

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

ERICK PETERSON
Hermiston Editor/Senior Reporter

THURSDAY, JULY 14, 2022

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

OUR VIEW

Why we should be worried about fentanyl

Drug overdose death in Oregon more than doubled from 2019 to 2021. The number of overdose deaths from opioids alone doubled — from 280 to at least 656. It was mostly due to the synthetic opioid fentanyl.

How can you read that announcement from the Oregon Health Authority and think what we are doing is working?

Some of the increase in overdoses is believed to be due to the social isolation and economic dislocation from the pandemic. But there is also an increasing availability of fentanyl.

The Oregon-Idaho High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Program said in April 40% of all counterfeit pills in circulation contain fatal amounts of fentanyl.

The Oregon Health Authority seems to be doing good things. It's letting everyone know about the problem. It's doing its best to ensure people have access to naloxone (Narcan). That is what is called a rescue drug. Give somebody a shot of naloxone when they have an opioid overdose and it's likely to save them. The state is also working to implement a mapping program that provides real time overdose updates to local communities.

Some people will try drugs and get addicted. If you have known someone struggling with addiction, it's not as simple as asking them to stop. So there are efforts to educate drug users.

They are told to assume pills they get have fentanyl unless the person who handed it to them was a pharmacist. They are told not to use drugs alone and keep naloxone around and visible if they do use drugs. Fentanyl test strips are made available.

But here are two ideas. Naloxone may or may not be covered by health insurance.

Coupons can be found online to help lower the cost. Should Oregon require health insurance to cover naloxone?

And second, we may sound like a broken record on this but we can't help but think Measure 110 may not have been constructed quite right.

That was the ballot measure that decriminalized possession of small amounts of drugs, such as heroin and methamphetamine. The measure also took marijuana tax revenue and funneled it into more drug treatment.

More treatment works best if people have something getting them into treatment. Measure 110 makes it easier than before for people who are caught in possession of drugs to avoid treatment.

That's a problem.

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.

