

Opinion

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GUEST EDITORIAL

Unions: They won't let you go

Editorial from The (Bend) Bulletin:

Joining the Oregon Education Association is simple for the approximately 44,000 educators who want to be members.

Leaving is not.

The union lets members leave only in September. The OEA apparently believes there's nothing wrong with pirating dues for months from members who want to leave, trampling their First Amendment rights by forcing them to continue to pay to support causes or speech they oppose.

Three school employees in Oregon are suing the OEA to end the practice. Justice demands they win.

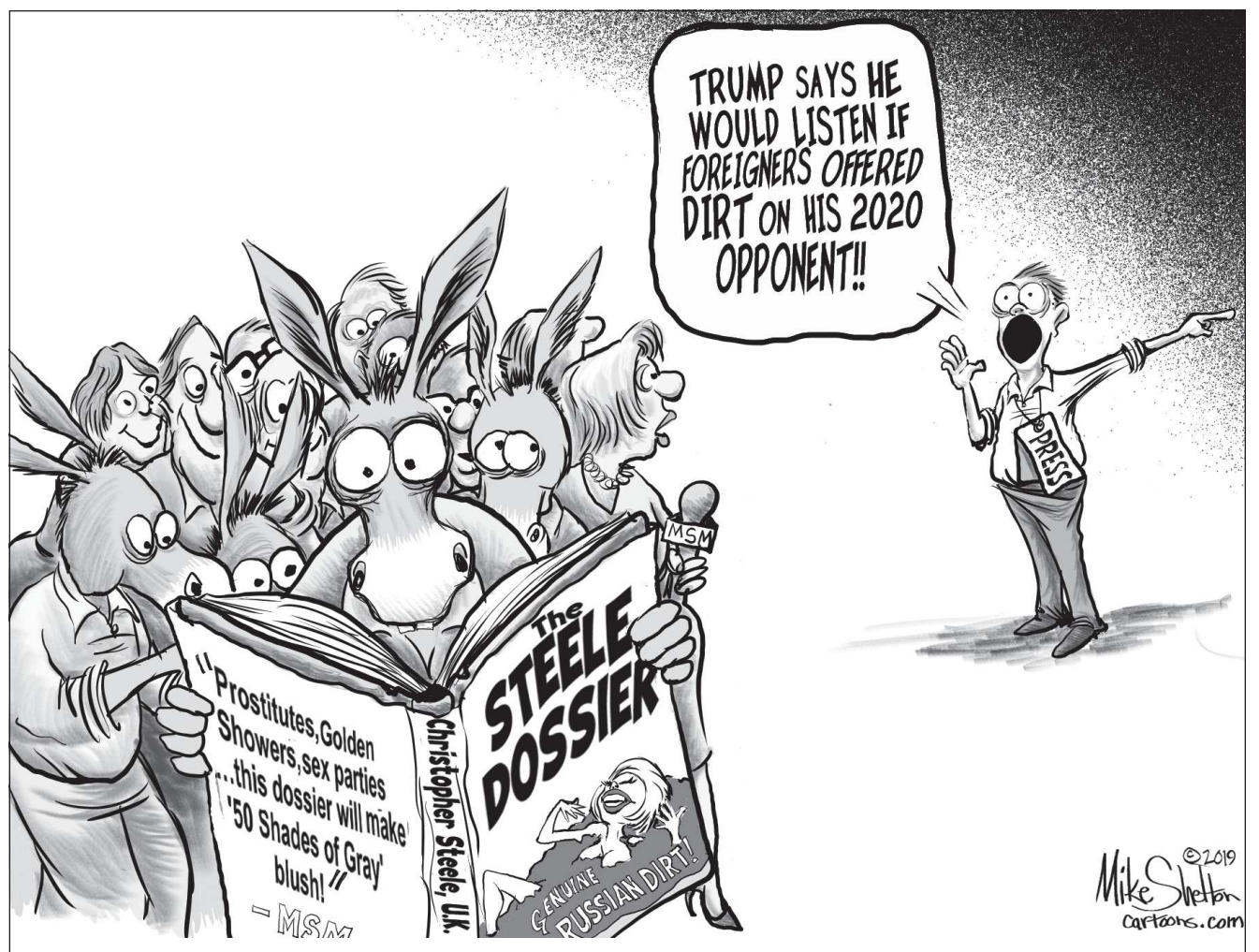
The employees claim the seizing of dues against their wishes violates their constitutional rights. The amounts at stake for the three employees vary. One pays about \$992 a year, another about half that amount.

