

A Public Forest Commission solution

In all of the anger surrounding last fall's court decision nullifying the Public Forest Commission, a simple solution seems to have been overlooked.

While the judge ruled the citizen initiative that created the commission should never have been placed on the ballot in 2002, he also explained precisely how to overcome the legal problem he identified.

State Circuit Court Judge William D. Cramer Jr. ruled the measure Grant County voters approved in 2002 was invalid because it conflicted with paramount state and federal laws. Specifically, he ruled, the measure contained language indicating the Public Forest Commission would manage all public land within the county.

Cramer said this violated the federal Constitution, federal laws governing Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management lands, the Oregon Constitution, the Oregon Admission Act and laws defining the legal limits of county ordinances.

However, Cramer did not say county residents had no rights to voice their concerns or to create a commission devoted to forest issues. In fact, he said quite the opposite.

"If the voters or the County Court of Grant County choose to pass a measure/ordinance to set up a forest commission to develop plans for future management of lands if those lands should ever come into County ownership, or to provide advisory information on how the County Court should seek to collaborate and advocate for uses on state and federal lands, they can do so," Cramer wrote in his Nov. 8 opinion on the case. "But any such measure should clearly state the commissions (sic) limits, must meet the procedural requirements in its inception and validation, and must not violate other

superior or paramount laws. As I understand how this commission actually functioned a proper measure could be developed and passed."

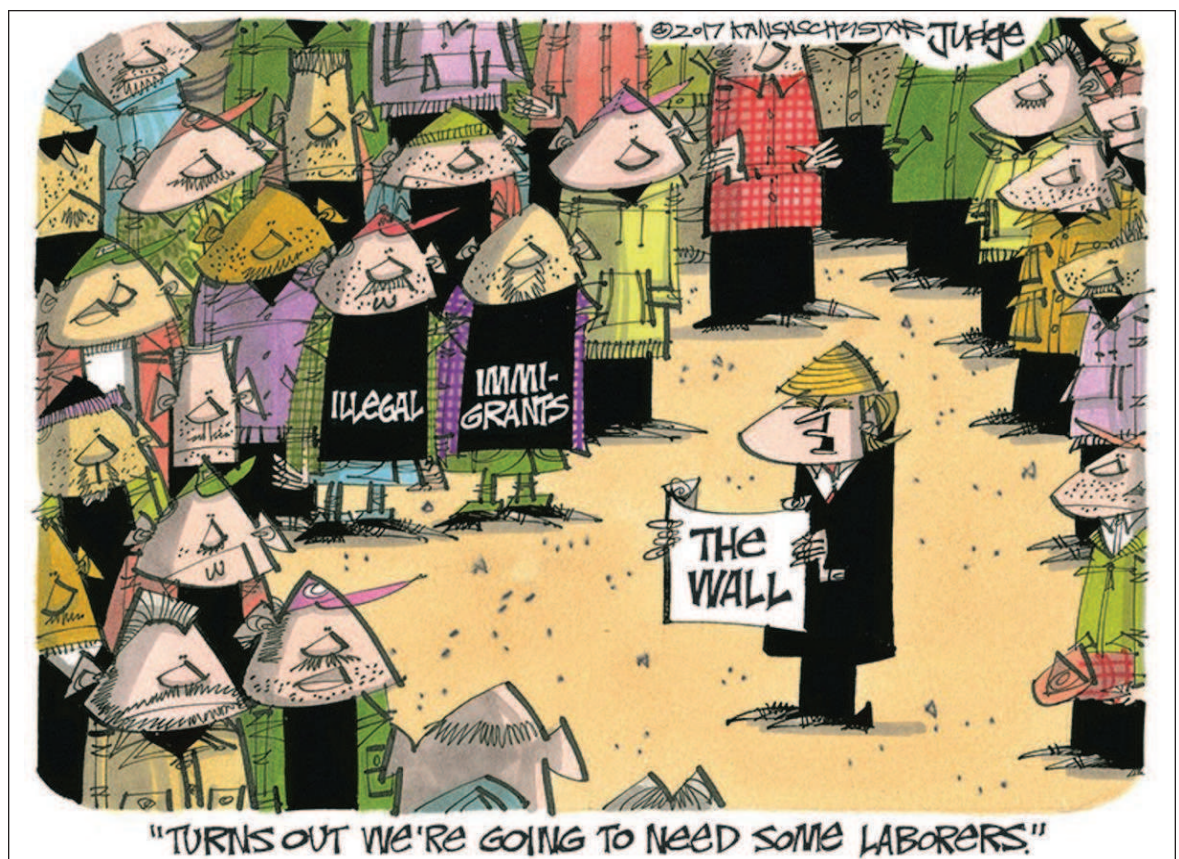
It has been three months since Cramer issued his opinion. If people upset by the ruling had spent that time collecting signatures for a new citizen initiative, they may have already collected enough to put this issue before voters again with revised language that would not run afoul of the law.

