

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

### A tip of the hat, a kick in the pants

**A tip of the hat** to Umatilla County for moving down from high to moderate risk this week. The change allows businesses, such as restaurants, gyms and theaters to operate at higher capacity, and signals a safer environment for county residents in general. It comes at a time when Oregon as a whole is seeing a new upward trend in cases, as are most other states.

The world is in a race between new, more contagious and dangerous variants of COVID-19 and our ability to protect people through vaccination. The time period we are in now is crucial to determining how quickly we can get back to “normal” life. Our actions now will determine what events, such as the Pendleton Round-Up and Umatilla County Fair, will look like later this year.

We know the recipe for reopening — quickly getting as many people vaccinated as possible, and until we have reached safe herd immunity levels, wearing masks properly over the nose and mouth while around people not in our household, social distancing, avoiding large gatherings and moving more things outside.

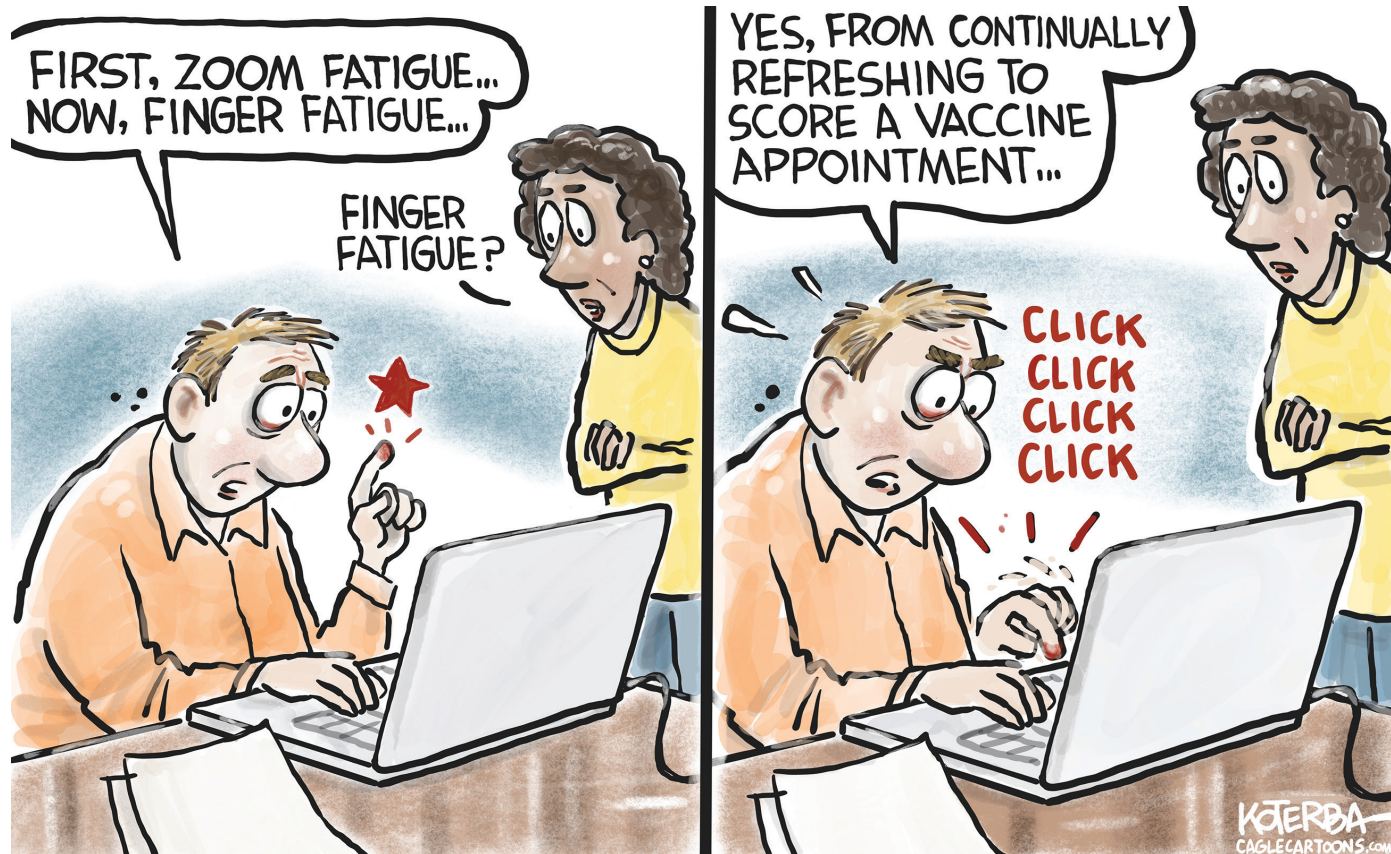
Umatilla County has been doing much better than last year. Let’s stay on that path.

