


ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

New product aims to get you to 'Go'

Starting in July, EO Media Group is launching Go! Magazine, a weekly arts and entertainment publication designed to do exactly what it says — get readers to “go” out and experience all of what Eastern Oregon has to offer. For readers in Union, Baker, Umatilla and Morrow counties, Go! will be in your Thursday newspaper. For readers in Wallowa and Grant counties, you will receive the magazine every Wednesday.

Go! is designed to be a solid platform to connect our readers in more diverse — and I hope, interesting — ways. The magazine gives you plenty of options to know what is going on where and in what town, with a calendar of event dates and times for a host of weekly entertainment venues throughout the region. The accompanying website, goeastoregon.com, will offer a mobile-friendly digital version of the magazine and calendar to take with you as you explore Eastern Oregon again. After more than a year of staying home, we are all ready to take to the roads and start celebrating at festivals, rodeos, concerts and events throughout the region.

After trying to find ways to work more efficiently and working on joint projects such as Northeast Oregon Artisans and AgriBusiness, the six papers that make up EO Media Group's eastside publications are launching Go! Magazine as another shared venture for our readers.

La Grande and Baker City readers are more than familiar with the product, since it has been a staple of those papers for more than a decade.

Our six papers — The Observer, Baker City Herald, East Oregonian, Wallowa County Chieftain, Blue Mountain Eagle and Hermiston Herald — are combining resources to expand the reach of the magazine.

Ultimately, what we do — all we do — is centered on our readers. We are a news product, sure, but all six newspapers also provide a vehicle for readers to know what is going on in the towns that dot our great region of Oregon.

That kind of reach is something we take some pride in. Eastern Oregon is a big chunk of real estate. But we have managed to provide a comprehensive news package at our newspapers on a consistent basis for a long time. While we are proud of that, we are most proud of the fact that we can furnish our readers with complete coverage in a remote part of our great state.

Finding a way to work more efficiently by designing and then executing joint programs between our newspapers is a way to “work smarter” and the payoff — which is what really matters — is that our readers will gain a wealth of new information.

Our six papers provide unprecedented reach across our region, and the addition of Go! will ensure that our readers continue to receive the benefit of our combined newspaper team strength.

I am especially pleased that we will be able to give you, the reader, more resources to make decisions and to go and see places and events that are part of our common heritage.

While it is great that we are expanding the product to new areas of the region, none of it would mean anything if we didn't have someone to be a “champion” for the product, someone to see it through from beginning to end week after week. For us, that someone is Lisa Britton, who is based at the Baker City Herald and can be reached by phone (541-406-5274) or by email (lbritton@bakercityherald.com). If you have an event that you'd like to let readers know about, she is the person to contact. We need information at least a week in advance of publication, so the sooner you can submit an event, the better. We welcome news about concerts, art shows, festivals, community events, museum exhibits and more.

Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian and the regional editorial director for the EO Media Group, overseeing the East Oregonian and five more newspapers in Eastern Oregon.



America is not as woke as it appears


TYLER COWEN
COMMENTARY

It is sometimes called “Conquest's Second Law of Politics”: “Any organization not explicitly and constitutionally right-wing will sooner or later become left-wing.” I am hearing this more and more lately, leading me to wonder if it is actually true.

And if so, why?

It is easy enough to find anecdotal evidence in support of it. Numerous foundations that arose from the fortunes of right-leaning founders, such as Pew or Ford or Hewlett, have morphed into left-wing institutions. I can't think of a major foundation that came from a left-wing founder and then moved to the right. In the broader sweep of American history, universities have not been explicitly left-wing — but they are today.

And the law is not necessarily confined to nonprofit institutions, which are vulnerable to capture by left-leaning educated elites. This doesn't explain the advent of “Woke Capital” — corporations pushing for explicitly Democratic or left-leaning policies, such as voting reform in Georgia. America's professional sports leagues have to varying degrees endorsed conceptions of racial politics closer to that of the Democratic Party.

Therein lies a clue as to the nature of the ideological shift. Those same sports leagues are not in every way woke. Football, for instance, remains a violent sport, imposing injuries on many relatively disadvantaged young men, while the NBA allows itself to be bullied by China on issues of human rights.

One possibility is that institutions respond to whichever groups make the

biggest stink about a given issue. On many political issues, the left cares more than the right, and so those left-wing preferences end up imprinted not only on public opinion-sensitive nonprofits but also on profit-maximizing corporations. Yet when it comes to statements about Hong Kong, China cares a great deal and most Americans do not, and so the NBA responds to that pressure.

Additional forces strengthen Conquest's Second Law. Educational polarization increasingly characterizes U.S. politics, with more educated Americans more likely to vote Democratic. Those same Americans are also likely to run nonprofits or major corporations, which would partially explain the ideological migration of those institutions.

There are, of course, numerous U.S. institutions that have maintained or even extended a largely right-wing slant, including many police forces, significant parts of the military, and many Protestant Evangelical churches. Those institutions tend to have lower educational requirements, and so they are not always so influential in the media, compared to many left-wing institutions.

Furthermore, the military and police are supposed to keep out of politics, and so their slant to the right is less noticeable, although no less real. The left is simply more prominent in mass media, so Conquest's Second Law appears to be truer than it really is. (Note that by definition the law excludes explicitly right-wing media.)

Left-wing views, at least on some issues, might have more of a “least common denominator” element than do many right-wing views. On average, the intellectual right is more likely to insist on biological differences between men and women, whereas the intellectual left is more likely to insist on equality of capabilities.

No matter your view, the left approach is easier to incorporate into mission statements, company slogans, and corporate

human-resource policies.

Egalitarian slogans require less explanation, are less likely to get an institution into trouble with the law, and are more compatible with a desire to attract a broad range of workers and customers.

