

# Set acrimony aside to solve road issues

There's no question that Grant County residents are passionate about the forest and the roads they use to access it. Activities like wood cutting, hunting, mining, and four-wheeling are local traditions made possible by our system of forest roads, and the loss of even one road riles people up.

As one observer noted, "it's a way of life that's changing, and people don't like it."

We live in a time when a lot of our traditions are challenged. Consider the timber industry and the changes that have wracked it over the past 30 years. Yet out of total stalemate in the woods, diverse groups of people — loggers, mill owners, environmentalists, managers — have come together to find new ways to recast the approach to managing the Malheur National Forest. The timber industry heyday is long over, relegated to the history books, but a new model is emerging.

With the 10-year-stewardship program and the accelerated harvest targets, people are working in the woods again. We expect that work to increase in the coming year, as the Malheur staff rolls out more landscape-scale projects.

To be sure, the goals are not the same as in the past; now it's about restoration and resilience, not simply resource extraction. The success of this new paradigm is critical not just to the forest but to our communities. The public has an important role in making

that work by participating in the dialogue that shapes the decisions.

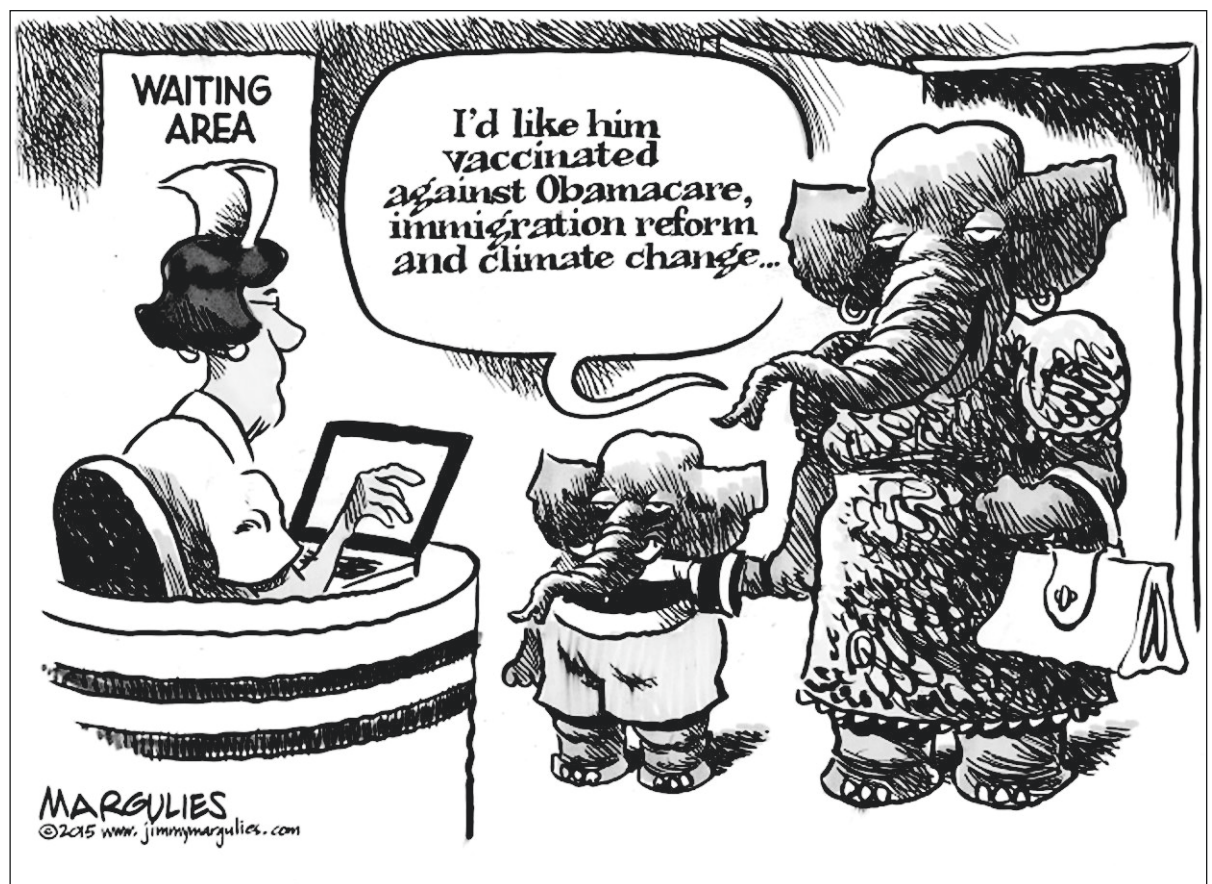
The collaborative groups, over the past eight years, have worked through significant differences to help push this work forward. Most would admit it hasn't been easy, and there have been some heated moments. But they might also concede that heated talk accomplishes far less than open communication by cooler heads.

