

Governors are supposed to be leaders

Any politician who stays in Washington, D.C., long enough will master the art of saying something while saying nothing. The congressman from Eastern Oregon, Greg Walden, is a master of the articulate non-statement.

Governors cannot afford such sleight of hand. After all, they are supposed to be leaders. We are also closer to them, physically. Congressmen can go to Washington to hide. Governors cannot.

It is unfortunate to see a penchant for non-speak develop so early in our Gov. Kate Brown.

Our sister newspaper the Capital Press sought to learn the position of Gov. Brown on the disputed proposal to create a national monument in Malheur County. The proposed monument is the Owyhee Canyonlands wilderness and conservation area.

Wrote the CP: “Here’s what (Brown’s) people said she said:

“While this is ultimately a federal decision, I have heard from many Oregonians with strong views about the Owyhee. There’s agreement as to the beauty and uniqueness of the Canyonlands and disagreement over whether a monument designation can best ensure those characteristics will be enjoyed for future generations. I have communicated those viewpoints to federal administration officials and will be closely following this issue in the months ahead.”

Huh? Brown conveyed the persona of a lawyer or TV news anchor. She does not present herself as a leader, as a governor.

On Jan. 7, this page made a similar observation about a comment that was relayed to us by Gov. Brown’s media person. The topic was a legislative proposal to have public employees contribute to their retirement, as private sector employees do. We wrote about the Public Employees Retirement System train wreck that is coming for school districts and city governments. Here was our response to Brown’s ambivalence.

“Gov. Brown’s response is a disappointment, because it contains no leadership. She sounds more like a lawyer or a news anchor — stating the obvious — than a governor. Where is Brown’s amazement that Oregon is the only state that requires no employee participation in retirement funding? Where is her anger about the pending horror in which school districts and cities will be decimated to pay for a phantom workforce of retirees?”

We then asked the question, “Why won’t Gov. Brown lead Oregon on PERS?

On the Owyhee Canyonlands, she does not have to lead. But acting like she is an umpire in the middle of the tennis court is an insult to Oregonians’ intelligence.

Brown is, of course, waiting for the election to be over. But our guess is that even then she will not lead Oregonians if she is asked to be at odds with public employee unions or the liberal Portland center of her electorate.

Even prior to her first election to office, Brown is becoming a big disappointment.



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Happy birthday; wish you were here

My dad, John Joseph McColgan, was born 100 years ago, on June 18, 1916. He was the sixth of 11 children, and the middle child in more ways than one. He had four older sisters and one older brother, along with four younger sisters and one younger brother. His dad was from the tiny hamlet of Clonmany in County Donegal, Ireland, and his mom was a first-generation Irish-American. His dad died in 1934 when my father was just 18 years old, and the older kids helped the family to make ends meet before the days of Social Security in the depths of the Great Depression.

After being the first kid in his family to graduate from high school, my dad worked as a messenger for several years in Boston while he was also pounding the streets each day looking for a better job. His excellent penmanship and math skills eventually won him a place at the Boston Edison Company, where he worked as a bookkeeper prior to World War II. He and his brothers went to enlist on Dec. 8, 1941, but initially he was



turned down because he had an irregular heartbeat and his feet were too flat. But by 1943, the army changed its mind about his heart and his feet, and he was off to the Pacific as part of the supply line for Gen. Douglas MacArthur.

My dad was a shy man who was devoted to his mother, so after he came back from the war, it took him a while to muster the courage to ask my mom — a pretty keypunch operator at the Edison — for their first date. She said yes, and they saw a play, “The Misfits,” (ironically, as things turned out) at Boston’s Colonial Theatre. A few years later, in 1949, they were married, and they went on to have six kids — three boys and three girls, thereby perpetuating my

dad’s gift for symmetry. I am the fourth of the bunch.

My father was the ultimate family man, devoted to his wife, Irene, for 55 years until his death in 2004. And he always was there for us kids. His yearly vacations from his excellent job at the Edison (where he ultimately retired as head of the Computer Department) were a reflection of his unselfish nature, because every day of his vacation was always about doing something fun for us kids. We would always thank him, and he would reply (modestly or perhaps sometimes accurately), “It was Mom’s idea.”