So as nonprofit institutions have become larger and big business has risen in relative importance, those trends also will instantiate Conquest's Law. As large organizations adopt a more egalitarian tone in their rhetoric, explicit right-wing views will tend to become less prominent in those organizations.

The common thread to these explanations is that left-wing views find it easier to win in spheres of reporting, talk and rhetoric — and that those tendencies strengthen over time.

It follows that, if Conquest's Second Law is true, societies are more right-wing than they appear. Furthermore, it is the intelligentsia itself that is most likely to be deluded about this, living as it does in the world of statements and proclamations. It is destined to be repeatedly surprised at how “barbarian” American society is.

There is also a significant strand of right-wing thought, most notably in opposition to Marxism, that stresses the immutable realities of human nature, and that people change only so much in response to their environments. So all that left-wing talk doesn't have to result in an entirely left-wing society.

Conservatives thus should be able to take some comfort in Conquest's Second Law. They may find the discourse suffocating at times. But there is more to life than just talk — and that, for liberals as well as conservatives, should be counted as one of life's saving graces.

Tyler Cowen is a Bloomberg columnist. He is a professor of economics at George Mason University and writes for the blog Marginal Revolution.

Behind the scenes with first-time legislators


DICK HUGHES
OTHER VIEWS

Suzanne Weber recalls when the Oregon Capitol hallways were so crowded with lawmakers, lobbyists and other folks that she had to edge her way through sideways.

That was when she was a local government official coming from the coast to talk with lawmakers. The former mayor of Tillamook now is a legislator herself, but is working in a quiet, uncrowded Capitol. For health protocols, the Capitol remained closed to the public as the 2021 Legislature toddled toward adjournment over the weekend.

To take readers behind the scenes of this year's session, I interviewed five first-time legislators this week: Rep. Weber, R-Tillamook; Democratic Reps. Maxine Dexter and Lisa Reynolds, of Portland; Republican Rep. Bobby Levy, of Echo; and Republican Sen. Dick Anderson, of Lincoln City. I also requested interviews with several other Democrats and Republicans. I hope to write a future column or two with their stories.

During previous legislative sessions, issues frequently got resolved when lobbyists and others talked and walked alongside legislators who were scurrying between meetings. In contrast, 2021's Capitol atmosphere is strange.

“It's quiet and lonely,” Anderson said.

Good staffs, constant learning

“This has been a really exhilarating experience,” Weber said. “I hadn't realized all the work that went on behind the scenes and all the people who were involved in what goes on behind the scenes.”

“I have learned so much about the process of government. It's challenging. It's mind-boggling — but not in a bad way.”

Said Anderson: “I've been impressed. The people are well-intended. In the most cases, good staffs, very cooperative. ... I've

felt good about how I've been treated and the intent of people.”

New legislators face an enormous learning curve. “I have been inspired and humbled by the process,” Dexter said. “What I realized is truly we have enormous capacity to make real change.”

Anderson was surprised by how often the party caucuses lock up legislators' votes, so outcomes were determined along party lines. As mayors, he and Weber were used to operating on a nonpartisan basis.

Reynolds noted that the vast majority of bills pass with strong bipartisan majorities. For the most part, she said, Democrats and Republicans have more in common than they do differences.

“People show up every day ready to work hard to do what they think is the best thing overall for Oregonians,” she said. “People really put their heart and soul into making Oregon a better place.”

Of these five new legislators, Dexter is the most experienced. She was appointed a year ago to fill the vacancy created by the death of Rep. Mitch Greenlick, and was elected last fall to a full two-year term.

Dexter said last year's special-session legislation on police reforms provided insights into bipartisanship. She cited the collaborative work of Rep. Janelle Bynum, D-Happy Valley, and two Republicans who are former police chiefs, Ron Noble, of McMinnville, and Rick Lewis, of Silverton.

Closed Capitol

Getting to know colleagues and their staffs was challenging this year without the impromptu conversations in hallways and elsewhere. Committee meetings were conducted via videoconference, and some personal interactions were restricted by the COVID-19 protocols.

“I'm a one-on-one kind of person — smaller groups — and I knew that was going to be a handicap, getting to know senators on a one-on-one basis,” Anderson said.

Still, connections get made.

“There are colleagues that I wasn't expecting to have so much interpersonal trust and relationship-building time with,”

Dexter said. “That's been really important to the work that we've had to do in these extraordinary times.”

As for House Republicans, Levy described them as a tight-knit caucus that was inclusive of newcomers: “I have never felt better about a group of people — and I've worked with lots of groups of people — and more welcome.”

She has made lifelong friends, including some Democrats.

Levy believes the session would have played out differently if the public had been in the Capitol, enabling more conversations that find middle ground. “We all love our district. We all want something for our district. We just can't seem to find someplace in the middle,” she said.

It's difficult being in the minority party and not from an urban area. Republicans say urban Democrats don't understand rural life but assume they do. “If we talk about our side of the state — so I'm in Eastern Oregon — they don't get it and they don't try to get it,” Levy said.

Public involvement

Weber's early morning routine includes perusing her emails to see what trends have emerged in how people feel about issues. Some topics draw hundreds of comments.

For Dexter, one surprise was that many people don't realize the capacity that legislators have to help constituents with government issues and that legislators have staff — paid with taxpayer dollars — to do so.

When some Oregonians are unhappy with her, Dexter tries to heed Greenlick's advice about not taking things personally: “Nothing is personal as far as how it comes at me, but everything is personal in how people engage as far as from their perspective.”

And as Levy said: “It's a learning experience every single day for me. And I enjoy it because I think it's really important that the people in my district have somebody to speak for them.”

Dick Hughes has been covering the Oregon political scene since 1976.