat to Marissa Williams, who departs our company

after more than 14 stellar years. The former rodeo royalty joined our company down in John Day, and quickly worked her way up the corporate ladder. She became publisher of our papers in Grant and Wallowa counties, and was the regional advertising director at the *East Oregonian* at the time of her departure. She also served on the board of the Oregon Newspaper Publishers Association.

She's going to a new great opportunity on the Silvie Valley Ranch outside her beloved John Day, and we wish her well from our offices here in Hermiston and Pendleton.

WHITE HOUSE ORG CHART



OTHER VIEWS

Shocked at firing of state librarian

By BUZZY NIELSEN

We were shocked and bewildered to hear about Governor Kate Brown's recent decision to dismiss State Librarian MaryKay Dahlgreen. Both the State Library and Dahlgreen have been invaluable partners in the Oregon Library Association's efforts to support libraries, library workers, and the patrons they serve statewide. We are confused about this seemingly sudden decision, made without consultation with key stakeholders and despite Dahlgreen's strong track record as agency head.

The State Library serves many stakeholders throughout the state, including the 1,200 public, academic, school, and special library staff and trustees in our association and the libraries at which they work. While we understand that the state librarian serves at the pleasure of the governor, we are struggling to understand why the views of several constituents such as ourselves were not considered in this decision.

This lack of consultation comes as a particular disappointment due to our past support for HB 3523 during the 2015 legislative session. Among many other changes to the state library, that bill made the state librarian a governor-appointed position rather than being appointed by the state library board.

We supported the legislation because we felt that being a governor-appointed would give the state librarian the same stature and level of accountability as other executive department heads. We were not expecting that it would result in unilateral decisions regarding the state librarian's job performance.

Had we been consulted, we would have told you that our association and its members hold Dahlgreen in high esteem. In 1996, she became much-beloved among public libraries statewide — from Portland to Burns — for her invaluable assistance as youth services consultant. Her consulting work was so respected that OLA honored Dahlgreen in

2003 with our highest honor for children's services, the Evelyn Sibley Lampman Award. Other libraries came to know Dahlgreen when she became Program Manager for Library Development Services in 2005. In that capacity, she managed approximately \$2 million in federal funds that support all Oregon libraries. Dahlgreen also hired a strong group of library development consultants who are well-regarded by libraries throughout Oregon.

We have been similarly impressed with Dahlgreen's time as state librarian. For her entire tenure in that position, Dahlgreen has overseen the legislature-directed reorganization of the State Library, making several tough decisions that had been put off for years: closing the public reference room, relocating the Willamette Valley Genealogical Society and transferring the Oregon Poetry Collection to the University of Oregon Library, to name a few.

She has found efficiencies across state agencies and external entities, resulting in a lean operation: the State Library's 40 full-time employees are managed by only four managers, including the state librarian. Thanks to Dahlgreen's efforts, the state library is well-respected statewide and nationwide. This respect is evident in the agency's overall customer satisfaction rating of 95 percent in their most recent annual performance measures.

While we feel that Dahlgreen's tenure has been admirable, we understand that you now are looking to the future of the State Library. We ask that you please involve both OLA and the State Library Board in that process. Our members possess expertise that will prove valuable both for short-term succession planning and for selecting a new state librarian who will be accepted and respected in the Oregon library community, respect that is essential to the position and the agency's success.

Buzzy Nielsen is president of the Oregon Library Association.

OTHER VIEWS

Dictators love Trump, and he loves them back

If you're a murderous dictator, this is a joyous time to be alive.

No one will make much of a fuss if your opposition leader is jailed, if an annoying journalist goes missing or if, as happened in Congo, a judge who displeases the dictatorial president suffers a home invasion in which goons rape his wife and daughter.

As President Donald Trump replaces Secretary of State Rex Tillerson with the more hawkish Mike Pompeo, let's note something that goes far beyond personnel to the heart of the American role in the world: The U.S. has abandoned a bipartisan consensus on human rights that goes back decades.

I'm back from Myanmar, where leaders are finding that this is also the optimal time to commit genocide. The army conducted a scorched-earth campaign against the Rohingya, with soldiers throwing babies onto bonfires as they raped the mothers.

What has Trump said to condemn Myanmar for these atrocities? Nothing.

In the past, human rights was at least one thread of our foreign policy. This was pursued inconsistently, grudgingly or hypocritically, and it jostled constantly with realpolitik considerations, but in the past it was one of the factors in play.

I periodically assailed Presidents Barack Obama and George W. Bush for not doing more after atrocities in Syria, Darfur or South Sudan, but both Obama and Bush were clearly anguished that they didn't have better tools to stop the slaughter.

In contrast, Trump seems simply indifferent. Trump defended Vladimir Putin for killing critics ("What? You think our country's so innocent?"), and praised Egypt's brutal president, Abdel-Fattah el-Sissi, for "a fantastic job." Trump hailed the Philippines' president, Rodrigo Duterte, whose dirty war on drugs has claimed 12,000 lives, for an "unbelievable job on the drug problem."

Sarah Margon of Human Rights Watch notes in Foreign Affairs that when Trump visited Manila, he laughed as Duterte called reporters "spies" — in a country where journalism has landed people in the morgue.

"In country after country, the Trump administration is gutting U.S. support for human rights," Margon writes.

So dictators see a clear field: A record number of journalists are in prison worldwide, by the count of the Committee to Protect Journalists. Joel Simon, the organization's executive director, says Trump has met with the leaders of each of the three top jailers of journalists — China, Russia and Turkey — and as far as we

know, has never raised the issue of press freedom with them.

"What's completely gone is the bipartisan consensus that was a cornerstone of our foreign policy, that if you imprison journalists and restrict the media, there will be consequences," Simon said.

In Cambodia, Prime Minister Hun Sen approvingly cited Trump's attacks on fake news as a precedent for closing down radio stations and the much admired newspaper *Cambodia Daily*. After the crackdown, in November, Trump posed for a photograph with Hun Sen, flashing a thumbs-up — and Hun Sen praised the American president for his lack of interest in human rights.

"Your policy is being changed," Hun Sen declared gratefully, and he lauded Trump for being "most respectful."

Trump told the king of repressive Bahrain "there won't be strain with this administration." Nabeel Rajab, a heroic Bahraini who is one of the Arab world's leading human rights campaigners, says the government responded a few days later by killing five protesters — and, just last month, the government followed up again by sentencing Rajab himself to five years in prison for his tweets.

Trump's soft spot for authoritarianism goes way back. He has spoken sympathetically of the Chinese massacres of pro-democracy protesters, and of Saddam Hussein's approach to counterterrorism.

Periodically, Trump does raise human rights issues, but only to bludgeon enemies like North Korea or Venezuela. This is so ham-handed and hypocritical that it simply diminishes American standing further.

In some respects, Trump has united the world. Against us. A recent Gallup poll shows that across 134 countries, approval of the United States has collapsed to a record low of 30 percent. Indeed, more people now approve of China. Russia is just behind us.

"Trump has been a disaster for U.S. soft power," says Gary Bass of Princeton University. "He's so hated around the world that he's radioactive. So on those rare occasions when he does something about human rights, it only tarnishes the cause."

This is a tragedy for the United States. But the greatest loss is felt by people who are helpless as loved ones are raped, tortured or murdered. In Myanmar, a young Rohingya man pleaded with me: "Please don't let us be treated as animals. Don't break our trust." What do we tell him?

Nicholas Kristof grew up on a sheep and cherry farm in Yamhill. Kristof and has been a columnist for The New York Times since 2001.

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