

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

## OUR VIEW

# Across the aisle in the Capitol

Policy disagreements, partisanship and the walkouts can give Oregonians a distorted picture of what their Oregon Legislature is like. Journalists — and certainly this editorial page — tend to highlight conflicts, not the places of accord.

We were struck recently by what state Rep. Daniel Bonham said during a committee hearing about a resolution to honor former state Rep. Mitch Greenlick. State Sen. Tim Knopp, R-Bend, is one of the resolution's sponsors.

Bonham is a Republican from The Dalles. His district includes a large part of Central Oregon — Sisters, Culver, Madras and the Warm Springs Reservation. Plot Bonham and Greenlick along an ideological line and there would be a big gap between them in how to solve many of Oregon's challenges. Bonham would be on the right. Greenlick, a Democrat who represented Multnomah and Washington counties beginning in 2002, was on the left. Greenlick died while serving in office on May 15, 2020.

They became friends.

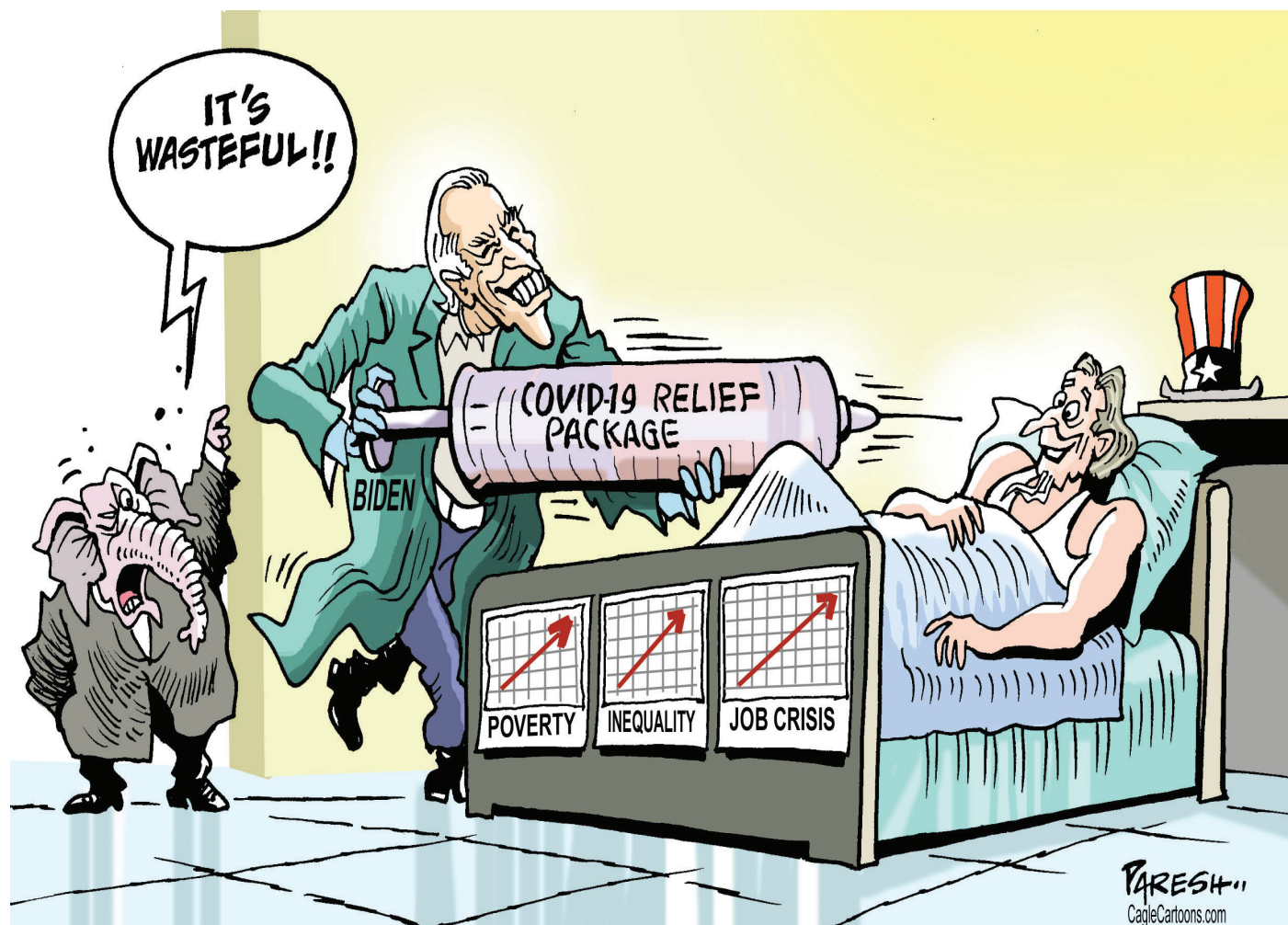
Bonham was appointed to the Legislature in November 2017 to fill a vacancy. He came into the session in 2018 trying to find his way in the new role.

