

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to Umatilla County for ramping up its vaccine distribution abilities so quickly and effectively that the county was able to vaccinate hundreds of residents against COVID-19 in a single week and is prepared to vaccinate as many as 2,000 more per week.

Unfortunately, the state has stymied that effort by not distributing anywhere near that level of vaccinations to Umatilla County, despite the fact that Umatilla County has had the second most COVID-19 cases per capita in the state. That deserves a kick in the pants to the Oregon Health Authority.

But that part of the equation isn't the county's fault, and we would much rather see the county ready for more vaccines than struggling to dole out what it has on hand before more arrive. Given the statewide data on vaccines administered compared to vaccines distributed, it seems Umatilla County is ahead of the curve, and that is to be commended.

A tip of the hat to all those involved in the complicated rescue of a snowmobiler injured on Sunday, Jan. 10, in a remote area of Umatilla County.

An ambulance couldn't get anywhere near the site of the crash, but the injured man was able to be evacuated through the efforts of sheriff's offices, search and rescue teams, fire districts and dispatch centers in both Umatilla and Union counties, as well as Life Flight Network and other snowmobilers on scene that day.

A tip of the hat to those who work to preserve and promote local history, including Victor Kucera, who recently wrote "Rivoli," a 502-page book on the historic Rivoli Theater in Pendleton. All proceeds from the book will support the restoration of the theater building currently underway.

Kucera spent countless hours over three years reading page by page through the *East Oregonian's* archives, interviewing residents, searching through historical documents and visiting museums to bring all that information about the landmark into one easy-to-access spot for future generations to enjoy.

His work, and his generous donation of the proceeds, are a valuable gift to Pendleton.



YOUR VIEWS

MLK's legacy of love is up to all of us

The Baha'is of Pendleton began organizing a Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration over 30 years ago, believing that the celebration of this day was one important way of pursuing the dream of justice, peace and equality for all. Over the years, thousands of people have been involved in these events, and The Pendleton MLK Jr. Day Committee is sorry the pandemic is preventing us from celebrating together this year.

We hope that each resident of Pendleton will take a moment on Monday, Jan. 18, to think of how they can further MLK Jr.'s call "for a worldwide fellowship that lifts neighborly concern beyond one's tribe, race, class, and nation" and is "in reality a call for an all-embracing and unconditional love for all men."

Although we ourselves cannot be together that day, we would like to share an uplifting video that celebrates that day from Lake Oswego: <https://www.ci.oswego.or.us/library/martin-luther-king-jr-day-celebration>.

Sarah Woodbury Haug
Pendleton

Bentz fails to represent his constituents

I was disappointed in the *East Oregonian's* article and editorial comments about our new representative, Cliff Bentz.

When Mr. Trump was elected in 2016, I became a registered Democrat. I could not understand how the Republican Party could support such an immoral and corrupt individual for president. We had so many "good" choices within the party. I have always been a bit independent in my voting practices and would often vote cross ticket for a Republican or Democrat, whoever I considered the best choice representing my personal beliefs and had the best interests for Oregon.

Even as a registered Democrat, I supported Rep. Greg Walden, because I felt he best represented how I felt; in other words, I considered him an honest individual.

Unfortunately, I do not feel the same way about our Rep. Bentz. After some of the antics that have gone on the Oregon Legislature (by Democrats and Republicans) I have lost faith in Oregon's Republican Party to find "good" and "honest" candidates. A good example is that the last (and best) Republican governor we ever had was Victor Atiyeh — better than Hatfield or McCall.

After only a few days in his new office, Bentz decided to support the challenge of the Pennsylvania electoral vote count. This was obviously a political move to endear himself to the likes of Sens. Ted Cruz, R-Texas, and Josh Hawley, R-Missouri, both of whom have their eye on the 2024 presidential race. It was already known, and accepted by all the representatives and senators, that this was only a delay tactic and they had no real authority other than totally rejecting an entire state's votes, including Republican votes.

Republicans have always been supportive of state's rights, yet Republicans tried to override a state's entire vote — just to placate an individual that is totally unfit to hold the office of president (and, of course, to hold on to their own power).

What amazes me most is that Bentz cast his dissenting vote after the inciting of the rioters and the breaking in and destruction of the U.S. Capitol. Oregon should have

chosen better.

We need more representatives like Adam Kitzinger, R-Illinois, who has the guts to support our Constitution as opposed to trying to twist its meaning to support some Republicans that are more interested in holding power than honoring their oath.

