MONDAY, AUGUST 27, 2018

GUEST EDITORIAL

Marijuana production, distribution, consumption out of control

Billy J. Williams, U.S. Attorney for the District of Oregon, provided the below statement on Aug. 2 on the release of the Oregon-Idaho High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HID-TA) 2018 Marijuana Insight Report.

The recent HIDTA Insight Report on marijuana production, distribution and consumption in Oregon confirms what we already know — it is out of control. The industry's considerable and negative impacts on land use, water and underage consumption must be addressed immediately. State officials should respond quickly and in a comprehensive manner to address the many concerns raised by this assessment.

To date, we've seen insufficient progress from our state officials. We are alarmed by revelations from industry representatives, landowners and law enforcement partners describing the insufficient and underfunded regulatory and enforcement structure governing both recreational and medical use. A weakly regulated industry will continue to detract from the livability and health of communities throughout the state.

What is often lost in this discussion is the link between marijuana and serious, interstate criminal activity. Overproduction is rampant and the illegal transport of product out of state — a violation of both state and federal law — continues unchecked. My task continues to be for transparency, responsible regulation, adequate funding and a willingness to work together. It's time for the state to wake up, slow down and address these issues in a responsible and thoughtful manner.

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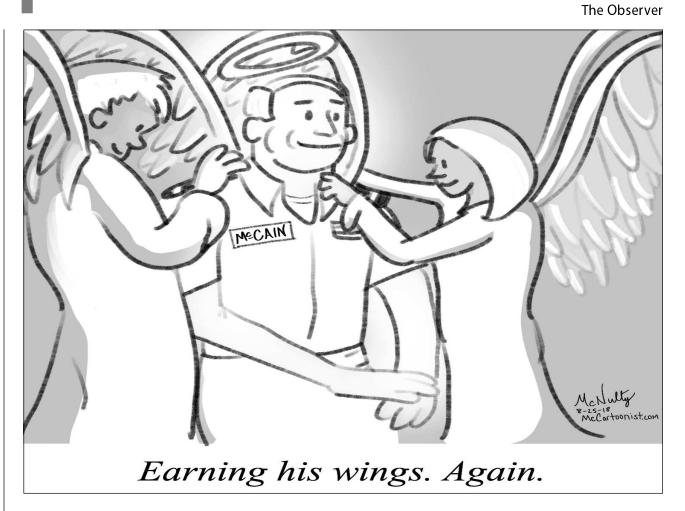
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Your views

Garlitz: Smoke what a bargain

To the Editor: We were told that we must save the spotted owl habitat; save the salmon river tributaries; end spraying for pine bark beetle and tussock moth infestations; stop timber resources harvests by endless lawsuits, letting judges set the timber resource harvests.

And what did we get in return?

Fires that destroy spotted owl habitat by the tens of thousands of acres; fires that denude tens of thousands of acres of salmon tributary watersheds; fires that destroy hundreds of millions of dollars of public and private properties; months on end of smokedrenched skies many times worse than the days of heavy agricultural burning, smoke that blankets thousands of square miles; untold human and animal health problems caused by breathing micro-aerosol particulates; hundreds of millions of dollars of public resources spent attempting to control uncontrollable fires; loss of millions of dollars in timber sales that provide resources to properly tend timberlands; and finally, devastated economies for many if not most timber-resource-based communities.

Man oh man, what a wonderful deal we have been dealt.

> Joe Garlitz Elgin

Zebrak: Walden's vote for Wall Street over Main Street is a vote against me and you

To the Editor:

Like many of my Baker City friends and neighbors, I own my own business. I

rely on an open internet so my customers can easily access and navigate my website. I am disgusted that Greg Walden voted to end net neutrality.

Net neutrality creates a level playing field by requiring Internet Service Providers to transmit all data at equal speeds. Without net neutrality, ISPs could adjust website delivery speeds to favor large companies who can pay more for service.

Walden's vote against continuing net neutrality will allow large cable and phone companies to make big profits by dividing content into so-called "fast lanes" and "slow lanes" and charging consumers or content providers extra fees to break out of the slow lanes. It's not surprising that Walden gets huge donations from telecommunications companies. Walden's vote for Wall Street over Main Street is a vote against me and you.

Like many of you, I have kids in my life. In my case it's curious young grandkids who use the internet for research and learning. The very best thing about the internet has been equal access to information and knowledge. Walden's vote against net neutrality means that online research, streaming educational videos and distance learning will be more

difficult and expensive. Like many of you, I support a level playing field for all businesses and seekers of knowledge and information. Come November my vote for District 2 Representative will go to Jamie McLeod-Skinner, who knows that a free and open internet will promote innovation, protect free speech, enable equitable access to information and help prevent unfair pricing

Write to us

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only).

We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.

Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

MY VOICE

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We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We reject those published elsewhere.

Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 9/850, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

practices.

I hope that you will be like me and vote for Jamie McLeod-Skinner.

> Jeanie Zebrak Baker City

Journet: Failing to address global warming would lead to catastrophe

To the Editor:

It's astonishing how humans can deny the obvious. We thought once serious regional disasters occurred that clearly implicated global warming, Americans and our leaders would respond. Think again.

Here we are, confronted by dwindling snowpack, advancing spring snowmelt and suffocating heatstimulating wildfires and hazardous health conditions, and still there are those like Trump and his cult who blame something or someone else, deny the science and recommend logging the forest to protect it. Here we are with decades of fire suppression having transformed our forests, and still we have folks urging yet more fire suppression rather than sane forest management that would allow us to manage the inevitable and essential forest fires.

We face a catastrophe of immense proportions if we fail to address global warming; we are just seeing a small harbinger of our future. Global biodiversity along with our agriculture, our forestry and our fisheries are at risk.

For our children's sake we should reject this ridiculous denial and work together to solve the problem of climate pollution before it's too late — if we are not too late already.

Alan Journet Co-facilitator, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now Jacksonville

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