

# The hole in Brown's budget

There is a gaping hole in Gov. Kate Brown's proposed budget, released last Thursday. Brown's financial road map for Oregon has nothing to say about the Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) and its burgeoning costs to local governments and school districts.

To propose a financial plan for Oregon and omit PERS is a bit like offering a battle strategy and leaving out ammunition costs.

In a nutshell, the PERS challenge is about an unfunded actuarial liability of more than \$20 billion. To close that gap, school districts and local governments will face extraordinary budget strains. For some school districts, the new PERS payroll burden will mean dismissing teachers in order to pay the retirement liability of those retired from the profession.

Once more Gov. Brown has failed us. Fortunately there are legislators who are willing to think about solutions that will pass constitutional muster.

The proposal most actively being discussed would invite three constituencies to participate in a solution: public sector employers, PERS members and Oregon taxpayers.

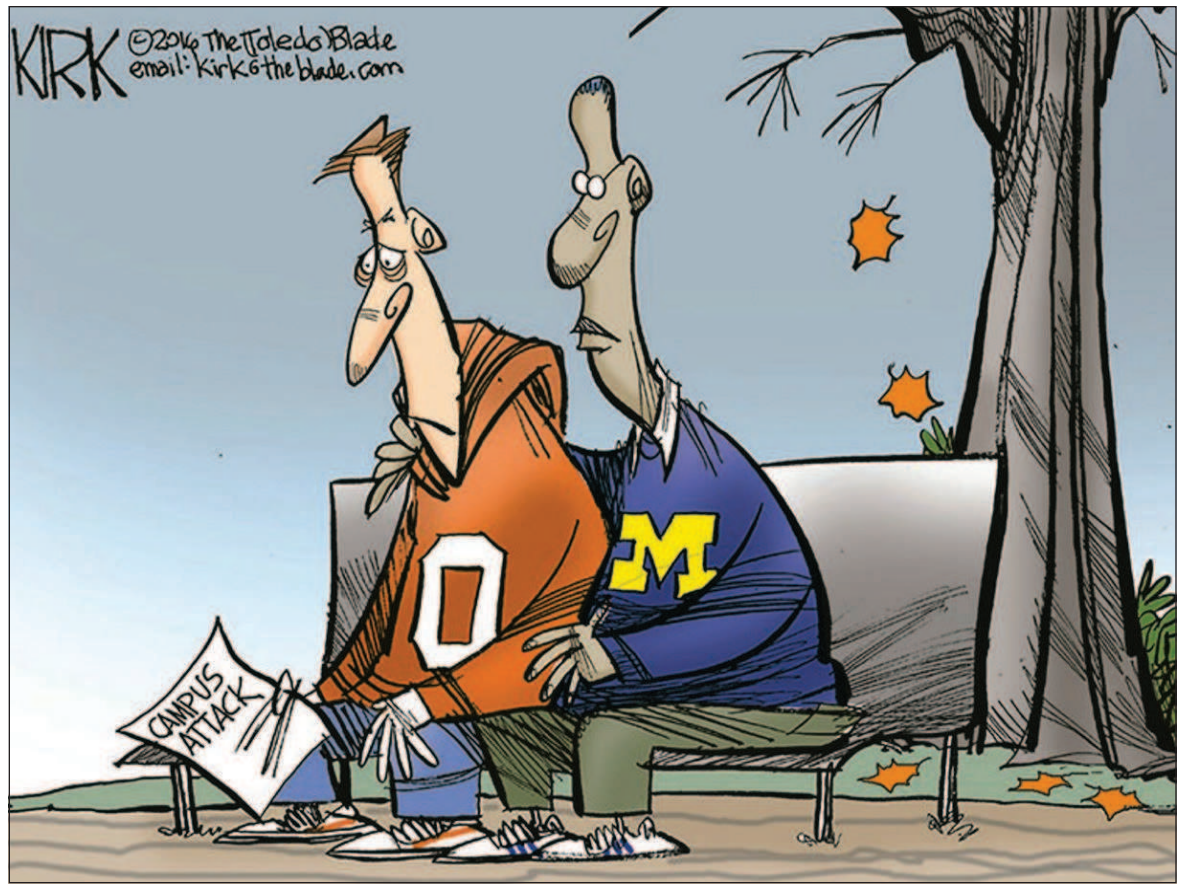
It is a realistic coalition of shared sacrifice.

The greatest political advances in history have occurred when a leader goes against his or her native values to break new ground. President Richard Nixon, the arch anti-Communist, opened diplomacy with what was then called Red China. President Lyndon Johnson, a Southerner, passed landmark Civil Rights legislation.

For there to be a breakthrough and a remedy on PERS, a similar act of courage must come from Oregon Democratic leaders, because they are most beholden to the public employees unions.

Gov. John Kitzhaber did that in 2013. Kitzhaber proposed PERS reforms, which the Legislature enacted. Elements of that package were subsequently thrown out by the Oregon Supreme Court.

Gov. Kate Brown seems to lack the courage to take up that fight and win new ground. Leadership on PERS must come from someone or some group in the statehouse. To ask local governments and school districts to strip services because of a flawed pension system is unacceptable, yet it is the current predicament that looks to only get worse in the future.



GUEST COMMENT

## Why I want to hunt

By Jeff Barnard  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Over the course of 33 years living in Oregon, I have caught salmon and steelhead with bait, lures and flies, rowed whitewater big and small and backpacked through wilderness where a herd of elk thundered across my trail.

