

OUR VIEW

Wyden town hall on River Democracy Act must provide answers

U.S. Sen Ron Wyden, D-Oregon, will host an online town hall meeting Tuesday, Aug. 31, and if you get the chance, we urge you to listen in.

The subject of the town hall will be the River Democracy Act, a sweeping piece of new legislation pushed by Wyden and Sen. Jeff Merkley, D-Oregon.

The bill is designed to greatly expand conservation protections to more than 4,000 miles of rivers and streams in Oregon, including many waterways in the eastern part of the state.

Wyden touts the legislation to expand recreation access, protect drinking water,

limit wildfire and safeguard endangered fish and wildlife.

The spirit of the bill — to protect more waterways — is a good one. Our natural resources are a finite commodity and represent national treasures that enhance us as a people and a nation.

Now, more than 2,000 river miles in the state are protected under the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.

As much merit as the proposed legislation has, it still needs to be explained carefully to voters. That it is why it is so important for area voters to participate in the town hall.

While protecting rivers and streams is a

good idea, the fact is, there already are existing protections — such as the National Wild and Scenic Rivers Act — on many waterways. Other federal laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, also help add a layer of protection to streams and rivers.

The danger in such pieces of legislation is unintended consequences. That's why Wyden must explain how, or if, private property rights will be impacted with the legislation. He also must explain how, or if, grazing rights will be affected by the legislation.

The streams and rivers of Eastern Oregon are part of our heritage and must be safeguarded, but too often the region is seen as a

kind of giant, conservation amusement park for a minority of people who have little or no connection to our unique way of life.

The natural bounty of our region isn't something taken for granted for most of us who live in Eastern Oregon. We see it every day. No one wants to see our local natural resource treasures destroyed.

But before we go and create yet another layer of federal regulations to our region, let's make sure we are all on the same page and working for the same results.

So, tune into the town hall and exercise your right to give feedback to your elected representative.

COLUMN

National Dog Day: Time to party with the pack

While John and I don't have children, we consider our pets as our canine kids. And this time of year is special in our house.

This past Thursday was the anniversary of the General, my 9-year-old German shepherd, joining the Malgesini pack. To celebrate the occasion, we had top sirloin. In a few days, we'll have another special meal to commemorate what would have been Lucifer's 12th birthday (John's German shepherd, who we lost this past winter).

And that's not all — Thursday, Aug. 26, is National Dog Day. Rest assured, we'll whoop it up in style. But the big deal will be Sept. 7, when Biko, my husband's German shepherd/Siberian husky mix, turns 1.

Several weeks ago we had a little scare with Biko. As a young pup living in his previous home, the little guy ate something that caused a blockage. He had to have it surgically removed, along with part of his intestinal tract.



Tammy Malgesini

Since adopting Biko at 6 months old, we have been hyper-vigilant about watching him. At times, I'm sure he thought his name was "What are you chewing?" "Leave it" or "Knock it off." However, sometimes we fall asleep and puppies will play.

John had given him a new toy that he purchased from D&B Supply in Pendleton. It's a cow with a removable squeaky ball in the udder area. Biko quickly figured out how to extract the ball and was happily playing with it all afternoon.

The only problem with the ball is it's really bouncy — sometimes

ending up under John's chair or other out-of-reach places. Since Biko doesn't have opposable thumbs, he can't just grab it. And while he can't just verbally tell us where it is, he does make valiant attempts to rescue it — providing us a cue regarding its whereabouts.

However, sometime during the evening Biko lost the ball and neither of us had noticed — until midnight when John woke up after falling asleep in his recliner. After searching under his chair and a couple of other places, Papa started to get a bit concerned. After remembering that Biko had been playing with the ball in the upstairs hallway, I found it lodged between

a clothes hamper and our bill box.

As a bizarre coincidence, Biko ended up feeling puny several hours later. He kept bolting upstairs where I had fallen asleep on the daybed.

