

Quick takes

Minimum wage jumps up

It's a snowball effect: Wages go up, prices go up.
— **Tonya R Rychard**

And when people find they have more money to spend and his profits increase, will he lower the prices? Nope.
— **Eric Sebastian**

Goodwill halts Pendleton plan

Good job "Main Street Mafia."
— **Leone Lightburn**

That is a central location, definitely good spot for a firehouse.
— **Nick Ritzer**

I would rather support the fire department than a \$8 million bridge to private property. They help people and the money is not coming from the street fund to fix pot holes.
— **Troy Thomas**

Grasty recall election fails

Translation: only 30 percent of Harney County are cooks.
— **Kate Chastain**

Is the FBI voting as citizens of the county?
— **Michele B Ball**

Hermiston bottle recycling

Before I moved to Eastern Oregon, we had the first bottle drop in Oregon just two blocks from our house. It was a blessing after having to use all those grocery store return drops. It's fast, it's easy and no waiting.
— **Ed Morris**

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.

Cannabis is world's safest substance

My name is Daniel John. Sometimes I go by the moniker DJ for short, or just DJ Short. I reside in the Pendleton area and have for the past 30 years. I travel a lot for work and to care for family, but I very much enjoy calling this neck of the woods home.

I'm somewhat deeply involved in the cannabis industry, as it turns out. A long while back I created a few cannabis strains (Blueberry, Flo, Blue Moonshine, Blue Velvet and Cocoa Kush, to name a few) that gained quite a popularity and now these varieties are all the rage among those in the know. As a result, I am finding myself in great demand in many places.

My focus is, and always has been, the medicinal aspects of the cannabis plant. It is a fascinating subject with unprecedented promise currently being studied in only a very few places, such as Israel.

Not here yet, unfortunately, and as a result I have never enjoyed any great reward for my efforts. This may soon change, however, as perceptions regarding cannabis shift — especially as successes present themselves regarding use of cannabis for cancer, AIDS, seizures, MS, diabetes, depression, Crohn's and addiction, to name a few. There is much need for research in this regard.

I'm writing today because folks at the *East Oregonian* were interested in my story and wanted some input from someone of my caliber and knowledge of all things cannabis. Originally, they wanted me to cover topics such as how did I get here, what does Eastern Oregon stand to offer/gain/lose from the burgeoning cannabis industry, the science of new strains and how legalization has affected my life and business — which is all well and good, and I am more than eager and willing to oblige.

There is, however, one topic concerning society's perception and misconceptions regarding cannabis that lingers and looms like the proverbial and neglected elephant in



DJ SHORT Comment

the room. I feel compelled to acknowledge it first: We have all been blatantly deceived, misled and lied to about this plant.

All of us. Each and every woman, man and child, every teacher, counselor, administrator and janitor, every politician, government employee or contractor, every doctor, lawyer and professor, every cop, prosecutor and judge, every cowboy and every native has been constantly and consistently lied to about this plant. It has become awkwardly ridiculous for most and a downright, ongoing disaster for others.

Due to the fact that everyone has been misinformed about this plant for the past 75-80 years, coupled with the fact that open research has been systematically quelled or stymied, there exists no truly trusted authority on the subject. Many like to pretend that they are authorities on the (misguided) negative aspects of cannabis. But very few, such as Dr. Sanjay Gupta, have actually made the "mea culpa," admitted their past mistake regarding the cannabis plant and now extol its virtues.

Which brings me to what may perhaps be a true fact regarding cannabis and its safety as a consumable substance: Cannabis is the safest substance known to human beings.

That is an extremely bold statement to make, I realize. How does one back that up? I don't need to. If anyone disagrees with or wishes to challenge that statement, there exists one very simple means by which to do so: Name something safer. Drinking water? Sorry, several annual deaths from that substance. Turns out cannabis is the only substance we know of that acts as a non-toxic inebriant that does not allow us to put enough of it into our systems to harm ourselves — in thousands

of years of recorded use and not one single reported fatality.

After realizing this simple but very relevant fact, if one continues to choose the prohibitionist rant that cannabis is harmful, my only recourse if to offer you a sincere apology: I am sorry you were lied to about this plant and I am sorry you accepted the lies as truth.