He happened to stay in the same hotel for the session as Greenlick and his wife, Harriet. They fell into the habit of exercising together in the gym and joining each other in the pool. And talking.

"I got to know Rep. Greenlick more on a personal level than anything else," Bonham said. "What really impressed me was just his care and concern for helping somebody brand new to this role that truly was trying to find their way. And despite the fact that we were not of the same party affiliation or shared the same views on how to solve health care problems, we had many wonderful conversations.

"I will say we probably talked more about the kids, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren than we did about public policy. But his care and his compassion for others was just evident in his approach to life. And we saw it come through in very passionate ways both on the floor and in committee and even over lunch.

"I wanted to take the moment to stop by your meeting here today and to offer my words of just gratitude to the Greenlicks. Again, I don't know how you talk about Mitch without talking about Harriet. I don't know how, at least from my experience. They were such a team. I am grateful for their friendship and for the kindness that they showed me. I give my absolute support to SCR (Senate Concurrent Resolution) 3 and encourage everyone else to take a moment and read through it and remember and honor our good friend Mitch Greenlick."



## History, like humans, is complicated



BRIGIT FARLEY  
PAST AND PROLOGUE

In last month's column, I reviewed some of our nation's controversies over statues and monuments, such as Pendleton's conflict over Confederate street names. Today seems a good day to talk about how some individuals and nations have attempted to resolve them.

Certain individuals and events honored with monuments in this country have had a rough go lately. Across the South, monuments to prominent Confederates have come under attack for their advocacy of slavery as well as the timing of their honor — most went up during the 1920s, when the Ku Klux Klan was making a comeback, so that they became de facto monuments to segregation. Outraged citizens took it upon themselves in some cases to pull them down. The statue of Theodore Roosevelt at the entrance to New York's Museum of Natural History faces removal after protests against the depiction of subservient African and Native Americans at Roosevelt's feet, emblematic of Roosevelt's views on nonwhites. San Francisco schools named for Presidents Washington and Lincoln will be renamed because of those individuals' ties to and views of slavery.

Opponents of these changes charge that removal airbrushes controversial individuals out of history. Proponents respond by underlining the absence of monuments to Nazi leaders in Germany and pointing to the hundreds of thousands of books in numerous languages covering every aspect of Nazism. No one needs statues or monuments, they maintain, to learn about Nazi Germany. Others occupy something of a middle

ground. They allege that today's history warriors are imposing 21st century standards on 18-20th century people. In their view, some individuals with ties to slavery should be extended grace if their positive contributions to the country are particularly meaningful and long lasting. Citizen Washington's ownership of slaves, for example, does not diminish President Washington's capable military leadership in the Revolutionary War and skillful stewardship of the country in its first difficult years.

The experiences of people abroad who have struggled with issues of history and memory provide possible guidance. When Communism fell in the Soviet Union in 1991, citizens of Moscow and other cities went to war with statues and monuments of Soviet leaders like Vladimir Lenin. A jubilant mob cheered as the statue of "Iron Feliks" Dzerzhinskii, founder of the Soviet secret police, was unceremoniously wrenched off its platform in front of the KGB building.

