

# O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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## OUR VIEW

# Stepping up to help out

We often don't think much about blood unless it happens to be our own, but the American Red Cross and, by extension, hospitals are facing a shortage of it. So if area residents can help, they should.

That means rolling up your sleeves at a local blood drive. Such donations will come not a moment too soon.

The Red Cross, which holds frequent blood drives locally, reports it is facing a severe crisis with blood supplies at a low level not seen in decades.

An ample blood supply is critical for a host of reasons. Blood donations are used in surgeries, for those with blood disorders such as sickle cell disease and for cancer patients. Without an ample supply of blood, those who need urgent care the most may face delays and those delays can be life threatening.

The Red Cross needs the entire nation to step up and help and decide to give blood.

Most local blood drives supply area hospitals. That means if residents decide to give blood they are most likely going to be helping someone from their town or region. O-negative blood is especially needed now.

For some, giving blood is a routine matter. For many of us though, the idea of taking time out of the day to give blood probably isn't a priority. It is often easy to forget that such actions as giving blood makes a huge positive impact. It doesn't take long and the blood you may give could save someone's life.

Across the region the crisis isn't as acute as in other parts of the nation. In La Grande and Baker City, there has been an increase in blood donations during the past year, but nationwide blood donations are down 10% since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Red Cross is key to ensuring there is enough blood. The agency supplies about 40% of the nation's blood supply. That means when there is a local blood drive by the Red Cross, area residents, if they can, should mark it on their calendar. When one gives blood they are performing a civic duty, one that will help the local community in an area that is crucial.

Giving blood may not matter for most of us in our daily lives but if an area resident needs a blood transfusion and there isn't enough of it around, then suddenly a blood donation is a big deal.



## Determining custody of the dog in a divorce



BLAINE CLOOTEN

ASK AN ATTORNEY

### Q. Who gets the dog in a divorce?

A. Despite the fact that we may see dogs as members of the family, the court does not view them this way during a divorce. Traditionally, courts view companion animals as property. Who will get the dog will vary from judge to judge. There are some things the court may consider in determining who will get "custody" of the dog, such as whether the dog was obtained before the marriage, who actually acquired the dog, whether there is a purchase agreement or adoption certificate, whether the dog was licensed, whose name is on the license and whether the dog was a gift.

When it comes down to it, the dog will be considered a piece of property. Ultimately, the court can distribute the dog in any way it deems to be just and proper. The court will generally take these pieces of information and make the decision if the parties cannot come to an agreement. Often if there are kids involved that love the dog, the judge will award the dog to the parent who will have the children the majority of the time.

This is the type of scenario that will depend on the facts and circumstances of your particular case. I would recommend you seek counsel from an attorney so that you can fully explain the situation and understand the full range of

possibilities in your case.

### Q. Is there a time frame in which beneficiaries to an estate should receive a report from the executor of the estate regarding disbursement?

A. I am unsure whether this question is asking, "Is there a time frame for a report on how the estate will be divided?" I'm picturing the old-timey movies where everyone sits around the attorney's office while the will is read aloud to the grieving family. This is usually the "big reveal."

Or, another way of reading this question, "Is there a time frame on when a report on the actual amounts to be distributed?"

In any event, the simple answer to both questions: No.

As to the first way of reading the question, aside from looking at the will itself, a good way to find out how the estate is going to be divided can be found in the information contained in the petition, where the heirs are listed. This would not necessarily lead a reader to the specific amounts an heir can expect to receive. This is because wills generally do not use dollar amounts for heirs, as the testator (will creator) does not know how much money/assets they will have when they pass away. Instead, Wills usually give shares or percentages to the heirs.

As for the second way of reading the question, there is no specific timeline for a plan of distribution to be submitted to the court. The beneficiary determinations of some estates can take years to work through the probate process, while others only take a few months.

Every estate that's probated has an

executor or personal representative appointed. The personal representative isn't able to make a plan for distribution until certain things happen first. This includes determining all the assets are accounted for and liquidated, and all claims are paid (debts) and fees invoiced.

Although there is no specific deadline for a "report to the beneficiary as to who will be getting what," the personal representative is required to file an annual accounting for the estate. The first annual accounting is due 14 months after appointment of the personal representative and annually every year thereafter. These annual accountings do not state an heir's distribution, but, they do give some insight as to the work the personal representative is doing and what has been done.

If the estate is fully liquidated and there is no other work that needs to be done, it's possible to raise the issue with the court as the personal representative has a duty to act timely and fairly. An unreasonable delay could be grounds to disqualify a personal representative.

Probate and estate related issues are complicated. This information is a good starting point and intended to be helpful but should not be relied upon solely. Please talk to an attorney about your case to fully understand your rights.

*Blaine Clooten is an attorney 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; talk to an attorney for more information.*

## YOUR VIEWS

### Clarification on local property transaction

Due to some inaccuracies in a recent letter to the editor and a few comments on Facebook, I would like to clarify the recent property transaction between the Active Senior Center of Pendleton board and Pendleton Children's Center.

Dating back to 2017, the East Oregonian has reported the senior center as an organization had been experiencing dwindling involvement and support.

In 2019 the Pendleton Children's Center board began efforts to establish a large, high-quality child care center in Pendleton.

Both organizations suffered setbacks due to the pandemic: PCC experienced a slowdown on its project, and sadly, it was the last straw for the already struggling senior center organization. Just more than a year ago, I joined in

PCC's efforts to find a building suitable for a child care center. Since then we have considered at least 50 available commercial buildings, properties and churches to determine whether they could be a feasible location, considering the state-mandated rules and regulations governing child care facilities. All of these efforts were to no avail.

During this time the senior center has sat empty and unused. We learned the senior center board had decided it would be best to dissolve as an organization and donate the building to another nonprofit. We, along with other nonprofits, put in a proposal describing how we would use the building to fill an unmet need in our community.

The senior center board voted unanimously to give the building to PCC. The board felt this project would provide the greatest benefit to the community because the child care shortage in Pendleton is a huge problem and this build-

ing could be the beginning of a solution.

The city was not involved. No money was transferred. This transaction was just two nonprofit boards each doing what they believed to be best for their members and the community. We very much appreciate this generous gift.

With financial help from the entire Pendleton community, we hope to start providing child care by the end of the year.

**Brittney Jackson  
Pendleton**

### Mask mandates, distancing costing us our future

Oregon leaders have put schools in difficult positions at the expense of our children. As an educator in Northeastern Oregon, I have watched my students and own children suffer as a result of mask mandates and social distancing rules for two years.

Students are demonstrating deficits in social/emotional skills, speech and language, and in academics. There are increased mental health concerns among both students and school staff. School boards are tasked with enforcing the mandates or risk losing funding.

Administrators "threaten" students with the loss of extracurricular activities and more online school due to school closures if they don't comply. The teachers' union continues to conspire with Oregon leaders as they control public schools. All while masked students and staff continue to fall ill with COVID-19, the flu and other normal illnesses that circulate through schools.

Mask mandates and social distancing rules are costing us our future. It's time schools, staff, parents and students demand local control and that mask wearing becomes an individual choice.

**Allie Scott  
Union**

### EDITORIALS

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

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