That's a thought for future discussions about road closures and public access. In recent weeks, we've seen passions over roads erupt into finger-pointing, acrimony and name-calling.

We're all adults, and most of us have heard worse. But is there really anyone out there who thinks derogatory talk helps make one's point? It certainly doesn't move the discussion forward.

There's a lot at stake right now in our forests, and roads are a flashpoint in a much larger discussion about management. The debate over roads is marked by distrust between long-time residents and the Forest Service — a pattern reminiscent of that in the early forest collaborative talks.

We hope all the parties will find room for discussion — passionate, yes, but also respectful — before an angry new stalemate develops and stalls out the other work being done to move us toward more active forest management and economic resilience.



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Senator should suit up

**To the Editor:**  
The resignation of our governor is a sad day for all Oregonians, whatever party you belong to. The investigations by both federal and state prosecutors will hopefully get to the truth of the matter. In the meantime, the governing of this state must go on.

Your state senator, Ted Ferrioli, has chosen not to act as a statesman, refusing to attend the induction ceremony of the new governor because, and I quote, "Why present the image that there is solidarity in the Senate when, despite the scandal and possible improper influence, the Democrats are running the pointlessly expensive and damaging LCFS bill over our objections?"

I fully understand that the Republicans and Democrats differ on policy (that is what makes our country work) but whatever happened to statesmanlike behavior? Maybe the problem with current politics has nothing to do with differing opinions and more to do with lack of good manners. Please be the bigger person and do the right thing!

Andy Jordan  
Bend

### Leadership needed

**To the Editor:**  
It's becoming apparent that we have less leadership in our County Court and more hand-wringers and do-nothings.

The County Court passes an ordinance that protects the residents from wholesale road closures, but they refuse to enforce it. They form an "access board" to address the restriction of motorized use and twice the board has brought to the court their findings and recommendations and the court has chosen to ignore them to state "we/I do not have enough information to make a decision."

This has nothing to do with not having the information to make a decision; the court has it. It has to do with a court that either supports the closures of the mountains, or are so utterly over their heads that they don't know what to do. I wouldn't state "the court supports roads closures" if it weren't for a comment made by Mr. Labhart made in court, that he was appreciative of the Forest Service polling hunters about closing roads as Mr. Labhart stated he's a hunter too and prefers the roads closed.

It's really not about the local residents of Grant County, and it's not about the right or wrong of freely accessing the mountains, it's about what the court prefers in their own personal lives. With it not being an election year, the court feels secure in their position and their checks, and the character of the men can truly show. I for one didn't vote to have

my elected representative sell me down the river and push their own personal agendas, and I'm sure you didn't either.

Those that are elected can be removed by the will of the people, and while I would have preferred not to say these words ever, maybe when their six months is up from the new election a wholesale recall vote would be in order.

Let's call it a referendum on the direction for Grant County for the future; if they won't act to protect us from the motorized restrictions, maybe it's time to protect ourselves from them and the few they feel they are protecting.

John D. George  
Bates

### An invite to our enemies

**To the Editor:**

I could not believe my ears when I listened to another episode of "Amateur Hour at the White House" one recent night, as the reporter described the order from Secretary of State John Kerry's department, which required our U.S. Marines who guarded our embassy in Yemen to surrender their rifles to the Islamic rebels who overthrew the government a couple of weeks ago.

