

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Be safe during the holiday season

The holiday season is a time for reflection and the gathering of relatives, but it also can deliver an unwelcome circumstance — crime.

Every holiday season there is no shortage of scams and other criminal activity that can impact families and ruin what ordinarily would be a fun Christmas.

While the local area isn't consumed with a crime wave, area residents should be aware that even the simplest actions can lead to an unfortunate situation where valuables and other items purchased for the holidays disappear.

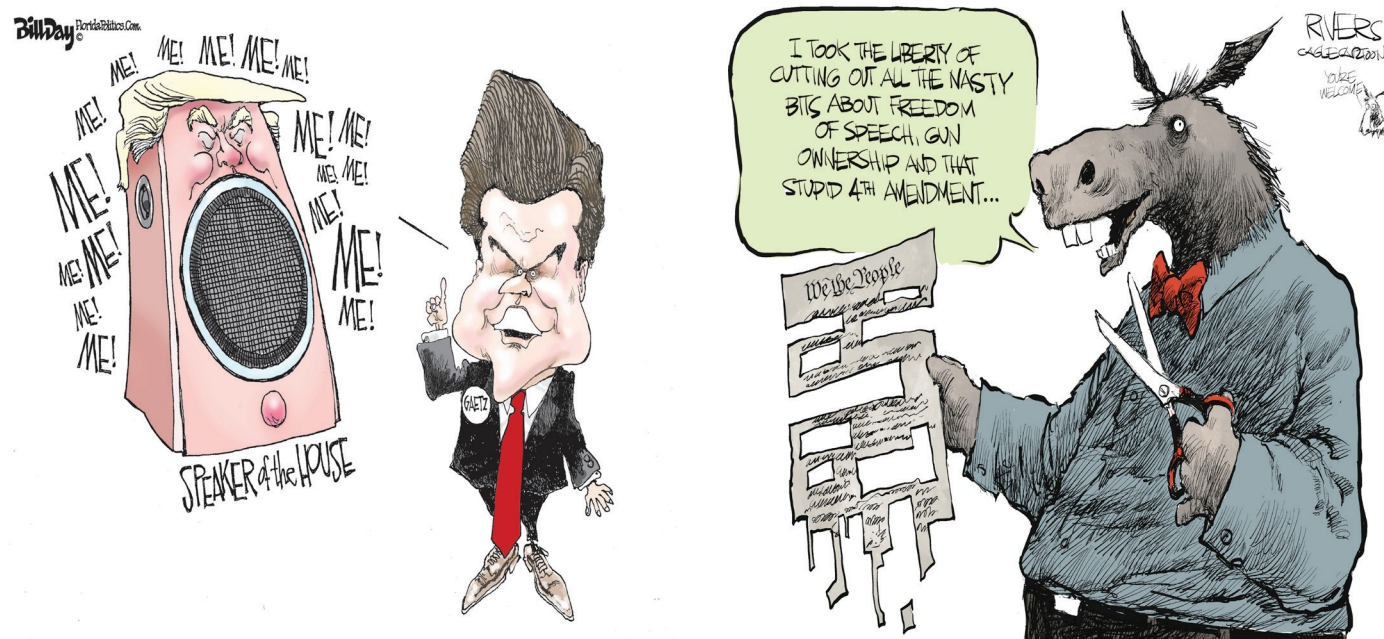
Social media is a great resource for many things, and its power is unlimited. Yet social media also can become a fertile hunting ground for criminals. Many of us like, when we go on vacation, to post photos of our time away. We want our friends and relatives to know where we are and the fun we are having. The trouble is that criminals also mine social media for information and posting photos and long storylines of your vacation is a clear signal to someone intent on thievery you are not at home — which means your home could be unguarded.

Another favorite trick of criminals is “porch piracy.” This occurs when packages are delivered to an individual's home, and a criminal is following the delivery truck at a discreet distance. As soon as the delivery truck departs — leaving your packages at the front door — the criminal moves in to steal the merchandise. Again, such activity isn't common locally, but it is never a bad idea to be aware such activity can occur.

