

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Living up to our rights in a democracy

We as a nation spend a lot of time — as we should — focusing on the rights of the individual but we just as often forget that while each of us as Americans are endowed with certain rights under the Constitution we also have a responsibility to live up to the themes of those privileges.

We expect a lot from our nation, from our elected leaders and when they fail we are quick — again, as we should — to point out those failures and demand that they be fixed.

Our responsibilities as citizens, as residents of our great piece of Oregon, are varied and legion.

We all have a responsibility to ourselves and to our families but we also share an obligation to our neighborhood, our town, our county, our state and finally our nation.

Our responsibilities center on a very simple theme of what can we do, as individuals, to help enhance our nation and demonstrate the rights we hold dear are ones we deserve.

In short, every citizen carries an obligation to, in some way, to serve the greater public good. Perhaps that service is related in volunteering. Or maybe it is service as an elected leader.

Today, in a partisan environment where even the best intentions can be skewed and criticized it is easy for many well-meaning residents to shun the political spectrum to hide from the obligation because it is such an ordeal.

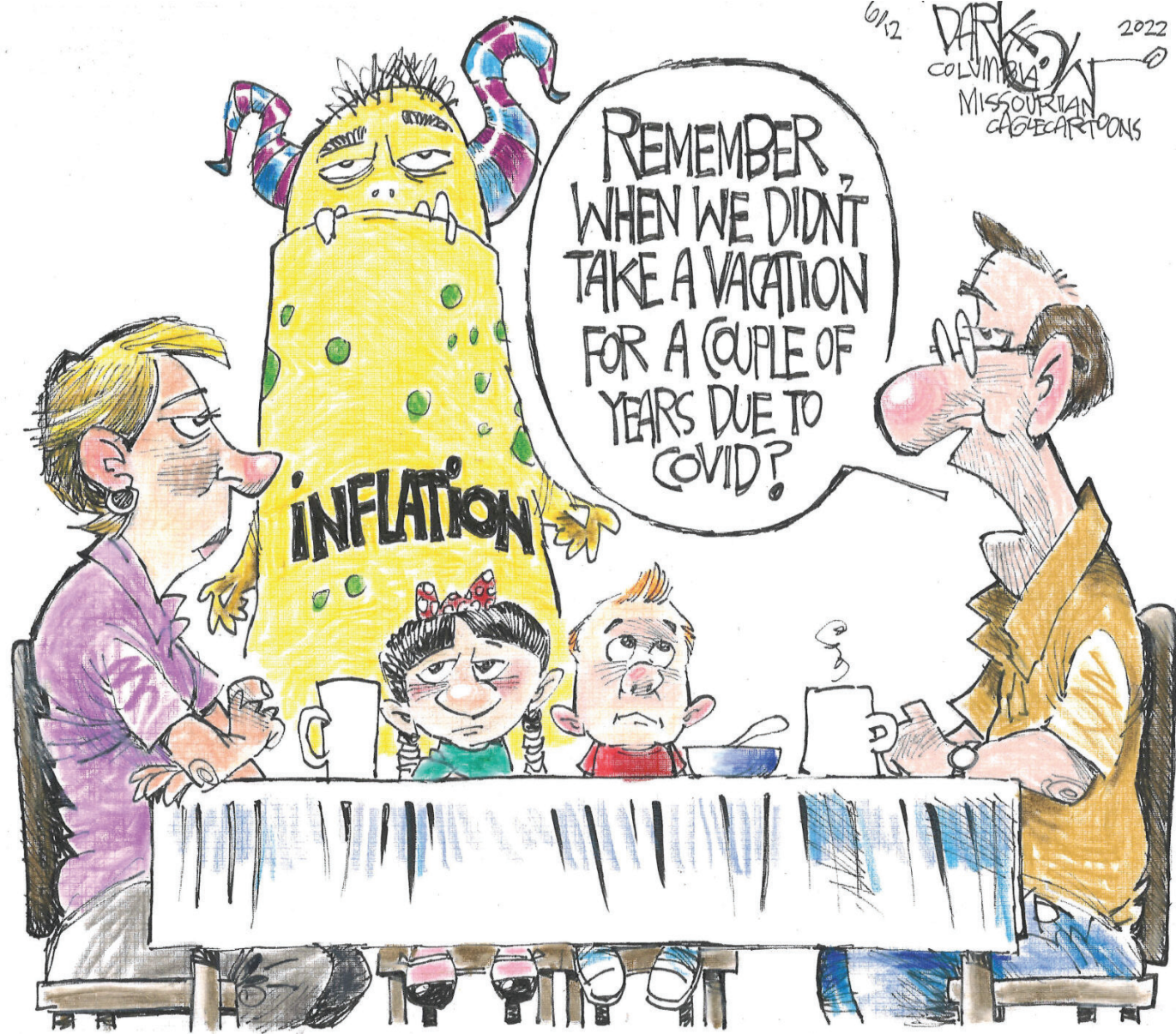
There is no doubt our political arena is rife with negative connotations and the full-scale twisting of facts. We seemingly face an array of terrible choices politically and our neighbors and friends are divided on specific issues.

Yet our system is built — to some extent — upon political friction. It is only when self-made demagogues gain momentum and spew misleading and self-serving rhetoric that our system bends from one end of the political spectrum to the other.

We have a responsibility as voters, as citizens, to be educated enough to be able to look past the white noise of political rhetoric and get to the heart of any matter. Then we must gauge and evaluate our conclusion — not as Republicans or Democrats or liberals or conservatives — but as American citizens.

