

**GUEST EDITORIAL FROM THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT-HERALD**

## Tax proposal details slowly take shape

The outlines of the tax overhaul that legislators have been working on continue to slowly come into focus, but we're weeks away from seeing the final details.

You'll recall that Gov. Kate Brown charged the Legislature with coming up with a new business tax would generate an additional \$2 billion per biennium, with the bulk of that money earmarked for K-12 education.

But she left the details to the Legislature. And so a legislative subcommittee facing that task has been holding sessions to hear pitches from various groups. Last week, the relatively new Coalition for the Common Good (an alliance of Oregon's largest public employee unions and some businesses) advocated for a gross receipts tax, one that would be calculated based on business sales. The potential problem there is that Oregon voters soundly defeated a gross receipts tax in 2016, when they trounced Measure 97.

It's true lawmakers have many different ways to set up a gross receipts tax, but if the final proposal from legislators hews in that direction, it may have to contend with the ghost of Measure 97.

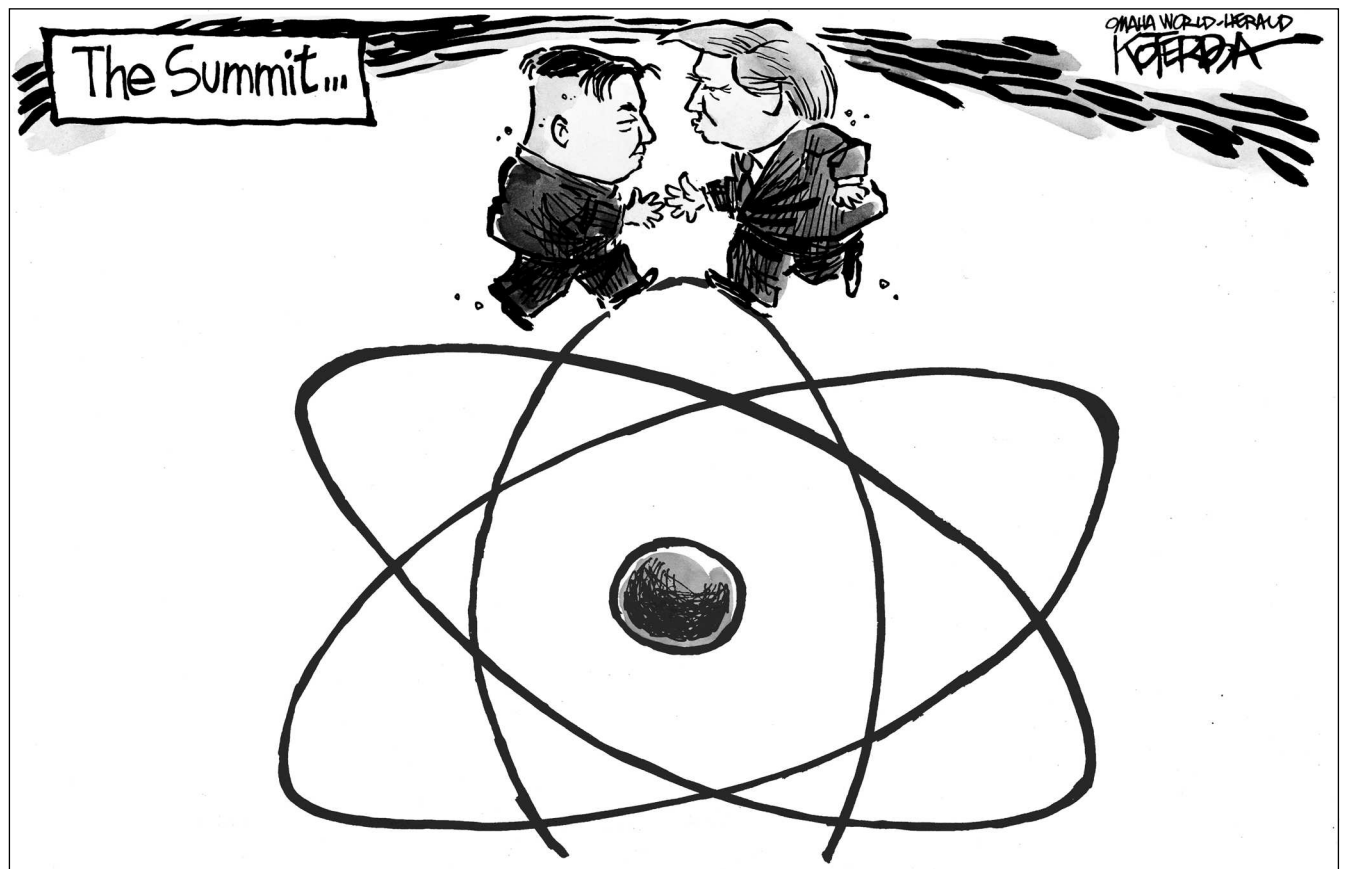
And, in general, the coalition representatives meeting with the subcommittee last week seemed interested primarily in how the money would be spent (to increase state spending on education) rather than the details of how the money would be raised. It's hard to blame the coalition for that: After all, that's essentially how Gov. Brown has approached the issue.

