

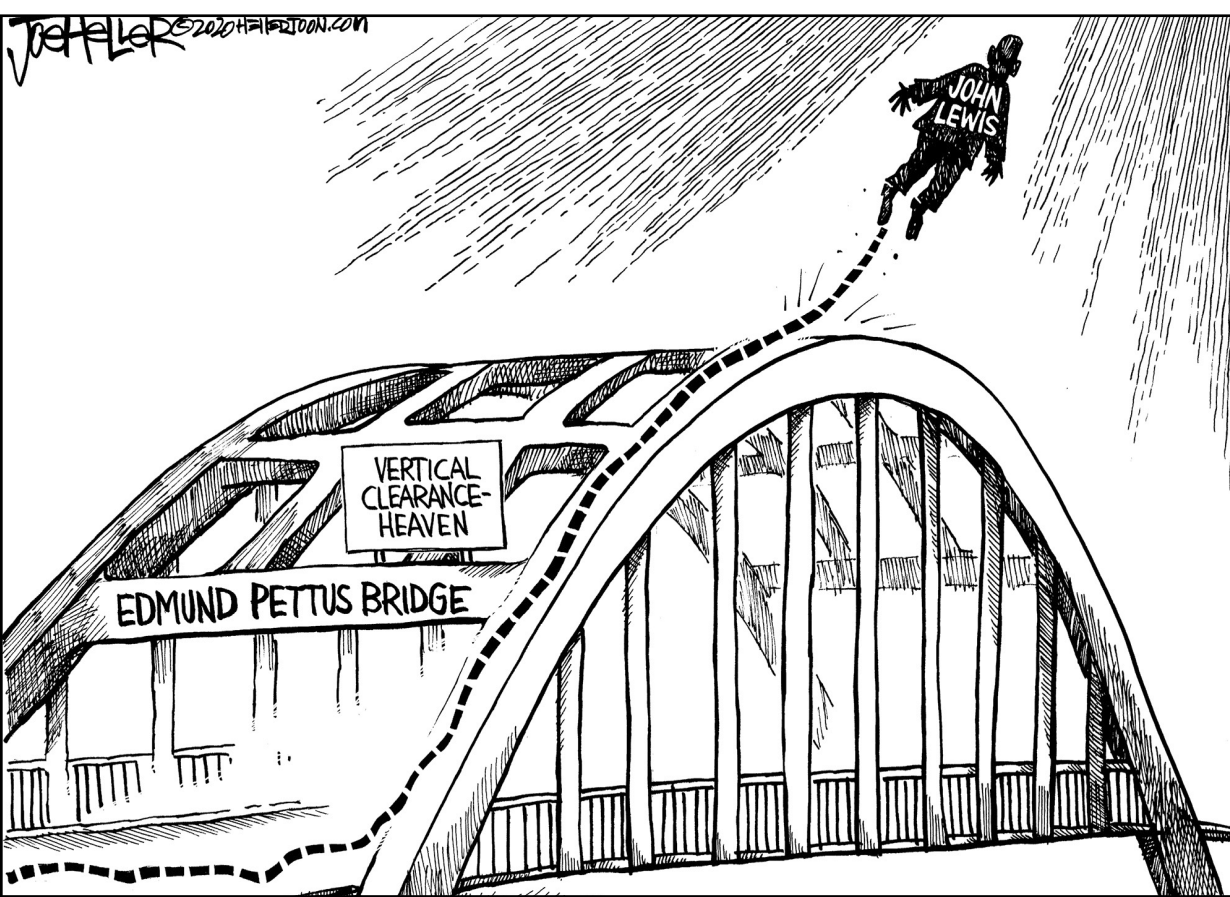
Cottage Grove Sentinel
116 N. Sixth St.
Cottage Grove, Ore. 97424

Opinion

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

"I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson (1800)



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Letters to the Editor Policy

The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must: 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

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Historic preservation more important than profits

(Editor's Note: Viewpoint submissions on this and other topics are always welcome as part of our goal to encourage community discussion and exchange of perspectives.)

I fear that a proposed addition to a designated historic property, 522 East Main Street, is using historic preservation guidelines as a workaround for permitting what is essentially new construction.

Not only does this proposed high-density construction threaten the character of our historic downtown, it also forebodes a potentially negative impact on local businesses while raising multiple affordability and accessibility concerns.