Shortly after my dad’s death, my mom notified one of his old army buddies, Tex, of the sad news. She received a letter in reply, which I will cite in portions here, because it says a lot not only about my dad, but also about Tex and about so many other guys from “the Greatest Generation.”

See MCCOLGAN, Page A5

Protect pets from sounds of summer

Mother Nature already has started celebrating summer with glorious, bone-shaking, window-rattling, lightning-bolt-riddled thunder storms.

Our pitiful response peaks on the Fourth of July with neighborhood firecracker shows, sparklers and the echoing boom of fireworks bouncing off the mountains and reverberating through the valleys of northeast Oregon.

It’s a wonderful time of year — unless you’re afraid.

Recent studies suggest that approximately one-third to one-half of dogs are fearful of noises such as thunderstorms and fireworks. Some dogs even show symptoms of noise phobias when the kitchen blender is used or the weed-eater is fired up.

Common symptoms of noise phobias are varied and include:

- Pacing or restlessness
- Lip licking
- Panting
- Hypervigilance
- Cowering
- Refusing to eat
- Yawning
- Vocalizing
- Expression changes (Brow furrowing and ears back)
- Freezing or lack of desire to move



around

- Trembling or shaking
- Abnormal clinginess (attempts to get unusually close to family members)
- Hiding (under furniture and in closets)

Different dogs display fear in different ways, but most owners can readily tell when their pet is not acting normally and showing signs of discomfort. Unfortunately, dogs reacting in fearful ways to noise can cause harm to themselves and their environment, creating a strain on the special bond between family members and their beloved pet.

The following suggestions may help keep your animal family members safe during the booming celebrations of summertime:

- Do not take your pets to fireworks displays
- Keep pets indoors where they will feel safe and protected. Leaving a TV, fan or radio turned on will provide a familiar sound that serves to decrease the auditory

impact of fireworks. Additionally, keeping your pet in an interior room or a basement may decrease the auditory stimuli and help reduce anxiety.

- If you live near centers of holiday celebrations, consider boarding your animals in facilities that are quieter and less stressful.
- Make certain that your dog or cat is properly identified to facilitate their return in the event that they run away. Proper identification includes a name tag fixed to a collar with a contact phone number where you can be reached. If you are traveling, attach a temporary tag that provides a local phone number where you can be contacted. A permanent method of identification involves having your pet implanted with a unique identification microchip (your veterinarian can help you with this).
- Never leave pets unattended outside, even in a fenced yard or on a chain. Fear-driven pets who typically respect a fence and a chain may escape the yard or become tangled in their chain, risking injury or death.
- Behavior training can help desensitize your pets to holiday confusion. Behavior training is best started before a noise phobia begins.

See RICE, Page A5

Pump the brakes on Rail with Trail

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Doug McDaniel
Wallowa

Editor’s note: Learn more about the Rail with Trail project during an informational meeting Thursday night at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise.

Can’t have it both ways

I’m pleased to learn The Chieftain has changed its mind about judicial review of bureaucratic decisions.

On March 22, The Chieftain editorialized against judicial review of the state wolf delisting decision, in which the scientific merits of delisting would be argued by scientists before an impartial court and a determination made whether or not the ODFW genuinely considered best science in its decision. The Chieftain felt “... a courtroom is not where science happens, and it is the wrong place for management decisions to be made.”

But in a June 15 editorial, The Chieftain rightly lauds the Supreme Court de-

cision affirming the right to challenge a government agency’s determination by a judicial review of its scientific basis. The Chieftain now feels an agency — in this case the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers — must show in court “a solid scientific basis” for its administrative decision. Of course in the particular case before the Supreme Court, it’s a landowner contesting the scientific basis for the need of a permit to mine peat from a wetland that could cause environmental damage to a watershed protected under the Clean Water Act.

Could it be The Chieftain has a double standard — that property owners have a right to judicial review but not conservationists? Naah, that would be too cynical.

So I look forward to an editorial criticizing State Rep. Barreto’s cynical promotion and misrepresentation of HB4040, the recent bill killing the delisting judicial review, now that The Chieftain has seen the light.

Wally Sykes
Joseph