

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Volunteers set a good example for all to follow

A big shout-out of praise to the volunteers who arrived at Olney Cemetery last weekend to spruce it up before Veterans Day.

Students and adults spent time at the cemetery doing a great community service and they did it because it was the right thing to do, not for money or praise.

But praise should be lavished on all who showed up to help out.

The event was one of those rare, feel-good happenings that not only sends the right kind of message about our residents and our youth but make Pendleton a better place to live and work.

One of the best things about the volunteer effort was that a good share of the people there helping out were students from Sunridge Middle School and Pendleton High School.

We like to highlight on this page and this space, as much as possible, how important it is to volunteer to help out the community.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Kyra Jackson, left, and Kyndra Nelson are silhouetted as they rake leaves during a pre-Veterans Day cemetery cleanup on Saturday morning at Olney Cemetery in Pendleton.

We understand taking time out of a busy schedule is difficult. Jobs, families, our own personal goals and dreams all compete for our time and effort. So that makes blocking out a significant amount

of time on a weekend to give back extremely difficult.

Yet there are very few actions a voter can take that deliver the kind of noble satisfaction giving back to the community bestows.

We all want our communities to be the best they can be. We all want to be able to look over our town and feel a sense of pride and satisfaction at how it looks.

The one way we can make sure that the good work — like helping spruce up the cemetery before the onset of Veterans Day — is completed is through volunteerism. We could shrug our shoulders and say “It is the city or the county’s problem,” but that is a cop-out. Yes, we pay taxes to make sure essential work is done but at some point, we all have to get involved.

The best part about volunteering is it allows all of us, at one time or another, to make a difference. If you want to see your town look better, or want to voice your opinion about an ordinance or a law that was passed, the answer is really very simple: Get involved.

Kudos to the volunteers who helped out last weekend at the cemetery, and we see their effort as a good example to follow.

OTHER VIEWS

Walden’s successor must place Eastern Oregon ahead of partisan politics

Since 1999, a lot has changed in Oregon: The Ducks became a football powerhouse, thousands of Californians ignored Gov. McCall’s admonition and decided to visit and stay, and tech fully took over timber’s prominence in the state’s economy.

For all the good and bad in the last two decades, a few things have remained unchanged, including Greg Walden’s position as Eastern Oregon’s representative to the House. This sort of political continuity carries its own positives and negatives. A review of those traits provides Eastern Oregonians with a rubric to judge the numerous candidates already gunning for the role.

Is this a launch pad?

Aside from a couple of rumors that Walden would run for governor in 2010, Congressman Walden has channeled his political ambition within the confines of his present office. As a result, Walden has scaled the political ladder within the Republican Party. His ascension has been a boon to Oregon. Consider that he will retire as the chair of the House Energy and Commerce Committee, a body with broad authority over legislative issues that directly impact communities like Baker City and Boardman. Walden wouldn’t have earned that chairmanship without some excellent political gamesmanship, such as focusing on his role in D.C. rather than on his next move in Oregon. Whoever wins in 2020 should do so because they intend to stay, rather than to set themselves up for something “bigger.”

How do they fit the district?

Walden wasn’t new to Eastern Oregon politics when he decided to run for Congress. His deep roots in Oregon testified to his familiarity with the deep issues affecting rural Oregonians. Though Walden wasn’t universally beloved in his district, few would challenge his thorough understanding of the issues in their part of Oregon. He gleaned this knowledge through

meaningful experience as a state legislator, not merely by shaking hands and whatever the 1999 equivalent was of taking selfies. A few of the candidates considering running appear to lack Walden’s willingness to work with every community in his district from Hood River to Hermiston; they instead seem to have a partisan agenda that isn’t of the people but rather for their party. Voters should snuff those candidates out.

Will they stand for Oregon values?

Even before Walden headed to Washington, he displayed streaks of principled politicking shown by the likes of Sen. Wayne Morse. Consider that Walden, channeling Morse, once announced that he’d run for office as an independent. Though he later won the seat as a Republican, he has continued to find ways to align with the center. Case in point, he has been a member of the centrist Republican Main Street Partnership and identified ways to contribute to bipartisan efforts, such as through the Small Brewers Caucus. And, at times, he has even stood up to President Trump’s backward thinking on the climate, immigration and trade, central issues to Eastern Oregon. The next representative must go further than Walden in remaining true to what it means to be an Oregonian. Hate has no home here. Our representatives must carry those values across the country.

I took issue with a great number of Walden’s policy positions, but never questioned his commitment to fighting for what he thought was best for Eastern Oregon. Let’s hope the next representative, Republican or Democrat, places the people of Eastern Oregon ahead of partisan priorities.

Kevin Frazier is currently pursuing a law degree at UC Berkeley. He previously worked for ECONorthwest as a senior research analyst. Though he resides in the Bay Area, Frazier calls Oregon home.



KEVIN
FRAZIER
COMMENT

YOUR VIEWS

New District 2 congressman must work for the people

Happily, U.S. Representative Greg Walden announced he’s quitting, with 14 others so far. In regard to the quitters of 2020, I’ve had a revelation. This revelation highlights a motivator about Republican willingness to serve.

Serving in Congress is supposed to be an effort to serve the people and improve America. Sadly, for most Republicans service is only directed to acquiring pure power and jamming through legislation that serves the primary objectives of the GOP: moving as much money and power into the hands of the already rich and powerful.

Hence, Republicans believe that if they cannot control the reins of power and easily accomplish their goals, then why serve? As a minority they do not

wish to participate in governing America. A near evenly represented Congress often creates the best legislation, legislation built on compromise and having benefits for all parties. In the GOP’s view, what’s the value of serving if one must compromise with the evil Progressives?

The hot question is whether the residents of District 2 will be able to recognize how hostile Walden is to the average citizens and their goals. If they do see that destroying health care coverage for middle- and low-income Americans, and tax cuts heavily weighted toward the wealthy and corporations, are not what they see as helpful to them then they can select someone more willing to work across party lines for the best outcome for everyone. In theory, we’re all in this together.

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