

OUR VIEW

A new way to learn about state politics

Oregon's political life bursts with conflict. But the state will be in trouble if the political life is not anchored in a way that serves and represents all the people who live here.

The state is an intricate mix of strong, rural, conservative traditions in many areas and what seems to be a growing dominance of a more progressive movement. National political events can also transfigure the local.

We probably all are guilty of falling into comfortable patterns of what we read or follow about Oregon politics. And maybe we don't seek out enough views that challenge our own.

We urge you to check out a new podcast called "The Oregon Bridge." It's put out by Ben Bowman and Alex Titus. They are friends. They often disagree. Bowman is a progressive, serves on the Tigard-Tualatin School Board and ran for state Senate. Titus is a conservative and worked as an adviser in the Trump administration.

Every two weeks or so they have been interviewing someone new, primarily in Oregon's political scene. They interviewed state Rep. Wlmsvey Campos, D-Aloha, a progressive endorsed by Bernie Sanders in one episode. In the next they interviewed Alex Skarlatos, the conservative who came about as close as anyone has to defeating Rep. Peter DeFazio. You may remember Skarlatos as the soldier, who with others, helped to stop a gunman on a train to Paris. They also interviewed Kevin Frazier, a law student from Oregon who submits columns to EO Media Group. Frazier hosts a blog, called The Oregon Way, which is a forum for political commentary.

The podcast isn't political mud wrestling. It's not people yelling at each other. They are thoughtful discussions. If you are looking for a way to enhance and broaden your understanding of Oregon politics, check out The Oregon Bridge. You can find it on Apple Podcasts and many other places.

