

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A kick in the pants to the terrible scene at Lost Valley Dairy, shared Thursday by the Oregon Department of Agriculture.

Photos taken by their inspectors back in May show dairy cows standing hoof-deep in manure and waste — unhealthy, inhumane and dangerous for the aquifer and the people who depend on it. Not to mention stinky, smelly and plumb gross. We published the photos online Thursday morning.

Eastern Oregon will always be ag country, and we support the many farmers and ranchers who are conservationists at heart — people who know that if you take care of the land, the land will take care of you.

But Lost Valley has been off to a bad start, and is giving farmers a bad name. Its owner — Greg te Velde — has faced a slew of criminal charges, from meth possession to patronizing a prostitute. And te Velde made major promises about how Lost Valley would operate that have fallen short thus far. State inspectors this week gave the operation another chance to shape up and remain in good standing, but there should be no more slaps on the wrists.

Lost Valley must play by the rules and live up to the promises it made about water, waste, environmental health and respect for animals.

Tip of the hat to everyone who turned out for the EO Forum on Tuesday, where doctors and practitioners spoke openly about their experiences with opioids, and how the local community can beat back the growing nationwide epidemic.

The honest and open discussion at Blue Mountain Community College in Pendleton was deeply affecting as well as informative — and it can be hard to thread that needle.

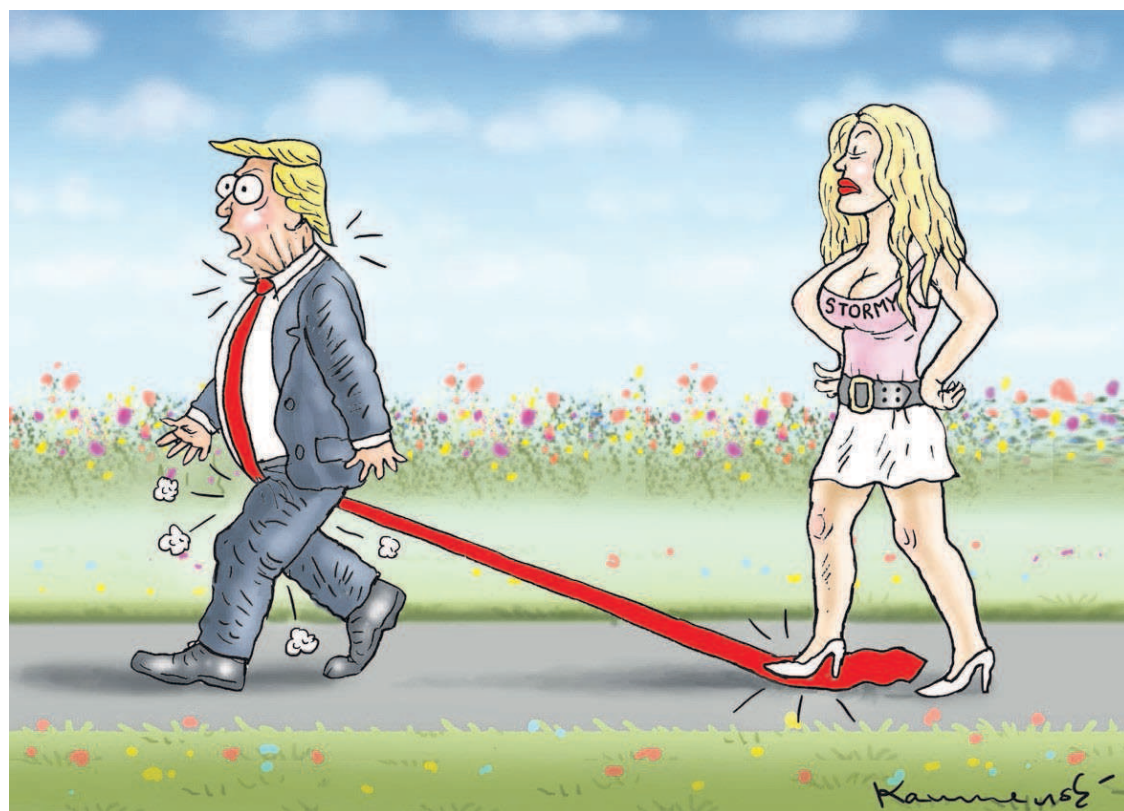
But open discussion about the dangers of prescription medications, especially opioids, is critical to avoiding addiction. Doctors need to know more and do more, patients need to know and do more, and caregivers of all stripes need to know and do more, too.

The forum Tuesday was one step down that road, and we tip our hats to those who took time out of their busy day to attend and learn. If you missed it, video from the event is posted to the *East Oregonian's* Youtube channel.



Photo courtesy Oregon Department of Agriculture

Conditions at the Lost Valley Dairy in Boardman, sometime before June 2017.



OTHER VIEWS

Calm before the stormy

Apart from his own kin, there's no category of person exempt from Donald Trump's attacks. He has gone after past presidents of the United States, current leaders of our closest allies, stewards of his own party, senior officials in his own administration, the Latina mayor of a city freshly devastated by a hurricane, the Muslim mayor of a city just struck by terrorists and the families of American soldiers killed in combat.

But not Stormy Daniels. Where are the tantrums and tweets for her? It's a glaring and fascinating omission.

Maybe the explanation is straightforward: He doesn't want to give her any extra motivation to speak out and describe whatever happened between them in a negative light. But when has Trump ever played the tempered pacifist before?

