

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

CHRISTOPHER RUSH
PublisherKATHRYN B. BROWN
OwnerDANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing EditorWYATT HAUPJT JR.
News Editor

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OUR VIEW

The elephants in the room

We'll wait and see if the Democrats' leadership will reach out to Republicans this Legislative session

As the Oregon Legislature prepared to start work this week, its leaders were saying all the right things about working together, respecting rural Oregon and doing what was best for the state as a whole.

But, as the saying goes, "only time will tell."

In the Oregon House, the Democratic and Republican leadership have a more collegial relationship than in the past. In the Senate, it seems prickly.

Democrats gained supermajorities in the House and Senate, which enables them to pass tax increases without needing any Republican votes — if all Democrats stick together, which is never a sure thing. Some legislative issues, such as potential changes in sentencing laws, have an even higher threshold for passage. In any case, Democrats cannot conduct business unless enough Republicans are present for a quorum.

Through the leadership of Senate President Peter Courtney, D-Salem, the Senate has acted as a moderating influence on proposals emanating

from the more-liberal House. But the November elections swung the Senate to the left, and Courtney worries about how he will balance the expectations of progressive Democrats with the need to work collaboratively with Republicans.

"We cannot do this, Democrats, without Republicans. You gotta understand that," Courtney said at the annual Associated Press Legislative Preview on Friday. "We cannot do this without Republicans. Without the elephants in the room — another way to put it — the donkeys can't do it."

The question is whether the 90 legislators, as well as Democratic Gov. Kate Brown, will give more than lip service to that collaboration.

The early signs are positive. They almost always are at the start of a legislative session.

Legislators went through civility training last week. Equal numbers of Democrats and Republicans will serve on the joint legislative committee charged with improving the Oregon Capitol culture and overcoming the specter of sexual harassment. Courtney appointed non-urban and



AP Photo/Andrew Selsky/

Oregon House Democratic Leader Jennifer Williamson, left, House Speaker Tina Kotek, center, and House Republican Leader Carl Wilson share a laugh on Friday as they speak with reporters during the Associated Press Legislative Preview at the Oregon Capitol in Salem.

urban senators — Democrats Betsy Johnson of Scappoose and Elizabeth Steiner Hayward of Beaverton — to jointly serve as the Senate's budget leaders. He has introduced Senate Bill 2, with Republican Sens. Bill Hansell of Athena and Cliff Bentz of Ontario, which could be a breakthrough in providing greater land-use flexibility in Eastern Oregon.

It might also be a good sign that legislators are still trying to write the carbon cap-and-invest legislation, which progressives demand and conservatives dislike. Some Democratic legislators had long ago insisted

that the legislation, known as Clean Oregon Jobs, was ready. Republicans have strived to make it less onerous for businesses and consumers.

Most bills passed by the Legislature are routine and have bipartisan support. Few of those will make headlines. But many contentious proposals — from taxes to firearms — likely will pit business vs. labor, rural vs. urban and minority Republicans vs. majority Democrats.

Those are the bills that will test legislators' commitment to collaboration, to civility — and to the whole of Oregon.

OTHER VIEWS

How to become a statue

To honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., I wanted to share a few thoughts on why I believe he's been immortalized into statues, parks, street names, community centers, and even his own holiday.

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is what you'd imagine a real-life angel would be. A force of nature so dedicated to the healing of humanity that during the Civil Rights Movement, he probably knew that there was a bullet with his name on it that would catch up to him one day; a bullet that would turn his wife into a widow and leave his children fatherless. He also knew that the more he spoke the faster that bullet raced. He chose to speak anyway.

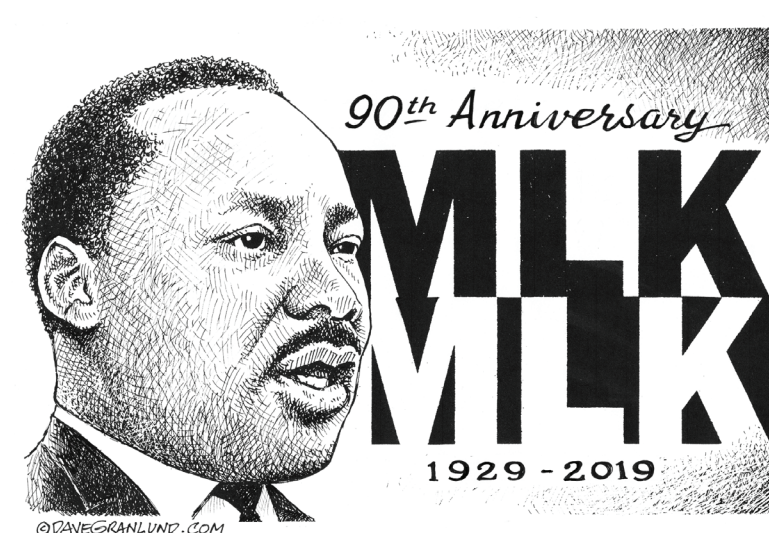
He chose not to succumb to the crippling forces of hate but instead to be elevated to a state of consciousness where love and forgiveness reigned supreme. Love was his sword and his shield. He was called every racist epithet imaginable; he was spat

