

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH  
PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN  
OwnerDANIEL WATTENBURGER  
Managing EditorTIM TRAINOR  
Opinion Page Editor

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## OUR VIEW

## Hamley's deserves better

For years, the fate of a venerable Pendleton institution has hung in the balance as the two co-owners of Hamley and Company have engaged in a personal dispute that has now spilled into the courtroom.

Hamley's is an important and valuable Pendleton brand, on the level with the Round-Up, the Woolen Mills and the Whisky. The business was created in 1883, and it has operated near the intersection of Court and Main in Pendleton since 1905. It has helped define Pendleton as a town of not just cowboys but of fine craftsmanship. And its long partnership with the Round-Up and some of the best rodeo riders in the world has helped define its own legacy.

Parley Pearce and Blair Woodfield re-opened, restored and re-energized the business in 2005, adding the coffeeshop and steakhouse next door. That operation now dominates one of the most visible blocks in Pendleton, and its rehab helped revitalize Main Street when construction finished more than a

decade ago.

That is all in danger now, as the inability for Pearce and Woodfield to get along — or at the very least agree on a financial future for the company — has put Hamley's at risk. And as anyone in business knows, a disagreement between principals on the future of the company, as well as a lack of a cohesive vision and plan, is no way to survive in the rapidly changing world of retail.

It's all the more disappointing when you see the incredible advantages that Hamley's could have as an upscale, artisan, historic business with deep community roots. It's the kind of business that could be growing and prospering in this moment, yet it has been torn between two warring factions — neither of whom are in the right. Both have made plenty of mistakes, and Pearce and Woodfield must do better if Hamley's is to survive unscathed. It needs better marketing. An updated online presence. Ownership that understands the power of its brand and



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

The Hamley's brand is stamped into the concrete sidewalk in front of the store in downtown Pendleton.

takes full advantage.

When someone owns an institution such as Hamley's, they must do it for the right reasons and be in it for the long haul. Personal jealousies and bickering must be set aside for the good of a century-old company. Deference must be paid to its past and

blood, sweat, tears and dollars must be expended so it has a prosperous future.

It does Hamley's no good, and it does Pendleton no good, for this company to be caught in a debilitating back-and-forth, and it becomes vulnerable via bankruptcy, auction, or being gutted and sold on the cheap.



## YOUR VIEWS

### Shifting priorities for Pendleton development

The Stillman Park street and shelter area and the walkway above the Little League Park, both designated no smoking areas, are going head-to-head for the undisputed title of the city's largest ashtray. Stillman does get a few bonus points as a repository for empty whisky, beer and pot containers that appear on a daily basis, plus the convenience of camping either on a table or the river bank. Though there is currently no scholarship available, the sport of "bottle breaking" seems to be gaining in popularity at Stillman. City priorities continue to favor the downtown area.

How about those Pendleton Development Commission urban renewal projects: Bowman Apartments, \$338,428; Sisters Cafe, \$126,167; Old City Hall \$33,318; Bela Bakery, \$10,000; Community Bank, \$220,000; Quarterly Pendleton Downtown Association (PDA) donation, \$13,750; OMG Burgers, \$19,000; Fenton and Marier demolition, \$10,000 and \$26,933. Can you guess how much they are including for sorely needed sidewalk and street improvements in the urban renewal district? That would be \$0. Despite having some of the worst in the city, again they don't seem a priority.

It's now official, the mayor and city manager agree: Creating living-wage jobs with the drone program is just not working out and is no longer a priority. It's kinda like that old adage says: "Why buy the cow when you can get the milk for free?" when it comes to any meaningful private sector investment at the airport. It looks like more bed-making jobs in the tourist industry is the new target.

When is enough, enough? The Pendleton, Heights contractor, in his latest plea, is, you guessed it, asking for more. Evidently, he's got City Hall figured out, a lot of confusing doubletalk seems to work. I'll bet he tries selling them a bridge next.

A possible \$25,000 in grants is

available to study opening up the north side of the river for greater public access. It should provide additional camping space for those professional outdoorsmen and relieve the overcrowding along the levee walkway.

Rick Rohde, Pendleton

### Housing in Pendleton being held for ransom by developer

This is my opinion on the article posted in the *East Oregonian* June 14 about the developer housing project in Pendleton.

It astonishes me how cities work with so-called developers. Why do I always hear city councils or school districts being held hostage? Big or small cities sign winning bidder contracts with businesses all the time agreeing to conditions, and sign an agreement to a price.

During the work process the company comes across unforeseen circumstances that may raise the original cost by 30-75 percent, or higher. The company goes back to the city and asks for much more money than the contract was signed for. The city feels they need to help for the good of the people.

