

# Cynics are everywhere, it appears

Two things happened in our community this past week that set the conspiracy theorists' tongues to wagging. Wallowa County discovered a vendor error in printing and mailing ballots in three precincts and the sewer backed up at Enterprise Elementary School.

Within minutes of the news of each breaking, Facebook posts began appearing alleging that the county was somehow incompetent or worse in collusion with someone to "fix" the election. And Enterprise School District was somehow complicit in trying to sicken our children through gross negligence.

Honestly, if I could get away with it, I would pull the plug on the Chieftain's Facebook page and never look back. I can't tell you how frustrated and sad these unreasonable posts make me. I'm sure a lot of you feel the same way.

Have we sunk to such a low level of trust in our county that everything that happens is the result of a sinister plot? How about "someone made a mistake."

Mistakes happen. Every day. Most of us do our best to



## WAHL TO WALL

Paul Wahl

**I DON'T KNOW IF THIS IS HAPPENING BECAUSE OF FACEBOOK OR IF IT'S ALWAYS BEEN HAPPENING AND WE DISCOVERED IT ONCE FACEBOOK APPEARED ON THE SCENE.**

assess the situation and take steps to make sure it doesn't happen again. But to say that the school district or City of Enterprise is somehow negligent because the sewer system backed up is ridiculous.

Perhaps I have more empathy for organizations because we are also pasted to the wall when the Chieftain makes a mistake. If something is inadvertently left out of an edition, we are immediately accused of having some sort of ulterior

motive and are somehow part of a sinister and evil plot. Never the case. If we plan to refuse to publish an item, the person submitted it will receive a full and swift explanation as to why it will not run. We don't play that game.

Neither does the county nor the Enterprise School District. Like us, their employees don't have time to sit around and foment plots. To suggest otherwise is to offer a totally uninformed opinion.

I'm not saying I agree with everything done by the county and the school district or any other public bodies, but my first stop is at their door to hear their side of the story.

Wouldn't you like to be treated accordingly if it were you? "Do unto others as you would have them do unto you" really takes on a fresh meaning in these situations.

