

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Communities working together make a big difference

You have to hand it to Helix. The small Umatilla County town achieved something of a triumph recently through a vaccination program that will funnel funds to specific groups because it reached a high vaccination rate.

The effort began with Emily Smith, chair of the Helix Parks and Recreation and the director of marketing, communications and foundation for CHI St. Anthony Hospital in Pendleton.

Smith met with Pastor Mark Woolbright at the Helix Community Church about the county's Community Rewards Program. The program incentivizes COVID-19 vaccine inoculations and works like this: When the ZIP code that covers Helix reached 60% of residents with vaccinations, groups that helped with the vaccine effort split a \$10,000 reward.

Helix's ZIP code was short of the 60% mark, but the parks department and the church united to sponsor a night swim at the town pool late last month. At the night swim offered free vaccines and nine people received inoculations, pushing the community to the 60% mark.

Helix now has the highest COVID-19 vaccination rate in the county.

The federal funds will be split among the key groups that helped with the effort and, according to Smith, the parks department wants to use its cut of the funds to build a new swimming pool. Woolbright said his church will give its money back to the community.

The Helix effort is especially significant now as the county is in the middle of another serious COVID-19 surge.

Across the state, the delta variant is fueling the COVID-19 wave.

That's why such efforts as the one in Helix deserve a tremendous amount of praise. While Helix is a small town, its outsized determination to make a difference shows what people can do if they work together.

The money will be well spent to enhance the overall livability of the community.

While there are dozens of state and federal programs and initiatives on the books to battle COVID-19, in the end the key battle in the war against the disease will be won at a grassroots level in places such as Helix. When individuals decide to make a positive difference, it is encouraging and laudable. What the Helix effort shows is it doesn't take trillions of dollars to take on COVID-19 but a clear plan and some motivated individuals who wish to help their community.

Area residents should review what Helix accomplished and reflect on how people such as Smith and Woolbright made a real difference.



Keeping a couple out of divorce court



BLAINEE CLOOTEN
ASK A LAWYER

Q: My boyfriend and I are getting married soon. What advice do you have for us avoid divorce court later?

A. First off, congratulations. Second, the fact that you are already contemplating these questions means that you care enough to try and avoid a negative future outcome. So, you are already heading in the correct direction.

Here's why your question is so important. I recently helped a person in Hermiston through the tumultuous end of their relationship. Unfortunately, there was significant domestic violence, and local agencies and services were involved. Out of respect for my client's identity (and attorney-client privilege), I'm being intentionally vague about the facts.

There are a number of areas in which our firm typically sees relationships break down. The broad categories are kids, finances, and work ethic. I'm ignoring the obvious substance abuse, religion, and personal attraction questions, and assuming those have been previously addressed, or else you would not be considering marriage.

Regarding kids: Are you going to have kids? What will be your parenting style? What will be your discipline strategy (spanking, timeouts, talking)? What religion will the kid(s) follow (is this important, how often will you go to church)? How about school (home school, private, public)? What values are important to instill in your kids

(relationships, hard work, athletics, schoolwork)? What happens in the event of infertility?

Regarding finances: What is important to spend money on (house, fun, car, retirement, vacations, school)? Who is keeping the budget? What is your significant other's credit score and who is applying for loans? Is it important to save or important to have fun?

Work Ethic: Who is going to work outside of the home? How are you going to divide chores and responsibilities (grass, dishes, vacuum, cars)?

Usually it is not one of these, but it can be. You might be surprised (or perhaps you wouldn't) to hear how often the reason one spouse is fed up with the other is, "their spending is out of control." Or, "they won't pull their own weight." You should have a pretty good idea about most of these answers, and do not ignore the red flags.

Q: My neighbor built a shed, and I think it's over my property line by about 2 feet. Can I ask him to compensate me for use of my property?

A. Property line disputes are often complicated and can lead to litigation. I generally recommend talking to an attorney about your particular facts and circumstances to know your rights.

That said, I suppose what often comes first to people's minds when they think of a property line dispute is the Hatfield-McCoy feud. But unlike the families in West Virginia and Kentucky, it sounds like your issue is amicable.