Robert Park
Helix

Trump is not above the law

It is not a law that protects a sitting president from being charged with a crime, it is only a Department of Justice policy. Thus, now that Donald Trump is leaving executive office, he needs to be held accountable for his reckless actions and self-serving conduct while he was president.

More than 380,000 Americans have now died from the pandemic. We are all very aware the coronavirus is very contagious. Trump is also very aware the virus can spread very easily and rapidly. The widely respected Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and many other health professionals and scientists, strongly advise against large gatherings.

However, Trump intentionally and willfully ignored this professional advice and held numerous large political rallies across the country to promote his failed reelection bid. Trump held these rallies so he could momentarily bask in all the adulation and glory he craves and finds at these rallies. Trump did not require masks or social distancing at his rallies.

It would not be difficult to legally prove there were specific deaths as a direct result of attending a Trump political rally. Herman Cain, an African American and a former presidential candidate, and also the former CEO of Godfather's Pizza, comes to mind. Cain died after attending the Trump rally in Tulsa, Oklahoma.

State criminal charges could be brought in the context of reckless endangerment, voluntary or involuntary manslaughter, or any number of relevant criminal conduct charges. There is a long-standing adage that no one is above the law, but Donald Trump, by his actions, certainly thinks he is.

Bob Shippentower
Pendleton

Dorran shows poor judgment

Bill Elfering has represented Umatilla County well as a county commissioner, businessman, and caring, compassionate, involved family man. Bill has demonstrated the confidence to stand alone, the courage to make tough decisions and the compassion to listen to the needs of others.

Observing him since the 1970s, the equality of his actions and the integrity of his intent catapulted Bill into county leadership. He has worked for many county causes, not for applause. He is not about impressing, but he does listen to others express. He has learned from others perspectives and open to being educated. Thanks, Commissioner Elfering.

During his campaign, new Commissioner Dan Dorran has advocated for increasing access to education, mental health, and drug rehab centers. Many voters showed support, viewing him as a part of the solution for dealing with addiction issues. Just weeks before the election, Mr. Dorran's foolish decision to get behind the wheel after drinking alcohol at a golf outing, driving through all that Tri-Cities traffic and causing a two-vehicle collision in Umatilla,

has self-sabotage written all over it.

Mr. Dorran claimed disenfranchisement for the west part of the county, which means the state of being deprived of a right or privilege. Felons who are no longer allowed to vote in elections are an example of people who are disenfranchised. It means not represented or not having the right to vote. Western Umatilla county voted.

Thank you, county commissioners, for not being divisive, and for representing all residents following science to regain social lifelines.

Sally Sundin
Walla Walla, Wash.

Kudos galore to CTUIR GED program upgrade

The challenges for adult learners to master the skills of reading in order to pass the GED appear to be unsurmountable. Althea Huesties-Wolf, Confederated Tribes of Umatilla Indian Reservation educator (*East Oregonian*, Jan. 5, 2021), rewrote the CTUIR's GED program to begin to address these challenges. Showcasing her own background in writing, she combined indigenous stories into custom-fitted lesson plans that are replete with activities to develop college-ready skills in all the component areas of the GED tests that include science, math and language arts.

Furthermore, an assessment process was developed to determine which students were ready to schedule a GED test. As a former director of the CTUIR Department of Education, I am very elated indeed to note the success of the current program. Kudos to Althea Huesties-Wolf and, most especially, congratulations to all the students that endeavor to earn their GED and benefit from the CTUIR GED program.

Zenaida M. Lyles
Pendleton

Bentz added fuel to the fire for no reason

Cliff Bentz is off to a bad start. In one of his first official acts as our member of the House of Representatives, he voted to throw out all of the millions of votes from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. In a statement issued on Jan. 7, Bentz explains: "Article II of the Constitution sets forth that each state legislature is entrusted with the authority to establish and facilitate elections within that state. In Pennsylvania, the Secretary of the Commonwealth and the state's Supreme Court did not adhere to the statutes set forth by the legislature when they extended deadlines for the return of absentee ballots."

The problem for Bentz and his thoughtful constitutional analysis is that his issue has already been settled through the proper legal channels. The case is *Kelly v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*, and the Supreme Court of Pennsylvania dismissed the case with prejudice on Nov. 28, 2020. And on appeal, the U.S. Supreme Court denied the request for injunctive relief on Dec. 8, 2020.

This means the issue is done, settled, over, finished. Bentz's irresponsible political stunt only added fuel to a fire that we have watched burn out of control. Bentz and his fellow Republicans must stop misrepresenting the results of the presidential election and get back to doing the jobs they were elected to do.

Jon White
La Grande

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

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