

Opinion

— EDITORIAL —

Time for a change

With this issue, *The Baker County Press* as an official newspaper will come to an end. This was a decision a year in the making, and certainly not an easy one.

When I started building this newspaper more than four years ago, things were very different in my family. In the past two years, my kids and I have gone through just about every major stressful life change imaginable—death, divorce, illness—which changed our household in many ways.

In my former career I was trained that when a major detail in a project or situation changes, then the scope of work going into that project would no longer fit. I was taught to stop and revise the work scope before moving ahead again. This approach seems like good, common sense.

The kids and I are now looking at more big changes over the coming months, all extremely positive ones this time, and the newspaper part of my business can't be bent to operate around everything we

need as a healthy family. So I stopped, changed the work plan, and made this decision.

Part of the newspaper's creation came from a desire to do something in service to the community. I'll continue the Facebook feed for an undetermined time. Maybe months. Maybe years! We will be posting, free of charge, press releases, anything that immediately affects public safety, maybe an article or two, and possibly some other ideas that at least one of my reporters has been batting around. We may begin to offer low-cost, flat-fee advertising opportunities there as well.

I'll also keep running the book publishing side of this company just like I have for 11 years (www.blacklyonpublishing.com).

What does this mean for current subscribers or for advertisers who prepaid? You'll receive refunds. We've already begun. Give us a few weeks – this is going to be a long, tedious process.

I sincerely apologize for the disappointment and inconvenience. I've been thankful for your kindness and support.

Finally, I want to thank all those who reported, sold ads, delivered papers and otherwise helped print and produce this paper. I've been very blessed to have worked with you all, and will likely still be regularly in touch with most of you as I begin this new path.

Kerry McQuisten
Publisher

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Vote No on 101

To the Editor:

How are our current healthcare dollars really being spent?

1. A \$1.2 Million-Dollar annual salary for the Oregon Hospitals Association's executive director (WWeek.com).

2. \$8,862,645.56 spent on campaign contributions by six medicaid groups/political action committees (oregonvotes.org).

3. A \$50 Million Dollar taxpayer funded loan to MODA Insurance - you know, the same one that spent \$40 million plastering their name on the side of the Rose Garden* (*Oregonian.com)

4. \$66,666/Month PERS payout to Oregon Health Sciences University's president - FOR LIFE!!! (Oregonian.com)

5. And millions of dollars hiring an army of health care lobbyists who get paid to protect financial interests of hospitals and insurance CEO's, while ensuring their clients won't pay new healthcare taxes like the rest of us (oregon.gov/ogec).

Remember, an "assessment" used in this bill is a tax, pure and simple to continue to fill the aforementioned pockets with our healthcare dollars.

Please join me in voting NO on Measure 101!

Lorri Speelman
Baker City

Tax, tax, tax

To the Editor:

Tax, Tax, Tax, our Democratic controlled state legislature recently voted to push another tax on the people of Oregon. This insidious tax measure is disguised as an assessment by the drafters of this measure. By calling this tax an assessment is like putting lipstick on a pig hoping to fool the Oregon voters into thinking their eating beef.

This tax raiser for Medicaid is to fund abortions and open the door for a flood of free medical care for illegal's Migrants. It is a tax on you, the tax payer, a tax on our health care insurance, state health care organizations, school medical insurance, collage student insurance, small business, non profits and our hospitals. But of course exempting big corporations, unions and insurance companies and of course the State Legislature from this tax. It is a tax on our health care system for you and me exempting the elite. Make no mistake the costs incurred by business will be passed on to you.

The sneaky little Democrats moved the election to January when everybody is still recovering from the holidays, hoping for a low voter turn out. The Democrats that wrote this bill along with the Governor

were bought and paid for by accepting Medicaid campaign cash after the law pass's. (Source: Voters Pamphlet) Tell these greedy Democrat politicians "no" and take back our health care system.

It's too bad they couldn't use that gas tax they passed to subsidize the alcohol producers, or the bike tax, or maybe the vehicle registration tax to prop up Medicaid for illegal's? Been waiting for the Democrat controlled legislature to start taxing toilet paper, that's about the only thing they haven't tried putting a tax on.

Chuck Chase
Baker City

Oregon voters beware

To the Editor:

Measure 101 is no good. Purported "temporary assessments" translates to another list of permanent taxes. "May not increase rates on health insurance premiums" likely means it *shall* happen. HB 2391 has already socked it to us this past October. Carefully read the summaries and see who really benefits from this, and it certainly isn't the public taxpayer. It is the politicians, insurance companies and the Public Employees Benefit Board who want the 1.5% assessments on premiums and premium equivalents for two years and then another increase of 0.7%.

