

# Opinion

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## Your views

### Congress should look inward before condemning others

I am sick to death of congressional members who attack good people when they have a closetful of dirty linen of their own that they hide from the people and lie their way out of when they get caught!

A few months ago there was a news item in all the papers and on the TV and radio about millions of taxpayer dollars having been paid by congressional members to mistresses and paramours to keep them quiet about their “illicit” relationships. To date, not one person has been identified in this national scandal!

These same people now have the intestinal fortitude to condemn someone with a record of years of public service, drag his name through the mud because of something that cannot be proved, that might have happened 35 or more years ago, when the “suspect” was a teenager, while they hide behind their cloak of hidden identity. This is a clear case of outright cover up and attempted blackmail.

It's time to clean house, or as President Trump puts it, “time to drain the swamp.”

**Alberta Bailey**  
Baker City

### School bond will give kids education they deserve

I have two kids attending school in Baker City. They both have attended Brooklyn Primary (one is still there, the other is at South Baker). Parents who have spent time in or around the school will know what I mean when I say that the overcrowding is obvious. The effort by the school staff and children is amazing. I really appreciate how hard everyone tries to make the current situation work for my kids, but I have no doubt that it has detracted from their education. For example, their schedule has to fit around cafeteria use for lunches and P.E. classes for over 450 students, putting academics at the mercy of coordinating the use of limited spaces.

Each year the labor market gets more demanding. I want our kids to be prepared with the best education and vocational training we can provide. The school bond will provide for adequate space to deliver the education our kids deserve, and the access to vocational training that will set them apart in the job market.

I have heard the history of how we came to this situation, but no excuse can make things better for kids in our schools. Each year we do nothing, they suffer the penalties for overcrowded, outdated and unsafe schools. This November we have the chance to turn it around. Please join me in voting yes for kids, on Measure 1-88.

**Charlie Tracy**  
Baker City

### Yes on Measure 106: Spend for schools, not abortions

Personal choice is one thing, but the use of public funding to support personal choice creates a financial burden for all. Through HB 3391, signed into law in 2017, Oregonians currently pay for free, taxpayer-funded abor-

tions for anyone — including undocumented residents.

In 2017, approximately \$1.9 million in taxpayer money was spent on more than 3,500 abortions, approximately 10 per day in the state. With limited tax revenues in the state, this money could be much better spent on needed education.

Voting Yes on Measure 106 doesn't stop anyone from choosing an abortion. People will still be able to have an abortion for any reason they wish, but this personal choice should not be paid for with our tax dollars. Also, Measure 106 allows for funding abortions when needed to protect the mother. Abortions that are medically necessary can still be covered by state-funded healthcare.

Please learn the facts about this important ballot measure and vote Yes on Measure 106.

**John Busch**  
Baker City

### We can restore current school buildings with local contractors

I read Grover Mann's letter in the paper and I agree with him. The 30-year timetable on the school bond is a longtime commitment and once started there is no backing out.

I understand that a large portion of Baker City and County's population consists of senior citizens who do not have school age children and are most likely retired on a fixed income. As Grover said in his letter, a majority of this group would never see the last payments on this bond.

Another fact is, everyone is going to pay if the bond levy passes whether they benefit from it or not. Those include:

- Renters who will have to pay additional rent to cover the extra tax the owner will be required to pay
- People who homeschool their kids
- People who send their kids to church schools such as the Seventh-day Adventist and Harvest Christian schools
- People who send their kids out of county to schools like North Powder Charter School
- The senior citizens mentioned earlier and couples that don't have children
- Single homeowners

Since the bond levy is to be paid for by property taxes, I would like to add another thought about those taxes. Several years ago the people of this state voted to limit the raise in property taxes to 3 percent a year. Guess what? Last year our property taxes went up 8 percent. According to the assessor's office this was legal because houses in the area, comparable to ours, were selling for an amount somewhat above their assessed value. I'm assuming this means that the assessed value of properties are going to go up, thus the property taxes will go up and the school bond add on will increase accordingly.

