

## Quick takes

### Milton-Freewater strip club

It is pretty simple — if you don't like it don't go there. I am tired of people who want to legislate their moral agenda to everyone else. Not saying I am for or against but this is America, at one time we as individuals had rights.

— Brian Mulcaire

No problem with strip clubs, but it will certainly contribute to the social decay well underway there ... even in Eugene, that's where all the drug dealers huddle.

— Chad Elliot DeFalco

### Wolves spread out

You're going to delist wolves because of 2 more? What is wrong with you? Try to learn to live with them by using non lethal and deterrents. The taxpayers pay for all of this, so what's the problem? Are the ranchers on public land you've leased out? Then you're to blame, habitat needs to be left for wildlife, not just livestock.

— Wolfbrynite

Non lethal deterrents do not work. The only way to deal with a wolf is a bullet. Always has been, always will be.

— Russell Morgan\*

Many countries in the world have learned to live with wolves. Why can't we?

— attaboy

\* Not affiliated with ODFW wolf program coordinator Russ Morgan

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.

# When it comes time for a hen to retire

By JOURDAN ARENSON  
Writers on the Range

When my daughter was a high school senior, she asked if she could keep chickens in the backyard. My first thought was, "Great. Another thing to take care of." But I have always been stingy about letting her keep animals, so I agreed. Besides, I figured we could use the eggs.

My daughter built a coop and brought home four buff Orpingtons. In the following months, she collected lots of eggs. When she moved away to college, responsibility for the chickens fell to me. I collected lots of eggs for the next three years. But recently, my son also moved away to college, and suddenly, my wife and I became empty nesters with a full chicken coop. And we're not getting any more eggs.

Spring ended, but nobody has started laying. While a typical chicken lays for only four seasons, it can live for up to 10 years. Facing seven years of chicken elder-care, I decided to explore my options for freeing myself of them.

I first checked with the city's Animal Services department. The folks there said they had never gotten a call to pick up hens that won't lay. Sometimes they get calls to rescue an escaped chicken that's roaming a neighbor's yard or crossing the road, presumably to get to the other side. But they don't collect old hens.

I then asked my neighbor Whitey. He sends his old hens to a friend's farm, where

they live out their days among the younger chickens. Eventually, the old hens die or a fox gets them. A gentle soul, Whitey has a talk with his hens to prepare them for changes to come. He explains that they are going to join a new flock — a flock with a rooster: "You've never met a rooster before."

## Facing seven years of chicken elder-care, I decided to explore my options for freeing myself of them.

I'm not one to talk to my hens, and "retiring" my chickens seemed like the coward's way out. I figured the local and sustainable thing would be to eat them. Food columnist Ari LeVaux encouraged me to do just that without regret: "Your hens lived immeasurably better lives than the average chicken. It was a good thing. It came to an end. Now eat some coq au vin."

My friend Walt, who shoots and eats game birds, said he'd show me how to dress one of them, but I'd have to dress the other three myself. This sounded reasonable, until I reflected that "dressing" was really more like "undressing," requiring me to pull out guts, pluck off feathers, sever heads and feet.

What's more, old hens are said to have tough stringy meat. Meanwhile, I can spend just a few dollars and buy a tasty tender chicken — one that is already dead and naked and lying motionless in my grocer's cooler. If that chicken in the cooler had a name, I have no idea what it was.

Not so with the chickens in my backyard. They're named after a "secretaries of the 1950s" theme: Doris, Gladys, Myrna and Harriet. I have never

been able to tell which chicken is which. That's because chickens don't suck up in cuddly ways to show how special they are. I suppose this should make it easier for me to get rid of them. But the truth is, I like them more because they don't demand emotional attention.

