

Opinion / Politics

— GUEST OPINION —

An open letter to the NFL

By Taya Kyle

Dear NFL,

You were doing your part to bring people together and heal the world. That's really how healing works. We heal by loving each other and leading by example; showing people what is possible when we love each other just as we are and not only recognize our differences but celebrate them and look at how we can use them together to make us jointly better than our separate parts. You were doing your part celebrating each other based on skills, talent and a joint vision without regard to color and religion.

You were doing your part and we were doing ours. We showed up cheering and groaning together to as one. We talked in the concession lines and commiserated and celebrated our team together. Did it ever occur to you that you and we were already a mix of backgrounds, races and religions? We were already living the dream you want, right in front of you.

Your desire to focus on division and anger has shattered what many people loved most about the sport. Football was really a metaphor for our ideal world—different backgrounds, talents, political beliefs and histories as one big team with one big goal—to do well, to win, TOGETHER.

You are asking us to abandon what we loved about togetherness and make choices of division. Will we stand with you? Will we stand with our flag? What does it mean? What does it mean if we buy a ticket or NFL gear? What does it mean if we don't? It is the polar opposite of the easy togetherness we once loved in football.

It was simple—we loved you and



Taya Kyle is the widow of deceased Navy SEAL Chris Kyle.

you loved us—with all of our races, religions, different backgrounds and politics. Simplicity in a crazy world was pretty awesome.

You dear NFL, have taken that. You have lost me here.

If you ever want to get off your knees and get to work on building bridges, let me know. I have found screaming about the problems in service marriages or even standing in silence in front of them, hasn't healed even one of them.

On the other hand, funding the Chris Kyle Frog Foundation, building a team and rolling up my sleeves to get in the trenches during my "off time"—volunteering there outside of my paying jobs—has proven to make real change.

You have a lot of strong guys, I am sure in the off season a lot of them could build some pretty big bridges if they care enough to do the hard work. That would involve getting off their knees and getting to work though. If I can do it while I raise two kids as their only parent and work through the greatest pain of my life, let's see if they can do it for the issues they say they care so much about.

Go Longhorns and Sic 'Em ...
Sincerely,
Taya

— SPECIAL COLUMN —

So I was thinking ...

Citified

By Jimmy Ingram
Special to The Baker County Press



Jimmy Ingram is a local farmer and father of two who enjoys people watching within our wonderful community and beyond.

My family made a recent weekend trip to Seattle.

As a lover of most things Northwest, this rural-American boy enjoys seeing the sites and culture of its few large cities.

Sports, some history, and good music are just a few things I love to take in over a long weekend. Here are a few things I don't care to take in.

Traffic: What better welcome to let you know you've arrived in the city than the fiery red glow of hundreds of brake lights in front of you.

The flashing beacons instantly remind you that dinner is now at 9 p.m. instead of 6, and that you should have stopped to go to the bathroom 30 miles ago.

In 20-yard increments you carry on, searching through awful radio stations for a song to calm you down.

Ironically you find a classic rock station playing Sammy Hagar's "I can't drive 55." Contrary to the meaning of Hagar's song, his chorus DOES prove correct: You ... can't ... drive ... 55(!) or 25, or even five. At this point being able to read the traffic sign you first saw in the distance 15 minutes ago feels like a victory.

Parking: One of the benefits of rural living is ample parking. Park just about anywhere that's NOT in someone else's way and you won't be ticketed, laughed at, honked at, or bothered in the least.

Don't have any change? It doesn't matter because you don't need any. You can park any place you want for free.

Honk again. Are you an elderly person taking too long in the crosswalk. Honk, honk, honk.

I feel like car manufacturers should have a 20 honk limiter on their horns for the life of a car. Like a ration of sorts on the amount of obnoxiousness a vehicle can put out during its life.

The horn honkers of the world may think long and hard before wasting 5% of their allotment on you for taking too long to back out of your parking spot. The same spot you spent 30 minutes trying to find after leaving the \$26 parking garage.

