

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the Hat, kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to local police agencies for stepping up time and again to make big events safer.

Collaboration and cooperation are how rural communities throughout Oregon pull off big events and attractions. Folks in Umatilla and Morrow counties know that well. From county fairs to the Pendleton Round-Up, locals pour in from all corners of the region to help.

Policing is no exception.

The Pendleton Police Department last weekend had its hands full with the Pendleton Whisky Music Fest. Event organizers estimated 17,000 people attended, effectively doubling the population of Pendleton for much of a weekend. Pendleton's finest would have been hard pressed to handle the load alone.

Oregon State Police pitched in with some of its mobile response team — troopers on bicycles. Officers from Boardman, Hermiston, Pilot Rock and the Umatilla Tribal Police Department also assisted. The *East Oregonian* ran a front page photo Tuesday, July 16, showing law enforcement dealing with a combative and bleeding man. Those officers were Morrow County sheriff's deputies.

The sheriff's deputies did not call the *East Oregonian* demanding recog-

ognition. They were just doing their job, after all.

A job that nowadays involves social work as much as traffic stops, dealing with the mentally ill as well as drunks, or stepping in to help someone overdosing while arresting a drug dealer.

The job also takes wading into a party pit in Pendleton's July weather where as many as 6,000 people were shouting, gyrating and bouncing around and into each other amid blaring music just to get a hold of someone trying to take on security officers.

Most of us can think of more enjoyable ways to spend our days at a festival. The willingness of local police to take on these tasks means most of us can.

A tip of the hat the Hermiston School District for being a good steward of taxpayer dollars, which should be good news for voters. The school district was recently awarded the Certificate of Achievement for excellence in Financial Reporting.

The district garnered the award for the 12th year in a row. The district's financial reports and debt management services — among an array of other metrics — are measured by the Government Finance Officers Association. While surely a boost for the district, the award is more important because it illustrates that an entity funded by



Staff photo by Kathy Aney

Police officers subdue a suspect during Saturday's Pendleton Whisky Music Fest.

public dollars isn't wasting taxpayer money. In a day and age where out-of-control government spending is the norm, this type of news about a local school district is welcome.

A tip of the hat to all of those who sponsored or volunteered to make the Pendleton Whisky Fest and the Pendleton Bike week a success. Local events such as these enhance our community and attract needed tourism dollars. Such events take a lot of preparation work but the end result is worth it.

A kick in the pants to President Donald Trump for his continued insistence in creating controversy, this time with four Democratic lawmakers. This consumes valuable time better spent on key issues facing our nation. While everyone — including the president — has a right to speak

their mind, clearly attacking lawmakers personally doesn't help move the nation forward. We face an array of problems, and the President's comments only distract from then national issues that need to be solved.

A tip of the hat to the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office for purchasing a new utility vehicle that will make the agency more versatile and flexible when responding to an emergency. At first glance the acquisition may not appear to be a big deal, but when you are in an accident and trapped in a secluded place, suddenly the new vehicle is a pretty important addition. The investment is a good one, and the sheriff's office should be lauded for having the foresight to make the buy.

OTHER VIEWS

The journey is the destination

The secret's out. Northeastern Oregon is home to writers.

Last Saturday's *East Oregonian* featured April Baer's story about how EOU's writing program, after a year's hiatus, has teamed with Wallowa County's Fishtrap to offer students the opportunity to learn at Fishtrap's Summer Gathering.

Under the leadership of President Tom Isko, the story said, EOU has been working to expand degree programs and take a more prominent place at the table in rural affairs. The MFA writing curriculum focuses on wilderness, ecology, and issues specific to Western communities. Fishtrap's mission since 1988 has been to promote "clear thinking and good writing in and about the West — and Fishtrap Executive Director Shannon McNerney hopes that with this connection, Northeastern Oregon "could become the literary hub of the Pacific Northwest."

I had to smile, because I'm one of those who think we already are.

In fact, I remember Fishtrap founder Rich Wandschneider, who had complained that Oregon writers' conferences could seem more like gatherings of I-5 writers, saying only half jokingly that we were the obvious geographical center of Northwest writing. Just look at the map. Montana, Idaho, Washington, Oregon — yes, there we are, at the center of that circle.

