

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to the generous bidders who pitched in to make Henry the lamb the most expensive animal at auction during the Umatilla County Fair.

The lamb was raised by Maddy Thomas of Echo, who was diagnosed one year ago with a brain tumor. Money from the sale is going toward high deductibles for her treatment and some college savings.

We're hardly surprised by the generosity we see when a member of one of our tight-knit communities is hurting. And this, like so many other charitable efforts, is done without any expectation of praise.

But we also feel it's worth pointing out.

The sale has raised about \$27,000 as of this publication, according to livestock auction superintendent Marie Linnell, and the last day to donate to the cause is Friday. If you'd like to add on to that total, email Linnell at mlinnell5@gmail.com or stop by the fair offices at the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center.

A kick in the pants to careless and dangerous drivers who heed no mind in construction zones or around farm equipment.

A flagger in one such zone was

struck and killed earlier this month on Highway 11 near Athena, and a combine driver was seriously injured when hit from behind on Interstate 84 last week.

With potato and onion harvest on the horizon, more slow-moving trucks and equipment will be on the road.

Distractions are a real safety concern, and the nonstop buzz of the smartphone has made keeping our mind (and eyes) on the road even more difficult.

It may seem like the wide open road is a good place to get caught up on social media or that email to your mom, but two seconds of distraction can have deadly results.

For all of our sakes, keep your eyes on the road and be aware of your surroundings.

A tip of the hat to the new Echo School addition, which was truly built with the community in mind.

The gathering space and workout room can be sealed off from the rest of the school, allowing the opportunity for community use without district employees present.

Schools have long been the hubs of small towns, and new buildings backed by local dollars should always keep the community at large in mind. As long



AP Photo/Matthew Brown, File

A herd of bison grazes in the Lamar Valley of Yellowstone National Park. An Oregon man has been sentenced to 130 days in jail after pleading guilty to misconduct in two national parks, including harassing a bison that had stopped traffic in Yellowstone National Park.

as the funds are being spent to make a better educational experience for students, we're all for finding ways to keep the taxpayers plugged in to their investment.

A kick in the pants to negative ambassadors from our fair cities.

A recent high-profile case of bison harassment at Yellowstone National Park has put Pendleton in newspapers, television broadcasts and social media posts for all the wrong reasons. We'll leave the name out here — we try not to kick while somebody's already down — but you can read about his exploits and punishment on the front page today.

It's a shame, really, that many in

Pendleton have put so much effort into branding the city as a fun place worth either a weekend visit or a full-on relocation. We're seeing that work take off — Pendleton has been written about extensively and even made the Smithsonian Magazines Top 20 Small Towns list. There's so much good press out there, but one wayward son puts a taint on that image, even though the city has nothing to do with it.

The lessons are plentiful, first and foremost to leave wild animals alone. But in this world, your dumb exploits will travel far and wide before you can even sober up. Think of your own reputation, your family's and even your town's when you're out in the world.

YOUR VIEWS

Walden hard at work

What does a U.S. representative do? I can tell you what Greg Walden, the U.S. representative for Oregon's 2nd Congressional District, does.

He finds lost Social Security checks, helps get funding for economic development projects and cuts through red tape to secure veterans' benefits. He is working on legislation that addresses forest health and managing our rampant wild fires. He has worked to expand rural broadband and roll back regulations that have hurt small towns. He is fighting to fund crucial rural health care for the children's health insurance programs and community health centers.

I am amused at recent letters to the editor from folks who say they can't find

Greg. Let me tell you why. HE IS WORKING! He is busy addressing the needs of his Oregon constituents.

It is the plot of a made-for-TV movie that a new, fresh-faced person from California, who has just been elected to Congress from Oregon, goes to

Washington, D.C., and convinces all the seasoned and experienced legislators to immediately join her and endorse her ideas. It is a great fantasy for the campaign trail but the reality of the job of representative involves years of hard work, study of the issues and experience working with other legislators. It is not an instant process, like mixing a Cup-o-Soup.

Real life involves gaining experience, trust and making friends and allies on both sides of the aisle. Real life involves representing Oregonians since Greg was first elected in 1998.

