

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Finding solutions to public records access

It's one thing to be frustrated with how costs block the public's access to public records in Oregon. That's easy. Editorial writers are good at that.

Figuring out how to solve it is another matter.

Oregon's Public Records Advisory Council is working on solutions. Next week it's going to be tackling a host of issues about making public records reform a reality. The policy questions include:

If fees are eliminated for public records, there's much less reason for people to limit the size of their request. How could that work?

If media should get a discount for fees, who defines what media is? Is a blogger? Is someone who writes a newsletter for a group?

If other individuals or groups should get a fee discount because a request is in the "public interest," who decides what is a public interest?

Many records retained by governments in Oregon are not easily searchable. Should that be a requirement moving forward when governments in the state upgrade technology? Related to that issue is that often personal information that is not supposed to be publicly released is commingled in government data with other information that can be released. Should forms and databases be revised to make separating such information simpler?

You can email the public records advocate with suggestions at PublicRecordsAdvocate.PRC@PRA.oregon.gov.

Life is better with Q&As

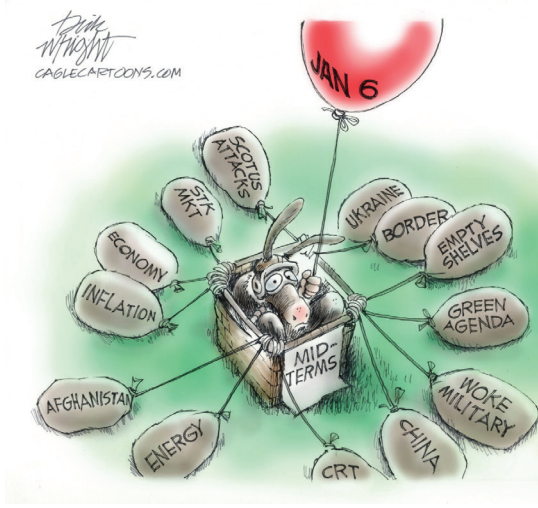
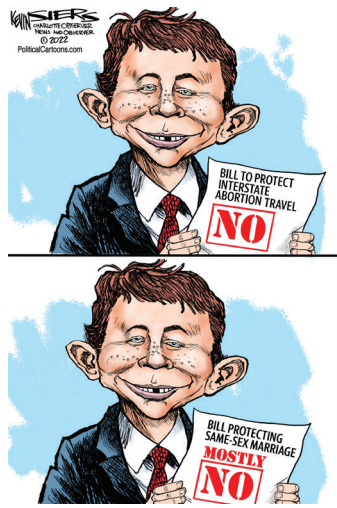
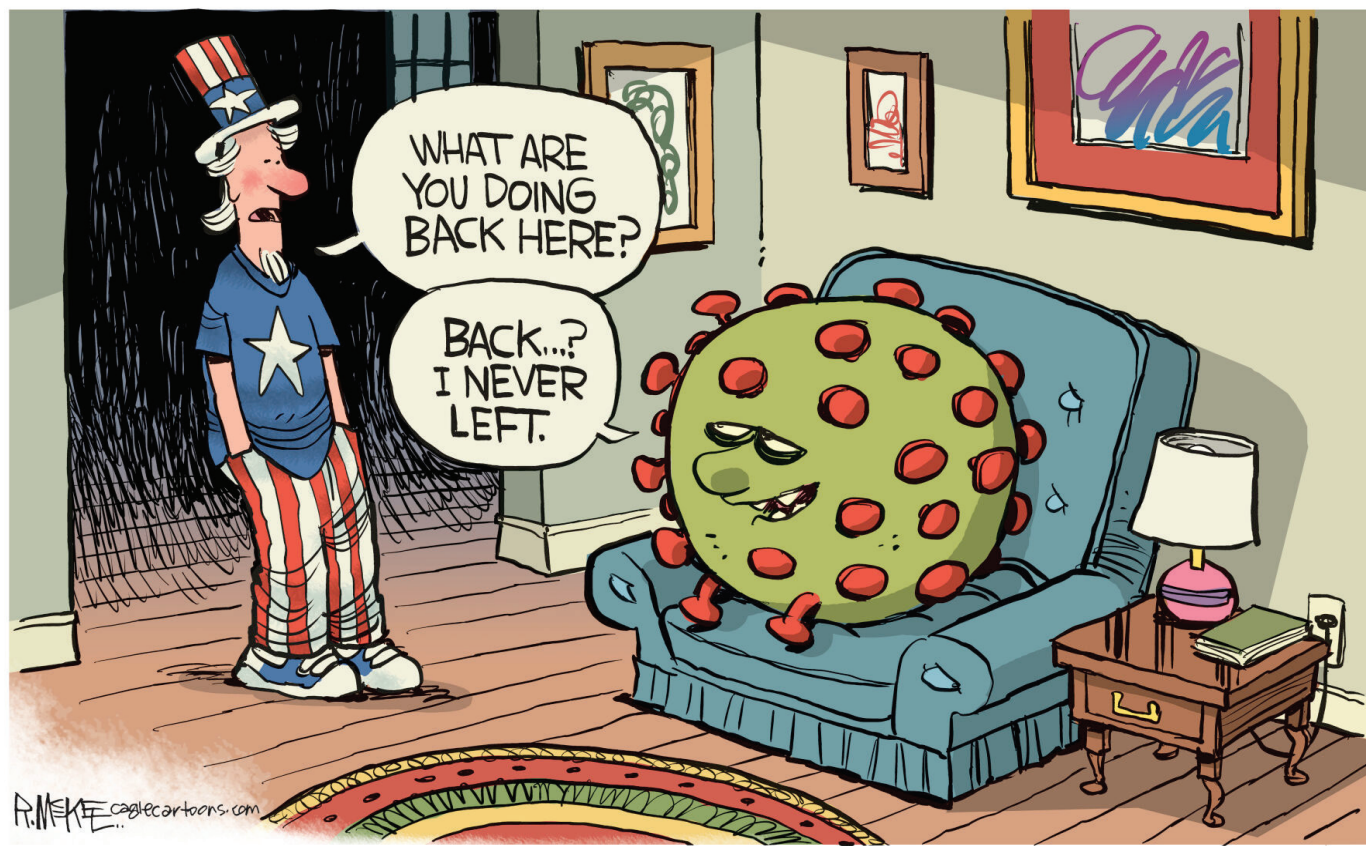
We like it when government makes government easy to understand. And the state's task force coming up with a health care plan for people who bounce in and out of health care coverage has made it easier.