If you follow the local news, you might have seen a legal action where Christopher and Monique Waine are suing the Umatilla County and the city of Hermiston to "Quiet Title" to "their" property. As part of their

relief, the Waines seek an injunction to prevent "trespass" and an order "clearing" the "cloudy" title, and other relief. In the media, Chris Waine has asked to be "compensated" for the use of "his land" by the county/city.

In any property line dispute, the first thing to do is to gather the facts. How long have you known about the shed being on your property/how long has it been there? Have previous surveys been done of the property lines? Have pins been set? If no survey has been done, there are several local survey companies — Primm Land Surveying, CK3, R.V. McKinnis and others — available to perform the job for you.

Once you are certain of the actual property lines, the next step is to put the other property owner on notice of the issue. Clearly outline the issues and keep careful records of these communications. After this, the neighborly thing to do (and often the law requires this) is to try and reason out a solution with your neighbor. If the shed is on your property, in most cases, you have a right to have the other owner remove the offending portion, or you can work out an "easement" and be compensated for the portion of your land being encroached upon. If this fails, you'll need an attorney.

For additional answers to similar questions please visit the resources page of my website, oregonlegalfirm.com. Please keep the questions rolling in; send those to clooten@gmail.com.

Blaine Clooten is an attorney at law, serving Umatilla County with a focus on family law, estate planning and personal injury cases. Questions answered do not create an attorney-client relationship. Facts and law may vary, please talk to an attorney for more information.

YOUR VIEWS

Why the stubborn resistance against COVID-19 protection?

Ads for new products often proclaim "New Scientific Breakthrough." We are very science-oriented.

So why do some refuse to protect their lives and loved ones by taking scientifically proven COVID-19 vaccination, even while our hospitals are overwhelmed with sick and dying unvaccinated COVID-19 delta patients?

When the brand-new Salk polio vaccine was released in 1955, almost all Americans rushed to receive it. Result: Today, America is polio free.

When DPT shots were introduced, protecting us against deadly diphtheria, pertussis (whooping cough) and tetanus, vast majorities signed up for the shots, largely eliminating these diseases.

So why the stubborn resistance by a few against COVID-19 protection? Who advises us not to save our lives by taking this scientific marvel?

No real medical group downplays COVID-19; medical establishments beg us to save ourselves. They are overwhelmed with unvaccinated patients.

Our president and federal government spend vast sums to support and distribute vaccines and information on COVID-19.

So who badmouths the shots? Dishonest politicians gain support from fearful, uninformed constituents by broadcasting propaganda: "The shots contain microchips, which turn us into zombies." "Alien invaders, or sinister secret groups, infect us with the shots."

Your answer to this deadly propaganda? For medical advice, do not ask a politician; ask any doctor or medical professional.

If you feel that doctors and nurses are part of a vast conspiracy against you, see a psychiatrist for help.

Allan Smyth
Prineville

GOP letter decrying Cuban dictatorship merely crocodile tears

On July 21, our congressional Rep. Cliff Bentz, along with many of his GOP colleagues, signed a letter to "leaders of Democratic states" decrying the Cuban dictatorship and calling

upon our allies to support the impassioned pleas for democracy by that island's beleaguered population.

Unfortunately, the crocodilian nature of the tears shed by Republicans for oppressed Cubans has been revealed by GOP actions here at home.

Mr. Bentz and his colleagues chose to support Trump's big lie of a stolen election by voting against certifying Joe Biden's electoral win. They then refused to endorse a bipartisan investigation into the Jan. 6 terrorist attack on the Capitol incited by their leader. Even worse, their party has passed laws across the country to suppress voting rights and enable partisan bodies to overturn elections.

Republican lawmakers seem to believe that they will have a hard time holding or gaining power unless they rig the electoral game and crush democracy in the U.S.

It appears obvious that the Trump cult, whether through its congressional wing (the GOP), or its paramilitary wing (the Proud Boys, Oath Keepers), has no goal beyond the termination of our tradition of fair elections so that in 2024 they can turn Trump into America's Fidel.

Stephen Ducat
Joseph

EDITORIALS

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LETTERS

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