

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

## Five reasons to hit up the Umatilla County Fair

It's hot outside. The kids need to go shopping for new school clothes. You'd like to get out of town one last time before the fall routine kicks in.

There are lots of reasons to skip the Umatilla County Fair this year. But we'd argue there are even more reasons to go.

While everyone has their own highlights, from carnival rides to hearing their favorite band from their high school years, here are our can't-miss reasons for checking out the fair.

**1. Support 4-H and FFA members.** The kids showing off their livestock, poultry, produce and more are the next generation of farmers and ranchers.

While you might not have the interest in bidding on a prize sow or the expertise to differentiate between a cubalaya and a cochon chicken, the barns and exhibit halls are full of budding experts who can teach you a thing or two. Caring for animals during the week — especially when it's super-hot — is hard work, but there's also plenty of down time.

They'd appreciate your questions, interest and encouragement, and you might even learn something.

**2. Support the arts.** There's more to fair competition than animals, of course,

and it's a great place to see the talent in our county on display.

From fine arts to folk art, photography to watercolors, Lego sculptures to quilts, you'll see the imaginations and creativity you never knew your friends and neighbors possessed.

Who knows? Maybe it will even inspire you to pick up the old sewing needle or oil paints and start working on an exhibit for next year.

**3. Mingle with folks from other communities.** The fair is Hermiston's signature event of the year, and the city has invested plenty in making sure it's got a good place to live at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center. But it's truly a county fair, with folks from all corners stopping in.

Whether you grew up in the county or have moved here recently, chances are good you'll bump into someone you know. And if not, there are always new friends to meet.

If you're really hard up for friends, we'd love to chat with you at our *East Oregonian/Hermiston Herald* booth in the exhibitor's hall. Stop by and we'll give you a prize.

**4. Cheat week.** While we generally



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Mary Lillegard, 12, of Stanfield cleans the stall of her, and her sister's, lambs as her friend, Cidney Estes, 13, of Hermiston, helps out on Tuesday at the Umatilla County Fair in Hermiston.

don't advocate caloric overload, if ever there's a week to cheat on your diet, it's this one.

Food vendors from near and far bring their tastiest, deepest-fried foods. There are healthy options, of course, but the best way to feel good about eating an elephant ear or loaded cheeseburger is knowing the money you pay for it is going to a good local cause.

**5. Award-winning rodeo.** A rodeo can be an intimidating sport to dive into. What happens in the arena often appears to be chaos to a newcomer, and

the celebrities of the sport don't have the same name recognition as an NBA or NFL star.

But the Farm-City Pro Rodeo is a premier event, drawing the top-tier stars who compete against local favorites on some of the top bucking stock found anywhere. It's also a fast-moving rodeo, produced with both the cowboy and spectator in mind.

After a few events we're sure you'll get the hang of it, and by the time the barrel racers and bull riders take the arena you'll be cheering along.

## OTHER VIEWS

## Democrats wonder, 'Where's Obama?'

Join me on Team '18," Barack Obama wrote in a recent fundraising email from his old political group, Organizing for Action. "Every election, every ballot measure, every conversation between now and November ... it all matters."

It wasn't much, but the email was one of Obama's few public, political, overtly partisan appeals as the Democratic Party approaches midterm elections that could stop President Trump's agenda and boost Democratic prospects going into 2020. To have an ex-president who remains highly popular with his party sitting on the sidelines cannot be what Democrats hoped.

There are reports that Obama plans to campaign for some Democrats starting in September. But beyond simply hitting the stump for the midterms, Obama could be, if not the full-fledged leader of the Resistance, at least a constant and public critic of the direction taken by the Trump administration and Republicans in Congress.

Instead, Obama isn't seen much. At the end of July, he and former Vice President Joe Biden made a stir when they dropped by a Washington, D.C., bakery for sandwiches. The visit had a purpose — the shop, Dog Tag Bakery, helps disabled veterans and their families — but besides shaking hands and posing for selfies, Obama didn't do anything that could be construed as politicking.

Obama did have a political message earlier in July, but he chose to deliver it in South Africa, thousands of miles away from U.S. midterm campaigning. Speaking at an event in Johannesburg honoring Nelson Mandela, Obama never mentioned Donald Trump's name, but his message was undoubtedly aimed at his successor in the White House.

"Look around," Obama said. "Strongman politics are ascendant suddenly, whereby elections and some pretense of democracy are maintained — the form of it — but those in power seek to undermine every institution or norm that gives democracy meaning.

"We see the utter loss of shame among political leaders," Obama continued, "where they're caught in a lie and they just double down and they lie some more."

Obama's speech got some coverage and some nostalgic comments by Democrats. But at the same time, President Trump is ramping up his political travel, headlining



BYRON YORK  
Comment

rallies just in the last week in the key states of Florida, Pennsylvania and Ohio — a combination of 2018 politicking for Republicans and 2020 politicking for himself.

A quick visit to a bakery is not quite the same.

There is no leader of the Democratic Party. A president is the leader of the party in the White House, and the opposition party doesn't really have a leader.

For Democrats today, who would it be? Charles Schumer? Nancy Pelosi? One of the party's 2020 hopefuls? There just isn't one.

For Democrats, Obama, who isn't running for anything, could be as close to a leader as an out-of-power party can have until the Democrats' next presidential nominee comes along. But he's just not taking the job.