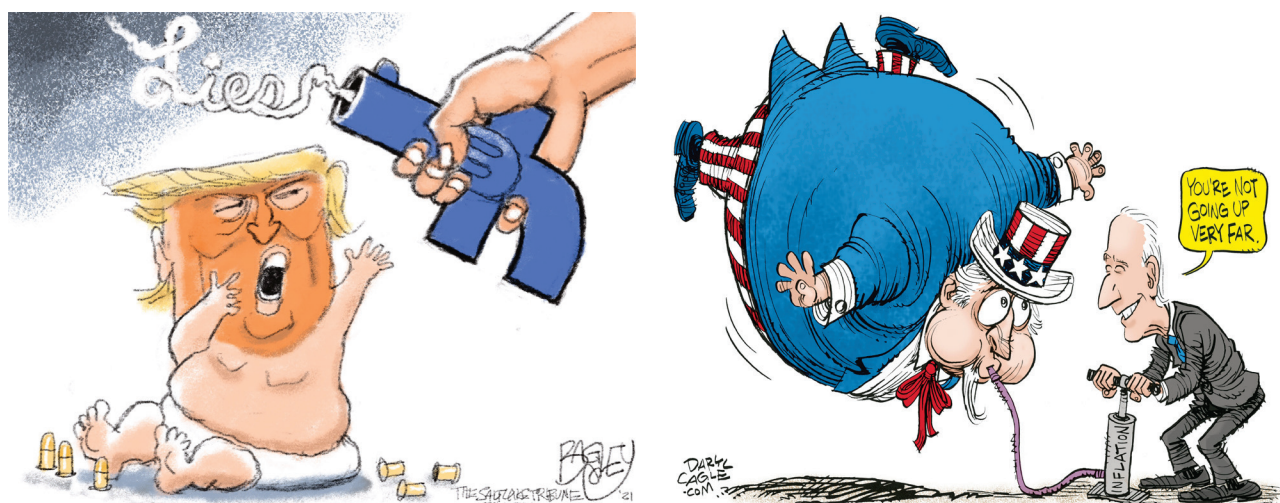
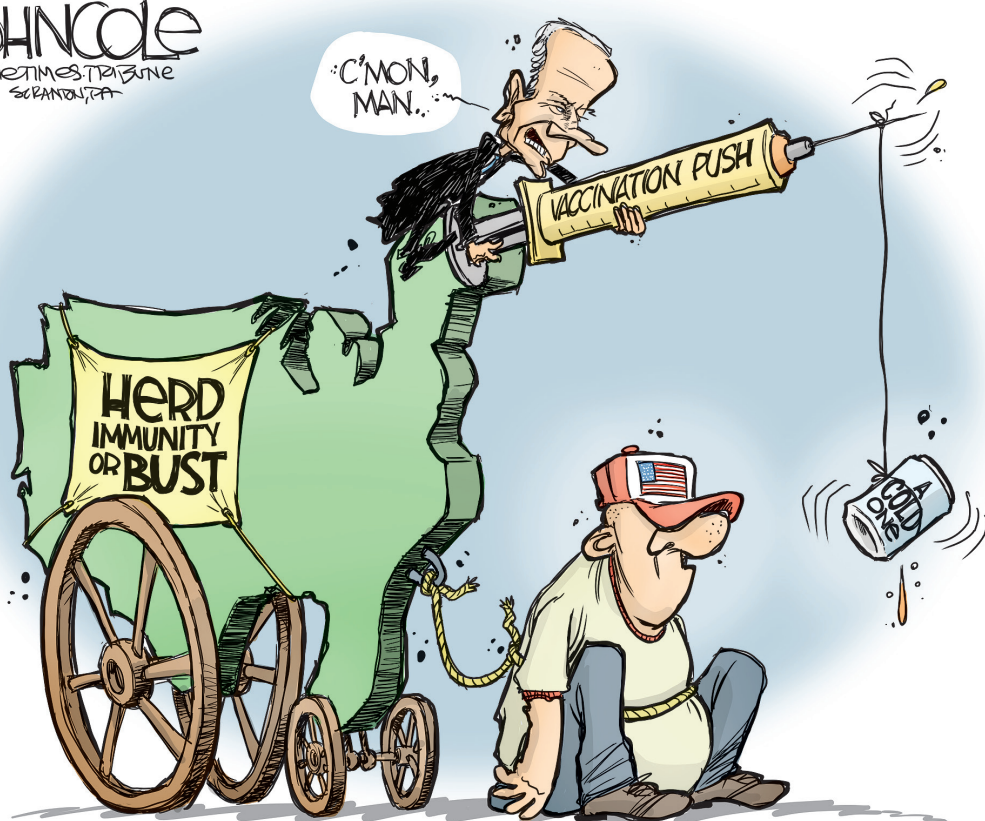
EDITORIALS
Unsigned editorials are the opinion of The Observer editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of The Observer.

LETTERS
• The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We will not publish consumer complaints against businesses, personal attacks against private individuals or comments that can incite violence. We also discourage thank-you letters.
• Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's name, address and phone number (for verification only). We will not publish

anonymous letters.
• Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks.
• Longer community comment columns, such as My Voice, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author's name, address and phone number.
• Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

SEND LETTERS TO:
letters@lagrandeobserver.com or via mail to Editor, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

JOHN COLE
© THE TIMES TRIBUNE
SEASIDE, OR



Regular, moderate sun exposure is the goal

JOHN WINTERS
HEALTH CARE ESSENTIALS

I asked the man strolling on the beach why he was wearing a life jacket. Trying to be patient, he explained, "My goodness, don't you know the ocean is dangerous? Millions drown every year."

He's right. The ocean can be a very dangerous place and requires great respect. I encouraged him to learn a little about the actual risks of certain activities so he wouldn't feel so threatened. Understanding and respect are different than blind fear. This analogy also applies to our attitudes toward the sun.

We often hear, "Avoid the sun's harmful rays," "stay inside," "protect yourself against the sun's damaging rays." Is our sun really out to get us, or is there more to the story?

These warnings have some truth to them, but they are also incomplete. The ocean sustains life on this planet, yet can kill you depending on your actions. You can learn to swim, fish or skipper a boat. You can safely row across the Atlantic given adequate preparation. Similarly, you can safely enjoy the sun's benefits while minimizing risk. The man on the beach probably doesn't need to wear a life jacket, and we probably don't need to hide from the sun.