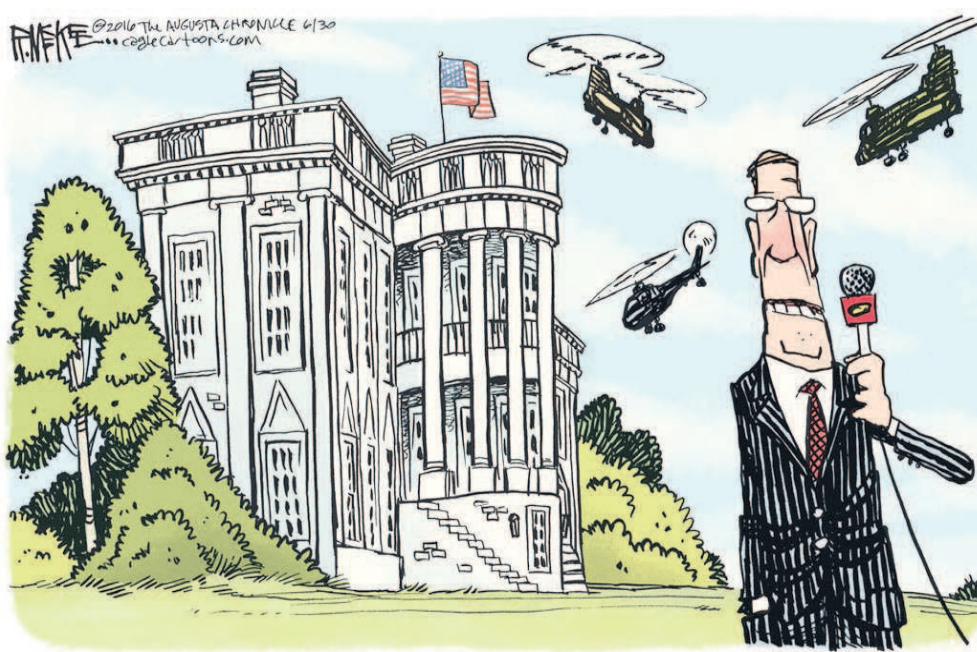
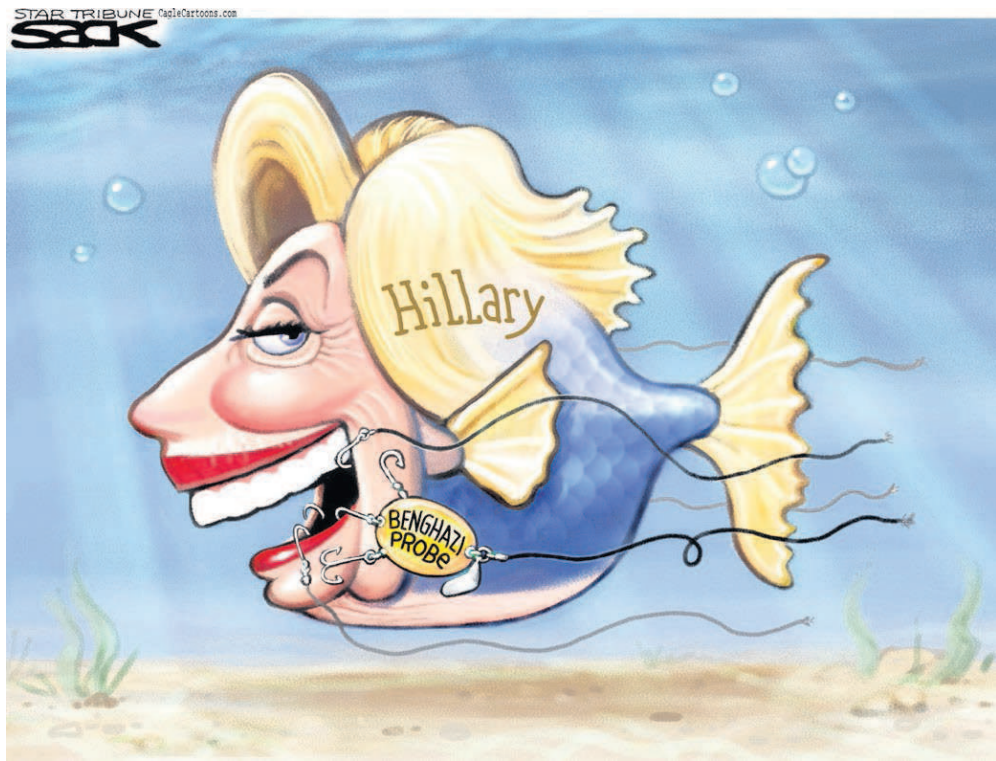
We have all been lied to about this plant, but there are those who have figured out the deception and who have made great progress and advances in the field. Those who have gone on to help ourselves and many others heal despite all of the oppressions and suppressions stacked against us. We are here to help you learn about this plant and its benefits, but only if you let us.

