

OUR VIEW

Actions speak louder than words

State lawmakers said all the right things during a forum at the Eastern Oregon Economic Summit in Hermiston last week, including vowing to cooperate with each other and try to eliminate partisanship.

Those vows should be good news for voters, but unfortunately talk — at least in this modern political era — is cheap.

Making bold promises to work together and making a big show regarding cooperation makes for good theater, but it only takes a single flash-point issue — just pick one as they are legion now — and all the smiling pledges will vanish like wheat dust in a Umatilla County wheat field during harvest.

Frankly, voters have heard it all before, and what usually occurs is — after assurances of bipartisanship — yet another political dogfight that gets no one anywhere but placates only the lunatic fringe of both parties.

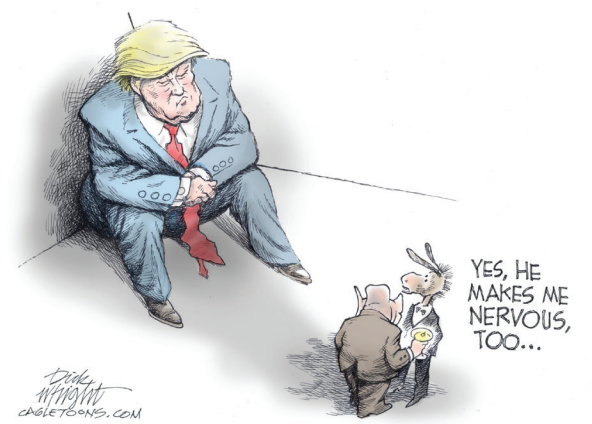
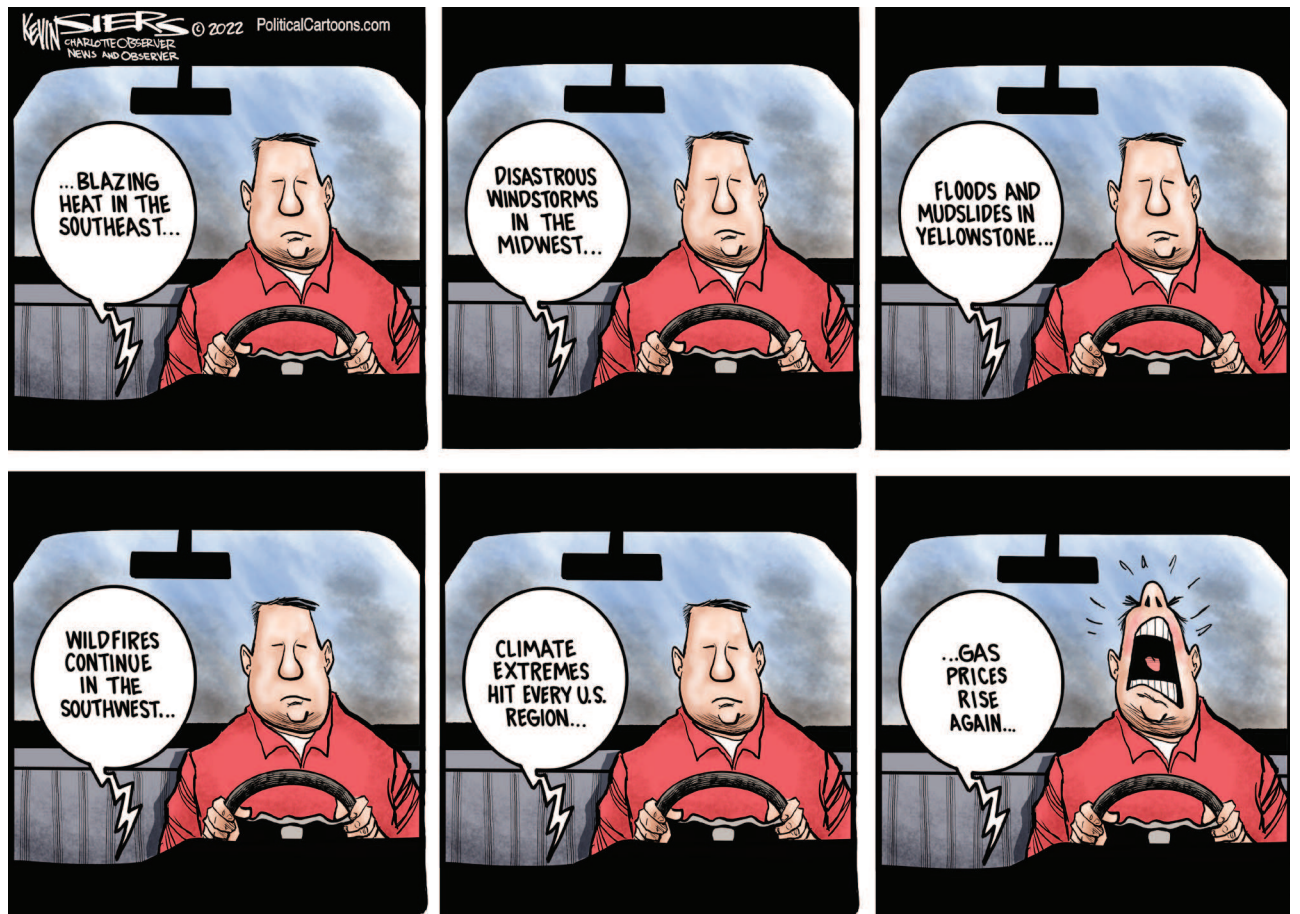
The bottom line is voters in this state — and in Eastern Oregon — deserve better.

