

**GUEST EDITORIAL**

## Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus

The following letter is perhaps the most famous example of a child wanting to know if Santa is real.

**Letter to the editor  
The New York Sun, 1897**

Dear Editor:

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, "If you see it in The Sun, it's so." Please tell me the truth, is there a Santa Claus?

— Virginia O'Hanlon

Virginia:

Your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except what they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours, man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect as compared with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus. He exists as certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! how dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no Virginias. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence.

We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The external light with which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies. You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if you did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside, but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived could tear apart. Only faith, poetry, love, romance, can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, Virginia, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding.

No Santa Claus! Thank God! He lives and lives forever. A thousand years from now, Virginia, nay 10 times 10,000 years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood.



**GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE BEND BULLETIN**

## Housing mandate plan is not a solution

Oregon has an affordable housing problem. But the answer is not, as lawmaker Tina Kotek, D-Portland, apparently believes, a statewide requirement to allow four homes on what are now single-family housing lots in at least 61 Oregon cities.

Kotek, speaker of the Oregon House of Representatives, is floating the idea of ending the concept of single-family zoning in all communities of 10,000 or more. In Central Oregon that includes Bend, Redmond and Prineville. All of us, like it or not, would have to allow four houses per lot.

Or at least most of all of us in those communities would be subject

to the change. Homes purchased in some planned developments in all three communities presumably would be governed, as they are now, by legally binding covenants, conditions and restrictions established when the neighborhoods were designed.

In a state worried about the growing gap between haves and have-nots, we'd be hard pressed to find a better way to make the problem worse.

For now, Bend is in the midst of adopting something akin to what Kotek proposes, as it should. Housing is in particularly short supply here, and one city response has been to work to change the zoning

laws to allow duplexes and triplexes in single-family neighborhoods.

That's our choice, however, not a rule being imposed from Salem. Local communities, not the Legislature, know best about how to tailor housing solutions to our communities.

As for the Legislature, if its members are as concerned about Oregon's housing problems as Kotek is, there's an easy solution at hand. Give cities more freedom to expand their urban growth boundaries quickly.

That would serve to lower housing costs and up housing supplies far more equitably than a state-imposed zoning change could ever do.

**CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS**

**President Donald Trump:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to [www.whitehouse.gov/contact](http://www.whitehouse.gov/contact).  
**U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley:** D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Fax: 202-228-3997. Website: [merkley.senate.gov/](http://merkley.senate.gov/). Email: [merkley.senate.gov/contact/](mailto:merkley.senate.gov/contact/). Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; email [elizabeth\\_scheeler@merkley.senate.gov](mailto:elizabeth_scheeler@merkley.senate.gov).  
**U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden:** D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-3703; phone: 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. Website: [wyden.senate.gov](http://wyden.senate.gov). Email: [wyden.senate.gov/contact/](mailto:wyden.senate.gov/contact/). La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; email [kathleen\\_cathay@wyden.senate.gov](mailto:kathleen_cathay@wyden.senate.gov).  
**U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District):** D.C. office: 2185 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-0001, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Website: [walden.house.gov](http://walden.house.gov). Email: [walden.house.gov/e-mail-greg](mailto:walden.house.gov/e-mail-greg). La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400,

email [jorden.noyes@mail.house.gov](mailto:jorden.noyes@mail.house.gov).  
**U.S. Department of Justice:** Main switchboard, 202-504-2000; comment line, 202-353-1555.  
**Oregon Gov. Kate Brown:** 900 Court St. N.E., Salem, OR 97301; 503-378-4582.  
**Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson:** 136 State Capitol, Salem OR 97310-0722; 503-986-1523.  
**Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Reed:** 350 Winter St. N.E., Suite 100, Salem, OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4329.  
**Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum:** Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.  
**State Sen. William S. Hansell (29th District/Pendleton):** Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., S-423, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1729. Website: [www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell). Email: [sen.billhansell@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:sen.billhansell@oregonlegislature.gov).  
**State Rep. Greg Barreto (58th District/Cove):** Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-384, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1458. Website: [www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto). Email: [rep.gregbarreto@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:rep.gregbarreto@oregonlegislature.gov).  
**State Rep. Greg Smith (57th District):** Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-482, Salem, OR, 97301; 503-986-1457. Heppner office: P.O. Box 219, Heppner, OR 97836; 541-676-5154; Website: [www.oregonlegislature.gov](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov).