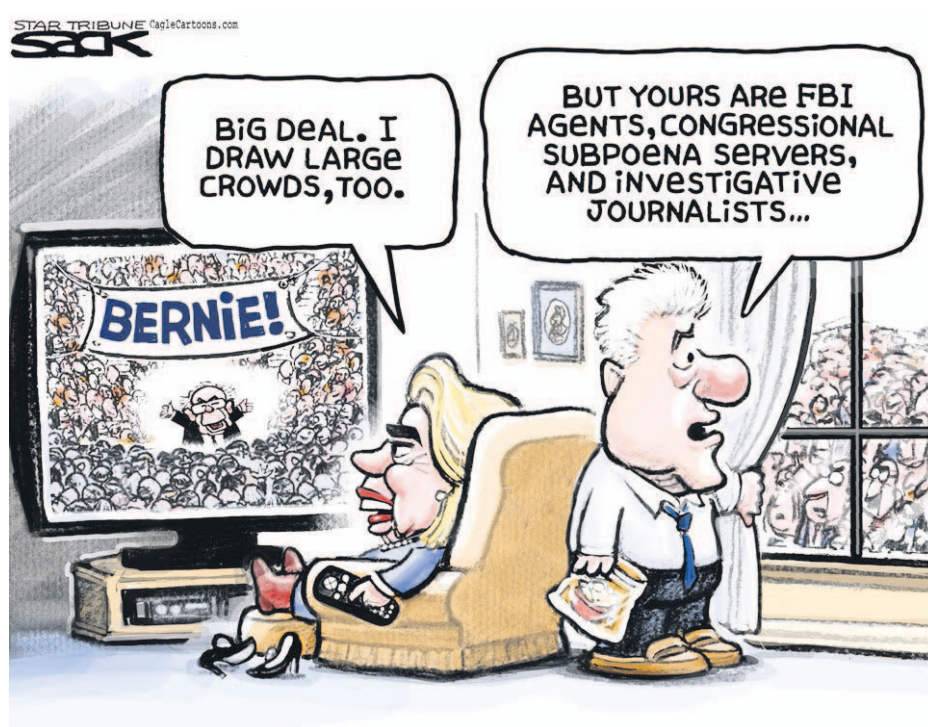
My hens never want to be picked up and soothed. If one hops the fence and can't make her way back to the coop, she hates to see me coming to her rescue. She runs away. I have to corner her, and when I reach down to grab her, she cuts back and escapes between my legs. But if I stand nearby and ignore her, she walks towards me with curiosity. She looks at me out of one eye, tilts her head to look out of the other eye, then steps forward to peck the grass at my feet.

This makes chickens easy to please. When I want to give them some special pampering, I just kick over a log to expose a night crawler twisting in the mud. A chicken always trots over, grabs a worm, then gobbles it down like spaghetti.

So I guess the girls are not much trouble. They do, however, impinge on my freedom. What if I want to fly to Vegas? Or sell the house and buy a sailboat? Then again, I don't like gambling and don't know how to sail. I do enjoy spending time at home, even though things are pretty quiet here with the teenagers gone. My wife and I aren't laying any more eggs ourselves.

I guess I can decide later. For now, I'll let the hunting, scratching and pecking of the "secretaries of the '50s" keep my backyard lively.

Jourdan Arenson is a contributor to Writers on the Range, a column service of High Country News (hcn.org). He writes in Oregon.



# County doesn't trust Oregon's marijuana program

By TAMARA MABBOTT

The Oregon medical marijuana program has significant regulatory and oversight problems. Members of the Umatilla County Marijuana Study Committee are working to remedy those problems. Until then, implementation of a medical marijuana program in Umatilla County is premature.

Sixteen months ago the Board of Commissioners adopted a temporary moratorium on medical marijuana dispensaries and, on the same day, appointed a committee to study the same. The committee approach was and still is unprecedented in Oregon.

Recognizing the multiple land use implications of marijuana laws, a few months later the board appointed me to chair the committee. Shortly thereafter the committee was expanded to include members of the public to strengthen the diverse perspective, including an attorney advocating for legal access and use, a registered nurse supportive of marijuana as an affordable and accessible alternative to dangerous narcotics and a highly regarded, reputable citizen with a keen interest in developing a community-appropriate medical dispensary program designed with appropriate checks and balances. Those new members rounded out an already diverse membership representing law enforcement,

District Attorney's office, public schools, drug treatment professionals and county counsel.

The study committee met multiple times in meetings open to the public. Each agenda included a time for public comment.

In November, after the passage of Measure 91 that legalized recreational marijuana, the board expanded the charter of the committee to study recreational marijuana businesses. Over the course of a year, the study committee assembled hundreds of pages of research of legal, medical and opinion materials. Materials were posted on the county website.

In April the committee hosted staff from the Oregon Health Authority to learn firsthand how the state monitors and regulates the Medical Marijuana Dispensary Program. The committee learned critical information about the state regulatory program: Four inspectors cover the entire state. Dispensaries are subject to an annual inspection (by contrast local restaurants and public swimming pools are subject to a minimum of two annual inspections by County Environmental Health and more if compliance is lacking). The state OHA does not coordinate with local government on zoning and provides no notice or opportunity for public comment. (This explains how two dispensaries started up unbeknownst to the county).

A single background check is conducted

on the owner but not the operator of the dispensary. Product is obtained from MMJ cardholders and there is almost no accountability for excess pot. Product is required to be tested for mold, mildew and potency but there is no training or licensing requirements and dispensaries can provide their own testing. Of the 242 active dispensaries in the state, OHA has suspended six licenses, four of which have been reinstated. With regard to edibles, OHA staff told the committee "it is currently an unregulated industry" although new legislation would likely change that.