But I have never hunted. Now that I am retired, I want to change that.

This is something I have wanted to do since I was a kid.

Hunting was not a tradition in my family. I did persuade my parents to let me buy an Army surplus 1903 Springfield. The .30-06 rifle cost about \$20, and my plan was to sportsterize it to hunt for deer. I got part-way through the process, but never even fired it until a couple years ago, after a gunsmith finished it for me. My father never hunted, there was no uncle who had ever hunted and I moved away from the few friends who grew up to hunt. With no mentor, there was no hunting for me.

I moved to Oregon in 1983 to take a job as southern Oregon correspondent for The Associated Press, based in Grants Pass. Raising a family, I barely had time to

teach myself to fish, let alone to hunt. But that changed when I retired last October.

In trying to understand why I want to do this, I have been reading a lot. I have found it is not that unusual. Tovar Cerulli, author of the book, "The Mindful Carnivore, A Vegetarian's Hunt for Sustainment," has even coined a term for this condition: "Adult Onset Hunting."

I have killed plenty of fish. But I am less certain about killing a warm-blooded mammal — something with big brown eyes that can look at me and focus. People tell me they felt a combination of remorse and elation at their first kill. Do I really want that?

With all the anti-hunting sentiment out there, defenses of hunting abound. Hunting controls wildlife that damage crops and keeps populations at a point the diminishing habitat can sustain. Hunters take true responsibility for the meat they eat. Guns and ammo sales generate serious money for restoring wildlife habitat and helping non-game species headed for extinction. Since 1937, the Pittman-Robertson Act has drawn a surcharge on guns and ammunition that goes to

states for wildlife conservation and hunter safety. Ironically, the surge in sales of assault weapons and pistols is generating record amounts of money for conservation. This year, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service distributed \$695,141,699 nationally, according to the website. Oregon's share was \$15,457,600.

But what motivates me is more in line with the late Spanish philosopher Jose Ortega y Gasset, who concluded that "The hunter is the alert man."

Similarly, natural history writer Pete Dunne writes in his essay, "Before the Echo," that as a birdwatcher, he is part of the audience watching the great play of the natural world. But as a hunter he is on the stage, one of the actors.

Fishing demands alertness and attention to detail. But I want to see and feel what comes from the hunt.

Jeff Barnard wrote for The Associated Press for 35 years, 33 of them based in Grants Pass. Since he retired last fall, he has been writing a blog about teaching himself to hunt for the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife.



## Mutual understandings in marriage

By Brianna Walker  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle



Brianna Walker

Waiting to get my trailer of watermelons unloaded, I sat in the shade and listened to a radio program about failing marriages and how to fix them.

Several wives had even admitted to hiring detectives to follow their husbands. The melons were unloaded before the program was over, but as I got in the pickup to continue on my deliveries, I couldn't help but think what would happen if I was to hire a private detective to follow my husband.

I think the only thing the pictures would prove would be that he didn't really use the coupons that he said he had. And maybe of him feeding the lunch I packed to the dogs while he hit Taco Bell.

Marriage really isn't that difficult; it's just a matter of coming to mutual understandings. He has to remember which hand towels are for every day use, and which are for (in the words of my husband) "the better people who visit my wife's home." And I have to keep my mitts off his shop towels; he says I use too many, and I never bring the roll back.

The only time that understanding wears thin is when we're packing for trips. And it doesn't matter if it's an overnight trip or a two-week vacation, this seems to be the packing formula:

I pack my stuff, the kids' stuff and make arrangements for the pet care. Meanwhile, my husband has clipped his toenails.

Then I clean out the food in the fridge that might die in our absence and straighten up the house, because if something happens, I don't want the neighbors to know we're slob. And while I'm dumping the garbage, I see that my husband has found a chore entirely unrelated to our trip, and deeming it the utmost importance, insists it must be completed before departure: something like organizing the sockets in his toolbox, changing the filter in the heater, sorting through the pile of magazines in the end table or calling some long lost relative he hasn't talked to since last vacation that he suddenly needs to talk to now.

Then I will call the family to say goodbye and give them a rough itinerary (just in case), ask friends or neighbors to keep an eye on the house and pack the pickup with some last-minute toys and books for the kids.

And before I make my last trip out of the house, my husband is standing beside the vehicle asking why I'm not ready yet?

I remember when I was little and would spend a weekend with my grandparents. My Grandma would be scurrying around getting ready all us grandkids ready for church, and my Grandpa would be sitting in the car honking the horn. When I was little, I found it funny. I must say, with age and understanding, it's a lot less funny than it used to be.

One of the marriage tips in the radio program I'd been listening to said, "Before you assign blame, take a breath and ask your partner for his perspective."

His perspective? I didn't know how he wanted the sockets, so that was a job he needed to do. I would have thrown away the wrong magazine — such as the Fastlane — so that was also a job he needed to do.

And he's never heard me volunteer to clip his toenails — although he'd be willing to let me, if I was that upset about it. And as far as me packing all the kids' stuff? Well I was doing such a great job, why interfere with perfection?

AHHHH!!! Take a breath, take a breath. I think I'm going to double my coupon clipping, just to give him a few more opportunities to feel guilty about throwing them away!

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.

### WHERE TO WRITE

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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).

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