The demoted Dzerzhinskii and other "dead" statues soon reappeared and stood in a kind of rogues' gallery, without explanation, near a Moscow art museum. Citizens would come inspect and often curse at, spit on or kick their least favorite former leaders. Someone doused a statue of Joseph Stalin with red paint. This represented a kind of catharsis, but it shed heat rather than light.

In Hungary, officials and citizens took a different tack. Hungary witnessed prolonged, bitter fighting between Nazi occupiers and Soviet liberators in 1944-45, only to have those "liberators" impose a Communist dictatorship on the country. Hungarians proved to be resentful and rebellious Communists, so they were overjoyed at the departure of Soviet troops and officials when the Cold War ended in 1989.

The capital, Budapest, was dotted with monuments to Hungarian Commu-

nist leaders, which complicated the debut of a post-Communist era. In an admirably democratic spirit, each neighborhood voted up or down on each statue. Most were removed, but received a transfer a year later to a Szoborpark (Memento Park), just outside the city.

Visitors have the opportunity there to view 50 years of Hungarian Communist history in monuments. They are invited to assess prominent individuals, like Hungarian Communist leader Bela Kun driving the chariot of history on to new heights, and important events, for example Mother Russia holding out a peace laurel symbolic of Soviet "liberation." Books and brochures detailing the exhibits are available for purchase in a small shop. When I visited, the park was attracting Hungarians of all ages and sparking some spirited conversations. It was good to see people learning about and engaging with their controversial past.

People here in the U.S. might incorporate the Russian and Hungarian experience as they negotiate settlements in their history wars. Some statues arguably deserve removal, but not at the hands of a mob. In a democratic society, there ought to be a deliberative process, an Arts Council ruling, perhaps, or, as in Budapest, a local vote.

Finding them a place in a museum or park, with well-informed context statements, could repurpose them as silent history instructors. And maybe some particularly significant, yet controversial, individuals — Presidents Washington and Lincoln, for example — could retain their place of honor in the public square, as a testament to the fact that history, like human beings and life itself, is complicated.

*Brigit Farley is a Washington State University professor, student of history, adventurer and Irish heritage girl living in Pendleton.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### HB 3115 will not accomplish the desired and necessary solution

I must write to express my alarm at the proposed House Bill 3115. As I read it, this gives over all public spaces, city, county and state parks, sidewalks, city parking structures, city halls, public trails, to a homeless and transient population without regard to, input from, or concern for the rest of the people who live in Oregon and pay the taxes to support and maintain these public facilities and spaces.

To invite the homeless to camp in the places where children play, families picnic, seniors walk, and people exercise is simply a terrible, irresponsible idea. Homeless camps are an unsanitary, unhealthy, dirty, dangerous public health hazard, a trashed blight on our cities, and their spread

to public spaces should not be encouraged and supported by measures, such as the poorly considered HB 3115.

There is no question the problem of homelessness and all the attendant subsets of drug abuse, mental and emotional instability, poverty, crime and random violence need to be addressed at a governmental level, but HB 3115 is not the tool for the job and will not accomplish the desired and necessary solution, but will in fact only exacerbate the troubles.

Ray Horton  
Portland

### Man can't live without nature, but nature can do without man

I agree with George Wuerthner in his comment (National forests, BLM lands should be off-limits to logging, Feb.

13) that forests are restored by natural processes. That's about all, though.

The forest ecosystems started changing dramatically when white man hit the East Coast and haven't stopped changing ever since. He points out a lot of problems that contribute to where we are today, but I don't hear any answers to them.

Sounds as if he is against the Malheur collaborative because logging is part of the possible problem-solving ideas. Remember, for the past 30 to 40 years, the environmentalists have guided and directed the U.S. Forest Service in doing its work.

Now we can't see the forest for the trees. I'm glad to see that there are some folks trying to work together to find answers for our man-made problems. We should remember, man can't live without nature, but nature can do without man.

Ken Koser  
Prairie City

### 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.

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