

'Silent mass disaster' demands nation's attention

Viewers of television crime shows get the impression that discovery of human remains sets off an intense response, complete with FBI facial reconstruction experts, swift and accurate DNA tests and vast electronic databases that match subtle clues with lists of possible victims. Reality is more like the situation the EO Media Group reported in Wahkiakum County, Washington. The piece, titled "Riverbank skeleton an unsolved mystery" is on Page A8.

A body is discovered, and local officials do what they can — with few resources — to determine whether a crime has been committed and who the person is. Ultimately, in a large nation, each new set of unidentified remains joins a large number of others and is gradually forgotten.

"The facts are sobering," Nancy Ritter of the National Institute of Justice said in the NIJ Journal. "On any given day, there are as many as 100,000 active missing persons cases in the United States. Every year, tens of thousands of people

vanish under suspicious circumstances. Viewed over a 20-year period, the number of missing persons can be estimated in the hundreds of thousands."

Some of these missing, which Ritter describes as "the nation's silent mass disaster," are missing because they are dead. More than 40,000 sets of human remains await identification in evidence rooms. Only 6,000 of these are entered in the FBI's National Crime Information Center database. Many remains are buried without even a DNA sample being obtained.

The NIJ makes a variety of good suggestions. All require federal or state funding. They include providing free tests of unidentified remains and collecting reference samples from the families of the missing.

It's shocking to learn the scale of this problem. An advanced nation should make the methodical science available to us a reality, not a TV gimmick. We can be certain murders are occurring that are never discovered, much less solved.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't be fooled

To the Editor:
Abe Lincoln said, "You can fool all the people some of the time, and some of the people all the time, but you cannot fool all the people all the time."

The election to recall County Commissioner Boyd Britton is an attempt to fool the people of Grant County with unsubstantiated and inaccurate claims of wrongdoing. Please consider the facts, not the misrepresentations, when you vote in the recall election. Don't be fooled: Vote no on the recall.

Mark and Adele Cerny
Bear Valley

Long Creek Ambulance crew are true lifesavers

To the Editor:

I would like to take the opportunity to let the Long Creek Ambulance crew know how much I have so deeply appreciated them throughout the years. They are all a great and amazing group of people who all deserve huge medals for all that they do. They have gone above and beyond to save the lives of others. Since 2003, I have been plagued with atrial fibrillations (an irregular heartbeat). Even though I was told A-Fibs are rarely ever fatal, they can easily scare you to death. Many times I have called upon the Long Creek Ambulance crew to transport me to the BMH where I had to be cardioverted to get my heart back to a normal beat. This has happened to me 12 different times; I know had it not have been for such an efficient, compassionate, caring group of EMTs I would have died. I can easily say I owe them my life, and mere words are not enough to express my gratitude to these people who have worked so very hard to gain the knowledge to save lives and to know what to do in such dire times of need and to show so much compassion and comfort. Often times, the crew would say to the hospital staff, "Take good care of her, she's special to us." Well, you are all very special to me also, and I will forever appreciate each and every one of you. You have truly been an awesome ambulance crew, a true blessing to our community and to the surrounding area. May God bless you for all that you have done.

Nancy Morgan
Long Creek

sage to the pro-militia, anti-government activists in our county. The purpose of these recalls is to replace officials who don't adopt their extreme ideas. "One by one," they say. Everything in their message is about what is wrong in government. At the same time, the solutions they offer are unworkable or non-existent. Our message to them is: We recognize there are problems, but we choose to work with our government leaders, not hate them. Even if the anti-government concerns are sometimes valid, their methods of dealing with issues are destructive and dangerous.

When you look at who has come to our counties to "educate" us, a lot of red flags are raised. It isn't education when only one interpretation of the Constitution is offered by KrisAnne Hall. It isn't education when Richard Mack appears and declares a sheriff's oath requires him to disobey laws that they don't like. It isn't education when Angus McIntosh tells ranchers they own the public lands just because they use it. Those interpretations are not education; they are indoctrination. What they accomplish with their passionate deliveries is an emotional response in people who are already vulnerable because of problems in their lives and in their communities. Engage county leaders; don't target them. Common sense should tell you the answers will come when people who disagree sit down together and find ways to make things work.

To use a controversial recall that will create greater division between neighbors, business owners and customers, church members, friends and family is a huge mistake. When will this stop? Where will it stop? I hope for Grant County it begins to end with voters loudly declaring "no recall!" Please, defeat this recall.

Jeannette Vinson
Burns

'This recall is not about Boyd or any of his so-called misdeeds'

To the Editor:

One of the reasons offered by those trying to recall County Commissioner Boyd Britton is that he does not recuse himself when the County Court is dealing with the Forest Service and other government agencies. The implication is that he is using his elected office to boost business for his welding company and, following that logic, that Boyd is corrupt. Let's examine the charge.

Apparently Boyd's business averages about \$4,200 yearly in sales to the Forest Service. If all that landed in Boyd's pocket, some might try to argue he is cashing in, although even that would be quite a stretch. But that's not how small business works. I started a business in 1977 and ran it for 35 years. Like most small businesses, in some years we lost money, some

years we broke even and in the very best years we approached about 10 percent in profit. Boyd's welding business would be similar, I'm sure, meaning \$4,200 in sales might net him \$400 in a good year.

Let's get real. Boyd would have to be completely nuts to attend all those many meetings and spend all the other time-consuming duties related to being a commissioner (as well as take the heaps of abuse that we give to elected officials these days) to make perhaps \$400 a year. The math is simple: Boyd's personal income would be higher each year if he could work more at his shop and he avoided all the public service.

This recall is not about Boyd or any of his so-called misdeeds. As they have pretty much admitted, it is all about promoting the agenda of a small group who are attempting to take over our county one elected office at a time.

Let's stop the nonsense. I encourage all of you — including those of you who were misled into signing the recall petition — to now vote no.

Jim Kelly
Kimberly

Recall Britton 'before the dike breaks'

To the Editor:

The decision to mount a recall of County Commissioner Boyd Britton was undertaken after much "thoughtful deliberation" and checking of facts through County Court minutes, FOIA requests and witness accounts. The petition itself was limited to 200 words or less, stating factual information, not opinion, beliefs or false claims. Petition circulators are not allowed to discuss or provide additional information during the process of collecting signatures. There are severe penalties for doing otherwise.

In his rebuttal in the July 13 Blue Mountain Eagle, I feel Commissioner Britton displayed, at the very least, a callous attitude toward the victims of the Canyon Creek Complex. Eyewitness accounts, accounts by firefighters themselves should have prompted an investigation.

The forestry should have borne the cost, but, barring that, the County Court seems to find plenty of money for pet projects, why not an investigation? Regarding forest access issues, I believe Commissioner Britton said it best himself last week in the Eagle: "Britton said he doesn't recall the court ever denying permission for the Forest Service to close any roads." Why not wait until the next election? When a dike starts leaking and the leak gets worse, you stop it before the dike breaks. Waiting causes more damage. I look forward to fresh perspectives and voices on the County Court.

Patti Yellow Hand Bull
Monument

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

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.
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Harney County resident fears for Grant County

To the Editor:

Your Harney County neighbors know what you are going through — another destructive recall of an elected county official; and it is not likely that it has anything to do with his performance as a county commissioner. We know it is like the recall that targeted our judge, Steve Grasty. We defeated it with a landslide of "no" votes, sending a mes-

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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