Congressman Greg Walden is the chairman of the House Energy and Commerce Committee. That prestigious honor only comes by virtue of knowledge, experience, being bipartisan and working hard. We need to keep that experience and knowledge working for Oregon.

We need Greg Walden.

Zee Koza
La Grande

Getting the budget right

The previous Pendleton City Council led you believe that maintenance on streets and public buildings was deferred because the public demanded funding

of other projects like those ridiculous speed bumps on Main Street, relocating the Eighth Street Bridge to Main Street, and the restoration of the Rivoli Theater. Had the choice been given to the public on those projects versus street repairs, there's no doubt street repairs would have been their first choice.

We were most recently given the choice of passing a gas tax, an Extension Service tax, and a Humane Society tax or suffer the consequences. Those tax measures ultimately failed to be adopted. The city council erroneously interpreted the failure of the gas tax as public indifference for repairing the streets. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather than fixing streets, the mayor and city council were more interested in honoring themselves with plaques on statues, and that was just plain unacceptable.

The recent donation of \$150,000 to the Farm II project would have been better spent on widening the Bedford Bridge or upgrading Southwest 18th Street. With all the proposed development in that convention center area, preparations for an alternate exit route for large events would seem a more prudent plan for the future. Likewise, the grant funding of the Pendleton Downtown Association for an office, secretary, more studies on parking, and a few Christmas lights cluttering up our historic street lights could have been more wisely spent on reducing deferred maintenance on facilities such as the Vert Auditorium.

Now we are on the verge of taking on yet another ill-conceived project, relocating that Eighth Street Bridge to Main Street. Its current condition results from years of neglect. Rather than wasting scarce funds, cancellation of this project rather than creating another maintenance headache would be an easy step towards a sustainable budget.

The city has a significant amount of unused or vacant property collecting no taxes. With such a significant amount of funding for the budget coming from property taxes, you'd think there'd be a stampede to divest.

As our unfunded PERS liability continues to climb, I get the feeling that the mayor, city council and city manager are realizing that the time to act is now. The question is will they act or punt again?

Rick Rohde
Pendleton



LIMEY PASTOR

A sorrowful week

This has been a week of sorrow. A person very close to me attempted suicide and was saved by police who found them and smashed a car window to get them out. They are out of the hospital now with a medication that has temporarily altered the personality and it seems that another being has taken over their body temporarily. This has occupied much of my concern.

Then a lightning bolt of revelation hit the Catholic Church in Pennsylvania and many of the clergy there unmasked as deceivers and deviants. An investigation in the United States revealing at least 1,000 children molested by these counterfeit holy men (some 300) — leading many other states to now start the process of discovering the wolves in sheep's clothing in their own parishes. It seems likely that this grand action could begin to erode the church in such a way that all of its structures could fall in reparations for the evil that men have done. I am certain that this crime is not just located in one denomination — it is a crime that takes advantage of secrecy and entrapment of promises. Let the purifying fire do its work.

As a demonic third act, the courts brought a damning set of indictments for Paul Manafort, the campaign chief for our new president, and for the attorney Michael Cohen. It appears both of these men, look-



COLIN BROWN
Faith

ing for the approval of lost fathers perhaps, are instruments for the distorted will of a modern Nero. Men of good will on both sides of the aisle are praying to our Heavenly Father for repentance and truth and that God's love will begin to show up in this strange and disabling story of conscienceless passions.

Over the valleys of Oregon the stench of smoke has hung, as if Hades' flames were licking at the edges. I pray for the continuing work of the holy people of Oregon by being close to their families, ignoring the arrogance of power, feeding the good and holy in their friends and protecting the welfare of the vulnerable.

I particularly give thanks for the politicians of Oregon, who seem genuinely committed to make the state as good as it can be. I sat down on the previous weekend and met in offices in the Salem and discussed problems of the elderly and the disabled and felt a genuine concern with our people was held by all.

May God protect our children, our politicians, our preachers and our people. May the Spirit of the Living Christ be abundant and alive fully in our beautiful state.

Amen.

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