

Our View

Across the aisle
in the Capitol

Policy disagreements, partisanship and the walkouts can give Oregonians a distorted picture of what their Oregon Legislature is like. Journalists — and certainly this editorial page — tend to highlight conflicts, not the places of accord.

Recently, however, what state Rep. Daniel Bonham said during a committee hearing struck us regarding a resolution to honor former state Rep. Mitch Greenlick.

Bonham is a Republican from The Dalles. His district includes a large part of Central Oregon — Sisters, Culver, Madras and the Warm Springs Reservation. Plot Bonham and Greenlick along an ideological line and there would be a big gap between them in how to solve many of Oregon’s challenges. Bonham would be on the right. Greenlick, a Democrat who represented Multnomah and Washington counties beginning in 2002, was on the left. Greenlick died while serving in office on May 15, 2020.

They became friends.

Commissioners of several Central Oregon counties appointed Bonham to the Legislature in November 2017 to fill a vacancy. He came into the session in 2018 trying to find his way in the new role.

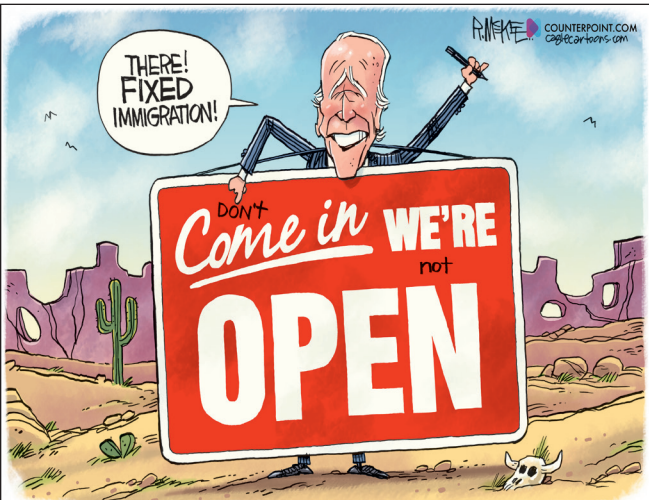
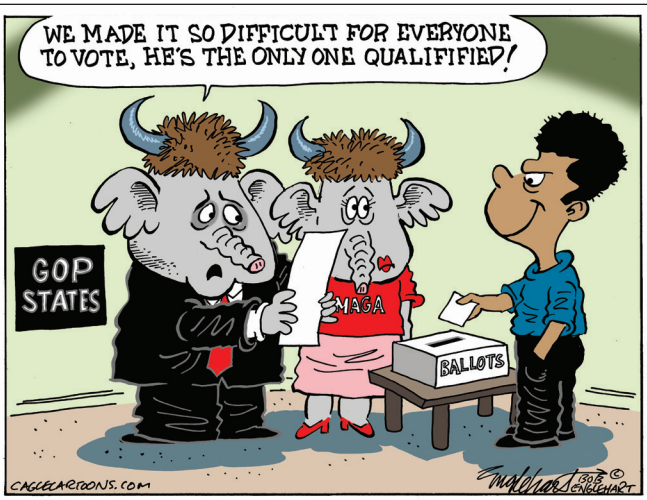
He happened to stay in the same hotel for the session as Greenlick and his wife, Harriet. They fell into the habit of exercising together in the gym and joining each other in the pool. And talking.

“I got to know Rep. Greenlick more on a personal level than anything else,” Bonham said.

“What really impressed me was just his care and concern for helping somebody brand-new to this role that truly was trying to find their way. And despite the fact that we were not of the same party affiliation or shared the same views on how to solve health care problems, we had many wonderful conversations.

“I will say we probably talked more about the kids, the grandchildren and the great-grandchildren than we did about public policy. But his care and his compassion for others was just evident in his approach to life. And we saw it come through in very passionate ways both on the floor and in committee and even over lunch.

