

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
Publisher

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

WYATT HAUPT
News Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to Brent and Janelle Hampton for their efforts to revitalize the old Pilot Rock schoolhouse.

As small rural towns have declined in population in the last century, some of these former community gathering places have fallen into disuse and disrepair. That leaves an ugly mark on a highly visible place in town.

The Hamptons are working to reverse the hands of time and restore the building to positive use. While sawmill jobs will never pump the same amount of cash into the Pilot Rock economy as they did in the 20th century, many are proud of their town and can take pride in a restored gem from the past.

A kick in the pants to the Write-In Larry Givens campaign for kicking off its dubious re-election effort by attacking factual *East Oregonian* reporting.

At this point the campaign is a Facebook page (tacitly approved by the outgoing commissioner) and a handful

of repurposed signs around the county. We won't blame Givens for the content.

But in two posts, the campaign page claims the *EO* is "manipulating" and "misleading" the citizens by reporting John Shafer is the commissioner-elect, and for publishing a story about a minor though much-needed county action (closing a gravel road to trucks) without giving Givens credit for his role in the 3-0 decision.

The fact is, Shafer beat Givens in the May primary, a race that included forums and campaigning by both candidates. Shafer earned about 600 more votes than Givens. On the second matter, while Givens may have been the most active commissioner in the decision to close the Butler Grade Road, reporting on procedural pieces of county business often doesn't name-drop commissioners. Instead, we reported the name of the resident who filed the complaint and the county employee who presented the plan to fix it.

It's a quirk of the electoral process that Shafer's name will appear on



Staff photo by E.J. Harris

Former owner of the old Pilot Rock schoolhouse Roy Golden, left, talks with former student Bill Christensen as another former student, Helen Humphreys, second from right, looks out the window with Marsha Morgan on Tuesday in Pilot Rock.

the November ballot at all. It will include a space next to it for those dissatisfied with the voters' choice in May who would like to write in another candidate.

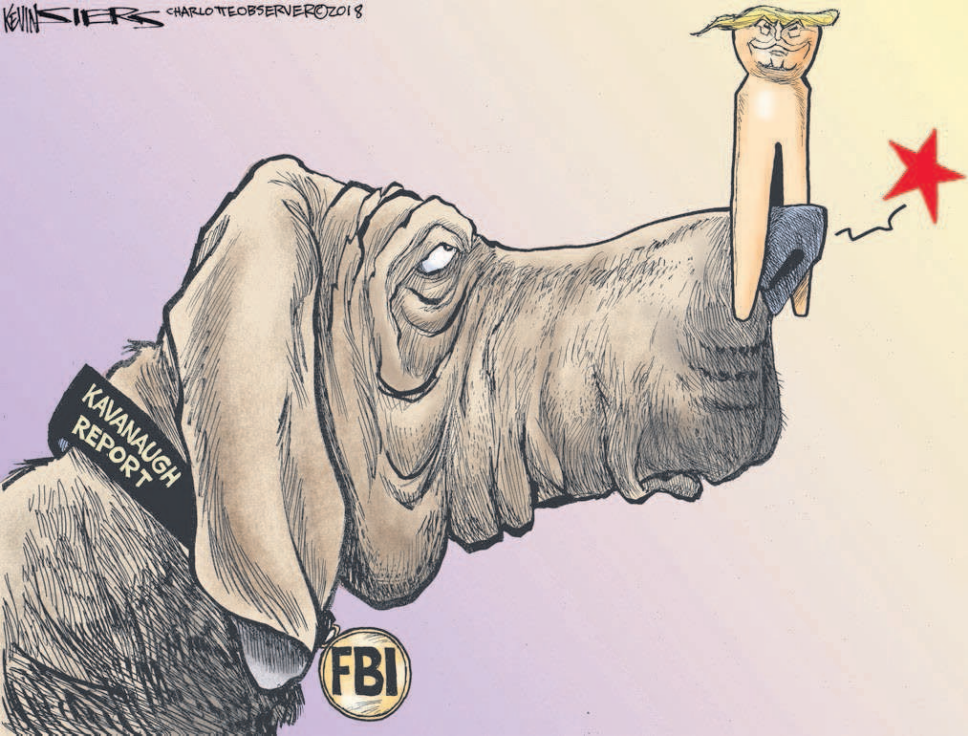
It's possible that Givens, who has served three terms, has earned enough devoted supporters over his 12 years to get his name jotted on some ballots. But the voters have spoken on the matter.

A tip of the hat to Al Davis, the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center

general manager, for his effort to bring more people up to the facility with a "Walktober" program and by opening the rodeo arena to horses two nights a week.

The campus has attracted some public and private events besides the Umatilla County Fair, but there are still some people who haven't yet found a reason to visit.

We applaud the effort to encourage those people to check out the complex as Hermiston works to make it a more vital part of the community.



YOUR VIEWS

Murdock gets things done

I will cast my vote this fall to re-elect George Murdock to the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners.

He has shown himself to be an energetic problem solver who is proactive in tackling issues and resolving them. Recently, I took old chemicals down to the Convention Center parking lot for disposal and there was George (in his temporary role as head of the county health department) working to set up for the day's collection.

He is a good organizer and has in-depth experience in leading large organizations with multiple employees and departments and complex budgets. His skills are needed on the board.

Please join me in returning him to his position for another term.

Betty Klepper
Pendleton

Election decision an easy one

This election is an easy decision for my family. Rick Pullen is one of us.

Rick is not a candidate who will sit back and coast like his competitor. This man truly loves Umatilla County, not just a select group or city whom he can benefit from. You can see this example as you drive around the county. He is out meeting with all constituents and hanging his own signs.

