

Quick takes

Did you feel the earthquake?

Heard and felt my house shake.
— **Mitzi Rodriguez**

My cat and I did. My family slept through it.
— **Malissa Wurtz**

I did in Athena. Thought my kiddo fell out of bed upstairs.
— **Alecia Tarnasky Angell**

Not an earthquake, just aftershocks from the Seahawk championship game on Sunday!
— **Gina Miller**

Sufjan films Round-Up

I read a little blurb about this in the *New Yorker* and I had to do a double take when I saw my town's name.
— **Katie Pearce**

Be nice if we got to see it.
— **Michael Comstock**

One of the great lessons of the Twitter age is that much can be summed up in just a few words. Here are some of this week's takes. Tweet yours @Tim_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.

Looking toward second session, tired of attacks

As the 2015 legislative session is set to begin, I wanted to take a moment and thank you for the ability to serve and represent you in Salem. This is truly an honor and I worked hard to make you proud as a freshman legislator.



BILL HANSELL
Comment

As your state senator I have prioritized working with issues that affect our daily lives. Working with a solid team of staff and fellow legislators we experienced success on many legislative issues.

These include: fighting to protect the rights of Eastern Oregonian farmers to grow the best crop lines available (SB 633); helping to pass the largest small business tax cut in Oregon history; lowering taxes on Eastern Oregon farmers who export wheat across the state (HB 2616); working to build consensus across the aisle for allowing for the lawful taking of wolves that attack livestock (HB 3452); and protecting the right of the people of Oregon to hold rodeos (SB 835). Senate Bill 833 prohibits treating rodeos less favorably than other organized events.

The upcoming legislative session begins in just a few weeks and I appreciate your input as we developed our priorities

for Eastern Oregon families and businesses.

To date these include SB 121, which will help rural areas deal with annexations to abate health hazards, currently an issue in Milton-Freewater; SB 122, which creates a tax credit for classroom expenses of an educator or parent; and SB 25, which allows exceptions

to land use laws for small counties facing declining populations.

Still to come with additional work are bills that will further help local small businesses thrive in Eastern Oregon, water projects that will benefit our area and a shield law to protect victims of domestic and spousal violence.

Last session I received recognition from several associations, I was awarded one of the "Legislators of the Year" by the Oregon Wheat Growers League, Oregonians for Food and Shelter and the Oregon Nurseries Association. I look forward to continuing to represent Eastern Oregonians through the

2015 session.

Some of you have heard or read the recent attacks against me funded by special interests from outside of our community — half-truths that distort the facts and mislead. This is a blatant attempt to misrepresent both my commitment to representing Eastern Oregon and my voting record. We are all tired of hateful, angry politics and I believe our community deserves better.

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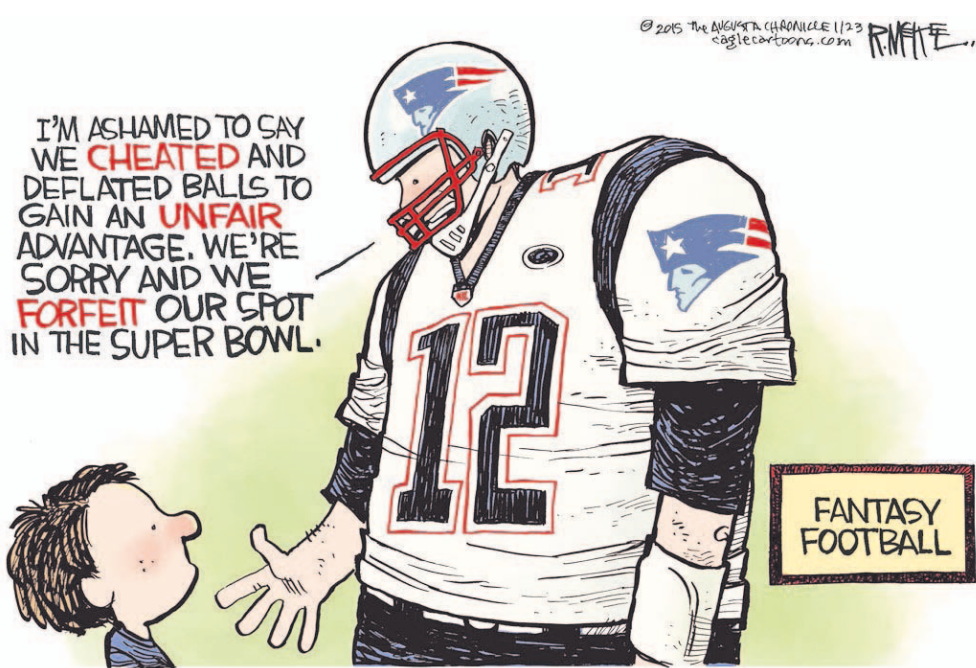
If you ever have a question about what is happening in Salem or have specific policy issues you would like addressed, please do not hesitate to get in touch with me. I'll be writing additional updates throughout the session and keeping my Facebook site current as well.

