

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

## Respect the road

We know about Cabbage Hill in the winter. We know about the long, weary stretches of Interstate 84 at night.

We know about the highways that climb and descend the Blue Mountains, the dusty back roads that connect the corners of Eastern Oregon and the busy intersections in Hermiston and Pendleton.

As drivers, we feel aware of the dangers that exist out on the road in the form of bad weather, difficult terrain and other vehicles.

But despite our knowledge, fatal motor vehicle wrecks remain a presence, month in and month out.

From Friday through Sunday, 11 people were killed in crashes around Oregon, according to the state police. If it had happened in one place at one time, it would have made national news. But the deaths are no less tragic because there was distance between them.

Pendleton lost Joanne Marie Norris, a generous quilter and artist, who will

be missed dearly. Families across the state, country and world lost loved ones, too.

The pictures Oregon State Police sends out after a wreck can be difficult to look at, filled with twisted metal, shattered glass and spilled belongings. But crashes have serious consequences, and it's important for us to understand their full toll.

In hopes of safer roads, the state police identified the "Fatal 5" — five behaviors that play a part in almost all crashes.

- Speed: Limits can seem constraining on the lonely stretches, or when there are few other cars on the road. But excessive speed not only makes a wreck more likely, it makes it more deadly.

- Occupant safety: From children in the back seat to the buddy riding shotgun, everyone should be wearing a seatbelt and sitting facing forward.

- Lane safety: The interstates are wide and give a false sense of security. Be aware of which lane you're in, vehicles approaching from behind and



EO file photo

A Life Flight helicopter prepares to land on Highway 730 in March 2016 responding to a two-vehicle collision east of Umatilla.

that you're coming up on, and if there are vehicles, cyclists or debris on the shoulder.

- Impaired driving: The *East Oregonian* lists all DUIs reported by police in our daily police log, and it's scary to see how many people take to the roads above the legal limit of alcohol or another drug. You can't do anything about them except be aware and set a good example in your own behaviors.

- Distracted driving: The dangers of looking away from the road while behind the wheel are well documented, and laws have been put in place to make it hurt if you're caught. The smart move is to download an app that disables your phone while driving so you won't be tempted.

Don't get complacent. The roads are a dangerous place, but we make things much better for ourselves and others if we take them seriously.

## OTHER VIEWS

## The Sultans of Self-Pity

Move over, Alec Baldwin. Bill Clinton does a much better impersonation of Donald Trump.

The hair is wrong but the air is right — self-righteous, self-pitying and suffused with anger that anyone would peddle a version of events less heroic than the one that he prefers. We're shaming him about ancient groping when we should be showering him with eternal gratitude. And what about his pain?

"I left the White House \$16 million in debt," Clinton said in an interview that NBC's "Today" aired on Monday, batting back questions about whether he had demonstrated sufficient contrition for converting a 22-year-old's romantic idolization of him into sexual favors and setting off a sequence of events that savaged her.

I don't know what legal bills have to do with a moral ledger. But I can see that his fixations on money and martyrdom are intact.

Before cries of "false equivalence" shatter windows and startle forest creatures, I should make clear that I'd take Clinton over Trump in any role on any day. Trump is the Everest of delusion and depravity; Clinton ascended only a bit beyond base camp.

But at an honor-starved moment when most of our politicians are quicker to shirk responsibility than to shoulder it, I cringe at his evasions, elisions and rationalizations. Is he taking a cue from Trump or showing us where Trump got some of his moves and inspiration?

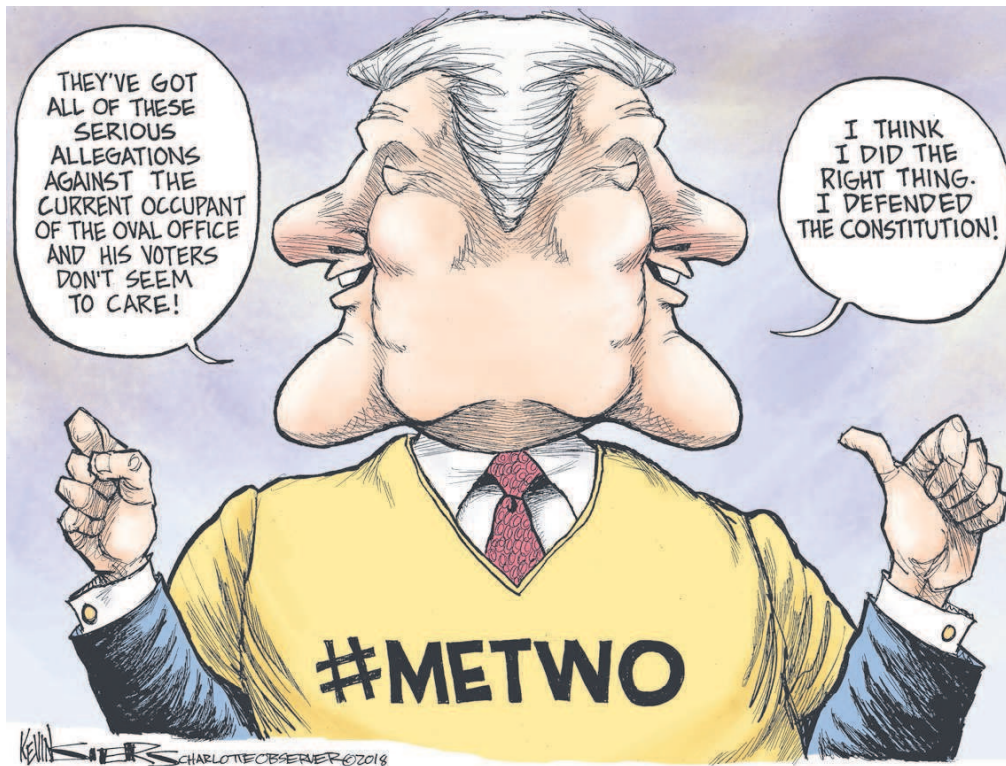
Granted, Clinton is venturing in front of cameras this week to discuss a book he wrote, not the book on him. So he's frustrated and flustered.