*(Editor's note: According to Kerry Savage, Baker County assessor, the tax rate for the bond measure, per \$1,000 of assessed valuation, would fluctuate based on the assessed value of a property. If the assessed value rises, the rate per \$1,000 for the bond repayment probably would drop because the school*

*district would need about the same amount of money each year to repay the bond.)*

I think Baker City prides itself in the old historic buildings that have been restored and are in use today. I think we as a community should feel the same way about restoring our school buildings. This is my recommendation and I agree with Grover on how the restoration and upgrading should be done by local people and contractors.

**Dick Culley**  
Baker City

### Encouraged by signs supporting McLeod-Skinner for Congress

I've just returned from a road trip, meandering across the beautiful and vast country of Oregon's District 2. I am thrilled by how many “Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congress” signs I've seen posted!

No wonder — Greg Walden has ceased to listen to the voices of rural Oregonians, and no longer has our interests at heart. He has been in Washington too long. He no longer offers town hall meetings to regular folks like us — he only appears at fancy fundraising dinners and on glossy billboards.

Greg's voting record shows he has forgotten our values.

His votes against the support of our U.S. military veterans and their families are disturbing. He headed the bill to abolish affordable health care, apparently not caring that 1 in 5 of his constituents would lose health care coverage as a result. Greg fails to recognize that half of his constituents live at or below poverty level, and 14 percent are unemployed, so his tax-cut schemes for the wealthy don't help us.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner's donors do not include corporate interests, but real rural Oregonians like us. She has traversed our state and put 40,000 miles on her Jeep, meeting and listening to us. She is dedicated to public service.

Jamie recognizes that we need to serve our veterans as they have served us. She is committed to accessible health care, water for our ranching and farming families, and providing tuition-free college or trade school in exchange for voluntary public service. Walden persists in fueling divisiveness, but Jamie McLeod-Skinner believes in “people before party.” Good ideas can come from both sides of the aisle. “Government needs to know when to help out, and when to get out of the way.”

Finally, we have a candidate who is truly one of us: Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congress. Jamie has earned my vote.

I encourage you to check out her website: [JamieforOregon.com](http://JamieforOregon.com) to learn more.

**Kata Bulinski**  
Baker City

### Nichols has proven himself best choice for commission chairman

I am writing this letter in support of Bruce Nichols for Baker County Commission Chair. In the years I have known Bruce I have found him to be honest, fair and of high integrity. I believe he is the strongest choice for the

County Commission Chair. In the last two years as a County Commissioner, Bruce has proven himself to be one who will question and work to ensure that the citizens are receiving the best value and representation from their local government when dealing with their partners on the state and federal level.

I know Bruce will be committed to maintaining Baker County's friendly and supportive environment where small businesses can continue to grow or be welcomed to relocate here.

Baker County is not the only county with issues with state and federal agencies, most all other western states and counties are fighting the same fight. Bruce has the personality and experience to coordinate with the other counties as well as state and federal Legislators to make a stronger voice on the issues.

Please join me in voting for Bruce Nichols, Baker County Commission Chair.

**Mitch Southwick**  
Baker City

### People shouldn't be condemned based on a single witness

We commonly think of the ninth of the Ten Commandments as:

“Thou shalt not lie.”

What it actually says is:

Exodus 20:16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.”

Much “false witness bearing” has been going on, without consequences for the ones found to be bearing false witness.

How can we put a stop to all these baseless sexual misconduct accusations that are freely flying around? Why are we condemning alleged perpetrators on the testimony of just one witness? The facts should be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses for each alleged incident.

If a malicious witness comes forward and accuses someone of a crime, then both the accuser and the accused should be closely questioned. If the accuser is found to be lying, she/he should receive the punishment intended for the accused. There should be punishment for bearing false witness. Those watching would be deterred from doing the same.

This timeless biblical principle is found in Deuteronomy 19:15-20:

“Never convict anyone of a crime on the testimony of just one witness. The facts of the case must be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If a malicious witness comes forward and accuses someone of a crime, then both the accuser and accused must appear before the priests and judges who are on duty before the Lord. They must be closely questioned, and if the accuser is found to be lying, the accuser will receive the punishment intended for the accused. In this way, you will cleanse such evil from among you. Those who hear about it will be afraid to do such an evil thing again.”

(New Living Translation)

**Mary Andersen**  
Baker City

# Seasonal confusion: Where's the wiper switch?

I settled into the driver's seat of the vehicle I've piloted most days for more than a decade and I promptly switched off the headlights even though it was dark and my retinas have no special powers.