In June, *New York* magazine published an article with the almost plaintive headline, "Where is Barack Obama?" Writer Gabriel Debenedetti portrayed a former president who, for whatever reason, has decided not to stay up on day-to-day politics, focusing instead on the new Obama Foundation and on his memoirs.

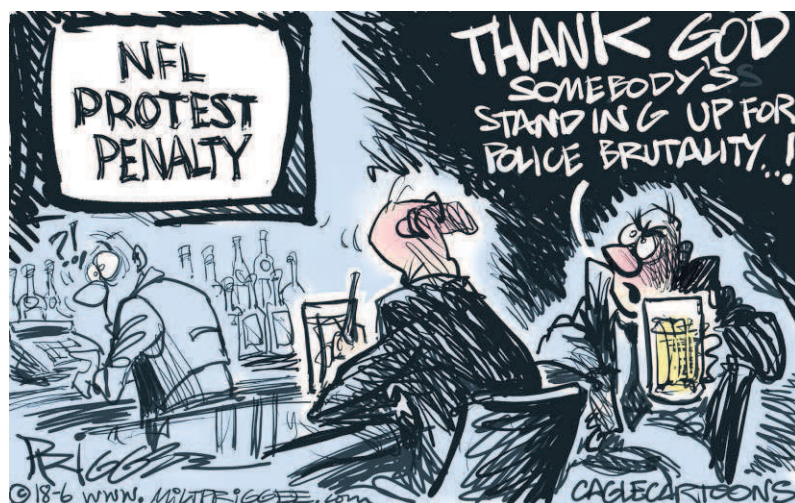
"In private conversations, Obama rarely mentions Trump at all," Debenedetti reported. "Those who've visited the office he's leased from the World Wildlife Fund in Washington's West End say he's eager to talk for hours about the world's ills. When informed about the latest presidential tweetstorms aimed at him, he chuckles and changes the subject."

Debenedetti talked to Obama friends who marveled at the former president's "Zen-like" calm in the face of the Trump tumult. That, of course, was a phrase often used to describe Obama in the White House, too.

Maybe that works for him. But for his admirers — and many Democratic voters — Obama's absence borders on the mysterious.

"How did the most ubiquitous man in America for eight years virtually disappear?" Debenedetti asked. "What explains his near absence from the political stage, where he might argue publicly against the reversals of his policy accomplishments, and also from American life more broadly?"

Byron York is chief political correspondent for *The Washington Examiner*.



## YOUR VIEWS

### U.S. health care costs and lying attorneys

I recently read your article on the retirement of Dr. Norman Sitz. I really enjoyed his opinion on our current medical system. He believes we need a one-payer system like most other nations. His quote by Winston Churchill that "America always manages to do the right thing only after they have done everything else wrong" was profound.

If you look on the internet you will find that our education system is ranked 16th globally and 20th in math. We spend around \$13,500 per year per student, which ranks fifth globally. We can not discipline, teach the 10 Commandments or teach children mental health through prayer, meditation, etc., without getting sued. We retire our teachers 12 to 15 years earlier than Germany. They retire at 67. We need to start getting our money's worth out of our education and health care services.

Our national health care costs us around 25 percent of our gross national product. Forty-eight percent of our bankruptcies are from people who have health insurance that does not pay for their client's bills. We need a one-payer system that attorneys cannot sue.

England's health care costs it 13 percent of its GNP. Germany has womb to tomb health care for 15 percent of its GNP. The major difference in their costs is our legal fees. Our attorneys advertise on TV to sue everyone for everything. Their legal system requires attorneys to tell the truth in their courts of law. If they are caught lying they lose their license and go to jail.

If we made our attorneys take the oath to tell the truth in our courts our system would immediately change. The more an attorney lies, the more they make! They must be required to disclose whom they truly represent if an insurance company is involved. Their clients must legally employ them — not their client's insurance company. We must demand complete

change in our broken system.

Nothing can change in our medical or educational systems until we change our legal systems.

Calvin B. Garton  
Pendleton

### Walden the best choice for rural Oregon

It seems that Greg Walden could find a cure for cancer, and yet some unreasonable partisans would still oppose him, putting partisan politics ahead of making positive accomplishments. None of these accomplishments are being recognized by some angry partisans, who, by the way, are nothing but the loud minority. They oppose everything Greg Walden does, grasping at straws to put a Democrat, Jamie McLeod-Skinner, in office. Her agenda is to transform Oregon's 2nd District into a clone of Portland. Is this what we want?

The majority of citizens in our community know better, and are standing by Greg Walden, who has consistently fought for the constituents of the 2nd District. Whether it was passing legislation to fix forest management in our state, stop the opioid crisis, or working to get the Hammonds pardoned, Greg is here for the people of the 2nd District of Oregon. These are not partisan issues. He understands our way of life and is truly a representative of rural Oregon.

McLeod-Skinner says that she likes to avoid buzzwords — so she won't ever use the words socialized medicine when she tells you she supports it. She is hiding behind this façade of appearing moderate while actually pushing an extremely liberal agenda. The people of the 2nd District deserve much better. This liberal agenda has nothing to do with improving the lives of Oregonians. Our local guy, Greg Walden, is working hard for us and definitely deserves our support again in November.

Kristine Wilhelm  
Hood River

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