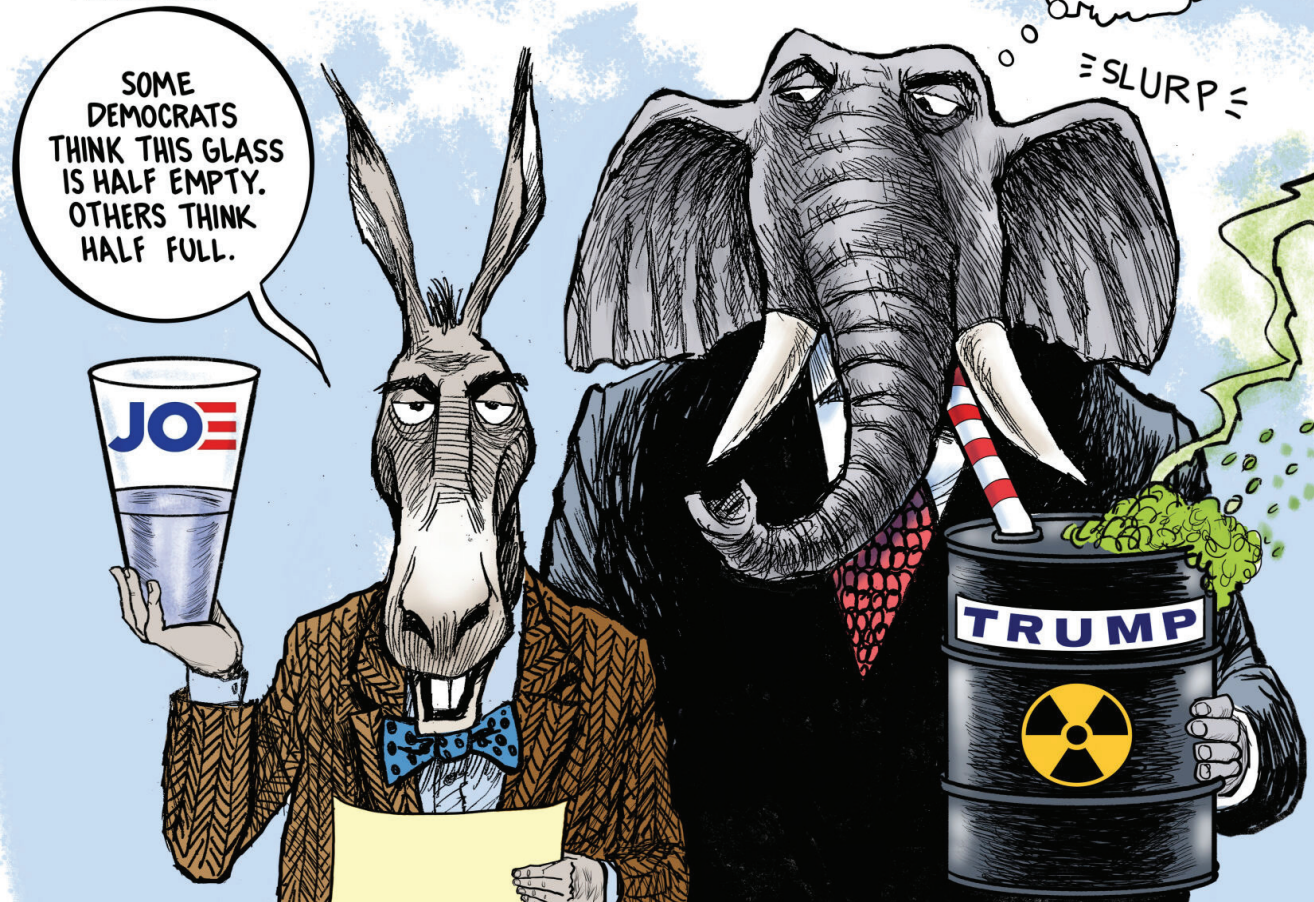
LETTERS

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.

SEND LETTERS TO:

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

KWINSIERS © 2022
CHARLOTTE OBSERVER
NEWS AND OBSERVER
PoliticalCartoons.com



An Irish holiday



BRIGIT FARLEY
PAST AND PROLOGUE

Last month, I broke my two-year COVID-19-imposed travel ban and took myself off to Ireland, with the intrepid Read/Bullington clan. I was on vacation, primed for the breathtaking views, visits with friends and good craic. I was not looking for history, really, but I certainly found it.

Upon arrival in Dublin, I walked out of the airport and boarded a bus for County Wexford. My friends Raymond and Barbara, who had just moved back to Ireland after retiring from jobs in London, had invited me to come visit. One thing I noticed right away, besides the immaculately kept Wexford town center, was the many Ukrainian flags flying there. My friends explained that several thousand Ukrainian refugees had settled in the county. On a walk around the nearby port of Rosslare, we saw a medium-sized hotel converted into apartments for Ukrainian families, and we heard Ukrainian mixed with English as kids played on the nearby football pitch. I asked my friends why the Irish government had taken in so many Ukrainians. They reminded me that nations around the world, the U.S. included, had given shelter over the centuries to desperate Irish people fleeing uprisings, famine or persecution. The Irish authorities now welcomed Ukrainians in turn. As if on cue, a young man approached us and asked, "are you Irish?" Barbara said yes. The man cleared his throat and addressed her in halting, heavily accented English: "Thank you for my clothes. Thank you for my family. Thank you for my life." Irish migra-

tion history was at work there in the service of a new generation of refugees.

In Northern Ireland, where Read/Bullingtons and I spent most of our time, history is ever-present. The 30-year civil war that raged there between Catholics and Protestants is visible to anyone visiting Derry or Belfast, the north's two biggest cities. Murals memorializing Irish Republican Army or Protestant paramilitary martyrs adorn the walls of neighborhoods. But our group found that while both cities acknowledge their troubled past, they have been writing new, promising chapters in their narratives. In Belfast, the city fathers decided to parlay the city's status as the birthplace of the Titanic into a first-rate historical attraction. We inspected the shipyard where Titanic was built and launched, then toured a state-of-the-art museum covering every aspect of Titanic's history, from its construction to its disastrous sinking through its discovery on the ocean floor. Afterward, we enjoyed some smooth adult beverages in the room where architects wrote the plans for the "unsinkable" Titanic, now a posh bar.

