

Oregon needs a state auditor

What happens when the person responsible for rooting out waste and fraud in state and local governments may be a crook? Our neighbor to the north is about to find out.

Last month, a federal grand jury indicted Washington's state auditor on 10 felony counts involving his private business practices. The indictment claims Troy Kelley devised schemes to defraud title companies and their borrowers of nearly \$3 million from 2006 to 2008. Kelley also is charged with failing to pay \$1 million in income taxes for those years by under-reporting his income.

The indictment does not accuse Kelley of criminal activity involving his duties as state auditor. However, Acting U.S. Attorney Annette Hayes said Kelley spun a web of lies in a cover-up during his tenure as state auditor.

It's a stunning downfall for the state's top fiscal watchdog. The News Tribune of Tacoma describes the man:

"In the span of six years, Troy Kelley rose from political obscurity to statewide office, capturing a series of state House campaign victories on his way to winning election as Washington's auditor. He projected a spit-polished image that sold well politically: a dedicated family man who served his country, a successful lawyer and businessman eager to lead. Boosted by a sterling resume with stops at the Department of Justice and a Fortune 500 company."

Kelley, a Tacoma Democrat, pleaded not guilty to the charges and vowed to clear his name. And despite calls from Gov. Jay Inslee, political leaders of both parties and most Washington newspapers, the 50-year-old refuses to resign. And that's where the political intrigue begins.

Kelley began a leave of absence on May 4 to pursue his legal fight. He will not accept pay or benefits during the absence, something Gov. Inslee already said would not happen.

Washington Republicans have other concerns. They pointed out in a recent e-mail that the deadline for candidates to file for a special election is May 11. That means if Kelley resigns after that date, Democrat Gov. Inslee would appoint the next state auditor. And that appointee would be in office until the next election in 2016, giving that person a serious head start against a Republican challenger.

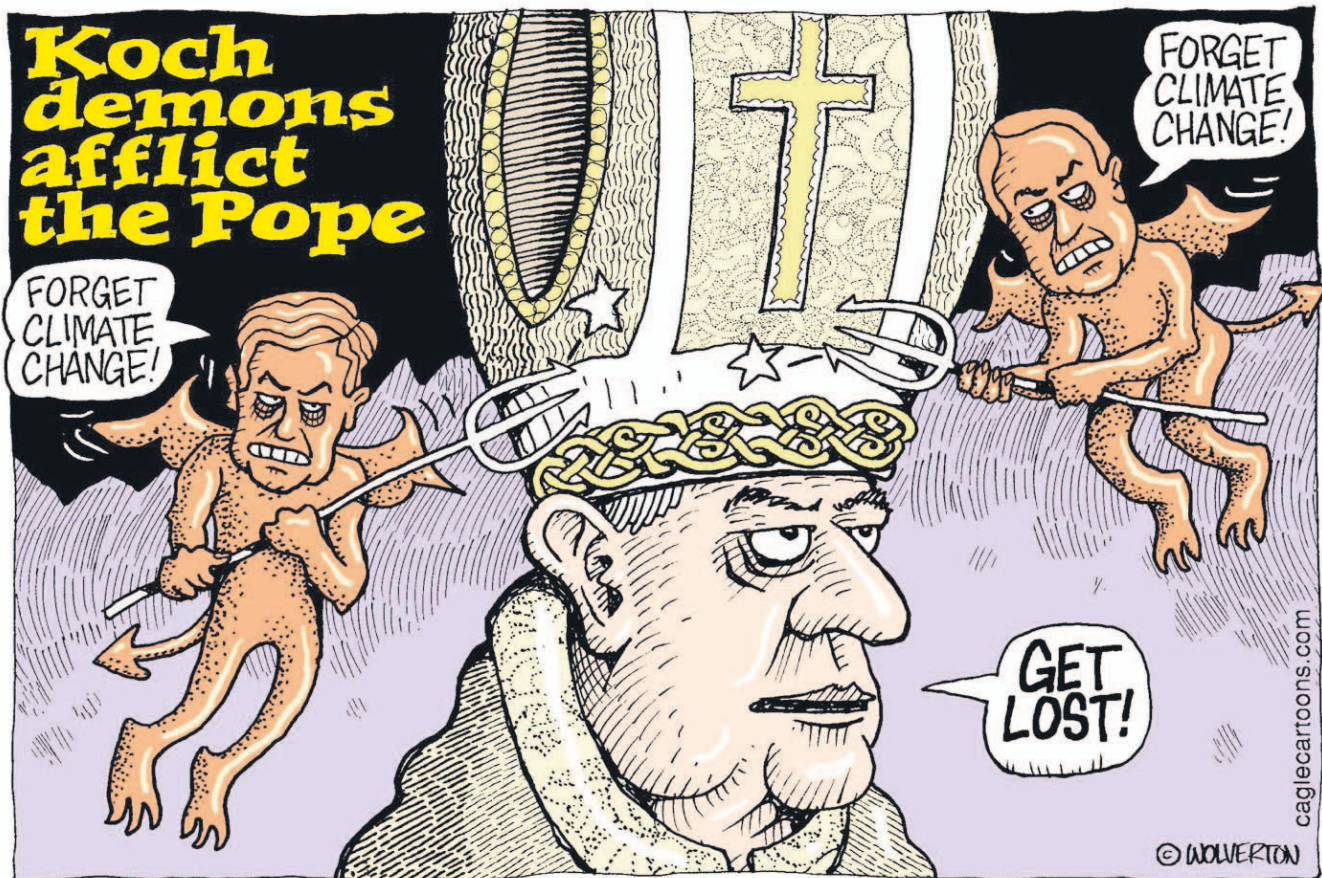
Washington's travails should not discourage Oregonians from pressing for an independently elected state auditor. Our current system of having the Secretary of State's office handle this critical responsibility is flawed.

