

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 Hermiston School District, which has once again helped bring several thousand tourists to Umatilla County to use the district’s athletic facilities.

Last weekend, the district played host to 110 AAU basketball tournament teams and three high school football playoffs between out-of-town schools. This weekend more football teams return for Oregon School Activities Association state championship games.

The crowded streets, stores, and restaurants may seem like an inconvenience to local residents, but they represent a shot in the arm for businesses. The school district has estimated in the past that each visitor represents an average of \$100 spent locally on meals, snacks, gas, hotel rooms and more. And a study conducted by EcoNorthwest estimated use of school district’s athletic facilities generated \$7.8 million in economic impact in 2014.

In recognition of the community’s

contributions to its facilities, from taxpayer-supported bonds to donations for Kennison Field, Hermiston School District makes its facilities available for free or at cost to not-for-profit events that include Hermiston students. That foresight has helped boost Hermiston’s profile and its economy.

A tip of the hat to volunteers who helped with community Thanksgiving meals in Pendleton and Hermiston.

Instead of using their day off to sit in front of the television in a pleasant haze of turkey-induced drowsiness, many people stepped up to make a nice Thanksgiving meal possible for those who otherwise wouldn’t have one.

Their hard work shows what true gratitude looks like, and they gave others something to be thankful for in the process.

A tip of the hat to the Hermiston Seventh-day Adventist Church and Umatilla Electric Cooperative for helping make Hermiston’s annual tree-lighting festival and light show possible.



Staff photo by Ben Lonergan
Spectators brave the cold and fog to watch La Grande take on The Dalles during the OSAA Class 4A semifinal game in Hermiston on Nov. 23, 2019. La Grande defeated The Dalles 68-0 to advance to the state championships.

The church donated the roughly 45-foot tree, which needed to be removed to make way for the church’s new building under construction, and UEC provided a crew and multiple trucks to make the difficult relocation process possible.

A tip of the hat to Al Sells, who left a legacy of giving.

Next week, the Echo Toy Run will continue in Sells’ honor after he died in a motorcycle crash in August. The Stanfield man spent 16 years leading the event, in which bikers from around

the region gather to transport donated toys and stuffed animals from Echo to Good Shepherd Medical Center.

Kelly Sanders, vice president of human resources for Good Shepherd, said Sells was “always the first to arrive and last to leave and seemed to do it all out of the kindness of his heart.”

The fact that Sells’ friends and family quickly decided to rally together and continue the event in his memory shows how influential one person can be.



YOUR VIEWS

Lowering drug costs in the best interest of Walden’s constituents

H.R. 3, the Lower Drug Costs Now Act recently introduced in Congress, has been so needed for so long. Drug prices and Big Pharma profits keep increasing, while Americans all bear the price (literally and figuratively). HR 3 would allow the federal government to directly negotiate lower prices with private companies in Medicare’s prescription drug program.

Like all works in progress, there are features of the bill that need to be strengthened before it reaches the House floor in mid-December: include people without insurance coverage, negotiate prices on more drugs, and protect patients from high launch prices and price spikes.

Mr. Walden’s assertion in his recent news release that controlling drug costs via price negotiation “will drive out innovation and result in fewer cures” is a view bought and paid for by the pharmaceutical industry’s “donations” to Mr. Walden and his Republican colleagues. It is a slap in the face for Walden’s constituents whose “cures” are already compromised because they can’t

afford their meds.

I’m hoping Mr. Walden and his colleagues in Congress will finally act on their constituents’ behalf rather than on behalf of their Big Pharma “donors,” and support and improve HR 3. My doctor’s advice and prescription can’t help much if I can’t afford the prescription. Mr. Walden may be a “lame duck” now, but he is still controlling my access to health care.

Cindy Allen
Hood River

Climate deniers funded by fossil fuel corporations

The writer of a Nov. 27 letter believes “There is no global climate crisis” because he’s getting his climate science from Fox News. Not a good source. Climate denial only exists within the GOP because our trillion-dollar fossil fuel corporations give almost all of their enormous political contributions to the GOP. They’ve spent \$150 million lobbying Congress in just one year, a sort of legal bribery (opensecrets.org).

In return for tens of millions donated to Republican congressional election campaigns each year, those corporations receive

tens of billions each year in taxpayer-funded subsidies and climate denial from those MOCs. Before that money began flowing, decades ago, GOP presidents like George H.W. Bush urged climate action.

Now a combination of corporate greed and government corruption have brought us to the point we are at today: The international scientific community reports that we now have only until 2030 to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 75% or face “catastrophic” climate change, which would result in “global economic collapse” in future decades, followed by “societal collapse” (National Academy of Sciences). This is the conclusion of thousands of the world’s best climate scientists, not one individual.

The good news is that solar and wind energy, the solution to the climate crisis, are now cheaper than any fossil fuel. If we rapidly scale them up nationwide, they’ll be “essentially free” by 2030 (UBS, Financial Times, Aug. 2018) and they’ll create about 10 million high-wage, local, permanent (40-year) jobs in the U.S. (Stanford University’s thesolutionsproject.org).

Pete Kuntz
Northglenn, Colorado

FROM THE EDITOR’S DESK New job has not disappointed

Six months ago, I stepped into the editor’s chair at the *East Oregonian* with a lot of expectations and hopes, and I can honestly say, I have not been disappointed.

I’ve learned a number of things in my first six months, chief among them that this is a great, newsy area.

Pendleton and its surrounding towns and counties are also a terrific place to live and work, and I feel pretty fortunate that I am in the editor’s chair. I’ve learned that the entire crew at the *East Oregonian* cares deeply about their town and their county, and I think that shows itself every day in our product.

I’ve learned our newspaper has a deep core of involved readers. I’ve learned that our newsroom staff is a dedicated bunch, eager to produce a viable news product every day.

I believe the future is not only bright for the *East Oregonian* but for our entire region as well.

All of this is good news, especially since the journalism landscape has changed so much over the past decade. The old paradigms that shaped our industry are either gone or beginning to fade. In many ways, our industry faces major upheaval and has for more than 15 years.

That’s why it is so encouraging to come to a newspaper that is tied so closely to its community.

That’s a good thing. But more work on our part needs to be done. We must do better, strive harder and endeavor to produce the best product possible.

I think we are already doing that, but our focus must not wane. Now, more than ever, the ability to depend on a trusted news source is crucial. In the era of “fake news” and a politically charged national environment, the ability for readers to be able to trust their news source gains in importance every day.

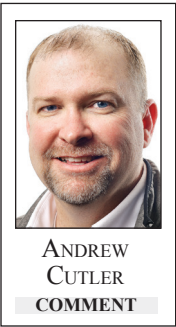
Building trust is never an easy task. It takes a lot of hard work and, sometimes, mistakes. What I hope readers will see is we are committed to our task of furnishing the best journalism possible.

We may stub our toes from time to time, but I will take that as long as the effort, the desire, to be the best is there.

I’ve learned a lot in the past six months and I am eager to learn more in 2020. So far this has been a great experience. And I am pleased to be at the helm of a great paper in a great community.

—

Andrew Cutler is the editor of the East Oregonian.



ANDREW CUTLER
COMMENT

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Send letters to the editor to editor@eastoregonian.com, or via mail to Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801