In order to do so, the powers that be will need to stop persecuting the cannabis community via the archaic and counter-productive war on drugs and all of the destructive deceit that goes with it.

This is not supposed to be some ongoing psychopathic neighborhood game of cops and robbers perpetrated by the local bullies in charge. You need to sincerely recognize and admit your mistakes before we may successfully move forward.

I would very much enjoy the opportunity to help teach my community about the wonders and merits of this valuable plant that offers something beneficial for almost everyone. But I am not certain if those in my community are ready and willing to admit to being misled regarding cannabis. Because if anyone chooses to cling to those deceptions there is really nothing any of us are able to do for you. The choice is yours; there are many of us here waiting and willing to help.

Daniel John Short lives in Pendleton. He is among the nation's foremost cannabis breeders.



"IN THE WAKE OF THE ISTANBUL ATTACK, PRESIDENT OBAMA HAS CALLED AN EMERGENCY MEETING OF HIS TOP-LEVEL ADVISERS TO RAMP UP EFFORTS TO IMPLEMENT NEW MEASURES TO ENSURE AVOIDING EVER USING THE PHRASE, 'ISLAMIC TERRORISM!'"

Political winds shouldn't delay air travelers

By **DREW JOHNSON**
Taxpayers Protection Alliance

A new navigation system at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is getting flyers onto the ground more quickly — and reducing greenhouse-gas emissions in the process.

If only Portland International could say the same. PDX has not yet installed the navigational technology boasted by Sea-Tac, known as "Required Navigation Performance."

Oregonians can blame Washington — D.C., that is — for the delay. Congress has turned the Federal Aviation Administration into a political football. Both parties say that they want to overhaul the nation's air traffic control system but haven't been able to agree on how to do so.

The solution? Spin the air traffic control system out of the FAA, into a separate non-profit jointly managed and funded by those who use it. Such a move would break the political gridlock that's taken hold of America's skies — and ensure that those traversing them benefit from the most up-to-date aviation technology.

Judging from Sea-Tac's experience, the advantages of Required Navigation Performance are substantial. By harnessing satellite technology, the system allows pilots to burn less fuel.

Alaska Airlines says that the technology has reduced fuel consumption for each Sea-Tac landing by 87 gallons — and cut carbon emissions by 1,900 pounds. In just one year, those savings amount to 2.1 million gallons of fuel and 22,000 metric tons of carbon. Its impressive results would

seem to indicate that the technology should be swiftly installed all across the country. Yet only a handful of airports have gained access to Required Navigation Performance.

That's largely because bickering in the nation's capital has made comprehensive reform of the nation's air navigation system all but impossible. The FAA simply doesn't know if it will have the funding from Congress to tackle the challenge.

The procedures followed by many air traffic controllers haven't changed in decades. In fact, most airports still rely on World War II-era ground radar technologies to guide pilots during takeoff and landing.

That has to change. Lawmakers should start by relieving the federal government of its role in air traffic control — and charging FAA regulators with focusing solely on air safety.

A new private, nonprofit user co-op would oversee air traffic control and tend to the system's infrastructure and personnel. Those who rely on the system, including airlines, would be responsible for funding this new organization. In order to pay for large-scale upgrades, this new body could borrow against its revenues.