Staff prepared a series of questions and answers. There's little you can do to simplify the jargon of Medicaid waivers but the Q&A format sure makes the policy issues much more accessible to the public. You can see it here: tinyurl.com/ORBridgeqna.

The state task force is trying to come up with a program to cover about 55,000 people who fall into a health care gap. Their employment status may change and suddenly they go on or off health care, being it the Oregon Health Plan or private insurance.

The lack of continuity of health coverage can mean they are less likely to get regular preventive care or health care when they should be getting it.

The Q&A marches through what is known about the population, what some of the policy options are and the implications for the state budget. But it puts it altogether in an easier to digest format. Why don't state committees do this more often? We hope they will.



Friendship clicks with fellow shutterbug



TAMMY MALGESINI
INSIDE MY SHOES

Shortly after I started working for the East Oregonian I periodically tried to convince a friend to let me interview her for a story.

Sometimes I sought Carol McIntosh out because I knew she would add something interesting to the story. Other times I was in a time crunch and was hopeful she would help bail me out.

She always turned me down. And then when she was quoted in a Tri-City Herald article, I jokingly gave her a bad time.

"I got caught up in the excitement," she told me about being interviewed during an Operation Thank You event. "I will say yes to you someday."

That day never came. Carol McIntosh, 81, died on June 24.

Carol and I became acquainted with each other through our spouses. My husband, John, and her husband, Jack, both taught at Umatilla High School.

Our friendship further developed through a shared interest in photography. In fact, about a decade ago, I thought Carol would jump at the chance to partici-

pate in a feature story I was writing about amateur photographers.

Throughout the course of our friendship, sometimes months would go by between contacts with each other. However, each year as it drew closer to the Umatilla County Fair, we always connected. We talked about everything from where we could get mats for our entries to what photos we were planning to enter.

Carol used to get so giddy with excitement. She could hardly wait to find out how many ribbons she won. And on some occasions, she didn't wait.

At the old fairgrounds, she would park her car on Orchard Avenue and "sneak" into Price Hall late in the afternoon on the Monday of fair week. With judging wrapping up, Carol was able to get a peek.

One time I asked her if she had noticed how my photos did. Focused on not getting caught in the building, Carol said she wasn't able to. However, she convinced me to sneak in — it's a snap, she said, giving me pointers on how to appear inconspicuous.

Evidently, I lacked the appropriate skills. Calling her after my thwarted attempt, she urged me to try again. I changed my shirt and put on a different hat — only to be turned away again.

We shared many laughs about that through the years. However, from 2006 through 2019, when I served as a judge in the fair's photography department is when the fun really began.

After finishing up with my fellow judges, I would search for one of Carol's entries that had been awarded a ribbon. Flipping it back, I would take a selfie with her photo and send it to her. Despite Carol nearly begging, I wouldn't tell her how many ribbons and what places she earned.

Jack called me the day Carol died. He didn't want me to find out via an email from the mortuary.

And in an ironic twist, despite Carol's reluctance to have her name in the newspaper, Jack wanted to make sure her death notice was placed in both the EO and Hermiston Herald.

I'll miss my friend's infectious laugh and the sparkle in her eyes that expressed kindness along with a hefty dose of mischievousness. Hopefully, she will forgive me for putting her name in the paper. Rest in peace, Carol.

Tammy Malgesini, the East Oregonian community writer, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.

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LETTERS

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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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