

# Opt-out provision at SBHC not a myth

A small furor has erupted over Enterprise School District plans to place a student health center in an empty Enterprise classroom space, a reaction that school officials and the medical clinic involved apparently didn't fully anticipate.

That's unfortunate, because now unhealthy levels of fear and distrust are driving the public discourse. If the health center's partnering organizations don't allay these soon, a project they conceived mainly to serve kids who aren't receiving needed care could be swept away in a wave of patron emotion.

We don't mean to imply here that the plans shouldn't receive a thorough public airing. All thoughtfully raised issues should be carefully addressed and resolved before deciding whether to proceed. Certain points of contention are less reasonable than others, though, and it appears there's a real danger this project could fall victim to the spreading popularity of opposing all things government-funded, especially if they're related to health care.

The controversy at hand isn't difficult to understand. A number of parents, fearing their kids could gain access to birth control and other services without the parents' knowledge, have inveighed against the school-based health center (SBHC). They view the center as an infringement on parental control. In response, the school district and Winding Waters Medical Clinic, the nonprofit that would operate the SBHC, are assuring parents there will be an "opt-out" provision allowing families to deny their own juvenile members access to the SBHC.

Promising this measure's availability might have easily resolved the parental control concern but for one crippling circumstance — an absence of trust. Among at least a few of the SBHC's opponents, the cogitative train to non-confidence runs something like this: The school district and clinic may or may not be utterly sincere about furnishing the non-participation alternative, but because this center receives state health care funding, local officials won't be the true decision-makers. They therefore won't be able to deliver on any such promise.

No doubt undergirded by the profound antipathy already cultivated toward Obamacare — of which the SBHC is not a product — local families can too readily conceive of mandates and penalties that tie everyone's hands against ever pulling away, let alone fashioning the offering to fit our community's choices.

Citizens would do well to bear in mind, however, that this local center isn't a state or federal requirement, and accepting grant money for it in one year doesn't lock anyone in to keeping the thing running indefinitely. So it would seem the buck indeed stops with school officials if patrons' desired opt-out path inexplicably disappears. And in any unacceptable scenario, patrons could use the ballot box to change the district board and pull the plug on the center, if that's what they really wanted. If they were very acutely miffed, they could start a recall against sitting board members to expedite the targeted change.

The point here is that local folks, not the state, wield ultimate authority in this matter, and we shouldn't wildly exaggerate the strength of any strings that are attached to grant funds for an SBHC.

It might also lend us some comfort to remember the years before Obamacare, when the administration of President George W. Bush sought to expand the Children's Health Insurance Program. Though launched during the Clinton years, CHIP fit well with Bush's espoused philosophy of compassionate conservatism.

With a safeguard for voluntary parental control assured, we believe establishing the SBHC could also prove to be a compassionate choice. —RCR

**EDITORIAL**  
The voice of the Chieftain



## Pro golf tourney a true treat

A few weeks ago, I attended a professional golf tournament for the first time. My adventure began on a Thursday morning, when I noticed while watching television that Pumpkin Ridge Golf Club, just 20 miles west of Portland, was hosting the final regular season event of the Web.Com Tour, beginning that very day. So I did a quick check on ticket prices for spectators — which were a bargain at \$25 for the entire tournament — and got my daughter, Briana's permission to sleep on her couch for a few nights. By the next morning, I was heading off to Portland in my trusty old Camry.

One of my reasons for wanting to attend the tournament, in addition to the chance to visit with my daughter, was the opportunity to watch one of my favorite golfers, Jason Allred. I first heard of Allred when he was just 13, after a buddy of mine played in the same group with him at Oak Knoll Golf Course in Ashland, where Jason grew up. My friend told me that this kid was already an amazing golfer with a great short game and even better manners. At that time, our family lived in nearby Talent, so I made a point of following Allred's standout career as a junior golfer, and later when he was at Pepperdine and eventually on various pro tours.

On the first day of the Portland Win-Co Foods Open, Allred had shot 1 under par while playing in the afternoon, so I knew that on Friday, he would be playing in the morning, and that his chances of making the cut were dicey. When I arrived at Pumpkin Ridge at about 2:00 on Friday afternoon, I was relieved to learn that Allred had posted 1 under again that



### POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

John McColgan

morning, which meant that he would get to play on the weekend by the skin of his teeth. That was good news for both of us.

On Friday afternoon, I got the lay of the land, literally, by walking the beautiful course that is carved carefully out of forest and wetlands. I learned that I could go anywhere I wanted so long as I stayed behind the ropes and observed proper golf etiquette whenever players were making a shot anywhere nearby. The modest-sized gallery was so respectful that I sometimes felt like I was in church.