According to my research, the sun and the human race have happily coexisted for a — really really — long time. I googled it. Sunshine is both life-giving and potentially dangerous. Our skin does have built in protections, but these take time to deploy. Human groups who have lived near the equator for eons are born with ample protective melanin

in their skin. Others who hail from the north don't need so much protection and are lighter in color.

For us northerners everything is dandy, until you move south or take a tropical vacation. The sudden increase in the sun's intensity causes problems.

Sunlight offers myriad types of light essential to life. Humans see only a small portion of the spectrum. Outside what we see are energy waves that warm us, help plants grow and improve our health. Yes that's right, the sun's "damaging ultraviolet rays" are also healthy.

So, how do we get the healthy part while minimizing the harmful part?

We require UV light to synthesize vitamin D. Vitamin D is noteworthy because it helps prevent skin cancer and has many other important properties. Optimal levels of vitamin D help prevent 17 types of cancer, hypertension and other cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, autoimmune diseases and influenza, including COVID-19. Optimal levels of vitamin D also improve moods, immune function in many ways and inflammation. That's all very important.

Dr. Cedric Garland, an epidemiologist known for his research in the field of vitamin D deficiency, calculates that adequate vitamin D levels would prevent 600,000 cases of breast and colorectal cancer every year. Dr. William Grant, a NASA atmospheric physicist, was one of the first to recognize vitamin D's protective benefits. He believes more than 50,000 American lives would be spared yearly, 30% of cancer deaths would be prevented, and cancers of the skin, prostate and lung would be halved.

The Journal of Investigative Der-

matology found that sun exposure has an inverse relationship to melanoma risk, by far the most deadly skin cancer. Surprisingly, office workers have much more melanoma than outdoor workers.

Experts point out that skin cancer rates are rising the past 50 years, about the time we started hiding from the sun and using sunscreen. They point out: "If sunscreen worked we would see less skin cancer, but instead we are seeing more." Trustworthy sources such as The Lancet, The British Journal of Dermatology and the Cochrane Collaboration find that sunscreen use doesn't reduce deaths from skin cancer.

The relationship between skin cancer and sunshine doesn't fit into a one sentence soundbite. You don't need to fear the sun, or the ocean — but there certainly are times for precaution. There are three main types of skin cancer — basal cell carcinoma, squamous cell carcinoma and malignant melanoma. BCC and SCC account for about 99% of skin cancer cases, and are important to treat but rarely cause death. Melanoma accounts for about 1% of cases but causes 75% of skin cancer deaths. Optimal vitamin D levels protect against melanoma in many ways. The key is to get plenty of vitamin D but not too much sun.

Your overall health requires mindful sun exposure. Hiding from the sun or burning can each cause problems. Like water, the sun is essential to life, yet too much is dangerous. Regular, moderate sun exposure is the goal.

John Winters is a naturopathic physician, who recently retired after operating a practice in La Grande since 1992.

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50
You can save up to 55% off the single-copy price with home delivery.
Call 800-781-3214 to subscribe.

Subscription rates:
Monthly Autopay\$10.75
13 weeks.....\$37.00
26 weeks.....\$71.00
52 weeks\$135.00

THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

www.lagrandeobserver.com

Periodicals postage paid at Pendleton, Oregon 97801
Published Tuesdays, Thursdays and Saturdays (except postal holidays) by EO Media Group, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

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.

COPYRIGHT © 2021

Phone: 541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon): 1-800-781-3214

Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com

POSTMASTER Send address changes to: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

STAFF

Regional publisher.....	Karrine Brogotti	Multimedia journalist.....	Alex Wittwer
Regional circulation director.....	Kelli Craft	Home delivery advisor.....	Amanda Fredrick
Interim editor.....	Andrew Cutler	Advertising representative.....	Juli Bloodgood
News clerk.....	Lisa Lester Kelly	Advertising representative.....	Amy Horn
Reporter.....	Dick Mason	National accounts coordinator.....	Devi Mathson
Reporter.....	Davis Carbaugh	Graphic design.....	Dorothy Kautz
Intern.....	Carlos Fuentes		



A division of