on, thrown in jail, hit in the head with a rock, all in the name of love. He chose to love with reckless abandon. He chose to lean heavily on his unwavering, immovable, immutable faith in love and forgiveness as an act of divine service to others.

King believed in non-violence because as impossible as it is to fathom for a lot of us, the good doctor was even fighting for those that would eventually take his life and also for those that would applaud his death. That thought alone

evokes fiery anger and a burning resentment in me that is difficult to quell.

I'll confess when Donald Trump won the presidency my rage consumed me; I was paralyzed by my fear for me and my family's safety and the safety of the communities I serve. I couldn't understand how so many people would prop up what I viewed as a symbol of hate. And as a result, I grew hateful. I put up walls. I lost people that I once considered friends. Allowing that



type of energy to dwell in me caused insidious and unspeakable problems.

You see, hate is easy at first. But what it does to the host is the saddest part. When hate finds a home in you, it locks the doors and draws the curtains. It refuses to let light in; the lawn may be lush, green and well manicured, but if hate can make a home out of you, it will swallow you whole, spit out your bones and proceed to complain that the meal was not

enough.

Hate will destroy you from the inside out if you let it.

I understand keeping the doors locked; it is imperative to protect your emotional and psychological safety from the ills of the world. But keep the curtains open; not only will light flow inward, but it will also continue to flow outward as well.

At that time, I was so mad that I arrived at a place where I even thought Dr. Martin Luther King

Jr. was a naïve fool that should've taken a more aggressive stance, that he should've fought back with a little hate in his heart and give his enemies a taste of their own medicine. See how they like it! But that is not what a good doctor would do and that is exactly what sets him apart from us mere mortals.

A true alchemist, King was able to transmute hate into love. I was the naïve one; I was the fool.

I believe his life is a road map for our perilous times and if I had to distill his life's work down into the one quote of his that turned him into a statue and that echoes the loudest and purest in my heart today it would be this: "I have decided to stick with love. Hate is too great a burden to bear."

To choose to love despite all invitations to hate is the path into divinity or statue-hood. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. solved the riddle of how to walk the path of least resentment without abandoning truth and that is the path his life and legacy invites us all to walk.

Jordan Chaney is a poet from Kennewick, Wash.

YOUR VIEWS

President Trump is using great walls of history as his examples

You people who are causing President Trump grief over his wall need to give him a break.

In grade school he heard about this "strong leader" called Qin Shi Huang who had the great wall in China built. This wall protected the Qin Dynasty from the brown horde from inner China.

Of course, he forgot or did not

listen to his teachers tell him it was for the period of 221-206 BC. He just knows it is a beautiful wall and you can see it from space just like you can see many of his buildings.

Carlisle Harrison
Hermiston

New fees could support needed city services

A few great ideas were suggested at the Pendleton

City Council workshop held on January 15 that would not place another tax on residents of Pendleton.

The first recommendation suggested the city should charge a service fee on tickets for hosted events.

In my opinion, a two dollar service fee for a ticket to attend the Round-Up Happy Canyon and other associated events is reasonably priced.

Most cities add a service fee for hosted events. In my assess-

ment, one dollar appropriated for street repair and one dollar appropriated for police and fire expenditures would cover the associated operating costs of hosting these events.

The second premise suggested the city does not recover enough operating costs for the aquatic center, the recreation division and parks division.

It should be noted that the city only collects 19 percent of the associated costs. Most cities recover at least 40 percent to

60 percent. The city should increase this percentage to 25 percent to cover annual operations for services.

I feel it would not be too much to ask from people who use and rely on these services.

These fees are needed to assist our local police and fire departments and help fund street repairs and improvement without adding another tax burden on Pendleton residents.

Rex J. Morehouse
Pendleton

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Send letters to managing editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 9780, or email editor@eastoregonian.com.