

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

A problem that needs to be solved

Umatilla County commissioners made the right decision earlier this month when they voted to approve the placement of a ban on psilocybin manufacturing and service centers on the November general election ballot.

Psilocybin is a hallucinogenic alkaloid in some toadstool mushrooms, the spore-bearing, fruiting body of a fungus. Oregon voters in November 2020 approved Ballot Measure 109, the Oregon Psilocybin Service Act, which allowed for the manufacture, delivery and administration of psilocybin at licensed facilities.

The vote in Umatilla County was strongly in opposition to the state measure, with 64% against and 36% in favor.

In June, the commissioners expressed the right tone when they indicated they wanted local voters to decide whether to allow psilocybin manufacturing in the county.

Based on the 2020 vote results, the outcome of the ban is probably foreordained but the voters are the ones who should be able to make the final call on the issue.

While there has been more than enough hand-wringing regarding psilocybin and its potential — but largely unproven — negative impacts on an area the issue itself clearly illustrates the great divide that exists in our state.

The ballot measure stumbled in many rural counties yet gained enough support to gain passage.

That type of disconnect is evident not just with the psilocybin issue but others our state faces as well. The disconnect continues to grow with little hope — apparently — it can be solved any time soon.

That conclusion, though, should not be satisfying to voters. To succeed as a town, a community, a county and a state we must work together to find common ground and to seek answers rather than animosity.

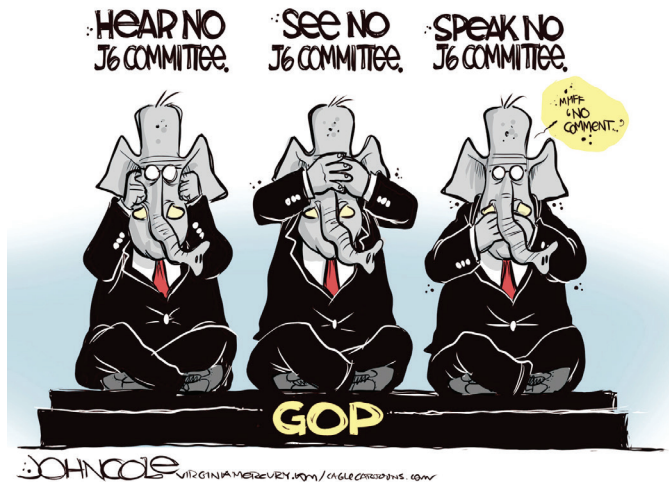
Clearly at this point there is no doubt several different cultures exist in our state, each with its own inherent values, each with a specific political outlook. Yet a measure — such as psilocybin manufacture — that may seem perfectly reasonable in one part of our state simply isn't going to fly in a rural area such as Umatilla County.

Going forward we must find a way to bridge the divide and seek answers instead of animosity, progress rather than peril.

The psilocybin issue should be for voters to decide but the larger issue it represents still deserves to be solved in the future.



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YOUR VIEWS

Love and compassion vs. hate and control

It's been clear for years the "far right" is fighting to secure minority rule. It's working. Both Trump and George W. Bush got fewer votes, and five of the current Supreme Court justices were confirmed by senators representing a minority of citizens. Can you guess which ones?

The effort is in tandem with the religious right, which is now explicitly embracing the theology of dominionism — the belief that they should control all aspects of government based on their beliefs and interpretation of the Bible. Hence their elation with the end of Roe and talking up ending more "evils" like birth control and marriage equality.

The battle lines are clear: love and compassion vs. hate and control.

The Founding Fathers didn't help our situation by giving each state, regardless of population, two senators, and creating the Electoral College. But those are the compromises it took to get the Constitution passed.

However, the founders were spot on regarding their fear of Christian nationalism, which they made explicitly clear and sought to prevent by insisting government "make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Thomas Jefferson labeled the concept the "separation of Church & State."

Here's what this boils down to: a minority of rabid Christians, aided by the Christian nationalist wing of the Supreme Court, wants to tell

you, no, force you, to live by their values and beliefs. They want the world to mirror their preferences and validate their prejudices.

Paul Miller, a professor of international affairs at Georgetown, noted Christian nationalists feel they have a right to define what America is. Katherine Stewart, who has reported on the religious right for more than a decade, said, "Breaking American democracy isn't an unintended side effect of Christian nationalism. It is the point of the project." We must stop them. Vote.

Hal McCune
Pendleton

Join me in voting for Joe Yetter

Please join me in voting for Joe Yetter for Congress.

At a recent gathering of Umatilla County Democrats we were introduced to Dr. Joe Yetter. Joe said that he was privileged to run for Congress to represent the people of this district.

The man is an Army Medical Corps veteran, a former practicing physician and professor and now ... farmer (he fully admits to being new at that).

I won't bore by detailing the chest thumping portion of the gathering. Joe is well informed and an excellent candidate for office.

I went to ask one line of questions: "Have you been approached by corporate entities or big money to fund your campaign? If any did; would you report it to the people you serve?" His reply was that he had not been

approached, and other than union support from teachers and medical professionals or local interests he will NOT accept any corporate assistance.

A verbal agreement remains a valuable cultural asset to those of us in Indian Country. Joe's words are good enough for me. He said it in front of many people, including diners not there for the meeting. I will support and plan to vote for our "local" Joe. I also donated.

Micheal Minthorn
Pilot Rock

Thank you to those who helped

On June 29, I tripped and fell after exiting a local restaurant. I fell face first onto the parking area, breaking my nose and fracturing the facial bones, plus I suffered a concussion and other pains and bruises.

The most amazing citizens of Hermiston came to my rescue and helped until the ambulance arrived. None of them were familiar to me. I would like to thank them for their kindness.

First is the young man who notified 911 and then removed his shirt to stop the blood from my nose. Next is the young lady who cradled my head in her lap; the lady who prayed for me; the woman who called a friend and the many others that brought paper towels from the restaurant to try to stop the blood.

Thanks to all of you who took a moment from your day to help a stranger in need.

Bertha Keith
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