The coalition's representatives also urged the subcommittee not to pair any tax proposal with efforts to cut costs related to Oregon's Public Employees Retirement System, noting previous attempts to do so proved fruitless. And that's correct, as far as it goes — but it fails to take into account the fact that school districts increasingly are groaning under the weight of increasing PERS premiums.

The subcommittee also has heard a somewhat different pitch from Oregon Business & Industry, the state's largest business group, which has proposed a business activity tax under which the state would tax businesses on their sales minus input.

Subcommittee co-chair Sen. Mark Hass, D-Beaverton, a veteran of legislative tax battles, said the committee isn't likely to fully adopt any specific proposal from any group; rather, he said, the committee will craft its own proposal. It will be interesting to see how that eventual proposal fares with the business groups that are expressing cautious support for at least some of these ideas. It also will be interesting to see how the proposal will affect the pocketbooks of ordinary Oregonians; after all, if a business can pass a tax through to a customer, it likely will do so.

Finally, the entire tax-overhaul question hinges on whether Democrats can keep their legislative supermajorities in line. Democrats have the necessary three-fifths majorities to enact revenue increases without a single vote from a Republican. But it might not take much to pry away one or two Democrats from the party line, and that could doom any tax proposal.



## 'Tip of the bow' to Carla Arnold for her dedication

In 1994, a young teacher moved to La Grande and began teaching music for the school district.

Now, 25 years later, the greater regional community is reaping the benefit of her vision, along with well over 600 children who now enjoy a deep appreciation for music.

Carla Arnold grew up in Salem, where her parents fostered her natural love of music and channeled it by allowing her to pursue the cello and violin at a young age.

She moved on to the violin and piano in middle school through high school and into college. While the music was the driving force, Carla ended up with a degree in business, and it was some time later that she was certified as a music educator.

Carla's background could be said to be more on the "classical" side, but things changed when she met her future husband who was involved with all types of music genres. He

played the banjo, among other instruments, and pulled Carla toward what would become a lifelong love of bluegrass and old-time contra dancing. Carla was also fortunate to take lessons while learning to play the guitar from a gentleman who suggested she learn in a more traditional folk method — a less structured way that didn't utilize the reading of notes on paper.

This method fostered listening, being bold enough to jump in and just jam with other musicians. Learning these common folk melodies, Carla was becoming a "fiddler."

Perhaps it was this combination of styles — plus seeing and feeling the fun of playing these commonly known pieces in an informal group as they are passed down through the eras — that led to Carla to start an afterschool strings program at Central School in La Grande some 15 years ago.

"We were given a few smaller violins that came

### My Voice

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Alice Trindle is the president of the Grande Ronde Symphony Association, based in La Grande. My Voice columns reflect the views of the author only. My Voice columns should be 500-700 words. Authors also should include their full name, age, occupation and relevant organizational memberships. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those published elsewhere. Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

from the defunct string program at the La Grande Middle School," commented Carla. "The fiddlers met one afternoon a week, and after the first five years, it was clear it was going to grow, as more students wanted to join and many students were returning year after year."