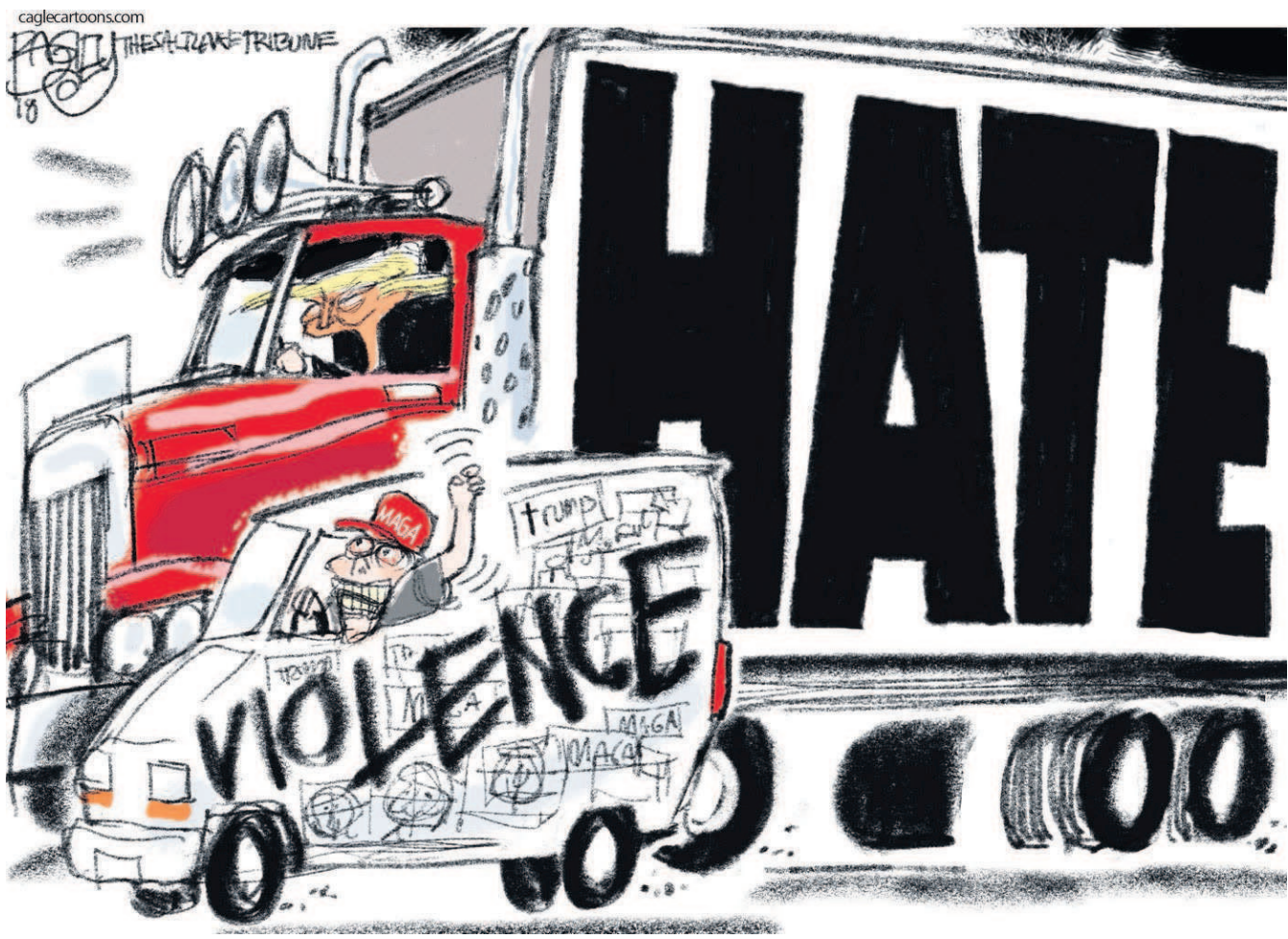
I don't know if this is happening because of Facebook or if it's always been happening and we discovered it once Facebook appeared on the scene.

Suddenly, anyone can accuse anyone of anything, no matter how heinous or despicable. And 95 percent of Facebook readers will take it at face value and spread the misinformation as if it were gospel.

I think Facebook has made us all stupid.

This Facebook-fueled rush to judgment on whatever the topic of the day is not helping bring our county or our nation together. Good people who work hard each day to perform their jobs are being caught in the backwash.

Why are we so quick to assign motive to everything that happens in our community? Are we really that cynical? I hope not.



## Time for columnist to address the real issues

### LETTERS to the EDITOR

#### MEASURE 104

### Time to close the taxing loopholes pols prefer

In 1996, Oregon voters passed a constitutional amendment requiring a supermajority vote on all revenue raising legislation. Politicians have created loopholes to get around the state's constitutional requirement for a three-fifths supermajority to raise taxes on Oregon families and small businesses.

Measure 104 will close the loopholes and make sure politicians follow the State Constitution. It also ensures that any legislation that raises revenue requires a three-fifths majority vote. This includes fees or the elimination of tax exemptions, deductions or credits — making it clear that Oregonians are fed up with politicians working behind closed doors to increase taxes.

Oregon lawmakers voted for a billion dollars in higher taxes within the past year — 10 cent gas tax increase, new payroll tax and car sales tax, car registration and title fees hike, truck mileage tax hike (up 25 percent), family health insurance premium tax (\$330 million), small business tax (\$376 million) and hunting and fishing license fee hike.

Oregon now ranks among the top 10 states in the country in terms of individual tax burden, according to the Tax Foundation. While Measure 104 won't stop every tax increase, it will make it a little harder and ensure that there is broader bi-partisan support.

Measure 104 sends a message to politicians: It tells them that we want better management of our tax dollars. There's currently no political will to make tough decisions.

Measure 104 forces politicians to eliminate waste before they come back to us for more money or find new ways to raise taxes. Please join us in voting for Measure 104.

