

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEWS

Back to school

Wednesday was my last day at the *East Oregonian*, after nearly six years here as deputy managing editor and opinion page editor.

After moving willy-nilly from Montana, Pendleton turned out to be a wonderful place to live and do journalism. I learned what a piggin' string is and how to drive a manual transmission wheat truck. I hosted and partied with the Northwest musicians who invariably stop in Pendleton on their cross-region trips, and I caught my first steelhead and then my second and third and fourth and fifth. And then I lost count. I helped the newspaper win nearly annual awards as the best small daily in the state. And I go out with us still on top.

I mention this not to brag, but to remind communities about their role in creating and supporting successful, happy, improving people. In some ways Eastern Oregon is excellent at this — in small cities and companies there is no one holding you back from doing more, from doing something new and different and making it your own. We learn a lot in that kind of environment, even if our first go at something doesn't work out exactly as we hoped. That sort of spirit is the backbone of small town life, of people filling niches that naturally arise in places where everything is a little spread out.

We can do better, of course. Supporting education — from pre-K to college and beyond — is a critical way for communities to get the most out of their talented human capital. In Pendleton we've seen real progress with an all-hands-on-deck preschool and kindergarten program, which gives young students the skills to begin their educational careers. That's wonderful, though there are opportunities to do more

up and down the education ladder. And we must understand that other regions and countries are making those investments.

Eventually, young people are going to want to put all that education into action. Creating the conditions where they can succeed — and not choose to flee like me to a larger metropolis — is the key question facing municipal officials and private citizens from Umatilla to Ukiah. Surprising to no one, young people think differently than the generations before them, and they expect their communities to keep up with the times. I think the digital transformation of our economy, our social lives and our world in general will be similar in scale to the industrial revolution.

The way society functions and is organized is changing quickly and dramatically. Those with the ideas and skills to compete in this new reality will thrive; those who do not adapt will struggle.

That is certainly the case in journalism, where the sea change is arriving quickly. That is part of the reason my next stop is Portland to earn a master's degree in multimedia journalism from the University of Oregon. My time at the *EO* has coincided with a time of nationwide layoffs in the newspaper industry, and the arrival of a president who berates the press and tries to convince his supporters not to trust their work. The technological and societal changes that are affecting the industry make it clear we need a new approach — and fast, before the tsunami hits.

Because the statistics are clear: When a local newspaper closes, tax rates rise, corruption increases, crime increases, government salaries increase. An academic study released in May showed that when

TIM
TRAINOR
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EO Media Group photo

Tim Trainor reels in a fish under the guidance of Drake Radditz on the North Fork Nehalem River.

a local paper shuts down, the county increased wages by an average of \$1.4 million and hired an average of four more government employees per 1,000 residents. The burden on taxpayers increased accordingly. That's the average — and then there are the outliers.

The California city of Bell's only local paper closed in the early 1990s. In 1993 the city hired a town manager at a starting salary of about \$70,000. By 2010, the same town manager was making more than \$785,000 per year.

These are problems that the vigilance of local journalists can help uncover, or even more efficiently we can help avoid them altogether. I'd like to be involved in doing so, which is one reason I'm headed back for additional education and introductions to the latest technology. I think we must do journalism differently than we have been doing it in order to remain viable and valuable. The *East Oregonian* is taking on that effort.

Hopefully I will be doing that again soon. I'm convinced rural Oregon is where the most interesting stories in the state are right now, and will be for the foreseeable future. The environmental and cultural stresses that are tugging at Eastern Oregon are dramatic and interesting. Water and fire will play a major role. Recreational opportunities and commodity prices will, too. Its relationship with Salem and Washington, D.C., matters. And how Eastern Oregon supports its young people and its entrepreneurs is the bedrock upon which all other issues rest.

Thanks to all who are making progress on these fronts, and to the people who have created the supportive environment that exists in Eastern Oregon. It has helped me, and it will help those who come after.

Tim Trainor was the opinion page and deputy managing editor of *The East Oregonian* from 2012-2018.

OTHER VIEWS

The third-party option

Is there room for a third party? If some independent mounted a presidential bid in 2020, would that person have a chance?

Those are questions we won't be able to answer for a few years. If the Democrats nominate somebody like Mitch Landrieu, the answer is no. Landrieu is a progressive former mayor of New Orleans whose personal style would play well with the white working class and whose convictions and history play well with African-Americans and other groups. A Democrat like Landrieu would occupy all the non-Trump space and make a meaningful third-party run impossible.

But suppose the Democrats nominate one of the senators who are now sprinting leftward to catch up with what they perceive to be the Democratic base.