This order had to have been the most difficult for them to obey, but was part of the evacuation plan ordered by our Secretary of State. As any military person knows, the last thing you would do in any situation is surrender your weapon. But, when the order comes from a person who is acting on orders from your commander in chief, you have no choice.

This had to be a most humiliating time for our soldiers, as they turned over their weapons and boarded a plane to leave the country. It is no wonder that our military and our country as a whole is no longer respected in so many parts of the world.

President Obama's plan for the Middle East, which he has labeled "Strategic Patience," is doing nothing but emboldening our enemies and will certainly be looked at by them as an invitation to come here.

Ralph and Toni Goodwin  
John Day

### Courtesy lacking

**To the Editor:**

Sen. Ted Ferrioli's grandstanding announcement that he will not attend the swearing-in of Kate Brown as the next Oregon governor is not just an insult to the new governor and to the Democratic Party in Oregon. It is an insult to Oregon and to his constituents.

### WHERE TO WRITE

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Janine Goodwin  
Prairie City

### Making a mockery

**To the Editor:**

The Grant County Public Access Advisory Board was appointed to their positions by the Grant County Court to serve in an advisory capacity, which the appointees believed to be the representation for the voice of the people of Grant County and drawing upon the response of Grant County residents through public meetings, sharing information, and encouraging written comments.

Members of the Board have been described as "activists." Wikipedia description: "Activists are also public watchdogs and whistle blowers, attempting to understand all the actions of every form of government that acts in the name of the people; all government must be accountable to oversight and transparency."

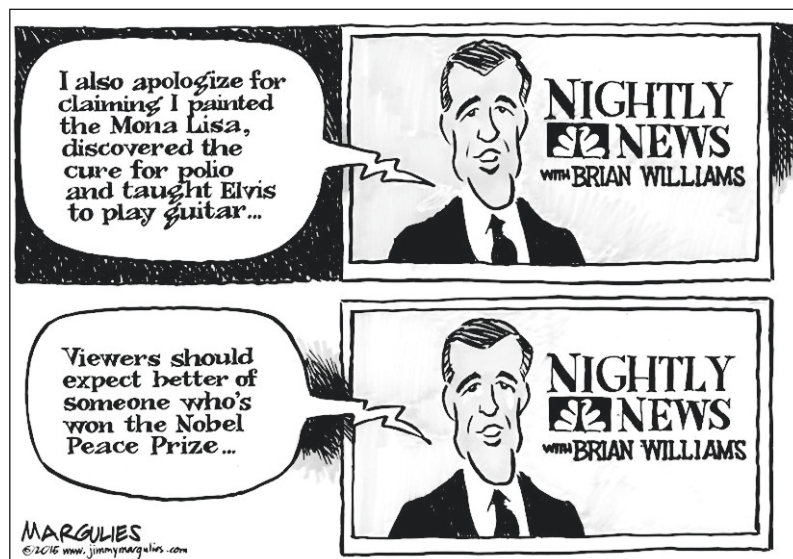
The actions of the County Court last Wednesday made a mockery of the efforts of the board to carry forward with their dedicated efforts defending public access to our lands and to uphold the Grant County Ordinance 2013-01.

A letter composed by the board, to be signed by the Court to Malheur Forest Supervisor Steve Beverlin, instructed them to uphold the ordinance and rescind all road closure orders that had been signed after the effective date of the ordinance. Signing of the letter was refused under the excuse of being "premature" and lacking information from the Forest Service, though Beverlin had made a previous public verbal agreement to rescind the closure order for roads referenced.

Proof of violation had been presented to the Court with evidence that the road closure documents had been secretly signed Sept. 30 by a previous forest supervisor, Teresa Raaf. So much for public transparency.

When Beverlin again said to "tell me what road you want to see addressed and we will give it come consideration" (understood everything else would be closed), yours truly made the remark "Bring your shovel." This remark was publicly chastised by the Court as being inappropriate. How inappropriate is the remark when being subjected to a continual supply of donkey donuts? If this was an attempt to insult or embarrass me, I must first value your opinion — nice try, though.

Judy Kerr  
Canyon City



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