Rodney and Linda Botts  
*Joseph*

#### MEASURE 106

### Original 'choice' was made by Gov. Brown

The "choice" of Gov. Kate Brown was to sign House Bill 3391 in 2017, a multi-million dollar bill significantly increasing taxpayer funding for abortion. HB 3391 was voted on by State lawmakers as an "emergency" preventing the tax bill from being referred for a public vote in accordance with the State Constitution.

Taxpayers also pay for high insurance premiums that include coverage for abortion they may not want or need.

Fact: Oregon is the only state in the United States with no limit on access to abortion at any stage of pregnancy including late term abortion of viable birth.

Fact: Oregon as well as every state in country has Christian charities who offer "free" and caring support to mothers of all ages for alternatives to abortion.

Thanks to Oregon Life United, the sponsors of Measure 106, all Oregon voters have a "choice." My Choice is "yes"

Karla Holme  
Imnaha

We have read with interest the column "Let's Roll" on the opinion page. But who is the intended audience?

"Let's Roll" repeats the Fox News narrative; perhaps that audience enjoys seeing their biases confirmed in the Chieftain. But if it is intended to convert the skeptical, it is unsuccessful for these reasons.

The arguments lack logic. The final sentence of the first column (Aug. 29) was, "Please note this article was based on facts, logic and verifiable history. Conclusion: Lock Her Up!"

Any high school course in critical thinking identifies this as a non sequitur. There were no facts presented, nor a logical argument to justify the conclusion. As to verifiable history, Hillary Clinton has never been charged with a crime.

The arguments are not factual and make little sense. For example, "When Obama won, Republicans never denied the legitimacy of the election process."

Is the author serious? The president is a notorious birther who consistently denies the legitimacy of the Obama presidency.

And, "Now Democrats have gone completely berserk trying to deny that Trump won the election." This is the straw man fallacy.

Few deny that he won the election. None of the comments by Holder, Waters and Clinton deny the election results; they suggest strategy in response to the election results.

The pink pussy hat demonstrations and Stormy Daniels controversy do not deny the election results; they were demonstrations against the decency of the man. "Let's Roll" losses credibility when falsehoods are claimed as truth.

There are many important issues that a conservative columnist could address such education, immigration, job creation and health care. We recommend that someone with "time to think" give these issues thoughtful consideration.

Ron and Terry Polk  
*Lostine*

### Basic problem is human, not Dems or Republicans

In response to last week's "Let's Roll" column:

The point of view expressed does nothing to fix the problem, instead it adds fuel to the fire which is already burning pretty hot. Instead, perhaps the author should be thinking of a solution.

Are we all a part of this insanity? Absolutely! The problem is not the Dems or the Republicans; the problem is humans. It is easy to become blinded by one side so you do not see the fault of your own.

What is happening in our country today is a symptom of what our culture has become. Our world is in major chaos, and until we see our own individual part in this insanity nothing will change.

Instead of pointing the finger and blaming, we need to come together collectively and respect each other. Not as a Democrat or as a Republican, but as a human being. The only way for us to heal as a country is to start with ourselves.

There are a lot of angry people everywhere on the political spectrum and hatred is contagious and growing. So, I ask all those who read this: What is your roll in all of this and what are you going to do about it to make things better for everyone?

### WHERE TO WRITE

#### Washington, D.C.

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. E-mail: wayne\_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Web site: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. E-mail: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R (Second District) — 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct e-mail because of spam. Web site: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.

Pending Bills: For information on bills in Congress, Phone: 202-225-1772.

#### Salem

Gov. Kate Brown, D — 160 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-4582. Fax: 503-378-8970. Web site: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

Oregon Legislature — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Web site: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

State Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove (District 58) — Room H-384, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1458. E-mail: rep.gregbarreto@state.or.us. Web site: http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R (District 29) — Room S-423, State Capitol, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1729. E-mail: Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us. Web site: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell.

Oregon Legislative Information — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

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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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**General Manager** Jennifer Cooney, jcooney@wallowa.com  
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