

## Quick takes

### Naked leap lands in tree

Let that be a lesson to all tweakers: if you do the drugs you could end up on the front page of the *EO* naked! And the Oregonlive/*The Oregonian*!

I'm glad the lady at home didn't get hurt (physically) — I know for a fact this will take her a lot of time to mentally get through this ordeal.

— **concernedforgrowth**

Reminds me of Round-Up of 1980...

— **Steven E. Anderson**

I would say he got caught with his pants down! What a hoot!

— **Nella Fackrell Britt**

This photo actually made me laugh a lot. And every time I see it in my news feed I giggle again.

— **Kasi Quaepts-McIntyre**

Mental illness and addiction are not a joke. I hope he finally can get help.

— **Rob Burton**

### Fenicum killing ruled justified

The key question is: When did the FBI shoot? Before Fenicum reached for his weapon?

— **David Petersen**

He wasn't reaching for a weapon he was grabbing his side when he was shot.

— **Jolene Buckner**

The investigation and report were released today in Bend. Go read it.

— **Virgene Thomas Cox**

Why read a factual report when conspiracy theories are so much more fun?

— **Paula Heinrich**

*Tweet your quick takes to @Tim\_Trainor or email editor@eastoregonian.com, and keep them to 140 characters.*

# Oregon's one-party rule is harming the state

Several years ago, Oregon's Legislature created what they entitled the "grand bargain." Whether or not it turned out to be as grand as the politicians touted it to be, the title stuck.

Now, as the Democrats continue their stranglehold on the shape of Oregon, and in the process reshape the purpose and intent of the short session, they've come up with a new plan — the grand deception.

Somehow, the Democratic leadership has adopted the middle class and those struggling to survive as beneficiaries of their ambitious plans for the minimum wage and a host of other social engineering initiatives designed to create an artificial level of security. Oregon is locked in the grip of misguided legislation driven by a group of Portland liberals who have never met a payroll — literally or figuratively.

Polls show raising the minimum wage is supported by 80 percent of Democrats and just 16 percent of Republicans.

In Eastern Oregon, the minimum wage proposals will certainly have an impact on helping some workers add to their paychecks. For a number of others, there will be no paycheck at all as hundreds of small businesses shutter their doors — unable to survive. A recent estimate provided at the economic outlook luncheon in Pendleton revealed the new minimum wage proposal will cost Oregon 32,000 jobs. Many observers feel that estimate is extremely conservative.

I visited a grocery store in a remote community of Eastern Oregon that is popular with the locals because otherwise they would have to drive 50-60 miles for groceries. Unlike stores in larger communities, traffic isn't heavy but workers have to be on hand throughout the day to be available when customers do come in.

That's something that happens in many small, rural areas where the access to services is a blessing but customer traffic is sparse. It isn't that the owners don't want to



GEORGE MURDOCK  
Comment

pay more — they simply don't have enough business to make it work. Jack up the wages and the citizens of those communities, who already have some of the lowest per capita incomes in Oregon, will be spending a fortune on gasoline because local shopping options are closed.

And, speaking of fuel, which is a burden on those with lower incomes, the plethora of

clean fuel initiatives are destined to drive up the cost of gasoline — along with other similar products — and the group hit the hardest will be those the Democrats purport to represent.

The same will happen with utility bills as strict environmental demands create new costs for those supplying power.

With both federal and state lawmakers continuing to assault the natural resource industries, the current housing shortage cannot help but be impacted by a shortage of building materials, let alone taking away yet more family wage jobs.

With minimum wage legislation, not only will the cost of food go up, the opportunity for young people to earn summer wages will diminish. Economics will force farmers to move away from labor intensive crops in favor of those which can be mechanized and reduce the need for labor. Students who rely on part-time employment will find the jobs have vanished and they will get neither the experience nor the income. Organizations which seek to offer internship opportunities for students will likely trash the idea.

Oregon farmers will be unable to compete on a national scale because their cost of production will eliminate their ability to compete with states where labor

costs are much, much less. Large chains don't care where their products come from but rather demand the lowest price.

Oregon is rapidly becoming the least business-friendly state in the nation thanks to the work of the Legislature. In fact, Oregon isn't even on the radar screen of most major businesses seeking to expand.

The agenda of Democratic legislative leaders cannot help but drive up the cost of fundamental goods and services — something which has the greatest impact on those experiencing financial challenges. Their actions will have a far more devastating impact on low income Oregonians than any gains that might be experienced from a higher minimum wage.