Oregon is the only state where the secretary of state is responsible for auditing public spending. That office is also charged with overseeing elections, promoting business and maintaining state archives. With state and local governments in Oregon spending more than \$40 billion each year, the audit function should be separate and independent.

An elected state auditor would report directly to the citizens of Oregon and be charged with representing the sole interest of the public. Washington state has demonstrated this public benefit for more than a century.

Voters may select a bad apple like Troy Kelley. But voters, not career politicians, should determine the person best suited to restore that trust.

EDITORIAL
The voice of the Chieftain



Skills budding in grafting late

I went to one too many apple cider squeezing parties last fall. Saw one too many clever designs for home-built cider presses. I realized just how easy it could be to start making my own apple juice so I got busy and have already wasted three or four days while apple juice is on sale for, what, two bucks at the store? I haven't even started making the homemade press contraption yet. Time and money wasting should really pick up steam when I get to that stage. But I'm currently focused on a time-consuming scheme to rebuild my feeble apple orchard.

I've got three old-growth apple trees that produce a large crop of tasteless, pretty awful fruit. Bushels of it. They're some kind of pale yellow transparent variety with a flavor that has strong overtones of nothing. It's like chewing mushy oxygen. But I also have one champion apple tree. It's small. Much younger than the gnarled old trees. But the apples on this little feller are just the right amount of crunch and tart. I carefully studied up on the art of grafting and went right to work by skipping some of the basic rules and cutting corners to try and combine my good apple tree with the bad ones.

First, you should gather your cuttings, or "scions," in the fall. Store them in a cool place through the winter, then do



AND FURTHERMORE

Jon Rombach

your grafts before buds appear in the spring. Or, as an alternative method, you can read about all this right when buds are starting to appear, then prune and graft like crazy for a couple days knowing it's probably not going to work. But think of all the money you'll save on apple juice.

To do a cleft graft, you basically cut little twigs of new growth from the good tree, trim the bottom into a wedge and cram those into a split you make on a branch of the other tree. Easy peasy. There's some kind of special waxy substance recommended to seal the joint. You can also buy specialty grafting tape to wrap everything up. Or, as an alternative, you can go my route with regular ol' paraffin wax from The Dollar Stretcher and electrical tape from Joseph Hardware. When the trees are already budding, you're late to the party and already doing it wrong, there's simply no time to fool around with doing things right.

You're supposed to be able to tell in

about two weeks if the grafts took. It's been a couple days so I check them about every five minutes or so, looking for any positive sign. I'm out there first thing in the morning, using calipers to see if any growth happened overnight. I whisper to them. Check the tightness of the electrical tape wrapping. Bring buckets of water. Lightly mist the new shoots. I ran a cord out to the yard and set up a boombox on low volume to play my new Riders In the Sky CD and old Guy Noir reruns to keep the little shoots company and encourage happy thoughts. So far, nothing. The suspense is terrible.

If the grafting does work by some miracle, I might get apples in a couple years. The railroad tracks go by my property so if this rails and trails thing goes through, look for a fresh apple juice stand set up in my yard. Factoring in my time so far on this venture and however many hundreds of dollars building my free cider press will cost, you should be able to enjoy a glass of fresh squeezed cider for somewhere in the ballpark of twenty bucks.

In the meantime I'm going to try grafting more mushrooms and huckleberries onto dandelion stems. Wish me luck.

Jonmy Applegraft Rombach is a local columnist for the Chieftain.