They deserve lawmakers who can put aside the bellowing rhetoric of the fanatics in each party. Lawmakers who can find a middle ground, regardless of how controversial a particular issue may be, and move things forward.

Walking out of a legislative session isn't productive. Yet, neither is political bullying by a majority party in blind obedience to views and policies that work for only a select few. Neither one is democracy. Both are symptoms of a far more insidious disease that haunts our great Republic now. A malady rooted in prejudice, misinformation and the ambitions of individuals who do not have the best interests of the Republic in their hearts. Individuals who tap into a general angst perpetrated by TV personalities who care only for growing the size of their paychecks, not what is best for democracy.

We are a great nation that is capable of so many great things, but you wouldn't know it by glancing back over the past few years at the American political arena. Instead of reasoned, productive political discourse we've been a captive audience to riots, scandals and outlandish federal spending. As much as Americans like a good spectacle, at some point the one-trick pony of partisanship becomes just yet another bizarre — and meaningless — circus act.

Lawmakers in this state need to back up their lofty words of unity and cooperation. That means they must do so with not just the countless minor legislative issues that arise, but also on the controversial themes that can quickly divide.



OTHER VIEWS

Educate yourself about Alzheimer's and dementia

June is Alzheimer's and Brain Awareness Month, and as a volunteer for the local chapter of the Alzheimer's Association, I encourage all Oregon residents to raise awareness and educate themselves about Alzheimer's and other dementias. This devastating disease impacts more than 69,000 Oregonians with that number growing year over year.

In addition to raising awareness at home in Oregon, last month I had the pleasure of heading to Washington, D.C., to meet with members of our congressional delegation and urged them to support a number of our priorities including:

- the bipartisan NAPA Reauthorization Act and Alzheimer's Accountability and Investment Act that would help ensure the nation continues to prioritize Alzheimer's and other dementias
- an additional investment of \$226 million for Alzheimer's research at the NIH for 2023

I am grateful to Rep. Bentz, his staff and the rest of our delegation for their time and continued leadership on issues critical to those impacted by dementia.

To learn more about this disease and how you can join the fight to end Alzheimer's, visit alzimpact.org.

MacKenzie Rodgers
Enterprise

Wildfire, high winds could bring unwelcome visitors in the form of embers

As I sit looking out my window on this early morning, I am captivated by the sight of the luxurious, nay, rampant growth of every green thing known to man. Some welcome, others not at all.

Our rainy season has settled in to encourage rainforest-like growth. The human eye has a sensitivity to green light. Perhaps a holdover from our ancient past as free-range tenants of forests and grasslands. The color offers a sense of well being and calm. It is a good way to begin the day, turmoil forgotten.

Then my thoughts turn to our surrounding miles of grasslands and forests. Now we see verdant growth replacing images of the dry brown ruin left by the winter months. Yet our traditional weather patterns foretell summer droughts and all the tall greenery turning to flammable, dried fuel for potential wildfires. Other areas across the West have

suffered fires of amazing ferocity, even early in the season. Homes and business districts burned out. Could this portend a similar fate for us?

Looking eastward, I can see a large, well-weathered wooden structure wrapped with vegetation on two walls, nearly to the eaves. Then I imagine the lush foliage dry, desiccated, no longer an eye-pleasing green, rather the tan color of prime tinder. Just like the bare wood walls. Is this why fires, once limited to fuel-filled forests, invade cities? Homes and businesses are more vulnerable when the in-town areas contain such structures as I see across the street from my window. How many others are dotted around our community? Could we be vulnerable? What about a neighbor's stand of tall grasses? Have I any that need trimming down? How much is too much?

Should the drought cycle descend upon us, the outlying areas could be at risk. From there, a wildfire combined with high winds could bring unwelcome visitors in the form of embers. I now look at overgrowth with a different perspective. Time to dress and get outside, to tour the property.

Cut it back while it is still green.
Rick Rienks
Baker City

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111

U.S. SENATORS

Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Cliff Bentz
2185 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
Medford office: 541-776-4646

GOVERNOR

Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court St.
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

STATE REPRESENTATIVES

Bobby Levy, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-376
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.BobbyLevy@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

STATE SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-415
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

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 Other Views, 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

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 © 2022

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 Home delivery adviser..... Amanda Turkington
Interim editor Andrew Cutler Advertising representative Kelli Craft
News clerk Lisa Lester Kelly Advertising representative Amy Horn
Reporter Dick Mason National accounts coordinator Devi Mathson
Reporter Isabella Crowley Graphic design Dorothy Kautz