Two of the employees signed the agreement to join the union with the fine print that says they couldn't leave except during September. A third refused to sign and was told he would have to keep paying through September anyway. The three are represented by the Freedom Foundation, which works to fight unions.

Do all those conditions and specifics matter? Is the OEA being fair by taking money from people for months who don't want to belong? It's not.

The question in this lawsuit follows from the Janus decision by the U.S. Supreme Court. The court ruled that public-sector unions must stop forcing nonmembers to pay fees without their consent. The "First Amendment is violated when money is taken from nonconsenting employees for a public-sector union; employees must choose to support the union before anything is taken from them," the court said.

Public-sector unions have been fighting Janus ever since. If the OEA can't force people to join the union and pay dues, it just won't let them leave when they want.



Your views

Officials haven't proved value in paying Greg Smith

Recently the Vale, Oregon-based newspaper the Malheur Enterprise published an exhaustive piece of investigative journalism on how Greg Smith, a representative in the Oregon Legislature, has convinced many municipalities in Oregon to spend millions of dollars hiring his economic development company. How can one man and one staff member possibly serve so many masters at one time? Apparently our local officials haven't even asked themselves the question.

For several years Baker County has been awarding a \$96,000-per-year contract to Greg Smith for economic development. According to the Baker City Herald (6-12-2019), County Commissioner Bill Harvey said "he doesn't

think that's an excessive cost given Smith's accomplishments."

Just what are those accomplishments? Harvey cites Smith's efforts to "encourage" the Safeway-Albertson's corporation to reopen the Albertson's grocery store. Harvey also gives Smith credit for the opening of the new Grocery Outlet store.

The problem with such assertions is that Harvey offers no evidence that the reopening of Albertson's and the opening of Grocery Outlet would not have happened without Smith's efforts.

It seems to me that the only way to prove that Smith has earned his \$96,000-per-year contracts is for CEOs to say that without Smith's involvement that their businesses would not have located in Baker City.

County Commissioner Bruce Nichols

is quoted in the Herald saying that economic developers can't be expected to "make someone want to move to Baker County." Nichols believes it's not always possible to determine how much credit to give to an economic developer. "There's a lot of money thrown at a problem that doesn't always show much in results," Nichols told the Herald.

If you can't prove that Smith is earning \$96,000 per year, then why have our County and City officials for several years been so cavalierly "throwing money" at him?

County Commissioner Mark Bennett told the Herald that local business owners have told him that money would be better spent creating a workforce capable of filling jobs. I agree.

Gary Dielman
Baker City

Letters to the editor

- We welcome letters on any issue of public interest. Customer complaints about specific businesses will not be printed.
- The Baker City Herald will not knowingly print false or misleading claims. However, we cannot verify the

accuracy of all statements in letters to the editor.

- Letters are limited to 350 words; longer letters will be edited for length. Writers are limited to one letter every 15 days.
- The writer must sign the letter and include an address and phone number (for verification only). Letters that do

not include this information cannot be published.

- Letters will be edited for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons.
- Mail:** To the Editor, Baker City Herald, P.O. Box 807, Baker City, OR 97814
Email: news@bakercityherald.com
Fax: 541-523-6426

Idaho Power skews data to back unneeded B2H

This is a response to Mitch Colburn's June 7 Letter to the Editor:

Dear Mitch, thank you for your opinion reminding us all here in Baker County how grateful we should be not only to Idaho Power but having you as their spokesman. I read your editorial and between your lines and realized how desperate you are cleverly seeking both a new pair of glasses and a new job, letting us know how frantic things have got at Idaho Power. Please if you need new glasses I'll be happy to pay for a new pair so you can replace those horribly scratched pair of rose-colored ones you keep judging us through.