The study committee agreed to take a hiatus until the Oregon Legislature completed their work on HB 3400, which created significant legal reform and provided a local opt out provision for counties whose voters opposed Measure 91 by 55 percent. The opt-out applies to medical and recreational marijuana. HB 3400 also directed the OHA to reform its regulatory program, although the existing program will operate until reform is in place. Consider how laws changed when prohibition on alcohol was repealed. States adopted regulations for manufacturing, labeling, licensing and sale of alcohol.

Given the current lackluster OHA oversight of medical dispensaries, the county study committee recommended the board

continue the moratorium until such time that robust regulatory oversight is in place. In the meantime, a subcommittee was formed to monitor and inform improvements to the state medical marijuana program. The study committee agreed to reconvene in January to evaluate the new measures and reassess whether the reforms are sufficient.

If so, the county study committee may recommend the board withdraw the moratorium and implement a reasonable and responsible medical marijuana dispensary program. Whether the county planning commission will find it appropriate to permit dispensaries in rural areas where access is limited is the topic of a future story. City planning commissions and councils of course are not constrained by a county moratorium.

In the meantime, laws allow medical (and recreational) users to grow their own and purchase from licensed facilities. So no patients should go without. Persons interested in the issue are encouraged to review the literature, participate in opportunities to reform state rules and contact county officials if they would like to participate in future county study committee meetings.

Tamra Mabbott is chair of the Umatilla County marijuana committee and the Umatilla County planning director.

# Collaboration and compromise create solutions on transmission line

By MITCH COLBURN

When everyone works together and in the spirit of collaboration, good things happen. This was the case recently on the Boardman to Hemingway (B2H) transmission line project. B2H is a proposed 300-mile, high-voltage power line that will run between the Boardman area and Melba, Idaho.

Hours of collaborative discussion resulted in an important change to the B2H route that avoids or greatly minimizes additional impacts to the Navy training facility and irrigated agricultural land, including tree farms.

Numerous stakeholders recently signed a letter of support for the B2H route variation that runs along the west side of Bombing Range Road on the eastern edge of the Navy's Weapons Systems Training Facility. The letter of

support was submitted to the Navy in an application for an easement and to the Bureau of Land Management for its B2H National Environmental Policy Act permitting process.

The stakeholder group included the Oregon and Idaho governors' energy offices, Morrow County, the Port of Morrow, the city of Boardman, Umatilla Electric Cooperative, Columbia Basin Electric Cooperative, PacifiCorp, Columbia-Snake River Irrigators Association, local landowners, Wheatridge Wind Energy, 2Morrow Energy, Ella Wind Development and Idaho Power.

It took much collaboration and several key compromises to make this route variation feasible. Everyone who signed the letter expressed their commitment to continue working together.

B2H will provide additional capacity for exchanging energy

between the Northwest and the Intermountain West regions, depending on which region is experiencing the highest demand. The Northwest traditionally experiences high winter energy use, while the Intermountain West experiences high summer energy use due to irrigation and air conditioning load. By taking advantage of this diversity in seasonal peak demands, B2H will allow both regions to operate more efficiently and economically while also strengthening the regional power grid.

As Idaho Power works with its plant co-owners on its glide path to less coal-fired power generation, B2H becomes even more important. The company recently affirmed in its 2015 integrated resource plan, a long-term resource planning study, that B2H is essential to serving long-term customer demand. Previous plans also have identified the need

for this transmission project, going back to 2006.

In the 2015 plan, the company's preferred portfolio includes the potential retirement of its 50 percent interest in the North Valmy coal-fired plant in Nevada in 2025. The Boardman coal plant, in which Idaho Power owns a 10 percent share, will cease coal-fired operations in 2020. While B2H doesn't take the place of these two plants, having a resource like it in place would help allow for acceleration of the early retirement of the North Valmy plant.

B2H will add to the entire region's ability to economically purchase and deliver power for utility customers. B2H will also be a "no-carbon resource" because it is an alternative to constructing traditional carbon emitting generation resources. The project will move energy from where it's generated to where it's needed.

The no-carbon nature of B2H may also assist Idaho and Oregon in meeting the new power-plant emission rules recently finalized by the Environmental Protection Agency. The line will use existing regional generation resources more efficiently.

Successful compromise and collaboration between diverse stakeholders — be it large or small — can be achieved. The recent letter of support for the West of Bombing Range Road B2H route variation demonstrates that. Idaho Power will continue to work with communities and landowners to site B2H and create solutions that lessen the project's impacts.

You can always find updated information on the project at boardmantohemingway.com.

Mitch Colburn is the leader of Idaho Power's 500-kV projects group.