

Opinion / Local

— LETTERS TO THE EDITOR —

Local liberals bragged about election hijacking tactics, 1-74

To the Editor:

You don't have to dig very deep to see the non-partisan movement for what it is: the bedrock for the socialist and progressive movement gaining traction in politics. And the same group that pushed and lost this measure last year in Baker County is at it again.

I attended a meeting in Baker City at the library last week that was presented by a far left organization from our state's west side. It was locally sponsored by the progressive liberals from Halfway and Baker City. It was publicly touted as a "safe space" to bring different points of views together to work as a community. However, the irony was lost on none of us when their so called "security" was openly armed, (in the public library no less), threatening, and menacing while displaying black panther T-shirts and logos. It was obvious they tried to intimidate those of us who were not from their political persuasion. We were polite and respectful the entire time. Now I have thick skin, and it takes a lot to bully me, but this was ridiculous. We left shortly before the meeting ended and the police were called to investigate the weapons and the integrity of this so called "safe space."

At this meeting, Baker County's Democrat chairman clearly laid out his party's intentions for passing 1-74 and defeating John Hoopes in the Sheriff's race.

He also claimed victory for the Democrat party in helping Bruce Nichols to win the Republican primary last May by a mere 37 votes. Their agenda is clear and articulated.

Passing 1-74 won't make our elections any more fair than they currently are. Every registered voter can already vote at election time. 1-74 is simply a ploy to strip platforms, policies, histories, and transparencies from those running as county legislators in our local government. Only someone who has something to hide would want less transparency when running for public office. It's the democrats who gain by passing this measure. If they want their guy in office, they should stand in the open on their platform and let the people decide.

1-74 isn't about kicking the politics out of Baker County. 1-74 is about hiding a liberal agenda inside of the politics that will always be inherent in local government. Let's keep Baker County commissioners transparent. I'm voting no on measure 1-74.

Jake Brown
Halfway

1-74 focuses on community

To the Editor:

I am honored to serve our community as an elected official on the Baker 5J Board of Education and as a regionally elected board member of the Oregon School Boards Association – both positions are nonpartisan. I have the privilege of advocating for our students and community without the need to generate talking points that are typically associated with partisan politics. As a nonpartisan representative, I have found it beneficial in having meaningful conversations with our State and Federal representatives regarding the effects of government policy on our local communities.

I believe Measure 1-74 is a step in the right direction as it allows each potential candidate the opportunity to gain support from a broader voter base which they ultimately are elected to serve. The question to you as a Baker County voter is: "Is it necessary for our locally elected county commissioners to be in partisan positions?" Understand that by voting to make these positions nonpartisan does not mean that future candidates have to hide any political ideologies they support. However, it would mean that the entire voting population in Baker County will have the opportunity to exercise their vote in deciding who will serve in these very important roles. 28 of 36 Oregon counties, including Union, Wallowa and Grant have nonpartisan county commissions. My conversations with Commissioners representing these adjacent counties have conveyed the same sentiment that I share regarding the benefits of being a nonpartisan representative. To be clear, my comments are not directed toward our currently elected commissioners.

In fact, Baker 5J and Baker County have a quality working relationship. I simply am sharing my experience and thoughts toward this question. I am a life-long registered Republican and my experience leads me to believe that the rhetoric associated with partisan politics do not necessarily assist us in solving local challenges.

Kevin Cassidy
Haines
Submitted by Jan Kerns

1-74 damages local government transparency

To the Editor:

The proponents of 1-74 are completely missing the point historically and in understanding the three forms of county government allowed in Oregon.

First off, they seem to be ignoring the roots, the history of how the nonpartisan movement started on this continent and also worldwide history and what it means. Nonpartisan is the forerunner of a one party system. As another letter reminded us, Germany and Italy were one party system and that did not work out so well in the 1930s and 1940s. Those who ignore what history can teach us are doomed to repeat it.

Another letter in ignorance listed a laundry list of counties in which their county commissioners are nonpartisan. This letter failed to mention many of these counties are a *home rule* form of county government. This means they have their own charter which the citizens of the county voted in and this charter also lays out how to replace a commissioner in times of resignation or death.