“I wanted to take the moment to stop by your meeting here today and to offer my words of just gratitude to the Greenlicks. Again, I don’t know how you talk about Mitch without talking about Harriet. I don’t know how, at least from my experience. They were such a team. I am grateful for their friendship and for the kindness that they showed me. I give my absolute support to SCR (Senate Concurrent Resolution) 3 and encourage everyone else to take a moment and read through it and remember and honor our good friend Mitch Greenlick.”



Other Views

A main stem vision for our upstream economy



TONY
MALMBERG

RANCHER

I am a Northeast Oregon rancher on Catherine Creek, in the Snake River Basin, and I face challenges that are much the same as the Snake River salmon.

We both have to rely on outdated and often obsolete technology, infrastructure and strategies to survive. Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson’s forward-looking “Energy and Salmon Concept” to upgrade and modernize the Snake River Basin’s and Pacific Northwest’s agriculture, infrastructure, energy and transportation systems can help the salmon, while supporting our region’s agriculture, energy and transportation sectors.

Salmon and steelhead are not recovering in our Grande Ronde watershed, or other tributaries of the lower Snake River. The numbers show clearly that the eight main stem dams on the Columbia and Snake are simply too many. Salmon in the John Day River, for example, that cross three dams, see adult return rates four times better than Snake River fish crossing eight.

This cannot be sustainable for salmon, steelhead or conservation. Fish that brave the dam gauntlet travel more than 650 miles of river from our place on Catherine Creek to the Pacific. High water temperature, lack of habitat for cover and food, and low stream flows further perplex their life cycle. These same issues cause problems for ranchers in these headwaters. To get a loop around potential solutions, we can reset our thinking and plan 50 years down the road, with a holistic

strategy for all stakeholders.

Simpson’s plan offers that vision. It focuses on innovations and solutions for irrigation and agricultural upgrades; funding for administrative options to sustain instream flows; and restoration of instream and upland habitats. Simpson’s approach benefits our operation, my community and salmon.

- Irrigation and ag upgrades: Irrigators will benefit from state-of-the-art irrigation to manage available water content and reduce compaction due to over irrigation just as salmon benefit from more water instream during the hot season. My community will benefit from potential local hydro power from irrigation upgrades just as salmon will benefit from better irrigation management.
- Instream restoration: Graziers will gain production from a higher water table when the creek is reconnected to the floodplain just as salmon juveniles benefit from refuge and habitat on functional floodplains, and my community will benefit from flood control.
- Upland restoration: Ranchers benefit from more grass when uplands have high soil organic matter to absorb the snowmelt into the soil mantle. Our streams gain cold water flow from the slowed release during the hot season, benefiting salmon. My cattle benefit from woody vegetation providing shade in summer and wind breaks in the winter, just as salmon benefit from shade keeping water cool.

Ranchers have learned a lot about better grazing management over the last 50 years. We can benefit by updating technology — for example, virtual fencing, RAM powered stock water pipelines and state-of-the-art grazing plan-

ning — to minimize overgrazing on critical watershed uplands and riparian areas.

Simpson’s package would deliver significant innovations and support in these categories of shared concern. Cooperation and coordination among farmers, ranchers, fishery, habitat, infrastructure and other specialists is something we’ve proven we can do, and we can do it well.

Where the needs of fish, transportation, energy and agriculture converge, we prioritize projects. Simpson’s proposal, when it turns into a bill, will deploy funds to support community-led watershed management.

Engage now with Rep. Bentz and encourage him to work with his colleague Rep. Simpson. Call on Oregon Sens. Ron Wyden and Jeff Merkley, so our existing collaborations and priorities are teed up in the bill.

A custom-made, Pacific Northwest-led solution for Snake River salmon and steelhead honoring our land managers and heritage of innovative collaboration improving our waterways can be achieved.

How?

Simply by empowering those managing our fishery, road, irrigation, energy, forest and agriculture production.

A plan meeting the challenges of the next generation lies before us. Engage.

Tony Malmberg and his wife, Andrea Malmberg, have been ranching in Northeastern Oregon for 10 years after ranching in Wyoming more than 30 years. You can find out more about him at his website, www.holisticmanagementguide.com.

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