And at 71, he's not the talker or the actor that he used to be. Those eyes don't mist as wetly. That lower lip isn't as ripe for penitential chewing.

But hasn't he or anyone around him, in response to the #MeToo movement, thought to prepare a script in which he speaks brave and healing words about his own mistakes, the lessons he learned and how all of us can apply and benefit from them?

He's correct that he has gone through the motions of saying that he's sorry for the Monica Lewinsky scandal before. But that preceded the fall of Harvey Weinstein, the recognition of sexual misconduct's pervasiveness and the damning circus of Trump, whose allergy to apology gives Clinton a chance to model a more generous, better way. He sure as hell isn't seizing it.

He grows visibly annoyed when journalists are so petty as to bring up the



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past and the pesky fact that he's one of only two American presidents ever impeached. He raged when Craig Melvin of NBC News breached this territory. And he promptly turned into Trump.

He pointed fingers elsewhere, excusing his own erotic exploits by insinuating that his Oval Office forebears were no less randy. "Do you think President Kennedy should have resigned?" he challenged Melvin. "Do you believe President Johnson should have resigned?" Give Clinton a break. He was merely playing follow the libido.

He cited polls, outsourcing discernment and judgment to the crowds. "Two-thirds of the American people sided with me," he told Melvin. They thought that Republicans' impeachment of him went too far. But that doesn't mean that he's innocent — or virtuous.

He accused Melvin of sloppy journalism, though there wasn't a scintilla of sloppiness in the portion of the interview that "Today" shared. "You, typically, have ignored gaping facts," he said. I myself gaped — at the Trumpian magnitude of Clinton's ire.

Those ignored facts were the most ignoble part of his rant. He mentioned how many women he had put in top jobs,

presenting the roll call as a counterweight to — or absolution for? — the infidelities, the accusations of sexual harassment and Juanita Broaddrick's claim of rape. Does Madeleine Albright's ascent redeem Monica Lewinsky's evisceration? Was Janet Reno a get-out-of-jail-free card?

What a queasy-making calculus. And what foreshadowing. Decades before many of Trump's enablers edited out huge chunks of his behavior to rally around his policies, many of Clinton's fans made a similar if less egregious bargain.

The Venn diagram of the 42nd and 45th presidents overlaps not only where hormones rage but also where entitlement roars. And that entitlement is antithetical to a world in which women get the respect and equality that they deserve and Americans get the leadership that we sorely need.

Clinton's new book, a thriller written with James Patterson, is called "The President Is Missing." That could also be a title for his book tour — and for a real-time chronicle of the Trump administration. If the president is supposed to be someone more focused on his obligations than on his reputation, on his duty than on his due, then we lack one now, and Clinton isn't filling the void.

He's warbling a tune that we're sick and tired of. Woe is him. Woe is Trump. I'd tweak the lyrics. Woe is us.

Frank Bruni, an Op-Ed columnist for *The New York Times* since June 2011, joined the newspaper in 1995 and has ranged broadly across its pages. He has been both a *White House* correspondent and the chief restaurant critic.

## YOUR VIEWS

### Local Democrats inspire state party leadership

In April I had the pleasure of meeting with Umatilla County Democrats, a dedicated and growing group of Oregonians working towards positive change in November's elections by building grassroots programs and raising both money and awareness throughout rural Oregon.

Despite being outnumbered, Umatilla Democrats are engaged because they believe in Oregon values, where we work together to care for our families and communities. They want government to support economic and educational opportunities for everyone. Sometimes they take issue with urban Democrats, but we share the common belief that people, not corporations, are our most important asset.

These rural Democrats have worked to get access to, and answers from, Congressman Greg Walden, but he for too long has ignored the needs of his constituents. He now sides with corporate interests and the Trump White House — supporting irresponsible tax cuts that now threaten funding for programs like Social Security, pushing trade policies that risk the economic future of our agricultural communities, and leading the effort to "repeal and replace" the very law that has helped to build our rural care system. His policies are hurting us all.

Eastern Oregon Democrats have now found a superb candidate to take him on in Jamie McLeod-Skinner. For the past year, Jamie has traveled tirelessly throughout the district, building a volunteer and supporter network that shows what can be done without expensive media buys. She wears her family's Eastern Oregon roots proudly and speaks to those values on the campaign trail. It's a measure of the respect she has earned that the other primary candidates are now rallied behind her campaign.

Your local Democrats are teaching the wider Democratic Party in Oregon lessons in how to stand up for Oregon values and be true to the values of rural communities. I am proud of county parties like in Umatilla and candidates like Jamie. Expect to see more of us in this pivotal election year.

Jeanne Atkins, chair  
Democratic Party of Oregon  
Portland

### Hermiston graduation should stay in Oregon

A "kick in the pants" to the Hermiston School District for having the 2018 high school graduation out of state!

Jim Garrou  
Hermiston