Baker County is *general law* county government. This means if two commissioners resign, then the Governor of Oregon steps in to select a replacement.

Last year (2015) the voters of Baker County turned down this exact same measure. But the same group is back trying to change something that is not broken. Ask yourself why?

Vote No on Baker County Measure 1-74. Keep Baker County Commissioners transparent.

Peggie Longwell
Baker City

Sheriff's Office did not help me

To the Editor:

I am asking everyone to vote no on Measure I-74. We need to keep partisan control of the county commissioner position.

An affirmative vote would make the position of County Commissioners nonpartisan. But I want to know what the person stands for before I vote. I want the selection of a candidate above-board, not made by a group of people who have something up their sleeves that I may not approve of.

As for the 28 Oregon counties that have voted for a nonpartisan commissioner position, I'm willing to bet 99% of those people did not know the difference between partisan and nonpartisan and the disadvantages of the latter. Please vote no on measure I-74.

Also, I would like to express my disappointment when I heard shortly after the Primary Election that we had citizens change into the Republican Party for one reason only, which was to vote against Kody Justus for County Commissioner. I thought Baker County would be against mob lynching. I read all the adds and letters to editors opposing Justus in local papers. As a newspaper reporter covering many trials for over fifty years, it is my conclusion there was no evidence against Justus that would stand up in court. In my view he was treated exceedingly unjustly. I am writing in his name on my ballot and voting for him.

I am also urging everyone to vote for John Hoopes for Baker County Sheriff. My requests for some kind of law enforcement failed to bring aid, during May, June and July of this year to protect my East Eagle land where my timber was burned last year. I was completely ignored when I had hundreds of mushroom pickers crawling all over my private land, "thick as maggots" as described by a man who was trying to protect my buildings.

A notice had been placed on the Internet saying that East Eagle Creek was the place to find mushrooms. So every kind of people came, to comb every inch of ground, including organized Mexican crews, and organized Cambodians/Vietnamese—and they came for weeks. There was no way I could get relief from them.

The invasion began May 10th, and I called Sheriff. The number of pickers steadily increased and ignored everybody who told them to leave. Then they came to pick my land wearing headlights through the night hours.

On May 29th I was trying to find mushrooms for myself about a hundred feet from my cellar when men carrying packs and baskets on their shoulders came to me from off the hill and from both sides. Some were wearing side arms.

I told them to get off my land and don't come back again, and I told them they were stealing from me and I called them thieves.

I also told them I had called the Sheriff's Office several times. Next year they will be back. Next year I want to call Sheriff John Hoopes!

Carmelita Holland
New Bridge / Richland

The future of our economy depends on natural resources

To the Editor:

It's time to think long and hard about your future or the potential lack of one.

Our country is on the brink of an economic breakdown. When this happens your job or source of income will be lost or seriously diminished. This didn't just happen, it is the result of 40 years of shortsighted, wrongheaded thinking.

The world has been bombarded by the environmental movement. It is a noble thing to be concerned for the environment around us, but if a little is good, never-ending move is not better.

The slogan "Save the Earth" has swept the Earth but few know or think of the other half of the equation: "No life can exist unless we use the Earth and harvest its produce and resources." Thus the industries that harvest our food, timber and minerals are the foundation of our economy. You must know that no business, industry or job can continue without these resources. Also know that all new wealth comes from the ground — there is no other source.

Every time we enact a new regulation that restricts access and use of the land and set aside another area to just look at or protect some bird, bug, fish or animal, we stop some productive use and take another bite out of economy.

We have overextended our regulations and land withdrawals to the point our country can no longer support itself. Those economic restrictions are bringing on our economic troubles and perhaps the end of America as we know it.

Our area is in the unique position to blunt some of these troubles if we act and think right. The mineral resources of our area are sufficient to provide jobs that will allow many miners to support their families and many local merchants.

If we are to survive this crisis we must change the actions and thinking of our government to allow the workers of our country to produce the necessities of life. So use your vote carefully.