In that case, there would be room for a third party. But that bid would not work if it were trying to present a moderate or centrist or pragmatic alternative to the two party ideologies. There is no evidence that there are enough centrists or "pragmatists" to threaten the two-party duopoly.

To have a chance, the third-party candidate would have to emerge as the most radical person in the race. That person would have to argue that the Republicans and Democrats are just two sides of a Washington-centric power structure that has ground to a halt. That person would have to promise to radically redistribute power across American society.

As Mike Hais, Doug Ross and Morley Winograd argue in their book, "Healing American Democracy," the current Washington-centric power structure emerged during the New Deal. In those days and for decades after, the country was pretty homogeneous, trust in big institutions was high and the federal government worked more effectively than state and local governments to build a safety net and break up local economic oligarchies.

But today, the country is diverse, trust in big institutions is low, the federal government is immobilized by partisanship and debt. Now, state and local governments are more effective across many overlapping domains.

It's no wonder that so many, especially millennials (the most diverse generation of voters in our history), have become

disillusioned with federal action.

Only 18 percent of Americans say the federal government does the right thing most or nearly all of the time. In July 2016, as Ronald Brownstein has pointed out, only 29 percent of Donald Trump supporters and 23 percent of Hillary Clinton supporters thought that electing their candidate would actually lead to progress.

In this new context, a third-party candidate might run on what Hais, Ross and Winograd call constitutional localism. The constitutional part means preserving the civil rights safeguards enshrined in the Constitution. The localism part means a radical decentralization of other powers, to the levels of authority people have faith in.

Part of the solution is devolving power to towns and cities, but as Bruce Katz and Jeremy Nowak write in their book, "The New Localism," "New Localism is not the same as local government."

Across the country, power is being most effectively wielded by civic councils — organically formed groups of local officials, business leaders, neighborhood organizations. The members may have different racial, class and partisan identities, but they have one shared identity — love of their community. My colleague Thomas Friedman wrote about one such council in Lancaster, Pennsylvania. If you want to see others you probably don't have to travel far — Winston-Salem, Indianapolis, Detroit, Kalamazoo, Denver, Grand Rapids. Power in these places is not just wielded at the ballot box; it is wielded by movements and collaboratives in a thousand ways. According to a 2015 Heartland Monitor poll, 66 percent of Americans believe that their local area is moving in the right direction.

These local efforts need a national leader in part because while it's easy to say, "devolve power," actually doing it is complicated. For example, civil rights is the area where the national government was once most clearly superior in many parts of the country. But these days, national partisan divisions overlap with our racial divisions, so it's national demagogues like Trump who most inflame racial animosity to gain political power.

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

DAVID
BROOKS
Comment

YOUR VIEWS

Nothing racist about trying to restrict immigration

The cartoon on the editorial page of the weekend edition (July 28-29) attributing the desire to repeal Oregon's sanctuary law with racism was interesting.

So, wanting people to enter this country legally is "racism?" Wanting your state to enforce federal law and stop aiding and abetting criminal behavior — i.e. illegal entry — is "racism?"

Interesting.

John Kaufman
Pendleton

Trump knows difference between good and bad

I agree 100 percent of what Stuart Dick says about the media and Trump. Every thing I read about our President has been negative.

No, I don't believe all news reporters are brilliant — they just want to keep their jobs or sell advertising. Too bad the media doesn't have an ethics standard. I just read an article regarding the real story of Benghazi. Nobody got it right. It's almost nine years since the event and it is now defunct. God, the poor bastards who gave their lives. What about retaliation? Nah, throw the SEALs into a grave and press on.

I believe President Trump is on the right course. He has guts, a normal amount of intelligence and a great idea of what is good and bad. The weenies of the country — unfortunately, a great majority of "us" — don't really care.

Just remember that every soldier (Marine, Navy, Army, Air Force) who has lost a limb in this ridiculous war won't receive anywhere near the care they receive from hospitals too lacking in complete care to give them a new life. Ridiculous.

Chuck McKee
Pendleton

SNAP dollars stretched at Pendleton Farmers Market

Partnerships and cooperation are the key to successful communities. Pendleton Farmers Market (PFM) is elated to partner with the Umatilla County Public Health Department to help increase the ability of SNAP clients to make fresh, locally grown vegetables and fruits part of their regular diet.

The Public Health Department has provided PFM with a second \$2,000 grant, the first was awarded at the start of the market season, to increase the buying power of individuals and families who receive Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, or SNAP, benefits. PFM will provide up to a \$15 match to SNAP clients who purchase PFM tokens at the Friday market.

Thanks to the generosity of Public Health, PFM expects to continue the SNAP match through this market season. That's good news for SNAP clients, PFM vendors and the greater Pendleton community.

Hal McCune, president
Pendleton Farmers Market

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