I'm excited about building upon our success from last session and look forward to the upcoming challenges and opportunities 2015 has to offer.

Bill Hansell, a Republican, is a state senator from Athena serving District 29 in the Oregon legislature.



Allow me to deflate your football, Otis. It's a game.



A homeless perspective on homelessness

By **DONALD BURNSIDE**

Yes, it was the season. A fresh start. However, alienation of the homeless persists. Regardless, let us collectively relax, drop the smiles and slowly back away from promises. Therefore, now would be an opportune time to introduce a divergence. Homeless rights. What a mess.

Utilitarian arrogance must stop. Fact: The bottom homeless are a part of us — forever. Agreed, the near perfect social/economic structure remains elusive. Nevertheless, ours requires adjustment.

Sure, the main flock should enjoy economic wellbeing, which has been earned through hard work and the use of science. Granted, taxes and donors build bridges and hospitals but higher power creates air and sun. Debate? Why argue?

Political standoffs need not get out of hand. Much is fixable. Obvious system error causes a lot of the rolling anger from the bottom. Known is that predators pounce on the edge-of-flock individuals.

How about electronically gathering the lost sheep? Consider a Bureau of Homeless Affairs,

Dept. of Interior and Executive Branch that would be located in Washington, D.C. Ostracism hurts.

Our poorest of the poor are being arrested for sleeping. Excrement and the act thereof are offenses. The homeless wave a white flag but nobody will accept it. Vagrants try to hide but the police are ordered to find them. Surely, the homeless cannot just disappear.

Be not blinded, accommodation problems will be difficult to implement. Focus upon the ideal that no nation has the authority to void human rights. We, not the homeless, are breaking International Law. Be assured that there are zero places in the entire USA where a single homeless citizen is able to live with all human rights intact.

If there is such a place, let it be known. Advertise the welcome mat. Give the exact name and location. Thousands of homeless will be on their way.

Of course, there is no such place. No homeless will be going anywhere.

Today, the homeless float naked of protections. They live within a type of null state — a nothing state if you will. More correctly put, it is an overlay state of being

with no soil. Yes, the property-less travel within a federal layer of federal authority. Agreed or not, the individual homeless citizen does attach directly to the central federal government.

Okay boys and girls, the time has come to behave ourselves. Promise? No sleeping on bus benches. No sleeping in parks. No sleeping along greenbelts. No sleeping near river's edge. No sleeping under bridges. Too many more, etc. In short: no trespassing, no camping, no sleeping, no loitering and no this and that.

Do obey the law. Obey the wink-wink human rights abusers. Obey and either die, go to jail or what? Warning: If the federal government refuses to inherit this matter, all might fail. How can a lonely, dirty and tired homeless individual start the ball rolling? So discouraging. Declaratory judgment?

As should be, engineering remains foundational.

■ Design a backpack-friendly cot. Breakdown type. Lightweight, rugged and put-together with clips or rubber bands. RR track made of metal tubes and fiber slats. A breathable cover sheet would replace the heavy and

environmentally damaging tent.

■ Find the correct plastic for a doo-doo bag and carrier. Fume resistant and red with hazmat warnings.

■ Design a federal ID card and computer support system. ATM compatible to collect park trail work, highway cleanup, etc. points (not money) for shoes, soap, etc. Also, debauchery points and punishments are to be in similar fashion as driver license point systems.

Get started. A well pleaded complaint must be brought before federal court if Congress clearly intends. A Declaratory Judgment question could be similar to the following: "Do property-less and address-less citizens retain individual 24/7 claim to human rights such as the right to sleep, to rest and to pass body wastes?" The answer to this question would be foundational.

Who, who are these citizens who travel in random directions across state lines? The answer is obvious. Federal at-large citizen is legally correct. Washington, D.C., should house the required R&D and tech center for the computer and staff personnel: "Cherries are ripe in Wash. State," "Storm damage in Iowa," "Surf is up in

Calif," "Certified welders needed in Nev," "Safe drinking water," would be helpful information.

As in a Dostoevsky novel, we homeless experience delusional relationships. For example, you folks do the human rights crimes and we endure the punishments. Is it not all about grass? After the federal citizens are welcomed midfield, the main flock should be at peace less the paranoia of us. Scare stories be damned.