Ken Anderson
Baker City

Ferrioli

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The purpose of the Campaign Committee is to raise money and get Republicans elected at the State Legislative level. Ferrioli estimates they will raise at least 10 million dollars and spend this to elect Republican candidates. If Republicans, he said, can just pick up a couple of seats, the dynamics of the Senate side of the Oregon legislature will change.

Nationally the Republicans now control more legislative assemblies since World War II. Ferrioli bluffed his way on the executive board as he convinced them he could do in Oregon what has been done in Washington state—and what happened in Washington, is they picked up a couple of seats in the State Senate. The picked up a couple of Democrats from rural areas who believed that King County was killing Washington, and together they formed a coalition. This coalition set the stage to turn over the Senate in the next election cycle. If Oregon picked up two seats, 15 seats with Democrat Betsy Johnson crossing the aisle, that means no new gun control legislation and no new taxes in Oregon.

Currently the Republican Legislative Campaign Committee has spent \$175,000 on the Oregon Senate races.

Bud Pierce is polling very close to the incumbent, Kate Brown in the race for governor. A win may depend on voter turnout in rural counties and how well about 30 counties do in getting out the vote. Ferrioli asked the committee to put their manners aside and be aggressive to get those Republican ballots in on November 8th.

Ferrioli reported that nationally there are 600 women running for legislative office.

Measure 97 is a sales tax on steroids, he said. Democrats say, "It's not a sales tax, it's a tax on sales."

M97 will not show up on cash register, but rather as a tax from the back room. Mac and cheese, for example, would raise from \$.99 cents, to \$1.39 or higher if M97 passes. Each sale from distributor on to the consumer accrues with the M97 sales tax—the most aggressive tax in Oregon.

Ferrioli asked, "What happens if they do not get their money? The answer: Well they will have to cut down the size of government."

If M97 passes, with that tax added to minimum wage mandate and sick leave mandate, there won't be 100 companies in a place like Ontario that are owned in Oregonians; companies will cross the river to operate in Idaho, he said.

ODOT puts up new variable freeway signs

In a first of its kind project in Oregon, ODOT highway managers are testing new variable speed signs to provide a greater margin of safety during winter weather on Interstate 84.

Over the past few weeks, crews from ODOT have been installing variable speed signs in a critical 30 mile corridor of Interstate 84 from Ladd Canyon to Baker City. These electronic message boards indicate a safe speed limit for vehicles when weather conditions turn adverse. Computers collect data regarding temperature, skid resistance (ice) and average motorist speed to determine the most effective speed limit for this area and then present that speed on the variable speed signs. This gives motorists additional information about their drive in order to remain safer on the highway. The signs will lower and raise speeds automatically to meet observed conditions on the roadway.

Currently, the new variable speed signs are in a test phase and are expected to go live on November 1. At that time, they will indicate the speed limit which will be enforceable by state and local police.

Motorists may notice these signs as they traverse the highway and various on-ramps between Ladd Canyon and Baker City.

Juveniles arrested for thefts

On October 8 at about 11:50 p.m., Sheriff Ash was notified of persons prowling around the Fish Lake Road area in Halfway. Deputy Eric Colton responded, took statements from the reporting party, and discovered evidence of unlawful entry into a motor vehicle. On 10-09-16, Deputy Tracy Howard took five reports involving thefts from motor vehicles in the Halfway area. In total, there were seven victims of theft, trespass and unlawful entry into a motor vehicle. Nine vehicles were involved.

Two juvenile male suspects were captured on video surveillance committing theft, trespass and unlawful entry into a motor vehicle. Deputies Scott Immoos and Rich Kirby were able to obtain the identities of both subjects. Sheriff Ash, Lt Jayo, Deputy Maldonado, Deputy Immoos and Deputy Colton travelled to Halfway, interviewed both suspects, and served a search warrant at 248 Dawson Street. Evidentiary items such as money, jewelry, purses, camera and driver's licenses were recovered. One juvenile was on OYA probation and was transported to youth detention. Both were issued citations charging Unlawful Entry into Motor Vehicles, Criminal Trespass II and Theft II.