

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to firefighters everywhere, running toward the smoke and flames in a battle that often looks unwinnable at the outset.

It's a dangerous but crucial job. Lives and property are at stake every time a wildfire flares up. It's a high-pressure situation that takes expertise, communication, coordination and plenty of sweat and tears.

Fortunately, there are many men and women who train for that task every day, and when the fires from wheat fields to mountain forests begin to burn, they're ready.

It's early August and we've already seen our fair share of wildfires, from Wilson Prairie to Juniper Canyon to Harris Park. More destructive fires are burning through other parts of the west, many with tragic results already.

We know the next two months may literally feel like hell in some places. We're grateful for those who are ready

at a moment's notice to head into the fight.

A kick in the pants to Greg Walden for his elusiveness on whether to accept a debate with opponent Jamie McLeod-Skinner.

We get it — there's not much the Republican incumbent has to gain by taking the stage with his Democratic adversary. In 10 terms he has become a known name and face in the 2nd Congressional District, and a twin-billed event with his lesser-known opponent gives her credibility. There's also the potential of a gaffe, though Walden's career in broadcast and experience in front of a crowd makes that unlikely.

We'd guess, as his staff has essentially said, he just doesn't consider it worth his time right now to make a plan.

That's a pretty flippant response, especially after seeing Walden make the time for a fundraiser in Portland (outside



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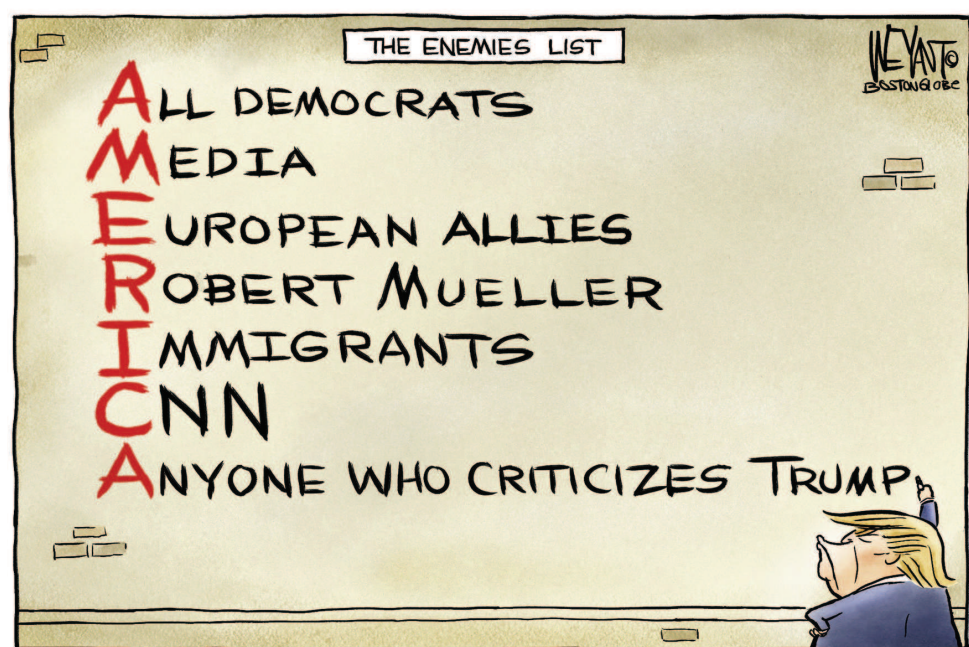
Firefighters work on the Wilson Prairie fire in south Morrow County.

his district) with Paul Ryan (outside his home state) this week.

We're very interested in what Walden and McLeod-Skinner have to say about their goals in the second district, and would like to hear them defend their positions on the same stage at the same time. We always appreciate the chances our editorial board have to sit down

with the candidates, but hearing them together is informative and compelling. The rest of Eastern Oregon should get that chance.

When McLeod-Skinner approached Walden at the Chief Joseph Days parade last week, he said he looked forward to debating her. We hope he intends to follow through.



YOUR VIEWS

A standing ovation for Gary Neal

Gary Neal is retiring after a long and remarkably successful career at the Port of Morrow and I wanted to take this opportunity to pay tribute to him as a giant in our industry.

He and Kathy welcomed my wife Julie and I to the area when we relocated from New Mexico and took employment at the Port of Umatilla. They were among the first people we met when we were adjusting to a new opportunity. I will always remember their kindness.

A couple of weeks ago Gary received a standing ovation from his peers at a conference of the Pacific Northwest Waterways Association in Clarkston, Washington, where he was a port commissioner before accepting his current position at the Port of Morrow. He is universally held in high regard by elected officials and captains of industry across a broad spectrum from trade and infrastructure to finance and workforce development.

The Port of Morrow itself is arguably one of the finest pieces of geography in the entire Pacific Northwest. It is uniquely situated at the confluence of the Columbia River, the interstate highway system and the Union Pacific mainline.

Founded in 1960, the commissioners and staff of the Port of Morrow have invested a significant portion of their lives into this enterprise. The courage, vision, and hard work they have shown has borne impressive results, creating thousands of jobs and adding value to raw materials grown, produced, and manufactured in this region.

The complexity of such an undertaking cannot be overestimated. It is one thing to have a diamond in the rough, but something entirely astounding to create a treasure.

