

# Sharing the dream legacy with Dr. King

It's Monday, Jan. 15, as I write this. I had a column ready to go, one thinking about Wallowa County as a microcosm of the country in which we, despite rancor and division at a national level, are working in the right directions.

We value health care for all; find women in positions of influence and leadership in our schools, local government, medical, professional and business communities. We have organizations discovering and celebrating a history of African-Americans living and logging alongside white citizens in Maxville and Wallowa.

We're working to heal wounds from our own beginnings, when Nez Perce Indians were forcibly removed from the Wallowas.

But today is the day set aside to celebrate the life and work of Martin Luther King. I began it with a look at the headlines in the online New York Times, and turned immediately to an article on black churches.

The writers had interviewed parishioners in Catholic and Protestant churches in Washington D.C., Boston, Kansas City, Atlanta and



**MAIN STREET**  
Rich Wandschneider

Miami, and everywhere they found people worried and confused. Less than two years removed from their pride and hope in a black American President:

"... They saw America slipping into an earlier, uglier version of itself. And when Mr. Trump used crude words to describe Haiti and African countries in an immigration discussion, they said, he was voicing what many Americans were thinking, even if it was something they no longer felt comfortable saying: America prefers white people."

As the father of a brown son, and grandfather to brown children, I see the same things and carry the same concerns. More and more I see President Trump not as a leader of a movement but as a flawed but still powerful spokesman for white people — mostly white men — who for all

kinds of reasons feel threatened or left behind as the country has moved to make health care, education and opportunity available to all.

President Obama was the last straw, an admission that the country we thought we lived in — one in which we all got along most of the time, but one in which white men called the shots in big boardrooms and local churches, NBA front offices, union halls and medical schools — had slipped away.

Trump found leaders who spoke to these white men — or the leaders found Donald Trump, and together they floated on a wave of white male fear to the highest office in the land. Mr. Trump's flaws — his attitudes toward women; previous business dealings with immigrants and foreign governments — made little difference. In fact, the "locker room" talk was quietly applauded by some angry white men.

Not all of these men are out of work coal miners in West Virginia. Many have good jobs and businesses, but they also have fears.

As do many of their wives and daughters. We all fear change to some extent, and when established norms and practices — the names of our sports teams; women, brown and black bosses and doctors; the laws regarding homosexual behavior — change, those fears rise.

Here is the good part. This is where living in a small place, a place where we are neighbors who have the opportunity and often the need to see each other as individuals, puts us at an advantage in dealing with change.

The Mexican restaurant is "Leo's restaurant," Leo who also plays soccer on Sunday mornings. The doctor is Rene or Liz or Annika — not that "woman doctor." The county commissioner is Susan; the director is Cheryl or Maria or ... you get the picture.

That does not mean that there is not work to do. The fears that we carry get amplified in our own homes, and blatantly carried by our children. Our fears of homosexuals, Mexicans, immigrants, Republicans or Democrats, the "government" or the environmentalists, Mormons or Catho-

lics, grow in the minds and mouths of our children. It's harder to be a brown child in Wallowa County than it is to be a brown adult.

And ideas grow in our own souls as we turn away from the neighbors who happen to be homosexual or brown, Catholic, outspoken woman or stay-at-home dad, and turn towards the Internet rabble-rousers who pine for a time when white men ruled the land.

We should all remember that there was a time when being a white man was not enough — you had to own property to vote; and there was a time when white men from Ireland and Greece and Italy were not white enough.

So on this Martin Luther King Day, I remember, as he so movingly did, that this country is an idea, a dream, in which "all men are created equal." I remember too that the "men" in that founding document is an idea that has grown to include women, and is still growing.

Columnist Rich Wandschneider lives in Joseph.



## You can always count on the Marines

My buddy Mike Koloski sent me the details on this. He and a number of other folks attended graveside services for former Marine George Hill at the Enterprise Cemetery last Thursday morning. Members of Eagle Cap Post 4307 of the VFW were assembled with flags, rifles and decorations.

Just prior to the start of the ceremony, Lee Bollman of Bollman's Funeral Home announced to assembled group of veterans and family that there would be a 10-minute delay awaiting the arrival of a Marine Color Guard on its way from Spokane.

Shortly, two members of the color guard, a sergeant and private in dress uniform, walked up the road to the cemetery. The services took place with the Marines smartly folding the burial flag for presentation to the widow and family.

After the ceremonies, Mike learned that four Marines had left Spokane for Enterprise early that morning driving over snowy and treacherous roads. They ran off the road twice on their trip.

The last incident required them to leave their vehicle by the roadside and split up in pairs to hitchhike on to Enterprise. One pair made it and walked the last quarter mile to the cemetery for the service.

"It's a great story of the Marines' ability to persist, improvise and prevail in peace as well as war," Mike said.

**STOPPED BY** the shop to have Bunk Sasser remove some of the fuzz from my nearly bald head last Wednesday. Turns out it was Bunk's 87th birthday. I would have guessed him about 10 years younger.

Bunk says he's doing well but has come to believe his mind is 20 years younger than his body.

"There's things I think I should be able to do, but I just can't do them anymore," he said.

Bunk recently moved Valley Barbers to a new location, so it appears he's planning to be around for many years to come.

I always get a Tootsie Pop from Bunk for being a "good boy" while I'm getting my hair cut.

