

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Volunteering is a rewarding act that pays off

The incident had all the earmarks of a daring rescue. A woman fell off a cliff. A group of emergency responders just happened to be near and quickly deployed to save the day.

That scenario played out recently when Jacki Mulhair fell from Indian Rock Overlook near La Grande.

Mulhair stepped too close to the edge of a cliff and then fell 86 feet, suffering numerous serious injuries.

Luckily, just over 2 miles away, personnel from the La Grande Rural Fire Protection District and Union County Search and Rescue were wrapping up training when Mulhair fell. The search and rescue team eventually rescued Mulhair. She is now in a Richland hospital recovering from serious injuries, including broken ribs and nose and a broken leg.

But she is alive, thanks to the quick action of the search and rescue personnel. Granted, a lot of things had to go right in this incident and it was very fortuitous that the search and rescue squad was relatively nearby and could react quickly.

The incident appears to be one of



La Grande Rural Fire Protection District Photo
Union County Search and Rescue and La Grande Rural Fire Protection District used illumination from car headlights to rescue Jacki Mulhair, who had fallen 86 feet at Indian Rock Overlook on top of Mt. Emily outside of La Grande.

those “what ifs,” where a lot of things could have gone wrong but didn’t.

The incident, though, also highlights one of those key facts about our emergency service personnel that often is overlooked. The members of the Union County Search and Res-

cue team are volunteers. They were not getting paid to go out and rescue an individual who was in a life-and-death situation. They were there because each one feels a sense of duty to the larger community.

Volunteers are a key strand in the

fabric of all our communities. Without them many events and other community enhancement efforts simply would not occur. Without dedicated men and women who choose to take time out of their own busy lives to give back, someone like Mulhair might have ended up in a far worse situation.

Mulhair’s case is significant and out of the ordinary. Someone trapped and seriously injured after falling off a cliff isn’t a day-to-day event. However, when such emergencies do occur it is up to people who volunteer to help.

We are all busy and we all have other priorities — jobs, children, etc. But volunteering your time for any event or agency — such as search and rescue — isn’t just the right thing to do but a noble endeavor.

Communities across the region need more volunteers, more people that choose to step forward and help out their communities.

Sure, devoting a chunk of time to the community isn’t easy. It takes commitment and courage. But, in the end, volunteering is a rewarding act that pays off.

OTHER VIEWS

Don’t recall Gov. Kate Brown

Bend Bulletin

Bill Currier, chairman of the Oregon Republican Party, wants to recall Gov. Kate Brown, a Democrat. If Brown showed contempt for limits of the state constitution by abusing her power as governor, who would be against recalling her?

But she has not. The recall is hare-brained hyperventilation.

Currier’s argument for recalling Brown has layers. He said she has “threatened to usurp legislative power with executive orders to implement her failed legislation, deciding single-handedly what is best for Oregon.”