Growth, you claim, has come to the Northwest but please don't broad brush us into your assessment. Most of us here in Baker City and County do not subscribe to your carcinogenic idea of growth. I'm worried, Mitch, that you are doing your job so well that, thanks to your misinformation, the Power Line might actually go through our county. Should

WHIT DESCHNER

this happen, you'll be out of work. But don't worry, you can move here. There'll be plenty of work and new places to live. Consider your options:

- Job 1: Spokesperson for the perils of Electromagnetic fields. Since the project will devalue property under the wires, building sites will be dirt cheap. You won't even have to leave your house to go to work. From there you can become a spokesperson for people who suffer from EMF exposure from powerlines forced upon their property and the effects the EMFs will have on them. You can explain to them how Oregon Statute 469.480 requires a committee to report on the adverse effects the EMFs powerlines cause. Who presently knows better than you, Mitch, why Idaho Power thinks they can ignore this law. You'd be a shoo-in for the position.

- Job 2: School Presentations.

Would require you to travel to schools and demonstrate Corona effects, the dangers of transmissions noises and the benefits of why a company such as Idaho Power would want to fudge on just how loud transmission lines can be.

- Job 3: Become a writer.

Your next title? "Book Cooking: My Favorite Recipes." Explain how to skewer data, like averaging numbers to falsely state or bend your case. Show how to be right every time by conducting your own "in-depth" studies, funding them and working backwards from your targeted results. You could even demonstrate your fact that, "Most towers would be about half as tall as a typical wind tower." Well, Mitch that's interesting but not too helpful. I Googled it and the average is 328 feet. Half that is 164 feet, not a height I would want to jump from, but you can Mitch. It would be a great promotion stunt. It should be a

best seller.

- Job 4: Project manager.

Digging out, moving and relocating entire Oregon Trail Interpretive Center in front of the power line route that currently places power lines in front of and in plain view of Center's current location. Person filling position will appreciate how important the Center is to both this nation's heritage and a major factor in Baker's City's economic well-being.

Which, Mitch, brings up another point. The Interpretive Center. Please explain to me how Idaho Power can be so arrogant as to run the power lines in front of the Center? This route is not about Idaho Power. The Center wasn't built to showcase your power lines and how they will adversely affect a small community. How can you straight-faced claim that this power line will expand local businesses and sprout new ones when, by running lines in front of the Center will squelch people's desire to visit and spend

money in the area. You're telling me that you're willing to crush an established tourist industry and merely say that by having power lines running through this county — with no substation — will somehow create new industry is incredulous. Why have you not been hit by a flying pig?

You state it is Idaho Power's position to take this job on. Who asked IP to do it? No one, of course, just like no one asked you to take your job on other than yourself because it bettered your financial standing. Ditto that for Idaho Power. Does Idaho Power take credit for the irresponsible growths of the Treasure and Magic Valleys. Don't you realize that by combining the two you have created the "Tragic Valley?" We here in Baker don't want or need the chaotic world that Idaho Power and you, Mitch, are intent on creating here in Baker Valley. Send B2H B2H.

Whit Deschner lives in Baker City.

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley: D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, U.S. Senate, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-3753; fax 202-228-3997. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; merkley.senate.gov.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate

Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20510; 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; wyden.senate.gov.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd District): D.C. office: 2182 Rayburn Office Building, Washington, D.C., 20515, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, fax, 541-624-2402; walden.house.gov.

State Sen. Cliff Bentz (R-Ontario): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., S-301, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1730. District office: P.O. Box 1027, Ontario, OR 97914; 541-889-8866.

State Rep. Lynn Findley (R-Vale): Salem office: 900 Court St. N.E., H-475, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1460. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov

Baker City Hall: 1655 First Street, P.O. Box 650, Baker City, OR 97814; 541-523-6541; fax 541-524-2049. City Council meets the second and fourth Tuesdays at 7 p.m. in Council Chambers. Mike Downing, Loran Joseph, Randy Schiewe, Lynette Perry, Arvid Andersen, Ken Gross and Doni Bruland.

Baker City administration: 541-523-6541. Fred Warner Jr., city manager; Dustin Newman, police chief; John Clark, fire chief; Michelle Owen, public works director.