**REMEMBER OUR** conversation of a while back when I told you about a 12-year-old murder story in Troy topping the number of hits for our website three consecutive months.

Mystery solved. An online reader informed me that the reason for the upsurge was because Benjamin Paul Harrell, the man originally accused of murder in connection with the 2006 incident, recently began posting videos on YouTube about firearms and shooting. YouTubers apparently wanted to know more about him, Googled and landed at our front door.

Is it just me, or do people who spend a lot of time on the Internet tend toward the macabre?

**THANKS TO** letter-writers who took time to chime in on the "no" side of the Measure 101 issue.

Quite frankly, I was expecting a lot more of them and was prepared to publish each one.

Looking at the balance of voter registration, I would expect to hear more from Republicans on issues of the day. According to statistics from the Oregon Secretary State, as of January 2017, the county had 2,588 registered Republicans and 1,247 Democrats. There were also 220 Independents and 1,167 Nonaffiliated.



**WAHL TO WALL**  
Paul Wahl

## Measure 101 is not the solution

I am writing in response to the Chieftain's editorial in support of Measure 101. While I support finding solutions to providing affordable health care, it is clear that Measure 101 is not a viable solution.

Insurers and hospitals will be taxed and the added costs will inevitably fall on consumers seeking health care options. The Oregon Department of Consumer and Business Services has said that insurance rates will go up in 2018 if the health care tax is upheld through Measure 101.

Small business owners, school districts and student health plans will all be taxed under the current legal framework in Measure 101. As premiums continue to increase, it is baffling that our leaders would even consider this type of tax.

According to the Kaiser Family Foundation, few states place taxes on health insurance premiums due to the negative impact on consumers. The Portland Oregonian's editorial board has urged voters to reject Measure 101 because they describe it as an inequitable tax.

It is shameful that low-income Oregonians are being used as a political bargaining chip in this election. Instead, our leaders in Salem need to find a long-lasting and non "Band-aid" solution to our state's financial blunders. Oregonians should reject Measure 101.

Evan Bryan  
Wallowa Lake

### Vote no on tax Measure 101

Ballot wording for Measure 101 tries to mislead us that this isn't another new tax that our Salem politicians have come up with. By calling it an assessment, they try to fool us into voting for it.

Calling a tax an assessment is like calling a rose by any other name — it is still a rose.

In reality Measure 101 is nothing but a new tax on hospitals, health insurers and coordinated care organizations. This new tax will be passed on to you and me thus driving up the cost of our health care.

It is time to tell Salem to live within their

**LETTERS to the EDITOR**

means just as we have to do. If you are tired of new taxes, vote no on Measure 101.

Rodd Clark  
Joseph

### Let the legislature do its work on 101

The one thing both sides in the Measure 101 debate agree on is that this is a complex issue. While few outside those creating this legislation can understand the inter-working of funding state government, we can know facts on which we can base a decision.

In the last legislative session, the governor gave out \$100 million in new raises. One party rule in the legislature also allocated \$10 million additional state monies to pay for abortion while shorting the Veterans budget \$3 million.

Also, it is a fact that voting "no" will not keep anyone from receiving healthcare. Voting no will simply put this back into the hands of the legislature to fix; they are currently in session.

The state bureaucracy in charge of running state Medicaid has wasted hundreds of millions of dollars, including \$186 millions that may have to be repaid to the federal government for signing up those not eligible.

If approved, Measure 101 will tax small business and those obtaining insurance in the individual market (the political nobodies) to fund state Medicaid. At the same time corporations, big business and powerful special interest are exempted. To date those being exempted have pumped almost \$3 million into convincing voters to approve Measure 101.

A no vote will send this back to the legislature. Our elected officials can, if we hold them accountable, structure equitable funding.

Annette Lathrop  
Joseph

### Measure 101 is 'foot-in-the-door;' vote no

Once again, state government is coming to us with a sob story as the reason to raise our taxes. Once again we Oregonians need to say "no."

Measure 101 sets a bad precedent. It taxes small businesses but exempts large corporations. Guess who has fancy lobbyists in Salem? Is this fair? No.

Measure 101 calls the new taxes an "assessment." Are they being honest? No.

Can the legislators increase the tax rate in future years because they "need" more money? What has been your experience? We voted no on Measure 97, but Salem didn't hear us.

Oregon government wastes millions of dollars but, rather than look for ways to save our money, they just dream up new ways to tax us. Voting to approve this measure simply enables addicted Salem to keep spending without consequences.

Look at your voters' pamphlet. Notice how many pages of Arguments in Favor there are? Then look to see who paid for them. Planned Parenthood. Oregon Medical Association. Oregon Association of Hospitals. Northwest Health Foundation, SEIU. All in favor of getting more of your money.

Look at the Arguments in Opposition, written by small business owners pleading for "healthcare reform, not new taxes." By a retired Master Sargent paying half of his retirement in premiums to help a disabled daughter. By a "business turn-around specialist" who finds it "incredibly frustrating to watch the colossal waste ..."

Don't fall for the government's sob story. Think about these people whose lives will be negatively impacted by higher taxes. Yours will be, too.

As Sam Carpenter says: "Hold Kate Brown and the Oregon Health Authority Accountable for Medicaid Mismanagement. Vote no on 101!"

Anita VanGrunsven  
Wallowa

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