Blame and condemnation has been cast at the Grant County Court — for failing to notify elected Public Forest Commission members of the circuit court proceedings and for refusing to appeal Cramer's decision. It should be noted, however, the county court could have chosen not to defend the measure, but the commissioners chose to spend taxpayer dollars for the county's attorney to fight to retain it.

Those upset by the nullification have argued the measure only sought to form a committee to manage public lands if they were ever legally transferred to county control. This, however, was the argument the county's attorney made before the judge. It didn't work.

People are understandably upset. Those who worked to draft this measure and collect signatures may feel the fruits of their labor were stolen. Those who voted to form the commission may feel the government is trying to silence their voice. Those who served on the commission and those campaigning for position openings this year may feel like the rug was pulled out from under their feet.

But the anger surrounding the commission's nullification seems misdirected. And it is accomplishing far less than a redirected effort to establish a commission within the confines of the law.



"TURNS OUT WE'RE GOING TO NEED SOME LABORERS."

FARMER'S FATE Hieroglyphic English

By Brianna Walker
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

"I thought a thought. But the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought."

My son just looked at me like I wasn't thinking clearly. Of all the subjects in school, English was definitely the one we both found the most challenging: I to teach it, and he to learn it. Holding a degree in English and having a bit of experience teaching high school English had me more confident and less prepared for our actual experience.

Rule: When two vowels go a-walking, the first one does the talking. As in boat, or train. Except when they don't as in double or howl.

Rule: ie says I as in pie or allies. Except when it makes the E sound like chief or reprieve.

Rule: The i says I in words ending with -ild or -ind: wild, mild, bind, kind. Except wind, unless it's wind.

Rule: If a root word ends in a consonant, double it before adding the suffix such as plan/planned, sip/sipping, fat/fatty. Except in the case of words like fasten/fastening, glisten/glistened, canter/cantered.

Rule: The letter C is pronounced K as in camel or caramel unless it sounds like cyclone.

Rule: G is pronounced guh as in gears or gaffe, unless it's giraffe or George.

Rule: The g in gn is silent in gnu,



Brianna Walker

gnaw and sign. Yet if the g and n occur at a syllable break, it becomes signal, and indignant.

When we got to the silent letters, my son looked up from his book: "Why do they even bother putting on a letter if we have to ignore it anyway?"

How do I answer that? I have no idea. I've always just accepted it. But why? What purpose do all the silent letters serve? My son sat looking expectantly at me.

"Yes, English is weird. It can be understood though, through tough thorough thought." He wasn't impressed.

And that was just one of many baffling English moments we have had over the past year and a half.

Plural words are also fun. Man is men, but pan is not pen. Foot is feet but boot is not beet. One is that, and three is those. Box becomes boxes — but ox becomes oxen. I have laughed at these oddities before, but never before was I trying to explain them to an inquiring 7-year-old.

Struggling with the suffix o-w, I started punching him playfully every time it came up in our reading to help him remember, "o-w says (ou)ch."