This proposed construction, reviewed and approved by the Historical Landmark Commission on May 18, will be attached to the rear of the building by a cantilevered sky bridge spanning an alley. Particularly disturbing is the fact that this four-story residential building will not feature an elevator, making it off-limits to many people with disabilities.

I also think it's a disservice to

the community to build market-rate housing without any truly affordable units on offer. The proposed rental rate of \$700 is more than half the monthly income of

GUEST VIEWPOINT

By Matt Runkle
H Street, Cottage Grove

someone working full time for minimum wage, the traditional wisdom being that rent should be no more than a third of a person's income.

As the devastating economic impact of the coronavirus crisis continues to reveal itself, the need for actually affordable housing will become even more dire. As a taxpayer, I also resent that, due to the Multi-Unit Property Tax Exemption (MUPT) program, the building's owner may be able to avoid paying property taxes while simultaneously making a profit off of citizens by collecting rent.

I live just across the river from downtown and enjoy walking down Main Street to frequent local businesses. Not everyone has this luxury and parking is

very limited in our tiny downtown area. Because this proposed multi-unit residential addition will be sited on what is currently a parking lot, I fear the increased traffic will make parking even more difficult, endangering pedestrians and making it more challenging for drivers to access local businesses.

Finally, the fact that this proposed construction is six feet taller than the building it is supposedly annexing makes its conduciveness to the historical character of downtown Cottage Grove highly questionable.

This goes against what makes this town special — different than most American cities and towns, which have been taken hostage by profit-driven real estate developers.

Once we embark on this disruptive construction project, I'm worried our beautiful downtown will be blighted in a way that will be difficult to reverse. My hope is that, as a city, we can focus on keeping our most vulnerable populations housed while staying true to what is unique and magnetic about Cottage Grove.

LETTERS

WATER BILL WOES

When I pay my water bill, I do not want or expect to pay for something that is not listed on the bill as something I agreed to.

What I do not agree to my funds being spent for is the promotion of the private company "Service Line Warranties."

Specifically, I don't agree to: The labor to design and write a complex propaganda letter for that company; print the letter on Cottage Grove paper; stuff it along with the private company's brochure in a Cottage Grove envelope; and post it with Cottage Grove postage to send it to almost everyone in Cottage Grove every month.

I see that as misappropriation of city funds — for the benefit of who? In government at any level, spending funds for personal employee interests, is socialism and has no place in the United States.

Cottage Grove water bill costs are among the most expensive in all of Oregon.

If you have that much extra money, please give it back to us.

—Russ Bowen
Cottage Grove

VENEER OF CIVILIZATION IS VERY THIN

I'm sure everyone has said some-

thing — or posted something — that other people did not agree with. Someone could then take that post and spread it all over Facebook and the news media, and destroy someone — just because they didn't agree with a statement.

The person hadn't done anything wrong, or hurt anyone. It was just a statement that someone else didn't agree with.

Maybe it didn't fit in the current politically correct environment.

Maybe it was taken out of context.

But that didn't matter, because someone wanted to smear someone else.

One of the perfect examples of something taken out of context is to make the statement — the Bible says there is no God.

How can that be? Scripture is God's word. How can it say there is no God?

Now lets put those words in the correct context: Psalms 14: 1 and 53:1 says: "The fool in his heart says, there is no God."

Quite a difference in meaning, isn't there?

The old saying: "He who is without sin, let him cast the first stone" is very appropriate here.

The veneer of civilization is very thin, and we are seeing it disappear

in the rioting, looting, destruction of property, the hateful comments, spreading of falsehoods or misinterpretations, and the bashing of other people.

Instead of pulling together in this time of crisis, we are tearing each other apart.

The moral code of Holy Scriptures — the Golden Rule and the Ten Commandments — give guidelines on how to live with one another. But I suppose some think the Bible should be banned, because it isn't 'politically correct' in its condemnation of certain lifestyles that are now currently embraced.

You shall not kill, commit adultery, steal, lie (bearing false witness against your neighbor) or covet.

The Constitution gives us Freedom of Speech — forget it — because if I don't give the current politically correct dialogue, I am condemned.

Yes, horrible mistakes have been made in the past. But two or even a hundred current wrongs don't make it right. And beating someone over the head because he said something we think was wrong solves nothing and only makes things a lot worse.

—Janetta Overholser
Cottage Grove