With the help of the Wallowa Valley Arts Council, Kim Stafford, and historian Alvin Josephy, the first Fishtrap Summer Gathering was born. Every summer since 1988 people have been writing with and learning from writers like Molly Gloss and Craig Lesley, Ursula K. Le Guin, David James Duncan, Yusef Kumenyakaa, Debra Earling, Gary Snyder, Luci Tapahonso. Thirty-two years of this. Just imagine.

Since Fishtrap is open entry, both beginning and experienced writers get to learn from each other, and McNerney and her staff create an atmosphere of inclusivity.

Of course there are other writing programs, and people can study for MFA degrees from Missoula to Eugene. Portland's Literary Arts hosts the Oregon Book Awards and writing fellowships, the Portland Book Festival, Portland Arts & Lectures, and more. No question, Literary Arts is the big dog

in the Northwest literary world.

But the news is getting out about Northeastern Oregon, too, and Pendleton Center for the Arts' First Draft Writers' Series has been part of this news. You have been welcoming Northwest writers with graciousness and enthusiasm for more than six years, and the word has spread. Writers contact us, hoping we have a spot for them though they know our calendar is booked months ahead.

Why does all this matter? Because stories matter — they shape our societies, our very lives — and a story isn't a story until the circle is complete. Until it has been shared. Heard or read. Received.

"Tell me a story." Whether you get your stories from First Draft or Netflix or the news, or just enjoy hearing about J.D.'s wayward goat, the lure is irresistible.

This year I was fortunate to attend the Fishtrap Weekend as the week of writing workshops was wrapping up and the year-long celebration of Ursula K. Le Guin was culminating. The theme of this year's Summer Fishtrap had been Steering the Craft, after the title of Le Guin's fiction handbook, and all the workshops had centered around her ideas. One such idea was central to Molly Gloss's keynote address: that writing, as Ursula often noted, is practice.

A bit like T'ai Chi, I thought. Practice, practice. Always learning, always striving, though never quite reaching that "farthest shore." But so worth the effort, because the journey — well, the journey is the destination, as they say.

And the journey itself can be a blessing. On the last night of the Gathering, with lightning flashing and rain pounding on the awning above our heads, we watched Arwen Curry's "The World of Ursula K. Le Guin," a documentary that will be shown on PBS's "American Masters" in October. Afterward, as we waited for Ursula's friends Molly Gloss, Scott Russell Sanders and Luis Urrea to share their insights, Rich Wandschneider turned to me and said, "Bette, aren't we lucky to have known her? And all the millionaires in the world can't take that away from us."

Which was exactly how I was feeling.

Bette Husted is a writer and a student of T'ai Chi and the natural world. She lives in Pendleton.



BETTE
HUSTED
COMMENT

YOUR VIEWS

President lacks the moral characteristics to lead the country

The Donald certainly was not the first presidential candidate to realize that the historical and deeply ingrained racism and bigotry in our country could be tapped into for political purposes. However, other candidates who realized this had principles, values, and a moral upbringing that precluded them from exploiting these negative characteristics for political and personal gain.

Unfortunately, The Donald does not have any principles and values to live by, so in 2016, he and his supporters rode racism and bigotry all the way to the White House. Currently, he is trying the same strategy and method for a second act. We all saw the ugly scenes Wednesday in North Carolina — "Send her back! Send her back!" Back to where? Michigan?

Thankfully, as we all know, the four congresswomen are not going anywhere.

And there was The Donald, playing head cheerleader and goading them on with their racist chants. Now, is this "leadership"? Is this what we have come to accept from the occupant of the Office of the President of the United States? Could anyone even imagine this kind of conduct from Abraham Lincoln or Dwight Eisenhower (both Republicans), or from any other previous president? Of course not.

The Donald was strutting around and basking in all the glory and adulation he always receives in places like Montana and North Carolina. Why doesn't he hold a "rally" in Los Angeles, San Francisco, Portland or Seattle? After all, he is the president of the entire country. However, The Donald will only set foot in places where it is politically safe to go.

It was laughable when I read that The Donald is a "street fighter." The Donald is the worst kind of coward; one of his official policies is to lock up toddlers and children in cages. Remember, these are his policies in his role as the President of the United States (Commander in Chief). Also, would a respectable street fighter evade the military draft during wartime (Vietnam), or even peacetime, like The Donald did?

If The Donald is re-elected, then the Statue of Liberty needs to be removed. Otherwise, it would be blatant hypocrisy of our entire country to profess to honor its principles while electing a bigoted and racist president.

**Bob Shippentower
Pendleton**

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