You'll leave when you're good and ready.

The cost of food: In small town America \$15 can normally buy you a really good meal. \$5 can buy you a drink. Not in the city. City food is special.

Note the key phrases like "free-range," "organically harvested," and whole portions of the menu dedicated to "Vegan."

While I have no issue with any of these eating "principles," I can't help but wonder if it's discriminatory that "carnivore" doesn't have its own specified section on the menu.

I also know that these things come at a cost. A \$10 hamburger at a small town cafe becomes \$18 on a city menu. Your favorite \$4.50 IPA is suddenly \$8. Appetizer? \$16. No thanks.

"Ohh you have to go during happy hour," your city dwelling friends will say. I couldn't, I was stuck in traffic for an hour and then couldn't find a parking spot.

The explanation of where you're from: I don't find this annoying as much as I do amusing. The "so where are you from?" question. It's a friendly enough question and I do realize places like Baker City aren't particularly noteworthy to PDX'ers or Seattle-ites. But trying to explain where it is typically has one of these as a follow up...

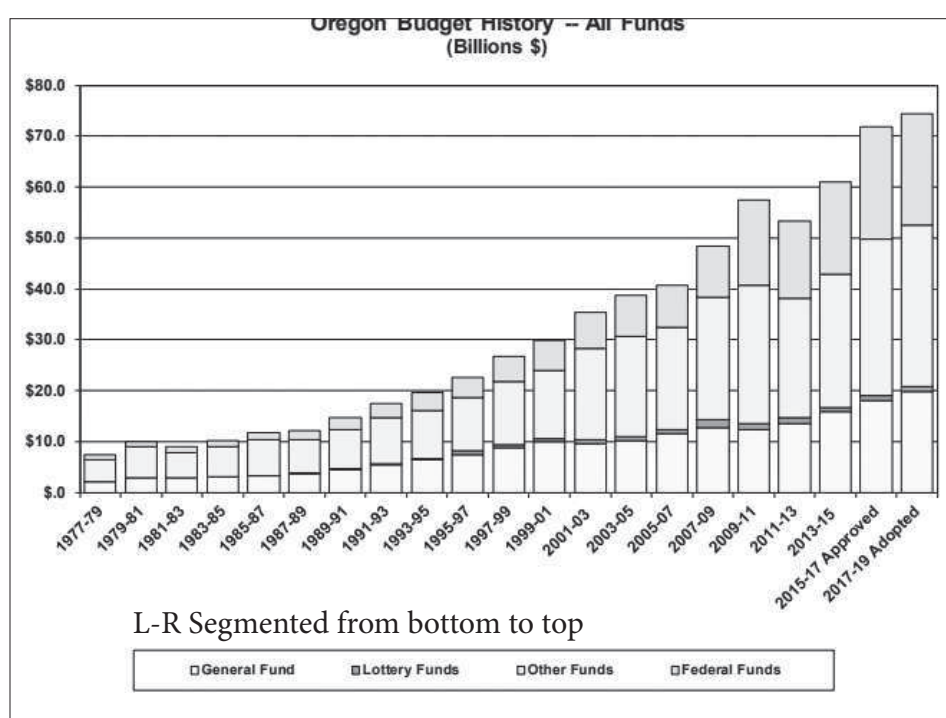
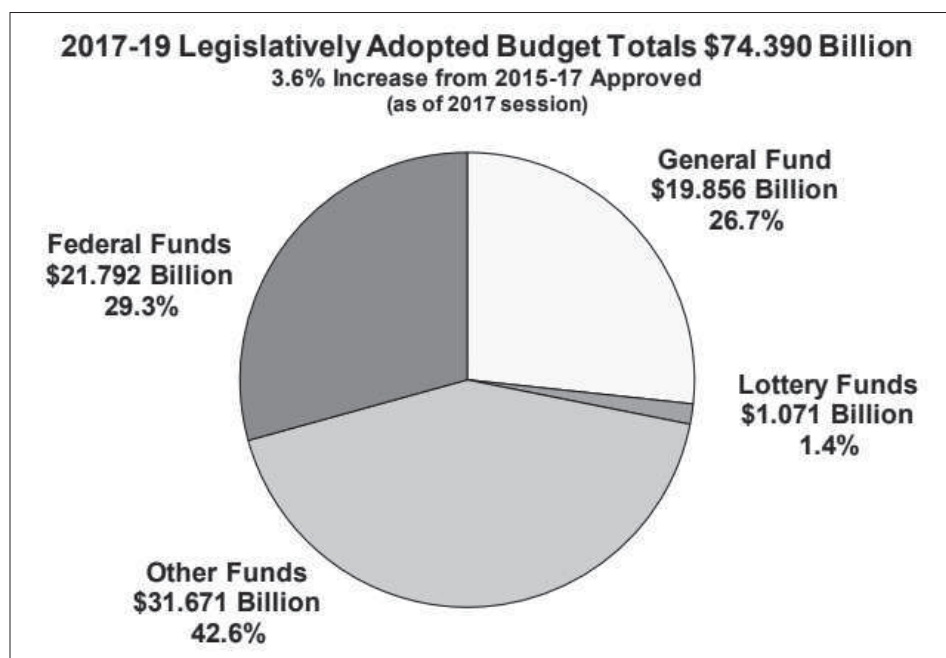
"Is that in Idaho?"
"So, Eastern Oregon, like Bend?"
"I think I drove through there once."
"Does it snow there?"
"Is there, like— mountains?"
"Ohh I think my mom's third husband had a second cousin from there. You probably know him."