[oregonlegislature.gov/smithg](http://oregonlegislature.gov/smithg). Email: [rep.gregsmith@oregonlegislature.gov](mailto:rep.gregsmith@oregonlegislature.gov).  
**Oregon Legislature:** Legislative documents and information are available online at [www.leg.state.or.us](http://www.leg.state.or.us).  
**City of La Grande:** Mayor Steve Clements, City Manager Robert Strope; P.O. Box 670, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-1309; fax 541-963-3333.  
**Union County Commissioners:** Donna Beverage, Steve McClure and Jack Howard; 1106 K Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-963-1001; fax 541-963-1079.  
**Wallowa County Commissioners:** Paul Castilleja, Todd Nash and Susan Roberts; 101 S. River St., Room 202, Enterprise, OR 97828; 541-426-4543, ext. 11; fax 541-426-0582.  
**Elgin City Councilors:** Mayor Allan Duffy, 501 N 11th St., 541-437-1016, [mayor@cityofelginor.org](mailto:mayor@cityofelginor.org); Mary West, 260 N 5th Ave., 541-805-0443, [councilor3@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor3@cityofelginor.org); Kathy Warren, PO Box 697, 541-786-9611, [councilor6@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor6@cityofelginor.org); Councilor Teresa Hylton-Shaffer, 540 N. 10th Ave., 541-663-6666, [councilor5@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor5@cityofelginor.org); Risa Halgarth, PO Box 525, 541-437-9462, [councilor2@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor2@cityofelginor.org); Rocky Burgess, 800 N 14th St., P.O. Box 854, 541-786-2417, [councilor1@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor1@cityofelginor.org); David Reed, 1011 Detroit St., PO Box 368; 541-975-3306, [councilor4@cityofelginor.org](mailto:councilor4@cityofelginor.org); Ryan Martin

**SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION**

**SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE**  
NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50  
You can save up to 34% off the single-copy price with home delivery.  
Call **541-963-3161** to subscribe.

Stopped account balances less than \$5 will be refunded upon request.

**Subscription rates per month:**  
By carrier.....\$10.50  
By mail, all other U.S. ....\$15

**THE OBSERVER**  
An independent newspaper founded in 1896  
(USPS 299-260)

Phone: **541-963-3161**  
Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-422-3110  
Fax: 541-963-7804  
Email: [news@agrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@agrandeobserver.com)  
Website: [www.lagrandeobserver.com](http://www.lagrandeobserver.com)  
Street address: 1406 Fifth St., La Grande

POSTMASTER  
Send address changes to:  
The Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850  
Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850

The Observer reserves the right to adjust subscription rates by giving prepaid and mail subscribers 30 days notice. Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850. Published Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (except Dec. 25) by Western Communications Inc., 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

COPYRIGHT © 2018 THE OBSERVER  
The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or ad illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

STAFF	
Regional publisher.....	Karrine Brogiotti
Home delivery advisor.....	Amanda Fredrick
General manager/ Regional operations manager.....	Frank Everidge
Customer service rep.....	Mollie Lynch
Advertising representative.....	Karen Fye
Regional audience development director.....	Kelli Craft
Advertising representative.....	Juli Bloodgood
Editor.....	Cherise Kaechele
Advertising representative.....	Amy Horn
News clerk.....	Lisa Lester Kelly
Graphic design supervisor.....	Dorothy Kautz
Sports editor.....	Ronald Bond
Graphic design.....	Cheryl Christian
Reporter.....	Dick Mason
Pressman.....	Jay Magnuson
Reporter.....	Max Denning
Distribution center supervisor.....	Larra Cutler
Classifieds.....	Devi Mathson
Distribution center.....	Terry Everidge
Customer service rep.....	Sharon Magnuson
Distribution center.....	Ernie Grende