Working closely with Rick Pullen on past projects, I can tell you that this candidate will not shy away from hard issues and will vote for the people of Umatilla County. He gives his all and is not afraid to challenge the status quo.

Tom and Teri Phelan
Pendleton

Umatilla County as a whole has coasted for far too long with our current elected officials. Results have been few unless you count the personal favors granted. A perfect example showing lack of effort is with our current county health department. Please tell me, Commissioner Murdock, why this county cannot keep a director under your supervision, cycling through three within the last five years? Aside from budget, why have we lost programs due to staffing under your supervision? Please explain to me why we cannot provide much-needed services to the Hermiston community and keep the Hermiston Health Department office open full time under your supervision? It starts at the top with you, sir. Stop with the Band-Aids and fix the issue.

We have a failed event center that our current staff gave to the city of Hermiston while committing county money, taking funds away from other towns in this county. I am not placing blame on Hermiston or the elected officials of that city for this. I would accept that responsibility if I were in your shoes. That decision impacted the entire county. The explanation given still baffles me to this day. It was an easy way out instead of fixing the problem. Yet another Band-Aid applied.

Rick Pullen is the change that we need to move Umatilla County forward. Rick is the person who will listen to the "everyday person" and strive to fix issues, not just replace Band-Aids! I encourage Umatilla County residents to join me and vote for Rick Pullen, Umatilla County commissioner.

OTHER VIEWS

For once, I'm grateful for Trump

For the first time since Donald Trump entered the political fray, I find myself grateful that he's in it. I'm reluctant to admit it and astonished to say it, especially since the president mocked Christine Blasey Ford in his ugly and gratuitous way at a rally Tuesday. Perhaps it's worth unpacking this admission for those who might be equally astonished to read it.

I'm grateful because Trump has not backed down in the face of the slipperiness, hypocrisy and dangerous standard-setting deployed by opponents of Brett Kavanaugh's nomination to the Supreme Court. I'm grateful because ferocious and even crass obstinacy has its uses in life, and never more so than in the face of sly moral bullying. I'm grateful because he's a big fat hammer fending off a razor-sharp dagger.

A few moments have crystallized my view over the past few days.

The first moment was a remark by a friend. "I'd rather be accused of murder," he said, "than of sexual assault." I feel the same way. One can think of excuses for killing a man; none for assaulting a woman. But if that's true, so is this: Falsely accusing a person of sexual assault is nearly as despicable as sexual assault itself. It inflicts psychic, familial, reputational and professional harms that can last a lifetime. This is nothing to sneer at.

The second moment, connected to the first: "Boo hoo hoo. Brett Kavanaugh is not a victim." That's the title of a column in the *Los Angeles Times*, which suggests that the possibility of Kavanaugh's innocence is "infinitesimal." Yet false allegations of rape, while relatively rare, are at least five times as common as false accusations of other types of crime, according to academic literature.

Since when did the possibility of innocence become, for today's liberals, something to wave off with an archly unfeeling "boo hoo"?

A third moment, connected to the second: Listening to Cory Booker explain Tuesday that "ultimately" it doesn't matter if Kavanaugh is "guilty or innocent," because "enough questions" had been raised that it was time to "move on to another candidate."

This is a rhetorical sleight of hand in three acts: Elide the one question that really matters; raise a secondary set of "questions" that are wholly the result of the question you've decided to ignore; call for "another candidate" because it will push confirmation hearings past the midterms, which was the Democratic



BRETT
STEPHENS
Comment

objective long before most anyone had ever heard of Blasey's allegation.

Fourth moment: Watching Julie Swetnick, the woman who accused Kavanaugh of attending parties decades earlier where women were gang raped, change key details of her story in an interview with NBC News.

Swetnick's claims border on the preposterous. They are wholly uncorroborated. But that didn't keep Kavanaugh's opponents, in politics and the press, from seizing them as evidence of corroboration with Blasey's allegation, which is not preposterous but is also largely uncorroborated, and with the allegation of Kavanaugh's Yale classmate Deborah Ramirez — uncorroborated again.

Uncorroborated plus uncorroborated plus largely uncorroborated is not the accumulation of questions, much less of evidence. It is the duplication of hearsay.

Fifth moment: Reading about a 1985 bar fight at Yale — a story that involved Kavanaugh throwing ice, resulted in no charges against him, and should never have been reported. Or reading a 1983 handwritten letter by Kavanaugh, in which he says of his gang of friends that "we're loud, obnoxious drunks with prolific pukers among us" — adolescent boasting now being treated as if it is a crucial piece of incriminating evidence. Or hearing from Yale classmates who claim to have seen Kavanaugh drunk, which somehow is supposed to show that he's a demonstrable perjurer and possible sex offender.

Will a full-bore investigation of adolescent behavior now become a standard part of the "job interview" for all senior office holders? I'm for it — provided we can start with your adolescent behavior, as it relates to your next job.

Sixth moment: Listening to Richard Blumenthal lecture Kavanaugh on the legal concept of falsus in omnibus — false in one thing, false in everything — when the senator from Connecticut lied shamelessly for years about his military service. And then feeling grateful to Trump for having the simple nerve to point out the naked hypocrisy.

We will learn soon enough what, if anything, the FBI has gleaned from its investigation of Kavanaugh. If the bureau finds persuasive evidence of Blasey's charge, the judge will have to step down and answer for it. Until then, I'll admit to feeling grateful that, in Trump, at least one big bully was willing to stand up to others.

■

Brett Stephens is a columnist for the *New York Times*.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.