Sometimes just for fun I like to answer all questions and statements with a "yes." So to sum up: "Yes, I'm from Bend Idaho, the snowy, mountainous town you drove through once on your way to visit your distant relative who I happen to know so well that we had dinner just last week."

As much as I enjoy many parts of Northwest cities, the feeling you get when your arrive back home in your barely-heard-of town is better.

Where you can park for free, eat and drink on the cheap, and honking horns are accompanied by a friendly wave and not an impatient stare.

Oregon budget highlights



Graphics courtesy of the Oregon Legislature.

The legislatively adopted budget (LAB) for the 2017-19 biennium is \$74.390 billion total funds, an increase of \$2.569 billion from the 2015-17 legislatively approved budget of \$71.821 billion, or a gain of 3.6%. The increase between the two biennia is, in part, due to the authorization to spend \$1.844 billion more in General Fund in the 2017-19 biennium than was spent in 2015-17. This 10.2% increase in General Fund expenditures continues a recent trend of biennial double-digit percentage increases. Detailed breakdowns are available at: www.oregonlegislature.gov/lfo/Documents/2017-19%20Budget%20Highlights.pdf

Parking in a metropolitan area resembles trying to cram that last dirty dish in the dishwasher: you know it's not going to fit, but you're going to try and make it happen anyway.

After 30 minutes of driving in circles hoping someone will leave you a reasonably sized parking spot (pro tip: they aren't) you submit to the parking garage.

Your truck/SUV is within 1/8" of the chain-hung maximum height indicator, which gives you pause enough to wonder if your vehicle is about to accidentally become a convertible.

You grab your ticket and make it past the first overhead beam safely.

You avoid glancing at the parking rates on the way in because sometimes ignorance is bliss.

This bliss will come to an end hours later when you realize it cost you \$26 to park in the garage for the day. This is all based on the assumption you live long enough to find your car in the garage since you can't remember if you parked on level J, K, or L.

At this moment you are reminded again why you live in a small town.

Honking: There's something especially obnoxious about car horn honkers to me. It's like someone yelling at you without saying a word.

And no one loves to honk more than people in the city. Someone appears to be in need of your parking spot. Are you taking too long to buckle your kid up in their car seat? Honk.

Do you need to fasten your own?

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