Read page 16: "Text of Measure." These assessments are in addition to current assessments, not in lieu of them. Pay particular attention to pages 39 and 40 of your Voter Pamphlet, then follow the money trail. Oregon doesn't need more taxes, it needs to learn to budget its expenditures like the taxpayers have to do.

VOTE NO on 101

Peggie Longwell
Baker City

Definite NO on 101

To the Editor:

Ballot wording for Measure 101 tries to mislead us that this isn't another new TAX that our Salem politicians have come up with. By calling it an assessment, they try to fool us into voting for it. Calling a TAX an assessment is like calling a rose by another name—it is still a rose.

In reality Measure 101 is nothing but a new TAX on hospitals, health insurers, and coordinated care organizations. This new TAX will be passed on to you and me thus driving up the cost of our health care. It is time to tell Salem to live within their means just as we have to do. If you are tired of new TAXes.

Vote NO on Measure 101.

Terry Speelman
Baker City

Letter to the Editor Policy: The Baker County Press reserves the right not to publish letters containing factual falsehoods or incoherent narrative. Letters promoting or detracting from specific for-profit businesses will not be published. Word limit is 375 words per letter. Letters are limited to one every other week per author. Letters should be submitted to Editor@TheBakerCountyPress.com.

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— SPECIAL COLUMN —

So I was thinking ...

About really bad drivers!

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press

Ever since the invention of the automobile there have been bad drivers. The world is inhabited by a percentage of the population unqualified to ride a bicycle, let alone navigate a two-ton machine capable of traveling at 100 mph. Cell phones and the public's obsession with them have made road travel even more unsafe. But let's be real, cell phones are just one of many things that distract people from driving responsibly.

Mr. No Turn Signal. To you, the flickering red beams indicating which direction you plan to turn are just too much of a nuisance. It could be laziness, it could be a self-perceived ownership of the road. Either way, it doesn't matter. You refuse to use it. Sometimes for fun I like to narrate your movement in front of me like Vin Scully announcing play by play of a Dodger game.

"And here comes the stop. Are they going to turn left? Yes they are, they're rounding the corner headed left and ... NO it's back to the right. Stay tuned at the next intersection folks, traveling unmarked intersections behind this car should have you on the edge of your seat."

The Speeder. We get it. You're in a hurry. So much so that you bob and weave back and forth across the lanes, not unlike the race car arcade games we played as kids. Difference being, this is real life, and depositing 50 cents into the machine doesn't get you another chance after you've totaled your car. Unless you are delivering your nine-months-pregnant wife to the hospital, you're just being an idiot. It comes as no surprise your '89 Toyota Camry is missing both bumpers, a side window, and looks like it once took first (or last) place in a demolition derby. Ironically after 12 miles of you darting in and out of cars (without any turn signals) you arrive at the freeway offramp 10 seconds before the rest of us. Looks like you too were going to the grocery store. You must be really hungry. Call me spiteful but I hope you end up in the slowest checkout line.

The Slowpoke. The goal of the painfully slow driver is apparently no goal other than to take in the landscape



Submitted Photo

Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

and turn a 30-minute trip into an all-day adventure. A trip to the store for you must feel like a shuttle launch to the moon. You like to remind people the speed limit is 55, but you choose to be rebellious by traveling at half that speed.

Fourth gear in your car is considered by you to be "warp speed," saved only for emergencies and/or a trip to Bi-Mart for lucky number Tuesday. You consider everyone else to be a reckless driver, even though your snail's pace is the ultimate in disrupting the flow of traffic.

You consider yourself a "safe driver" proven by your stoppage at every single unmarked intersection and commitment to wait at stop signs for entire afternoons. But your unwillingness to commit to pressing the gas pedal at green traffic lights means we're all late for work, school, dentist appointments, and possibly even voting in the 2020 election.

It's my hope that someday you and the "speeder" listed above can have a mutual intervention and agree to meet in the middle somehow.

Mr. Obnoxious. There's always a few of these drivers out there. Squealing tires, black diesel smoke, off-road only high beam lights, etc.

Clearly your parents didn't give you enough attention as a child because your desire to be noticed at every stop sign and traffic light knows no bounds.

Here's a tip for you: no woman has ever seen a man squeal his tires at a green light and said, "Who was that?" in a sexy voice. Imagining all the fuel and rubber you go through in a year makes me want to invest in petroleum stocks. I wish no ill on you, but someday your motor will blow up and pushing your truck through an intersection may not exactly be the "badass" look you're hoping for.

On a different note, this will be the last issue of *The Baker County Press*.

I appreciate the hard work of the BCP, and those of you who have taken the time to read my printed thoughts and rants over the last couple years. I've thoroughly enjoyed writing them and hope my attempt at humor was taken as just that—humor.

— CONTACT US —

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