Then the company returns with more needs. Now the city is being held hostage. Already in unforeseen debt, they hope by paying the ransom the city will be okay. But that's not how it goes. Now, a project that should have been completed a long time ago has been brought back with another demand. Any signed contract should stand. Period.

I believe there should be an added section to the contract. Any bid should include a certain percentage (10-15 percent) additional cost, for unforeseen expenses occurring during the set agreed time of the job completion. It is not to go over this cost. And the city is not responsible for the overage. It should be covered by the business' insurance.

Something has to change. All these ransom tactics only hurt the taxpayers.

Bernie Sanderson, Hermiston

## OTHER VIEWS

## Personalism: The philosophy we need

One of the lessons of a life in journalism is that people are always way more complicated than you think. We talk in shorthand about "Trump voters" or "social justice warriors," but when you actually meet people they defy categories. Someone might be a Latina lesbian who loves the NRA or a socialist Mormon cowboy from Arizona.

Moreover, most actual human beings are filled with ambivalences. Most political activists I know love parts of their party and despise parts of their party. A whole lifetime of experience, joy and pain goes into that complexity, and it insults their lives to try to reduce them to a label that ignores that.

Yet our culture does a pretty good job of ignoring the uniqueness and depth of each person. Pollsters see in terms of broad demographic groups. Big data counts people as if it were counting apples. At the extreme, evolutionary psychology reduces people to biological drives, capitalism reduces people to economic self-interest, modern Marxism to their class position and multiculturalism to their racial one. Consumerism treats people as mere selves — as shallow creatures concerned merely with the experience of pleasure and the acquisition of stuff.

Back in 1968, Karol Wojtyla wrote, "The evil of our times consists in the first place in a kind of degradation, indeed in a pulverization, of the fundamental uniqueness of each human person." That's still true.

So this might be a perfect time for a revival of personalism.

Personalism is a philosophic tendency built on the infinite uniqueness and depth of each person. Over the years people like Walt Whitman, Martin Luther King, William James, Peter Maurin and Wojtyla (who went on to become Pope John Paul II) have called themselves personalists, but the movement is still something of a philosophic nub. It's not exactly famous.

Personalism starts by drawing a line between humans and other animals. Your dog is great, but there is a depth, complexity and superabundance to each human personality that gives each person unique, infinite dignity.

Despite what the achievement culture teaches, that dignity does not depend on what you do, how successful you are or whether your school calls you gifted. Infinite worth is inherent in being human. Every human encounter is a meeting of equals. Doing community service isn't about saving the poor; it's a meeting of absolute equals as both seek to change and grow.

The first responsibility of personalism is to see each other person in his or her full depth. This is astonishingly hard to do. As we go through our busy days it's normal to want to establish I-It relationships — with the security guard in your building or the office worker down the hall. Life is busy, and sometimes we just need to reduce

people to their superficial function.

But personalism asks, as much as possible, for I-Thou encounters: that you just don't regard people as a data point, but as emerging out of the full narrative, and that you try, when you can, to get to know their stories, or at least to realize that everybody is in a struggle you know nothing about.

The second responsibility of personalism is self-gifting.

Twentieth-century psychologists like Carl Rogers treated people as self-actualizing beings — get in touch with yourself. Descartes tried to separate individual reason from the bonding emotions. Nikolai Berdyaev said that tends to turn people into self-enclosed monads, with no doors or windows.

Personalists believe that people are "open wholes." They find their perfection in communion with other whole persons. The crucial questions in life are not "what" questions — what do I do? They are "who" questions — who do I follow, who do I serve, who do I love?

The reason for life, Jacques Maritain wrote, is "self-mastery for the purpose of self-giving." It's to give yourself as a gift to people and causes you love and to receive such gifts for others. It is through this love that each person brings unity to his or her fragmented personality. Through this love, people touch the full personhood in others and purify the full personhood in themselves.

The third responsibility of personalism is availability: to be open for this kind of giving and friendship. This is a tough one, too; life is busy, and being available for people takes time and intentionality.

Margarita Mooney of Princeton Theological Seminary has written that personalism is a middle way between authoritarian collectivism and radical individualism. The former subsumes the individual within the collective. The latter uses the group to serve the interests of the self.

Personalism demands that we change the way we structure our institutions. A company that treats people as units to simply maximize shareholder return is showing contempt for its own workers. Schools that treat students as brains on a stick are not preparing them to lead whole lives.

The big point is that today's social fragmentation didn't spring from shallow roots. It sprang from worldviews that amputated people from their own depths and divided them into simplistic, flattened identities. That has to change. As Charles Péguy said, "The revolution is moral or not at all."

David Brooks became a *New York Times* Op-Ed columnist in 2003. He has been a senior editor at *The Weekly Standard*, a contributing editor at *Newsweek* and the *Atlantic Monthly*, and is currently a commentator on PBS.