Lawyers are no doubt urging him not to amplify her importance — and spotlight a payment to her that may have violated campaign-finance laws — by personally battling her. But he has repeatedly ignored their counsel not to rail against Robert Mueller and others who are looking into his campaign's ties to Russia, and that's a matter of presumably greater threat to his presidency.

Meanwhile he stays mum about a porn star who is peddling steamy secrets about him — and who is doing what he hates most, which is using him as a steppingstone to saturation fame.

The interview that she gave to "60 Minutes" is scheduled to be broadcast this weekend without a peep from the president (though with frantic efforts by his lawyers to quash it). His silence speaks volumes.

It could say that he has more discipline than he gets credit for, and that instead of

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Comment

a mad, lonely king ranting in his castle, he is actually a profoundly flawed tactician playing his own pale version of chess.

The salvos against Mueller last weekend absolutely had a logic: They were shirt-tailed to the firing of deputy FBI director Andrew McCabe in the service of a corruption narrative, and they were trial balloons to see how negatively Republican leaders in Congress

responded. (The unsurprising answer: not negatively enough.)

Trump's silence could also say that he isn't actually bothered by Daniels' account of an affair with him. This is a man whose appearances on Howard Stern's radio show over the years were all about erotic peacocking, who bragged to Billy Bush about groping women and paid no discernible price for it; and who can apparently do anything shy of converting to Islam and not fret about his evangelical base.

Where the rest of us see reckless infidelity, he sees a buxom conquest that lesser Lotharios can only dream about.

But I wonder more about the opposite. What if the enigma of what Daniels is about to say really rattles him, and his turning away from it is the telltale sign of that? The assumption has long been that his Twitter account gives us his psychic vital signs and that we can chart his distress by his diatribes. But diatribes are his norm. Deviations from them may hold more meaning.

And there are reasons that he'd be rattled. His selling of himself as a super-potent stud ("Best Sex I've Ever Had") is one of the pillars of his vanity, and Daniels could smash it to the ground. She didn't quite do that in a 2011 interview with *In Touch* magazine, but neither did she sound

remotely wowed.

"Textbook generic" was how she described the sex that she said she had with him. "He wasn't like Fabio or anything." He sought her assurance that he looked good on the cover of a magazine that he showed her. He confessed to the superstition that he'd lose his wealth if he changed his custard-swirl hair. He comes across as somewhat pitiable. And she has reportedly given new details and documents to "60 Minutes."

Then there's Melania. By all evidence the distance between the Trumps has widened since the surfacing of Daniels' allegations that he had sex with her shortly after Melania gave birth to Barron in 2006 and that he told Daniels to pay his wife no heed.

Every mention of Daniels must mortify Melania, and the president can't afford that. There's more than enough strain in their marriage and turbulence in the White House already.

Besides, it's one thing to have the lewder parts of your past aired when you're a candidate. It's quite another when you're president, even a president as unconventional as Trump.

And it's worse still if a series of recent elections — in Virginia, in Alabama, in Pennsylvania — suggest that you repel women in the suburbs and they're acting on their disgust. They won't be soothed by an illicit romance that could be titled "Filthy Shades of Orange."

So the president ignores its release. He sits on his Twitter hands. They're big ones, by the way. Just ask him.

Frank Bruni, an *Op-Ed* columnist for *The New York Times* since 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995. Over his years, he has worn a wide variety of hats, including chief restaurant critic and Rome bureau chief.

OTHER VIEWS

Lawmakers can't duck Oregon's PERS burden

The (Bend) Bulletin

Both Gov. Kate Brown and the Oregon Legislature deserve credit for acknowledging the seriousness of the state's public pension problem.

A task force commissioned by the governor kicked the tires last year on a handful of options for reducing the pension system's \$25 billion shortfall. And the Legislature followed up with modest efforts to fill the massive hole.

Voters this year should insist that their representatives keep the momentum going. The PERS problem remains huge and long-lasting — and it may be even worse than we think.

This information comes from a presentation prepared for a February meeting of the High Desert Education Service District board. The ESD, which focuses primarily on Crook and Deschutes counties, provides regional services to schools. But what the ESD does is less relevant here than what it is: a publicly funded entity that employs people on whose behalf it accrues pension liability. Its PERS outlook is roughly similar to those of many other government agencies.

The ESD projected payroll and PERS contributions over a 20-year period beginning in 2017. The ESD developed the data with the help of an employer rate projection tool made available recently by PERS. The tool has its limitations. Payroll, for instance, is simply assumed to grow at a rate of 3.5 percent annually. Still, it provides a useful look ahead and allows public entities to model cost-containment options.

The look ahead, in brief, involves a lot of dollar signs. The ESD's pension contributions are expected to keep growing for many years. They're also expected to continue growing in relation to payroll before the pressure begins to ease. During the 2029-30 biennium, PERS costs are expected to top 30 percent of payroll. Ouch.

But the pain is even greater, at least in the near term. The ESD's PERS costs appear to jump dramatically after the 2027-29 biennium. But reality is more complicated, explains ESD Director of Business Services Greg Munn. The ESD has created a side account, funded by bond sales, that will continue to depress PERS rates over the next decade or so. When that side account expires, PERS rates will jump.

There's a lesson here for taxpayers, who will soon begin voting on legislative and gubernatorial candidates who will have varying degrees of interest in PERS reform. Some may say, incorrectly, that recent state Supreme Court decisions that have made further attempts to control PERS costs a fool's errand. Before buying the PERS-surrender arguments, voters should consider the scale of the problem, which is so significant that public entities like the High Desert ESD have been willing to create side accounts and invite risk in the hope of realizing even one or two percentage points in net savings.