In Derry, home of the biggest atrocity of the Troubles — Bloody Sunday — both Catholics and Protestants have built museums that tell their respective stories. The Museum of Free Derry chronicles the Catholic struggle for civil rights, while the Derry Siege Museum celebrates Protestants whose motto was, "No Surrender" to Catholics. Both now must compete with a new draw to the city: the Derry Girls, stars of the smash Netflix hit series about Derry school girls and their zany adventures in 1990s Derry. The girls and their tart-tongued principal, Sister Michael, regale passersby from an oversized mural in the city center and attract dozens of tourists daily for themed walking tours. It was

gratifying to see that Derry and Belfast have turned the page in the 21st century.

Before returning home, I had an unplanned rendezvous with recent British history. 100 years ago, after a long struggle between Irish revolutionaries and the British government, the six northernmost counties of Ireland remained in the United Kingdom, while the other 26 became the independent Republic of Ireland. Thus today's Northern Ireland is part of the UK. Accordingly, its citizens benefit from the National Health Service, which the British government established in 1947 to improve the health of postwar Britain. Citizens and government jointly finance the NHS in taxes and subsidies, so that no one pays for services up front.

Unfortunately, or perhaps fortunately, COVID-19 felled me on the last day of the trip and I landed in the Derry NHS hospital. I received seven hours of competent and compassionate care there, the staff inquiring about my Irish heritage as they pumped me full of IV fluids. The attending doctor examined me and sent me on my way with medicine and advice about quarantine and recovery. When I left the hospital, I worried about the cost — surely an ER visit would not be free for a non-citizen — but they charged me nothing. As sick as I was, I took care to say a silent prayer of thanks for the 1947 British government and the NHS.

I can't seem to come up with a stirring ending, so I'll reach back into 19th century literary history and conclude, simply, that this trip was the best of times and the worst of times — pretty much like history, or life, itself.

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

YOUR VIEWS

Prove citizenship to vote in this country

Voting is central to a healthy democracy. I believe voting is not only a right, but the duty of every citizen. Common sense tells me we must require all citizens to show proof of citizenship before they are allowed to cast their ballot. Furthermore, they must show proof that they live where they are voting. Common sense also tells me this must not be an onerous or restrictive process. Voter and election fraud are already serious criminal offenses. Making it onerous for citizens to provide the necessary proof required for voting must also be prosecuted as serious offenses.

We can get next-day delivery of almost anything we

want to buy. We can put men on the moon. Surely we can make a simple, quick and efficient way for any citizen to provide the proof necessary for voting. This is the challenge, but we can solve it. This is where our focus needs to be. Avoiding the problem is not the solution.

Some would argue that if people pay taxes then they should be allowed to vote. I disagree. People who live in this country already get the services (police, fire, roads, schools, etc.) that they paid for with their taxes. Citizenship and voting are separate issues.

Citizenship is about defining the country that we belong to, not simply living in that country. That's why we let citizens living abroad vote, because they belong

to this country. That's the difference. You must belong to vote. Let's face it, unions would not want nonunion workers to vote in their union elections. It's the same thing. You must be a citizen to vote in this country.

**James P. Elliott
Bend**

Shame on Morrow County commissioners

Shame, shame, shame on the Morrow County commissioners who voted to terminate Darrell Bend. I've rarely met a man of such integrity, intelligence and gentle temperament.

Darrell successfully headed a program at Blue Mountain Community College prior to his employ-

ment as county administrator and was influential in helping many, many low-income residents in Umatilla and Morrow counties get a basic education leading to employment.

So commissioners, what are you really hiding from the public? You won't release the tapes? Why? He wasn't approached at the time of the perceived issue? So what corruption are you trying to cover up on your end? For shame.

You both should be recalled from office as soon as possible while Mr. Green must now look for a new job, which will now be more difficult for your actions. If I were Mr. Green, I'd hire a good lawyer and fight this to the end.

**Matt Henry
Pendleton**