The best defense, of course, to criminal activity is to not post photos of your vacation on social media. As far as package deliveries go, homeowners can avoid a theft by scheduling the deliveries to arrive when they are home or have the items brought to their workplace or a neighbor.

Finally, we need to look out for each other. That means if you see something out of place with your neighbor, call the police. Local law enforcement can be swift to check out suspicious activity.

The holidays should be a great time for everyone. Let's all take some basic, common-sense measures to ensure it stays that way.



YOUR VIEWS

Street repair, too much, too fast?

In a recent edition of the East Oregonian, Pendleton City Councilor Dale Primmer gave residents a comprehensive update on the progress the city has made this last year in its efforts to bring the city's infrastructure, specifically our streets, up to par, including future plans.

Progress, to say the least, has been slow. Delays have put the completion date months behind schedule and quality is bound to suffer because of the weather. Curing time for concrete and asphalt is significantly degraded by cold weather. It sounds like Pendleton Public Works Director Bob Patterson is taking so much heat over the delays that he's lost confidence in his own staff and asking the city council to approve hiring an engineering firm to develop the street maintenance program his staff is unable to deliver.

Is it time for the city manager to consider making some overdue staffing changes?

Future plans include spending \$14.7 million on streets in the next three years, with the bulk of that provided by the good folks at the Pendleton Development Commission for streets in the Urban Renewal District and financed by loans from Banner Bank. Once repayment begins, over half the PDC budget will be required for debt service and to cover administrative costs.

The big question that everyone should be asking is: What is the city planning to do when the PDC money is exhausted? This was briefly discussed at the last November council meeting, but the consensus of both the mayor and city council was to take a “wait and see” position. Can we really afford to wait? Here's an update on those replace-

ment vintage lampposts on Main Street. Homeless individuals will no longer be relegated to city parks to charge their phones and other devices as the new lampposts have outlets added at ground level, kudos to public works.

So, what about an expanded camera system on the Pendleton River Parkway requested by residents? The public works director has deemed the current system obsolete, but a replacement would be pretty expensive. In lieu of that, Charles Denight, Pendleton Urban Renewal associate director, has proposed a comprehensive camera system for Main Street merchants to evaluate their business volumes during promotions sponsored by the Pendleton Downtown Association.

Evidently, they are unable monitor their sales using traditional bookkeeping methods.

**Rick Rohde
Pendleton**

Republicans only now care about the national debt

Well, here we are again: a battle over the debt ceiling and funding to keep the federal government operating that will bring us to the brink of a government shutdown, or over the edge into a full-blown catastrophe.

After four years of profligate spending and tax breaks for extremely wealthy individuals and big corporations, suddenly Republicans are horrified by the size of the national debt.

Here are some facts, as outlined in a ProPublica piece recently:

- The national debt rose by almost \$7.8 trillion during President Donald Trump's time in office. That's nearly twice as much as what Americans owe on student loans, car loans, credit cards

and every other type of debt other than mortgages. Candidate Trump promised to pay down the national debt in eight years. Instead, he presided over a 40% rise in just four years.

- The growth in the annual deficit under Trump ranks as the third-biggest increase, relative to the size of the economy, of any U.S. presidential administration, according to a calculation by Eugene Steuerle, co-founder of the Urban-Brookings Tax Policy Center. Two other presidents, George W. Bush and Abraham Lincoln, had larger growth rates, both due to war spending. Trump? He just shoveled money out of our pockets (by “our” we mean residents of this county) into the pockets of hedge fund managers, CEOs of financial institutions and insurance companies.

Arguing over the debt limit legislation will bring Medicare payments, Social Security payments and infrastructure spending to a grinding halt. Of course, that's their objective. Here's the thing: If the Republicans retake Congress in 2022, be prepared for whiplash as these same spending hawks pass bills cutting taxes even more for those least in need. It won't help the national debt any, but it will sure gut the Build Back Better Act, with good things such as protection for families with children, affordable day care, help with their hearing for Medicare recipients, paid family leave, and addressing the climate needs (many times greater than the help included in the Build Back Better Act, but it's a beginning).

So have at it, newly-minted deficit hawks. Just keep fiddling while the USA — and the entire earth — burns.

**Dan and Jan Blair
Joseph**

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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