The 2016 Legislative session was a farce that completely disregarded the very intent of short sessions. Short sessions were sold on the basis of tweaking measures passed in the long session — not creating major policy initiatives. But short sessions also provide cover for passing measures with limited public awareness and participation. And the misuse of power, as demonstrated by the 2016 Legislature, can limit discussion by those who are not proponents of the Democratic agenda.

And yet, despite the grand deception, our most economically vulnerable citizens provide the strongest base of support for the very lawmakers whose actions are making their lives miserable.

When decisions are being guided by those organizations with big checkbooks, Oregonians can expect a future based upon entitlement, not empowerment.

George Murdock, of Pendleton, is a Umatilla County Commissioner.

The agenda of the Democratic leaders cannot help but drive up the cost of fundamental goods and services.

## Ten Commandments for open meetings

By BRIAN J. HUNHOFF

Yankton County (S.D.) Observer

"I think heroic deeds were all conceived in the open air."  
-Walt Whitman

The quote atop this editorial is from Song of the Open Road — a cheerful 1856 tribute to freedom and the great outdoors.

Hopefully, Mr. Whitman would have approved use of his prose to promote open, well-aired government. It's unlikely the great poet favored government secrecy and closed-door meetings. He also wrote, "Out of the dark confinement, out from behind the screen!"

For today's purposes, Whitman's "screen" represents the executive session — a self-important term for a classic oxymoron: closed public meeting.

Too many elected boards seek every opportunity to meet out of sight of the public they serve. Some schedule executive sessions as a regular agenda item. Some hold up to three executive sessions in a single meeting. Some have executive sessions that last longer than the open portion of their meeting.

In most cases, executive sessions do not violate open meeting laws. The closed-door discussions are often suggested or encouraged by an elected board's legal counsel.

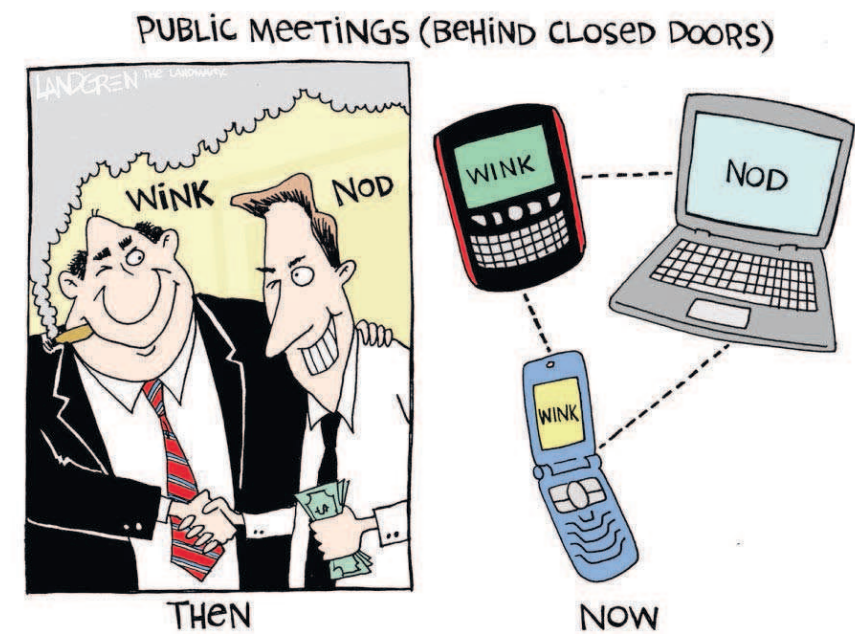
But legality and necessity are two different things.

Consider the following list our Fourth Estate counsel to county commissions, city councils, and school boards everywhere on executive sessions and general government openness. Citizens should hold their elected officials to the standards below.

These are Ten Commandments for open meetings:

**ONE:** Do not gather as a quorum outside of regular meetings, and do not hold special meetings without giving at least 24 hours public notice.

**TWO:** Do not habitually add



last-minute items to the agenda, and do not act on anything not listed on the posted agenda.

**THREE:** Do not abuse the litigation excuse for executive sessions to speculate about possible or imagined lawsuits.

**FOUR:** Do not stretch the personnel excuse for executive sessions to discuss policy issues. Example: Creating a new position or changing a department's job descriptions are policy decisions and not appropriate topics for a closed meeting.

**FIVE:** Do not dial up the "negotiations" excuse to suddenly exclude the public from discussion of controversial issues that were previously aired thoroughly in open session.

**SIX:** Do not allow executive session conversations to stray to other topics.

**SEVEN:** Do not violate the spirit of the open meeting law with frequent phone, email or text dialogue with other members. Reach consensus at the meeting.

**EIGHT:** Do not make a habit of whispering or passing notes at meetings. You were elected to speak

for us. Tell what you have to say out loud and proud!