Of course, federal citizens shall use their eyes and ears. The highly organized and very successful shadow nation already knows these facts.

Drug trade of billions of dollars and the "use them up and throw them down" sex industry, which is better run than what any entrepreneur can match are now trying to protect business as usual. Towns and communities are to be kept under the thumb at all cost.

Quite a show. The Dark Side will not relax or back away from promises. The poisoning of children shall continue (with odd respect!) and parents will continue allowing dealers their freedoms.

Donald R. Burnside is currently living in Tucson, Arizona. He has spent time in Eastern Oregon.

Agriculture needs to back up and remember roots

By **COURTNEY WHITE**
Writers on the Range

It's easy to forget that once upon a time, all agriculture was organic and grassfed. Saving seeds, composting, fertilizing diverse crops with manure, not tilling and raising livestock entirely on grass was the norm over a century ago. Yet today, these are just the approaches we associate with sustainable food production.

We all know what happened as we modernized — the plow, the tractor, fossil fuels, monocrops, nitrogen fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, fungicides, feedlots, animal byproducts, *E. coli*, genetically modified organisms, and erosion. We farmed faster and we farmed more acreage. These are all practices and conditions that most Americans now consider "normal," if they think about agriculture at all.

Many young farmers are looking to the past, and they've discovered nature works best.

Fortunately, a movement to rediscover and implement "old" practices of bygone days has risen rapidly, abetted by innovations in technology, breakthroughs in scientific knowledge, and tons of old-fashioned, on-the-ground problem solving.

Take Dorn Cox, a young farmer in New Hampshire. He tossed away the plow, preferring to use no-till practices on his parents' organic farm. Then he developed a biodiesel alternative to fossil fuels. He measures the carbon content of the soil through sophisticated technology, aiming to raise the content as high as possible, and he also co-founded Farm Hack, an open-source virtual café for young and beginning farmers.

"Farming isn't rocket science," he likes to say, "it's more complicated than that."

Like Dorn, many young people in agriculture today are looking

to the past, and what they have discovered is that nature's model works best. After all, nature has been using evolution and the laws of physics to beta-test what works for millions of years — billions in the case of photosynthesis. Humans are pipsqueaks in this process by comparison, and the idea that we know what's best is increasingly looking like a dangerous form of hubris. That's why a new generation of agrarians is returning to the roots of agriculture for a different approach that includes large helpings of science and social responsibility as well.

Soil carbon is a good example. As gardeners know, creating the dark, rich soil called humus is critical to plant vigor, mineral uptake and smart water use. At the farm and ranch scale, it helps prevent soil erosion. A short list of practices that build soil carbon include planting cover crops, mulching, composting, employing low or no-till and planning where livestock graze.

Building humus is a great way to sequester atmospheric carbon dioxide in the soil for potentially long periods of time, which means that "old" practices can address

"new" challenges such as climate change.

Recently, the level of CO2 in the atmosphere rose past 400 parts per million for the first time in millions of years. However, it is possible to help bring this level back down through the old-fashioned process of photosynthesis.

Last spring, the Rodale Institute, a research and education nonprofit, released a white paper entitled *Regenerative Organic Agriculture and Climate Change: A Down-to-Earth Solution to Global Warming*. It states boldly that we could sequester more than 100 percent of current annual CO2 emissions by switching to soil-creating, inexpensive and effective organic agricultural methods.

Just a few years ago, the climate potential of soil carbon wasn't on anyone's radar screens, other than a few laboratories, soil scientists and a handful of progressive farmers and ranchers. Now, talk of trapping carbon in soil is everywhere.

At a major grazing conference I attended recently, soil carbon was the most popular topic discussed (after cattle), with speaker after speaker extolling its virtues. And yes, people are even talking now

about using it to slow down climate change.

It is undeniably true that there are many obstacles to implementing these tried and true solutions to food and climate challenges. Some are economic, but many are policy-based, which is why it is important to support groups like the Organic Consumers Association and the National Young Farmers Coalition in their efforts to create an environment that favors old-style farmers and ranchers, not to mention eaters, which means all of us.

It all comes back to nature. I like the way the Rodale Institute put it recently: Farming like the Earth matters. Farming as if water and soil and land matter. Farming as if clean air matters. Farming as if human health, animal health and ecosystem health matter. Because all of this does matter, and regenerative agricultural practices are the best way to preserve it.

Courtney White is a contributor to High Country News. He co-founded the Quivira Coalition, a nonprofit dedicated to improving economic and ecological resilience in Western working landscapes.