But then he said that "row should be R-O-E, not R-O-W, because it says O, now OW." True ... but ... it just doesn't. Not a great answer —

not even a good answer. But I barely understand digraphs and how syllable breaks and letter clusters change letter sounds myself — how can I explain it to a second grader? Our book continued with the story of King Tut's tomb — pronounced toom. Here we go again. Womb says room, tomb says toom, bomb says boom ... oh wow, that example blew up in my face.

Then there is the emphasis on certain syllables to make different words: In a minute I'll examine this minute sample. I'm not content with the content of this book. I object to that object.

There are double words as in the sentence: "All the faith we had had, had had no effect on the outcome of his life."

We have noses that run and feet that smell. Slim chance and fat chance mean the same thing — but wise man and wise guy don't. A house burns up while it burns down. There is no egg in eggplant. Hamburgers don't have ham in them. We recite at a play and play at a recital.

And we haven't even started on the letters that sometimes say different things entirely. I once saw a sign that read: "GHOTI says fish."

G-H as in cough.

O as in women.

T-I as in nation.

I'm starting to see the appeal of hieroglyphics.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Thankful to have ambulance back

To the Editor:

On Thursday night, I spent most of the entire night by myself because my wife was in and out of bed, answering the call of the ambulance pager, which is once again sitting by the bed. She was no sooner back from one call when the pager went off again. That night the Monument ambulance transported three local citizens in distress to meet the John Day ambulance where they were taken to Blue Mountain Hospital for treatment. A month ago, those people would have had to wait over an hour for an ambulance. But now, they only wait 15-30 minutes before someone is on their doorstep to attend to them. I want to personally thank the new Blue Mountain Hospital CEO Derek Daly and the new Ambulance Administrator Rebekah Rand for all they have done to bring ambulance service back to Monument. I appreciate all the people who spoke out; everyone should be thankful to have the ambulance back.

Darrell Howe
Monument

Discrimination?

To the Editor:

If our Governor Kate Brown is willing to use her executive powers to protect undocumented aliens

from federal prosecution, shouldn't she also protect Oregon citizens such as farmers and ranchers from federal overreach and prosecution? Such an example is ranchers Steven and Dwight Hammond in regards to their five-year prison sentences for burns used to protect and improve their ranch. Is this not discrimination?

Sam Noonkester
Myrtle Creek

Choosing laws to obey

To the Editor:

I recently read at KGW.com that both Senator Merkley and Senator Wyden have told the city of Portland that they can pick and choose which federal laws that they will obey. Based on that premise, Grant County citizens can pick and choose which laws we will obey. I am sure glad they clarified that for us.

Ralph Goodwin
John Day

Malheur protest trial, part two

To the Editor:

The "leaders" of the Malheur refuge protest were acquitted on all charges last October. The prosecution's response was to add many more charges to the remaining defendants, Darryl Thorn, Jake Ryan,

Duane Ehmer, Dylan Anderson, Jason Patrick and Sean and Sandy Anderson.

Judge Anna Brown decided that the defendants are not entitled to be judged by the jury on the misdemeanor charges, instead their innocence or guilt and the sentencing on the misdemeanors will be decided by bench trial by Judge Anna Brown herself. For a judge that showed so much contempt for the defendants of part one of this trial, this seems to be a guarantee that the prosecution will get at least some convictions. The jury will be allowed to decide innocence or guilt on the felony charges only, and even then the jury will not be allowed to know what the sentencing for those charges may be.

When denying a jury trial on misdemeanor charges, Judge Anna Brown is holding a U.S. Supreme Court opinion superior to the U.S. Constitution. It is written in the U.S. Constitution, Article III, Section 2: "The trial of all Crimes, except in Cases of Impeachment; shall be by Jury..." There are no other exceptions. This goes against the Supremacy Clause of the Constitution.

Starting Feb. 14, supporters of the defendants will be watching the trial and gathering across the street from the courthouse at "Patriots Corner." Hatfield Federal Courthouse is at 1000 SW Third Ave. in downtown Portland.

Terry Noonkester
Myrtle Creek

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