We must, as citizens, live up to the rights given to us by being active participants in our democracy and not spectators.

That means getting involved, using wise reflection rather than pure hot emotion and reviewing each issue with a value-free perspective.



Walter Cronkite, we need you



ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

As the U.S. House of Representatives opens its investigation into the Jan. 6, 2021, attack on the Capitol, I can't help but remember a similar series of hearings during the past 50 years over other such high-profile issues such as Watergate and the Iran-Contra arms sale controversy.

As I reflect on these similar-in-scope controversies I am reminded of how much has changed in our lives and why that impacts how we as a nation absorb such episodes.

The Watergate scandal pretty much needs no introduction or explanatory analysis. The scandal brought down President Richard M. Nixon and sent the nation off on a different trajectory we are, in some ways, still on today.

The Iran-Contra affair was a big, big deal in the mid-1980s. It was, in essence, another political scandal where, between 1981 and 1986, senior Reagan adminis-

tration officials secretly cleared the way for the sale of weapons to Iran to hopefully use the profits to fund the Contras in Nicaragua. At the time the Contras were a guerrilla group supported by the U.S. who were trying to overthrow the Nicaraguan government.

Both scandals rocked the nation and created a tremendous amount of controversy. Now, as the House begins its live hearings, the item that resonates the most with me is how much our media landscape has changed and how these new hearings will be presented.

Now, more than ever, the hearings are inside a new level of controversy and partisan bickering. Many Republicans don't think the hearings will even be fair. Fox Network won't carry the hearings live.

The entire episode will, it appears, evolve into yet another political quagmire with no real results except for more partisanship.

In short, there will be no single "honest broker" to come forward and present a factual, nonbiased view for the American public. Instead, our news media will be — as it has been now for almost a generation — in its own particular silos.

Fox will cater to a certain group. CNN will, too. Other networks will pander to who they believe are the most important. The truth? Well, forget about it.

That, I think, is the real shame. We no longer have a Walter Cronkite who can come on the screen and give us a simple just-the-facts report that lets each of us make our own decision. That type of reporting is something I push very hard for in my position with the EO Media Group. I want that type of just-the-facts reporting to be our hallmark. As long as I am able, I will continue to do so.

Yet, as I look across the broad media landscape and I review the hearings that began June 9, I have to admit I feel a bit disappointed. I wish we could, as a nation, do better.

I am, in the end, left with only a single sentiment: Walter Cronkite, where are you now when we need you?

Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian and the regional editorial director for the EO Media Group, overseeing the East Oregonian and five more newspapers in Eastern Oregon.

YOUR VIEWS

The Second Amendment made sense — in 1787

I don't think the Second Amendment to the Constitution provides me any safety. The way a lot of people interpret the Second Amendment creates fear. Living in fear is not freedom. It does not give freedom to the thousands of men, women and children who were killed in 233 mass murder incidents (four or more people killed) in this country during the past year (as of the writing of this letter).

I can understand that in 1787, when the Constitution, was written, it made sense. There was no Army, Navy, Marine Corps or Coast Guard or organized policing of any kind. The conscripted soldiers during the Revolutionary War used muskets with homemade ammunition against the British. No one during that time could have imagined that 250 years later so many citizens of the United States would have the sophisticated weapons of war that are available now.

In 2022 the United States has more guns than people, and the guns that are most in demand seem to be those designed specifically to kill people — people in large numbers. Do these armaments make us safe? Do they make us less fearful? Do they make us free?

The children killed in Uvalde, Columbine, Sandy Hook and so many other schools were not made safe or free. The people killed in churches, grocery stores and shopping malls lost their freedom. In fact, because of our worship of the Second Amendment, no American is as free as the citizens of other developed countries that limit access to firearms.

I am someone who reveres the U.S. Constitution, and I accept the Second Amendment as a part of our history. I do not accept the need for so many to be armed to the teeth with military weapons intended to kill fellow humans.

Evelyn Swart
Joseph

Admiral Chester Nimitz takes command

Christmas Day 1941, Admiral Chester Nimitz arrived alone by Catalina flying boat to command the Pacific Fleet. He saw the Pearl Harbor attack had missed dry-docks, repair shops and the tank farm. Therefore, the carriers, their escorts and submarines stood ready to take the offensive.

Nimitz determined some good men had taken a terrible beating. When he officially took command Dec. 31, he told the assembled staffs he had

complete and unlimited confidence in every one of them. He immediately sent submarines into Japanese waters and conducted carrier operations disrupting Japanese initiatives.

The discovery through code breaking of enemy intentions for Midway provided a unique opportunity to fight their main carrier fleet, but against long odds. Preparing Midway Island for invasion and assembling the carrier task forces for battle required the combined achievements of thousands in logistics, ship repair and naval intelligence.

Yet on June 4, 1942, the final margin for victory resided with the fearful sacrifice of a few brave men. About 550 airmen lost more than half their number when killed flying into the concentrated anti-aircraft fire and fighter attacks to destroy four heavy carriers and defend Midway.

This splendid victory permanently seized the initiative from the Japanese. One could easily paraphrase Winston Churchill to say never have so many, who fought in the Pacific, owed so much to so few. Walter Lord and Gordon W. Prange considered this accomplishment incredible and miraculous. For Mitsuo Fuchida and Masatake Okumiya, it was the battle that doomed Japan.

Nolan Nelson
Redmond

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

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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