**NINE:** Allow public input at every meeting. Include it on every agenda.

**TEN:** Be as transparent as possible. Do not hold executive sessions simply because counsel advised it is "legal" to do so. Ask yourself: "Is it absolutely critical we discuss this privately?"

That should be the standard because legality and necessity are two different things.

We appreciate our commissioners and board members. They serve for minimal compensation. They make tough decisions. They sometimes lose friends and make enemies. Their dedication to community is admirable.

We simply ask elected officials to think twice before kicking the public out of public meetings.

Strive for fewer. Less is more. A closed meeting should be a rare occasion, not a habit.

Brian Hunhoff writes for the Yankton County Observer in Yankton, South Dakota. His editorials about open government won the 2015 Freedom of Information award, which was given by the National Newspaper Association.

## Graze it or blaze it

By KEITH BALTZOR

The proposed wilderness area in Oregon's Malheur County, if designated, will lead to the destruction of the very landscape some wish to protect. Oregon Natural Desert Association and Keen Footwear, a multi-million dollar Portland company, and others seek such designation.

Wilderness designation will mean very large blocks of land will be denied access to motorized travel, making it nearly impossible for local ranchers to remain viable. Diminished cattle numbers could lead to the undoing of the Owyhee landscape. Whether you agree or disagree with grazing on public lands, the fact is, grazing done correctly reduces intensity and helps prevent fire. Reduction or elimination of grazing in a short number of years will lead to an overabundance of fine fuels.

Research conducted by rangeland scientists, Davies, Bates, Svejcar and Boyd, "Effects of Long Term Livestock Grazing on Fuel Characteristics in Rangelands: An Example from the Sage Brush Steppe" suggested that "moderate livestock grazing reduces the risk of wildfires on sage brush rangelands by decreasing the amount of fine fuel available for ignition and limiting potential fire spread by reducing fine fuel, continuity, accumulation, and height." The accumulation and continuity of these unused grasses create a perfect opportunity for what are commonly

referred to as mega fires.

Mega fires burn with such intensity they often kill many of the beneficial perennial grasses, such as Bluebunch Wheat Grass and Idaho Fescue. These perennials are the last line of defense against undesirable, invasive species, such as cheat grass and Medusa Head that flourish after fires. These invasives lead to a less diverse plant community, erosion, and even more fire.

Jordan Valley's Rural Fire Protection Association is currently trained, equipped, and motivated to respond to fires at a moment's notice. Many fires are stopped while small, saving countless acres of resource. If these ranchers are put out of business by wilderness designation, I doubt they will spend their time, money, or put their lives on the line to protect a resource that no longer directly benefits them. I highly doubt ONDA, Keen, and their cohorts will have a 150-person fire protection association on the ground to replace the Jordan Valley association.

Even though ONDA claims grazing will continue, it would be wise to look at what they have done in the past rather than listen to what they say they will do in the future. I believe through litigation and denied access, cattle will be pushed from the land. If so, it will ultimately lead to incinerating the area they purport to protect.

This proposal must be stopped to truly save the Owyhees.

Keith Baltzor lives in Burns.

## Transmission needs remain strong

Idaho Power looks forward to reaching some major milestones for the Boardman to Hemingway transmission line project in 2016. The federal permitting process is in the home stretch, with a final Environmental Impact Statement expected from the Bureau of Land Management this year, and potentially a record of decision, too. Idaho Power will finalize its application for Oregon's facility siting process after the momentous BLM events.

It has been a long, productive road to get to this point. Idaho Power's 2015 integrated resource plan, a long-term resource planning study, recently



MITCH COLBURN  
Comment

reaffirmed that B2H is essential to serving future growth in customer demand. Previous IRPs also have identified the need for this transmission project, going back to the 2006 IRP.

The need for B2H is still strong. When finished, the project will help provide low-cost energy to Idaho Power's customers in southern Idaho and eastern Oregon. The project also will interconnect with existing transmission facilities owned by our project partners PacifiCorp and the Bonneville Power Administration, allowing greater amounts of electricity to move throughout the Pacific Northwest. This helps meet a regional need and provides benefits to the entire area, much of which is served, directly or indirectly, by those two

providers. In addition, the project allows Idaho Power to serve its growing load without building a carbon-emitting resource.

We thank all of the communities along the B2H route for their past input and continued engagement with the project. That public involvement began in 2010 with the year-long Community Advisory Process and continues today. The hundreds of hours spent by numerous folks, from landowners to public officials, to help find the best route for the project have been invaluable. We look forward to continuing to work with you as permitting of B2H continues, and through the construction of this project that benefits the entire region.

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

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