Under this new model, America's air traffic control system would no longer depend on funding from Congress. Decisions would be based not on the vagaries of partisan politics — but on what's best for pilots, travelers, and the environment.

Fewer than 130 miles separate Sea-Tac and Portland International. But technologically, they're light years apart.

Anti-government militias threaten us at home

By **RAÚL M. GRIJALVA AND BENNIE THOMPSON**
High Country News

As we saw during the Bundy Ranch standoff in 2014 and earlier this year at a wildlife refuge in Oregon, violent extremism is not limited to war-torn countries thousands of miles away from the United States. Armed militias have expanded in size and sophistication and now present a threat to public safety and national security.

These homegrown militias threaten our public lands, the American people who want to enjoy them, and the public servants who manage them. Although much of the news coverage of those incidents painted a sanitized picture of people who just "want their land back," a June 15 congressional forum on these groups made it clear that the reality is much darker.

The consequences of their anti-government activism — much of which stems from their hatred of President Barack Obama — go much deeper than a few newspaper headlines. Some of the men and women involved in the Nevada and Oregon standoffs have openly called for the death of federal land management officials, and they continue to harass them — largely without punishment — simply for doing their jobs.

These extremists encourage each other by publicizing pictures of the faces of federal officials, along with their vehicles' license plates. At our congressional forum, Tim Blount, the executive director of Friends of Malheur National Wildlife Refuge, described how he needed a police escort just to move safely around his home community in Oregon.

As David Jenkins, president of Conservatives for Responsible Stewardship, pointed out in his testimony, creating this climate of fear and ignoring democratically established laws can never be considered patriotic.

"This is why it is so important that

extremism and violence on our public lands be unequivocally rejected by Republicans and Democrats alike, and that addressing this growing problem be a bipartisan endeavor," he told us. He is absolutely correct.

The threat these groups pose deserves a full congressional hearing with Republican lawmakers in attendance. As the top Democrats on the Natural Resources and Homeland Security committees, we have asked for such a hearing. The Republican majority has ignored our request and consistently refuses to take this issue seriously.

Instead, as we heard at our forum, some Republican lawmakers employ the same anti-government rhetoric that fuels these radicals. Chairman Rob Bishop, R-Utah, has co-sponsored a bill by Rep. Jason Chaffetz, R-Utah, to remove federal law enforcement authority from the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management, turning those functions over to local police and county sheriffs who lack the relevant training.

Anti-government extremists didn't always direct their ire at public-lands agencies. That changed, in part, because a group of Western congressmen, state legislators and county sheriffs built their careers by advocating the transfer of millions of acres of federal land to states or counties, even though no state or county had ever owned the land in question or could afford to manage it now.

In the guise of giving land "back," these lawmakers — and the extremists who now use this campaign as a rallying cry — have undermined the very idea of public

lands as a shared and cherished resource. Anyone who has visited a national monument lately need only imagine it replaced by a mine or strip mall or blocked off by "no trespassing" signs to understand what this campaign truly represents.

It's high time we acknowledged that our nation's own homegrown terrorists also threaten public safety.

Our public lands and the people who protect them enjoy enormous public support. Garrett Reppenhagen of the Vet Voice Foundation spoke movingly at our forum about how access to our national forests helped him recover psychologically after his multiple tours of duty overseas, and described what it would mean to him and other veterans to lose that access.

And for perhaps the first time ever, 32 former federal employees — including former heads of the Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife Service and Bureau of Land Management — recently signed a letter urging Congress to act against the threat of the self-described "patriot movement."

Congress and the American public cannot afford to turn a blind eye to ISIS or other foreign terrorists that mean us harm. But it's high time we acknowledged that our nation's own homegrown terrorists also threaten public safety. Tolerating them, or, even worse, encouraging them as part of a campaign to hand our public lands over to the private sector, is a dangerous and short-sighted strategy.

The writers are contributors to Writers on the Range, an opinion service of High Country News. Rep. Raúl M. Grijalva, D-Ariz., is the ranking member of the House Committee on Natural Resources. Rep. Bennie Thompson, D-Miss., is the ranking member of the House Committee on Homeland Security.