After enjoying a good visit with Briana on Friday evening, I headed back to the course early Saturday morning amidst strong winds and occasional showers. I made the decision to follow Allred's threesome throughout the round, where I tagged along with about a dozen other fans of his, most of whom turned out to be his family and friends. I re-introduced myself to his mom, Peggy, whom I had met many years before when she was subbing at a school where I was student-teaching in Ashland. Peggy graciously introduced me to her husband, Gene, who is an E.R. doctor, and to Jason's lovely wife, Kimberly, and to a few of Jason's friends. For the rest of the day, our little entourage mingled contentedly, sometimes chatting quietly, but always mindful of the golf that was unfolding. The blustery condi-

tions proved challenging, and Jason shot 3 over par with a score that was not atypical relative to the rest of the field. Having the chance to meet and socialize with Jason's family and friends that day was a great treat for me.

On Sunday, I chose to sample the rest of the tournament rather than following just Allred's group. I set my camp chair behind the first green, watched a few groups come through, and then repeated the process for each hole in succession. By the time I had reached the 18th hole, the last groups were just a few holes away. I was delighted when I learned that Allred had finished with a solid final round of 5 under, and I was on hand at the 18th green when Dicky Pride, a 46-year-old journeyman who had not won a tournament in more than two decades, notched his second professional victory. I also watched as the top 25 money-earners on the Web.Com Tour were awarded their highly coveted PGA Tour cards for 2016.

Many casual observers might mistakenly assume that most pro golfers are multi-millionaires, when in fact the vast majority of pros are just grinding every week to earn a living. A guy like Jason Allred, who comes from a strong family, and who, along with Kimberly, is providing for their three young kids, is a pleasure to root for. And supporting a tournament that raised more than 1.1 million dollars for local charities gave me additional satisfaction. With the bonus of getting to visit with my daughter each evening — what an idyllic way to spend a weekend!

John McColgan writes from his home in Joseph.

### GUEST COMMENTARY

## Joint wolf experiment good early step

If anyone knows the impact of wolves on the livestock industry it's Dave Dashiell.

Last year the rancher lost 300 sheep to the Huckleberry Pack in Northeast Washington's Stevens County. Although other Washington ranchers have lost livestock to wolves, no rancher has reported more losses or received more attention than Dashiell.

The Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife approved shooting up to four wolves in the pack last year. The agency shot one, but stopped hunting when the sheep moved out of the pack's territory.

Ranchers were outraged. Environmentalists were outraged that even one wolf was killed.

But Dashiell pressed on. He entered into an agreement with WDFW that included a whole list of preventive measures he would take to protect his flock. Earlier this year Dashiell lost 26 sheep in an attack that also left wounded a 92-pound sheep dog, one of five guarding the flock.

Justin Hedrick, president of the Stevens County Cattlemen's Association, said at the time that the attack on the dog illustrates what happens "when you don't kill the offending pack that needs to be killed."

Nonetheless, Dashiell was forced off grazing lands in Stevens County by continuing wolf activity. He has kept his sheep on pastures near the Tri-Cities and spends \$10,000 a month on hay.

So no one could blame Dashiell for taking a hard line on the subject of wolves and the environmentalists who advocate for them.

But last week Dashiell came to a tentative agreement with conservationists that could put him back on grazing land. We see that as a valuable step forward.

Dashiell is a member of the WDFW wolf advisory panel. The advisory group's environmentalists tentatively agreed to publicly support Dashiell's return to graze in wolf country. Dashiell said he will welcome their involvement in putting together a plan to protect his sheep with non-lethal measures.

Environmentalists involved in the deal say they want to show they can work with ranchers.

"That's pretty gutsy of them. I don't know what kind of blowback they're going to get," Dashiell said. "I don't know what kind of blowback I'm going to get."

There are extremists on both sides. Some ranchers would like to see all of the wolves eliminated. Some environmentalists would like to see ranchers pushed off public rangeland and to assume losses on private land as the cost of doing business in wolf country.

If it comes to fruition, the collaboration could answer two questions central to the issue.

Can ranchers and environmentalists work together to ensure both livestock and wolves survive on the range? Can non-lethal measures alone protect livestock while keeping ranching economically viable?

We're not sure which is the more vexing question.

If the measures deployed adequately protect the sheep and are viable, everyone wins. If they don't, then everyone will know.

Definitive judgments can't be made on just one experiment.

But what happens after the results are known will tell us a lot about whether real cooperation is possible.

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