Today, in conjunction with the Grande Ronde Symphony Association's Fiddle Club, Carla, along with Denise Hutton and Kathy Thimmes, are working with nearly 60 children at Central, Greenwood and Island City elementary

schools. The threesome of instructors use a combination of methods incorporating kaleidoscope, classical, and traditional fiddling, with the goal of inspiring children to first enjoy music, and second to continue on with an instrument to make it a life-long pursuit.

The greater community owes Carla Arnold a great debt of gratitude in fostering this love of music in so many of the youth in Union County. For that, the Grande Ronde Symphony Association tips our bow and salutes her.

## CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

**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, Matt Scarfo and Paul Anderes; 1106 K Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-963-1001; fax 541-963-1079.

**Wallowa County Commissioners:** John Hillock, 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; Mary West, 260 N 5th Ave., 541-805-0443,

councilor3@cityofelginor.org; Kathy Warren, PO Box 697, 541-786-9611, councilor6@cityofelginor.org; Risa Halgarth, PO Box 525, 541-437-9462, councilor2@cityofelginor.org; Rocky Burgess, 800 N 14th St., P.O. Box 854, 541-786-2417, councilor1@cityofelginor.org; David Reed, 1011 Detroit St., PO Box 368; 541-975-3306, councilor4@cityofelginor.org; Ryan Martin, councilor5@cityofelginor.org

**Enterprise City Councilors:** Mayor Stacey Karvoski, mayorofenterprise@gmail.com; Jenni Word; Dave Elliott; Ashley Sullivan; Micah Agnew; Larry Christman; Chris Pritchard; 541-426-4196;

mail to City of Enterprise, 108 N.E. 1st Street, Enterprise, OR 97828

**Imbler City Councilors:** Mayor Mike McLean, Corrine Wilfong, Herman Ortmann, Mark Howell, Rick Vicek, Joan Harding, Jason Berglund; 180 Ruckman Ave.; P.O. Box 40, Imbler OR 97841; 541-534-6095

**Joseph City Councilors:** Mayor Teresa Sajonia; Martin Hamilton; Pearl Strum; Tanya Collier; Michael J Lockhart; Patty Bufford 541-432-3832; P.O. Box 15, Joseph, Oregon 97846; 201 North Main St.; cityofjosephoregon@gmail.com

**La Grande City Councilors:** Mayor Steve Clements, Gary Lillard, Nicole

Howard, Corrine Dutto, Mary Ann Miesner, Jim Whitbeck, Justin Rock; through the City Manager's office, 541-962-1309

**Union City Councilors:** Mayor Leonard Flint, LeonardFlint@cityofunion.com; John Farmer, johnfarmer@cityofunion.com; Leslie McMillan; Sue Hawkins, susanhawkins@cityofunion.com; Matt Later, mattlater@cityofunion.com; Jay Blackburn, jayblackburn@cityofunion.com; Walt Brookshire, waltbrookshire@cityofunion.com

**City of Cove:** Mayor Del Little, (503)-508-6727 504 Alder Street P.O. Box 8 Cove, OR 97824 City Manager Donna Lewis, (541) 568-4566

### 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



A division of Western Communications Inc.

# THE OBSERVER

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

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 © 2019 THE OBSERVER**  
The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

Phone: **541-963-3161**

Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-422-3110  
Fax: 541-963-7804

Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com  
Website: 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

### STAFF

Regional publisher.....Karrine Brogotti  
Regional audience development director.....Kelli Craft  
Editor.....Cherise Kaechele  
News clerk.....Lisa Lester Kelly  
Sports editor.....Ronald Bond  
Reporter.....Dick Mason  
Reporter.....Francisca Benitez  
Reporter.....Amanda Weisbrod  
Classifieds.....Devi Mathson  
Customer service rep.....Sharon Magnuson  
Home delivery advisor.....Amanda Fredrick  
Customer service rep.....Mollie Lynch  
Advertising representative.....Karen Fye  
Advertising representative.....Juli Bloodgood  
Advertising representative.....Amy Horn  
Graphic design supervisor.....Dorothy Kautz  
Graphic design.....Cheryl Christian