**A kick in the pants** to the dispute that has caused the American Legion to stop meeting at the VFW building in Hermiston. Different people we have talked to about the situation, both on and off the record, have varying accounts of what happened and who is to blame. But whatever is going on, the interpersonal drama that seems to be at play is a distraction from serving veterans — a mission both organizations share.

We hope to see those involved put aside any differences they may have and work together to make both organizations a strong asset to local veterans and their families.

**A tip of the hat** to Bailey Munck, the 17-year-old Weston-McEwen High School student who testified to the Senate Judiciary Committee of the Oregon Legislature in favor of a bill named after her, which would increase penalties for sexually abusing a minor if the defendant is the victim’s teacher.

Munck’s bravery in sharing her story of abuse with the committee in March and with readers of the *East Oregonian* this week is something she should be proud of for the rest of her life, and will likely lead to changes that help future generations of students find justice.



## YOUR VIEWS

### BPA salmon claims need clarification

I frequently read newspaper articles claiming the Bonneville Power Administration has spent at least \$17 billion attempting to recover Columbia Basin threatened and endangered salmon and steelhead. This claim needs clarification.

Federal law requires BPA to be self-sustaining. A more accurate statement: Private citizens and business owners across the Pacific Northwest have paid the lion’s share of that \$17 billion, month by month, when they pay their electricity bills.

Fish and wildlife costs make up 24% of BPA’s nearly \$3 billion annual budget, or around \$700 million each year. Meanwhile, BPA is \$15 billion in debt, recently burned through \$900 million of its financial reserves, raised power prices by 30% over eight years, and will soon max out its \$7-plus billion credit card from the U.S. Treasury. Add to the mix aging assets that require increasingly greater capital expenditures, along with falling prices for BPA’s surplus energy.

Idaho Rep. Mike Simpson has crafted a proposal that would give BPA a chance for financial survival. Ignore or oppose Simpson’s proposal and Pacific Northwesters stand to lose more than Snake River salmon and steelhead.

**Bonnie Schonefeld Kooskia, Idaho**

### Gregg invested in Pendleton and its schools

I am writing this letter to express my support for Pat Gregg, who is running for Pendleton School Board, Position 7. I have known Pat for over 10 years and find him to be intelligent,

### LETTERS DEADLINE FOR MAY 18 ELECTIONS

The *East Oregonian* does not run endorsements of more than 400 words. The *East Oregonian* will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary. We run the letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to East Oregonian, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. We will publish our last letters on Saturday, May 15. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is May 18.

hard-working and invested in Pendleton.

Pat is a true leader who cares about this community. Since moving to Pendleton, Pat has served as a board member of the Umatilla County Historical Society, Cason’s Place and Pendleton on Wheels, in addition to the many professional organizations to which he belongs.

He and his wife Jill have three young children who attend (or will soon attend) Pendleton public schools, so he has a dedicated interest in our local schools.

Please join me in voting for Pat Gregg for Pendleton School Board, Position 7.

**Darcey Ridgway Pendleton**

### Munck is my hometown hero

Bailey Munck. What an incredible “silence breaker” at 17 years old. She too deserves to be on the cover of Time magazine, like the women in 2017 who launched the “me too” movement and began to hold accountable men who abuse their power and take.

I’m proud of my dad, Senator Bill Hansell, for not just listening to his

constituents but taking action, for advocating to close the existing loophole that allows teachers be held to a lesser account in how they behave with students then coaches are. It’s time to fix that loophole. Bailey and her family picked the right senator. My dad, with five daughters, has been advocating for equity and opportunity for women throughout his entire career.

Your April 6 article on “Bailey’s Bill” literally brought me to tears. As described, Bailey “enduring” sexual harassment from her English teacher, at home, during school and at sporting events shows that more must be done to ready consequences for teachers that take and abuse.

I’d put her friends, the ones on the bus that came alongside Bailey and heard her story and encouraged her to share, on the cover of Time magazine as well. They are young women that are saying “No More” and holding their predator teacher DeYoe accountable. I hope and encourage them to keep their voice and use it always.

Bailey, with courage, is sharing her story, speaking a powerful truth, and seeking justice.

I have a new hero from my Athena hometown — Bailey Munck.

**Elizabeth Hansell Santa Monica, California**

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Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

**LETTERS**  
The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

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