(Indeed, based on what my optometrist has told me, they are quite decrepit, and their neighbors the corneas are worse still.)

I was trying to turn on the windshield wipers, a task many toddlers can manage even when they're not trying.

But after about four months of rain-free morning drives it seems my muscle memory had come down with amnesia.

(I can't with good conscience refer to this trip as a “commute,” since that word implies a certain density of traffic and the need to negotiate several onramps and offramps. I drive straight for one mile and my route is interrupted by one stop sign and, occasionally, by one traffic signal. I am far more likely to be detained by a deer than by a line of idling cars. There are also many squirrels.)

It was Tuesday morning, a bit before dawn, and rain was sluicing down in the steady, sullen way that's rare in our rain-shadowed valley.

In an average year — more a



**JAYSON JACOBY**

statistical conceit than a reality, of course — we get only about 10 inches of precipitation, and a fair amount of that volume falls not as rain but as snow, which if nothing else is easier to shovel.

(It all counts, though — snow melts in the heated rain gauge at the airport. That's how it's supposed to work, anyway.)

I finally figured out which control stalk jutting from the steering column activates the wipers, and I went on my well-illuminated, and now also well-scrubbed, way.

It was a peculiar trip, notwithstanding its brevity.

I had forgotten not only how to turn on the windshield wipers but also how dramatically the glare from wet asphalt degrades visibility.

I peered through the rain-streaked glass, squinting like a musher traveling in an arctic blizzard or a man trying to shave with the aid of a fogged mirror.

Even the low liquid hiss from the tires seemed incongruous.

My damp drive to work wasn't the only visceral experience, though, that jolted me into another autumn.

These minor seasonal episodes happen every year, of course. But it seems to me that the transition was rather more jarring because this past summer was so persistent with its heat and absence of rainfall.

On a recent morning that was the antithesis of the soggy day that precipitated my gaffe with the wipers — which is to say the sky was cloud-free — I walked out to the driveway and noticed the windshield was encased in frost.

I don't own a garage (or rent one either) which gives me a more intimate relationship with the weather than I would prefer. We have a pair of vinyl rectangles that fit snugly over the windshields but I had, since the last frost of spring, lost track of them. The covers offer rather less shelter than a garage, of course, but they also didn't require a mortgage.

I was equally vague on the location of my ice scraper, a cunning little tool with a fake suede mitt that has about as much insulating value as a wet paper towel but at least protects your fingers if you're overly aggressive in slashing at the frost.

(I nearly lost a digit up to the second knuckle one time when I hacked at the rime, which had the approximate hardness of steel, and the plastic blade of a mitt-less scraper ricocheted and my finger somehow ended up stuck in one of the drain vents below the windshield. I have a knack for this sort of thing.)

I finally found the scraper after fumbling about fruitlessly beneath both front seats, a task fitting for an archaeologist. I discovered, among much else, two umbrellas, one of which appeared to have been subjected to a tornado although I don't recall such an event, the tattered fragments of a forest map and two pretzels that seemed to have come through their long, dark ordeal in remarkably fresh condition. Rocket scientists get all the publicity, sure, but to me the real geniuses are the makers of food preservatives.

A couple days later we went to the Taste of Baker and I was taken aback by the ferocity of the north wind.

I had asked for a couple of napkins to keep pizza grease from accumulating in an unsightly way around my mouth, but I ended up using it mainly to deal with my nose, which seemed to have sprung

a slow but steady leak.

It was a blustery day already, of course, but the historic buildings that line Main Street create a tunnel effect that turns the thoroughfare into a pretty fair approximation of a wind tunnel.

You could test aircraft wings down there.

The instant I exposed my face to the chilly gale I could feel the liquid slide into my philtrum and form a sort of bubble there. I had to dab at it with the napkin frequently, lest an especially vigorous gust catch hold of the salty little drop and fling it into the air like a small, viscous missile.

This is a distressing possibility under any circumstance, but especially so when you're milling around with dozens of people clutching plates of food.

The potential exists for the sort of social faux pas for which there is really no graceful excuse.

There is nothing for it but to wait for winter, I suppose. The nose drainage problem remains, of course, but quite often it gets cold enough that the liquid freezes before it can get loose and embarrass you.

*Jayson Jacoby is editor of the Baker City Herald.*