

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants

A tip of the hat to Dave and Jodene Hughes, who are leaving Eastern Oregon Mission after 17 years serving Hermiston and surrounding communities through the Agape House and Martha’s House.

During that time they have helped thousands of struggling individuals and families through emergency food boxes, shelter, firewood, showers, name-your-price parking lot sales of clothing and household goods, the backpack program that sends food home with hungry schoolchildren on the weekends and other services.

“I’d say he is the most compassionate man I’ve ever met. He sees a need and he wants to fix it,” said Doug Alvarez, who has volunteered with Agape House for the last decade.

Remarkably, Dave did not draw a salary for much of his tenure as director of the Agape House, preferring to free up that money to go directly toward services for the Agape House’s clients.

We wish Dave and Jodene the best of luck in their new endeavors in Arizona, and we wish Eastern Oregon Mission luck in finding someone who

can take the Agape House and Martha’s House to new heights as Hermiston grows.

A tip of the hat to the city of Pendleton for recognizing the need to consider setting up a city-sanctioned homeless camp.

At one point about two weeks ago, the Pendleton Police Department identified 22 active or abandoned homeless camps along the Umatilla River.

City Manager Robb Corbett said staff is looking at three city-owned properties: one of the plots on Southwest Byers Avenue west of the Round-Up Grounds, a property near Airport Park, and a piece of industrial land near the Blue Mountain Community College baseball field.

Mayor John Turner said he anticipated the homeless camp would have some basic amenities like port-a-potties, a dumpster and a water trailer.

The council agreed that the camp just couldn’t be a city initiative, and that it needed to involve other public agencies and organizations that were involved in solving homelessness.

Turner suggested that there wasn’t a quick fix and we agree. There are no easy answers to the homeless-



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Agape House Executive Director Dave Hughes poses for a portrait at his desk on Oct. 3, 2019. Hughes, who has been with the organization since 2002, is retiring to pursue other ventures.

ness issue in Pendleton and Umatilla County, and no one size fits all solutions. But Pendleton is taking steps to find an answer and, for that, they deserve credit.

A kick in the pants to the city of Lexington for letting disagreements between the mayor, council and staff continue to affect the city’s ability to get things done.

The turmoil led to the resignation of Marcia Kemp, the city’s mayor, less than two weeks before an Oct. 22 recall election against her. Kemp said the council had refused to work with her, had stopped letting her sign

checks and she suspected they were discussing city business together outside of council chambers to circumvent her. She said she had come to the conclusion that wouldn’t change even if she survived the recall effort.

It is sad that all parties could not work together to find a common goal. There are no winners, only losers in this case. The real losers, of course, are the good residents of Lexington. Their city government is dysfunctional at the moment. It will require residents to take an active role to demand cooperation and accountability from their elected officials.

YOUR VIEWS

Walden is doing what his party wants him to do

Regina Braker’s recent letter (“An open letter to Congressman Walden,” Oct. 8) focused on a number of topics, including our president’s damaged relationships with allies, cozying up to dictators and bullying his administration. This reply to your statements are only to clarify what we see as pros and cons from your letter.

Trump is not a politician and the majority of us are thankful for that. Secondly, and it is a con, many people do not like things he has said or his actions in the past. However, the great points totally top the cons. Another con is perhaps he does need a different employee vetting system. Perhaps, though, you might look at the confirmation numbers of employees he has suggested to whether or not those employees were put temporarily into a job. Our president has the worst confirmation vetting of any past president ever. Not his fault, but the Democrats’.

Our country is now unafraid of actions by North Korea. They may not be perfect but historically they are much better, and the only person to aid to that is Trump.

We all knew Obamacare was wrong. As Speaker of the House Nancy Pelosi said, “Well, you have to pass it before you can find out what is in it.” Now, we all know money was being passed to the hospitals, not physicians. My husband needs a particular heart test every other year. That test under his heart specialist was \$1,800 in his office. The insurance at the time (no Medicare) paid about \$1,200 and that was our cost. His physician went out of business due to Obamacare and he had to go to a medical center for the test. Well,

\$4,000 for the same test and we had to pay about \$1,200 of it. Keep watching because the Dems are not doing anything, and health care will come down the pike by Republicans.

So now our president cannot say anything to another leader without the Democrats wanting to know what he is saying and accusing him of corruption. They hate to think of him talking with Putin, and now we are seeing it with Ukraine, Japan and China. We want him to keep after the tariffs and sign more agreements with other countries. We’ll never get back the billions Obama gave to Iran. So those dollars are totally lost and has allowed ISIS’s benefit.