The infrastructure alone — electricity, steam, water, wastewater, roads, rails, and river terminals — has required decades of dedicated and persistent work with private industry and government at every level from local to national. The Port of Morrow is what it is because of Gary, the staff, and his commissioners.

Gary is known, and deserves to be known, on a first name basis from City Hall to the Halls of Congress. His achievements have contributed to the community and will continue to do so for generations to come.

I will miss him and wanted to take one last time to thank him and acknowledge a small part of what he has accomplished in an extraordinary career.

Kim Puzey
Port of Umatilla general manager

Temple an outstanding judge

I was an attorney in Hermiston for nearly 40 years. During that time I appeared in court in nearly every county in the state and probably appeared before at least 50 different circuit court judges.

Some were not so good. Others were very good. Eva Temple is among the best I ever appeared before. It is astonishing to me anyone would file affidavits against her. To do so is really disheartening. She is a very good judge. We are lucky to have her on the bench.

Tom Ditton
Hermiston

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OTHER VIEWS

Manafort's trial and Trump

The word collusion probably won't come up in the Alexandria, Virginia, courtroom where Paul Manafort sweats out much of this and the next few weeks. It's possible, too, that Donald Trump won't be mentioned, at least not often.

But make no mistake: Manafort's trial on bank- and tax-fraud charges, stemming from political consulting in Ukraine that predates his stint with Trump's 2016 campaign, has plenty to do with the president and plenty of potential to hurt him.

That's not just because Robert Mueller, the special counsel, is tightening the screws on Manafort in the hope — apparently futile so far — of extracting unrelated evidence against Trump. It's because Manafort is such a gilded, sordid reminder of the company that Trump keeps and of how he sees and navigates the world. They're like-spirited plutocrats. Fellow plunderers.

As prosecutors lay out their case against Manafort, jurors will hear about a man whose vanity and thirst for splendor eclipsed any discretion about whom he joined forces with, where he had to travel to consort with them and how he conducted his business. Sound like any real estate tycoon you know?

They'll learn that in order to amass as much and live as large as he did, Manafort contrived ways to beat the system and fatten his winnings. Rules were for chumps who didn't have manses, suits, trinkets and gadgets like his, or so his thinking apparently went. I'm acquainted with that philosophy, and so are you. It's shared by a certain orangey blowhard with aggressive lawsuits, convenient bankruptcies, stiffed creditors and phony philanthropy in his past.

You could argue that yoking Trump to Manafort isn't fair, because Manafort also worked for other presidents and was officially employed by Trump's campaign for all of five months. My response would be: Michael Cohen.

He and Trump were entwined for more than a decade. And he's another piece of amoral work: a dubiously gifted lawyer who secretly tapped: a profane guardian of Trump's image who threatened detractors with intense pain and utter destruction; a smarmy fixer who used hush money to cover Trump's erotic tracks; an indefatigable scammer who sought to sell his access to the president to the highest bidders, domestic and foreign.

A detailed report in The Times last May explored — or, rather, marveled at — Cohen's shadowy financial deals, the riches that mystically materialized for him and the strange turns of his career. Strangest to me was that he "at some point began carrying a licensed pistol in an ankle holster." I suppose that's how all the smart thugs keep their guns from ruining the silhouettes of their suits.



FRANK BRUNI
Comment

Politicians before Trump have mingled with unsavory types, elevating the practical benefit above the reputational cost. Presidents before him have groomed attack dogs and invited swine and vultures in the door. But Trump's bestiary is different. More feral. More rabid. Mangier.

The newspaper publisher to whom Trump is closest is David Pecker of the National Enquirer.

Manafort took the reins of Trump's campaign from Corey ("womp womp") Lewandowski, mocker of caged migrants and yanker of a female journalist's arm.

Such model citizens as Rob Goldstone and Sam Nunberg flitted around the operation, while such moral touchstones as Roger Ailes and Roger Stone muttered advice from the sidelines. Hovering over them all was the ghost of Roy Cohn. Trump met and courted the legendarily despicable lawyer early on — and idolized him. When it came to ethics, Cohn was Trump's poster boy.

Trump attracts pillagers, braggarts, hacks. They're in his past, his present, his family, his Cabinet. They confuse wealth with merit, glitter with character, and they're all about fast lanes and short cuts, which is to say that they're reflections of him.

Manafort is the mirror extraordinaire. He made his fortune by holding his nose. His Washington lobbying and consulting firm represented what Betsy Woodruff and Tim Mak of The Daily Beast described as "a rogue's gallery of clients far away from D.C.'s genteel corridors of power: dictators, guerrilla groups and despots with no regard for human rights — including one man responsible for mass amputations and another who oversaw state-sanctioned rape."

Mueller filed court papers on Monday alleging that Manafort made more than \$60 million consulting for pro-Russia politicians and political parties in Ukraine. To avoid taxes, he funneled the money illegally through offshore accounts, according to the criminal charges against him. That helped pay for a lavish wardrobe of custom suits, a dazzling collection of multimillion-dollar properties, such home improvements as a waterfall and a putting green, three Range Rovers (which are British-made, last I checked) and a Mercedes-Benz (German).

So much for America First. He always put himself and his prodigious appetites first. That was the secret of his prosperity until it was the recipe for his doom. Trump has much the same disposition. Time will tell if he meets the same fate.

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.

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