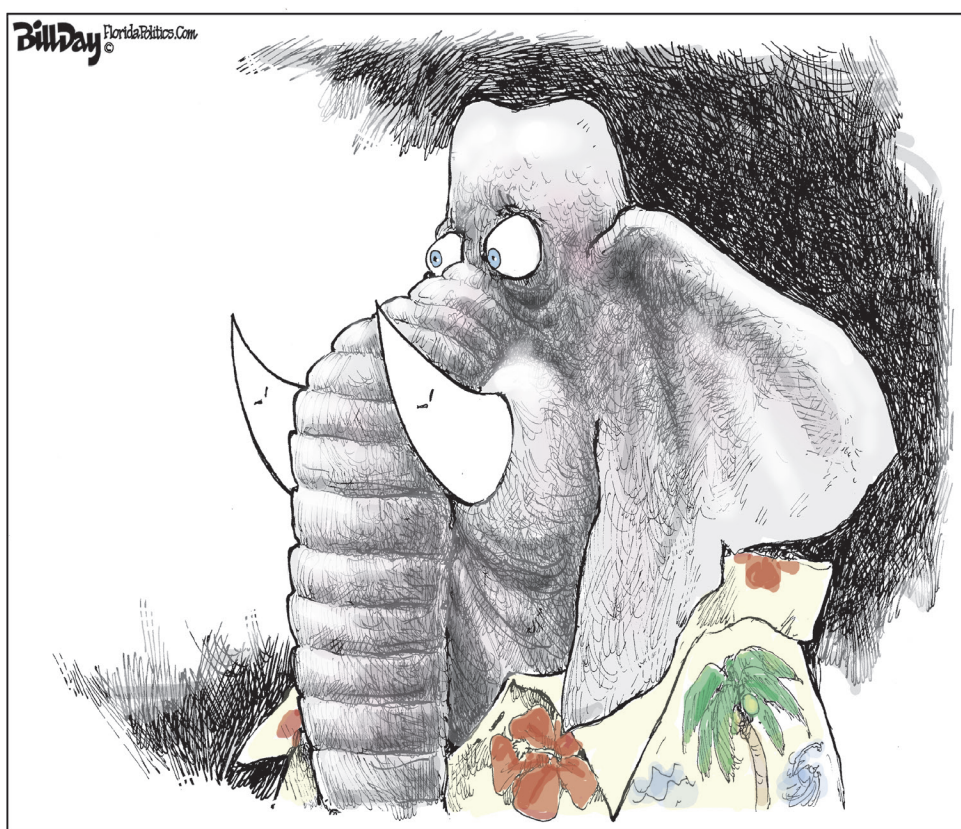
What has she actually done? Brown was disappointed that cap-and-trade legislation, House Bill 2020, died. She believes it’s critical for the state to reduce greenhouse gases to tamp down wildfires, protect the ocean from acidifying, prevent declines in agricultural yields and more. And what she said she would do is: “I am also directing my staff and agencies to explore alternative paths in case these collaborative approaches do not lead to successful legislation. This includes the use of my executive powers and direction of state agencies.”

We have editorialized against HB 2020 and believe it was flawed for a number of reasons. But Brown has not actually done anything to violate the state constitution.

Currier also criticized passage of a bill that would enable the state to issue driver’s licenses to unauthorized immigrants. Yes, voters overturned a similar law when it was put on the ballot just a few years ago in 2014. But Brown did nothing to abuse her power by signing into law a new bill passed by the Legislature.

Currier criticized the state’s new hidden business sales tax, passed by the 2019 Legislature and signed into law by Brown. We have editorialized against that tax. Oregon taxes should be broadly based and not hidden from consumers. Voters rejected at the ballot a very similar tax just a few years ago. Again, what did Brown do that violated the state constitution? Nothing.

Brown’s leadership of the state is grounds for debate, criticism and sometimes even praise. She does things Currier disagrees with. She does things we disagree with. That’s no reason to go all hide-the-children and recall her. It’s reason for Currier and the rest of the GOP to convince Oregonians they have a better plan and, therefore, to elect their candidates.



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YOUR VIEWS

Legislation jeopardizes coastal communities

I agree with radio show host Lars Larson on this one — the Oregon Legislature recently overturned a 25-year-old bill preventing new schools, hospitals, jails, fire and police stations from being built inside the state’s tsunami inundation zone.

Passage of House Bill 3309 has given in to construction and comp any interests in spite of the certainty the Oregon coast will suffer a devastating earthquake of magnitude 9.0 sometime within the next 40 to 50 years.

The truth is, this disaster is overdue now and could easily occur tomorrow. The Cascadia Fault is 600 miles long and is only 70 to 100 miles off the Oregon coast. When this fault breaks, there will be a fast-moving wave 100 feet high inundating every coastal town in Oregon. Geologists tell us residents will have “seconds to minutes” to evacuate on those narrow two-lane roads leading away from the coast. I would guess there will be more deaths in wrecks than from the tsu-

nami itself as people panic trying to leave the coast. The resulting devastation will mean there will be no services or assistance for at least two weeks after the event. There will be billions of dollars of destruction and many lives lost.

Building the listed facilities inside this zone will guarantee the deaths of hundreds of school children and staff, and complete destruction of all rescue and fire agencies as well as police departments. There will not even be hospitals left for the injured to be treated. We have witnessed a similar catastrophic event in Japan — this one will be as bad or worse.

Coastal legislators claim their towns are suffering economically because of the old law. That is unfortunate — if true — but it pales in comparison with the certain complete and total destruction of every town and every economy along the coast of Oregon. The Cascadia Event is a mathematical certainty. Is it really worth that risk?

**David Burns
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