Our president has a right of government to discuss our safety and past corruption. Have you read “The Deep State”? Perhaps it should be on your literary list as a college administrator.

We like the economic value that our president has added. We like that the southern border will be as safe or safer than our northern border, and we like that Trump’s promises he made to the voters are being upheld. Veterans, drugs and the list goes on.

Democrats thought they had a shoo-in with Hillary Clinton. The voters thought otherwise and hated the actions of her and her group due to emails and Benghazi. Time will tell if we were correct. Perhaps if Dems were to go ahead and just take their stupid impeachment vote and allow the Senate to vote, we could all get closer to being on the same page.

Walden is doing what we, his party, want to see him do, and that is support our president, which is a reason for each party. America first.

**Patricia Maier
Hermiston**

FROM THE HEADWATERS OF DRY CREEK

Time always marches on

We are, once again, approaching the annual switch from daylight saving time back to good old normal regular time, meaning that my bedtime at dark will almost overlap with my supper at 6 p.m. My dad believed that daylight saving occurred because the bosses didn’t have the guts to ask workers to come to work an hour earlier in order to save electric costs, so they paid legislators to mess with time.

I pack around a tiny hope that there are folks in government who actually listen to what folks outside government want and need. This infant Pollyannaism is buoyed by the knowledge that the snails of legal procedure are now carrying new laws around the marble halls of California, Oregon and Washington legislatures that will do away with the semiannual switcheroo and keep our clocks permanently on daylight savings.

I am ready. Which brings us into the deeper recesses of time as a relative concept. Have you noticed that the years appear to scoot past faster than they once did? My wife’s answer to why time seems to collapse as we grow older is based on a mathematical principal that, 30 years ago in a flush of pure romanticism, I convinced my daughter to tattoo over my left nipple. We don’t have the technical capability to reproduce the tattoo here. When we meet, I’ll show you.

Her formula expresses human awareness of time as the percentage of a person’s life thus far experienced. In other words, at the age of 3 years old, a period of three years represents your entire existence, so an hour can seem like a very long time. By the age of 60, three years only represents 5% of your life, and an hour is a mere drop in the old time bucket.

Despite having reared two children through the serious-question sixes, my own theory of time is yet to be codified (“Dad, if a bug only lives a day, does it seem like a full lifetime? Are their minutes shorter or longer?”).

I think that one’s perception of time is experience-based, that it can be skewed by what happens during one’s aliveness, and the whole tamale has something to do with memory, expectations, vibes, and biorhythms.

Fuzzy enough for you?

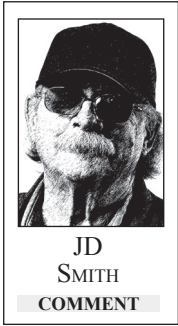
For example, let us examine our use of those personal computer thingamabobs in our pockets. How many of you remember the stone age of personal computing, 20-some years ago, before the web, during the days of Gophering and FTPing, when it seemed an absolute miracle that the bastard child of a typewriter and a television set could connect us, in only 10 minutes, to the Vatican library, way over there in Rome, Italy, and we could actually read text from there? In only 10 minutes.

Like my dad used to say, “Sometimes I get the feeling that there are smarter people than I am.” Now, let us stir in a few decades of work by a herd of cybergeniuses and bounce that early only-10 minutes experience off of what we expect today. Think about sitting in front of a computer nowadays, and how we impatiently pat our foot during the 3-second delay that it takes a modern hotrod device with all the broadband bells and whistles to connect us with a live video link to the janitor in the Vatican library so we can watch him scrub the feet of the saints and hear him sing the Toreador song from “Carmen.” In 20 years, a 10-minute miracle has transformed into a 3-second annoyance. Which time period is longer?

On the subject of time and its connection to memory, a cowboy pal of mine used to say, “You never learn younger.” A pretty good example of that concept is the following story that my mom says came from the Black Hills of South Dakota:

“I grew up in the hills, in a miner’s cabin, with no glass windows, just shutters. One summer day, I found a puppy in the woods and brought him home. My pappy didn’t want the dog. It was another mouth to feed. I finally talked him into letting me keep the little furball. First day, the dog came in the cabin, and pooped in the corner. Pappy threw him out the window. Second day, the dog came in the cabin and pooped in the corner. Pappy threw him out the window. Third day, the dog came in the cabin, pooped in the corner, and jumped out the window.”

JD Smith is an accomplished writer and jack-of-all-trades. He lives in Athena.



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