Older Americans Act vital at 50

GUEST COLUMN

Pam Latta

What would you do if your elderly neighbor told you that he just hasn't been in the mood to cook his own meals after his wife passed away three months ago? Who would you contact if your sister called from Portland to inform you that Mom wanted to move to an Assisted Living apartment, but she didn't know where to locate ones that were close to her home and church? Where would you find help for your friend who is taking care of her elderly grandfather in his home and just needs to get out of the house for a few hours a month?

These are examples of the types of services needed by Americans every day and

funded under the provisions of the Older Americans Act of 1965.

In 1963, only 17 million Americans had reached their 65th birthday. About a third of older Americans lived in poverty and there were few programs to meet their needs. Remember back then we were less than 20 years out from the end of the Great Depression and World War II.

Today more than 60 million Americans have reached that mark! Between

1960 and 1995, the official poverty rate of those aged 65 and above fell from 35% to 10% even as the number of older Americans was on the rise.

As part of President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society reforms, the Act was a response to national concerns about the lack of community social services for senior citizens and was supported by Congressional members on both sides of the aisle. The Older Americans Act (OAA) remains the principal piece of federal legislation designed to provide a range of community services to adults age 60 and over.

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Rail-trail's benefits overstated

GUEST COLUMN

Carol McCrae

I would like to clarify a few items from the meeting at Hurricane Creek Grange related to the rail-trail topic.

From the WNT trail group Ms. Atteberry claimed credit for a new business on the trail, Sparky Water in Council, Idaho. Sparky is under the Whole Foods group in Boise. I called Sparky; they said they had been looking for an opportunity like this, a natural hot spring, the trail had no part in their decision. The spring was there folks, they didn't bring it with them. One new business in how many years of the trail?

There was at least half if not more in opposition to a trail through Wallowa County attending the meeting. It

is hoped that they will stay active and make their voices known. The surveys are out but not to everyone; just targeted people, however they can be found on the internet (eou.edu/rails-with-trails) and by phone (county commissioners for paper copies).

Using city directories I called businesses within the trail corridor. Very few claimed an economic benefit from the trail.

A restaurant in Midvale, Idaho,

within spitting distance of the trail told me the trail people do not use their restaurant. They had trouble with one member of the WNT trail group about boulders delineating between the restaurant property and the trail ... that was solved eventually. It is interesting how close this business is to the trail and no business from it. (She mentioned they bring their high protein bars with them.) How can one think someone further away will be aided by it? Unless they do incidental bicycle repair, are in the porta-potty business or sell high protein bars.

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Hill not seeking cemetery board post

To the Editor:

In the upcoming election for Enterprise cemetery board, it needs to be noted that incumbent candidate, George Hill, resigned from the cemetery board effective April 9. I would ask voters to give Pat Willis our vote of support for that position. She will breathe new life into our dead cemetery.

Carolyn Maasdam
Enterprise

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

cemetery restoration project There has been a great deal of concern about the deterioration of the cemetery and both these individuals have stepped up to the plate and are working to restore the grounds.

As per the Chieftain article a few weeks ago George Hill resigned his board position but remains on the ballot. Thank you for your service Mr. Hill.

A groundswell of citizens are offering their help in many ways to bring our cemetery back to what it once was. Pat Willis and Perry Davis are certainly doing their part and would appreciate your vote.

Pat and Judy Wortman
Enterprise

Support Davis, Willis for board

To the Editor:

We urge on voters in the Enterprise Cemetery District to support Perry Davis and Pat Willis for positions on the cemetery board.

We feel and Perry and Pat have shown their interest, concern and willingness in working long term to solve problems and improve conditions at the Enterprise Cemetery. They have done this by stepping up to fill vacancies created by the early resignations of two sitting board members and have already started work on some of the problems.

Betty & Jim Butner
Enterprise

Willis, Davis devoted to cemetery

To the Editor:

Election time is coming up May 19 and we would encourage you to vote Pat Willis and Perry Davis for the Enterprise Cemetery District. Both Pat and Perry have devoted enormous time and energy to the

WALLOWA COUNTY CHIEFTAIN

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P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.
Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

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MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHER **Marissa Williams, marissa@bmeagle.com**
EDITOR **Rob Ruth, editor@wallowa.com**
REPORTER **Stephen Tool, stool@wallowa.com**
REPORTER **Kathleen Eilyn, kellyn@wallowa.com**
NEWSROOM ASSISTANT **Rich Rautenstrauch, rrautenstrauch@wallowa.com**
AD SALES CONSULTANT **Brooke Pace, bpace@wallowa.com**
GRAPHIC DESIGNER **Robby Day, rday@wallowa.com**
OFFICE MANAGER **Cheryl Jenkins, cjenkins@wallowa.com**

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