Initially, I slept through his full-on, nose-to-the-sky howling. However, the little guy was quite persistent. I'd like to think Biko understands that I'm Mommie Doolittle, who takes care of little owies.

If we hadn't found the ball, I'm sure we would have hauled Biko in for an emergency appointment at the veterinarian. Luckily, he just had an upset stomach and after I gave him a Pepto-Bismol pill, he started to feel better.

For those interested, there are 13 more shopping days left until Biko's birthday. He likes durable squeaky toys, rawhide chews and top sirloin.

Tammy Malgesini, who recently returned as a Hermiston Herald community writer, enjoys spending time with her husband and two German shepherds, as well as entertaining herself with random musings.



Tammy Malgesini/Hermiston Herald
Taking a pack selfie is a bit complicated for Tammy Malgesini with the General, 9, and Biko, 11 months.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Compassion is more useful than charity

I recently was given an analogy in defense of Critical Race Theory. "Critical Height Theory — tall people have more privilege than shorties." My reply:

And Critical Weight Theory — Skinny People Privilege. It's "You have something I don't, and the world owes it to me." Not equality. Not systemic bias. It's self-pity despite insufficient effort. It's focusing on what "they" have instead of my own life. Anything is possible with enough effort. Equal opportunity is not equal quality of life. Short people aren't "denied" food too high on a shelf, they simply have an obstacle to overcome. I can toss items at what I want, use a long object to prod, etc., until it comes to me. Even the tall have to, sometimes.

Odds are someone will come to assist anyway. Nobody has a right to shorter shelves, just a right to buy the food that is there. Difficulty is just a handicap to work through.

Back to CRT, society has already bent over backward too far. Laws require businesses meet racist skin color quotas, regardless of skill or experience. It's problematic in many ways and has created this situation. Doing for others leaves them with their handicap.

You have to combine compassion with tough love and mentorship. Doing for people is rarely compassion (far less is joining in complaining). Compassion grants others the ability. Com- (together/with) passion (effort, difficulty) ... literally, working together. When nobody does the work, there's no compassion.

I hope this is getting through.

Mark Elfering
Hermiston

Take responsibility for COVID-19 actions

I really hate having to mask up again. But I also hated flak jackets when I was in Vietnam. But I wore one, and it saved my life. The mask, although from several accounts it isn't considered effective, apparently does save lives. I got the vaccine, no problem.

I was in Safeway, Hermiston, today. Straw count, 60% of the people unmasked. If you're going to mandate, enforce it. If you don't want to mask up or get inoculated, fine. I think that's called suicide; it's your life.

The problem is, because of your self-centered inconsiderate actions, you will infect others — and that, my self-righteous friends, is called murder.

John Carter
Irrigon

COLUMN

The education corner: Time for school supplies

It's back-to-school time.

After this last year, our children experienced many futuristic forms of back to school. Very few were what we would consider normal with the pandemic happening around us. The question is: What will school look like this coming fall? For the most part, something more traditional. Some good and not-so-good strategies happened over the past school year. Now we'll see which ones remain and which ones do not.

One thing that won't change for sure and is so important to kids is school supplies. The excitement of what is to come, the organizing of new pencils, rulers, crayons and scissors marks the begin-



Scott Smith

ning of school. The anticipation for that first day of school and the days ahead makes this an exciting time of the year for children.

The beginning of the school year is also an excellent learning opportunity for kids with the planning and anticipation, evaluating and adjusting they are, full of questions as they anticipate the coming school year. It can be frustrating for parents, however.

Use this time to expand your children's minds. Students after first grade should be able to create their own supply lists. Ask them to calculate what the cost would be for you. You can also provide them with an amount to spend (budget) and create their shopping list. Don't limit it to just school supplies. Clothing is an important part as well. That simple activity provides your child with the opportu-

nity to use multiple life skills that will provide a strong foundation for not only the school year ahead but lifelong understanding of shopping and the opportunity to guide them. It reinforces their writing skills as they create their lists. It forces them to use evaluative skills as they decide which items would be best. Having to stay within their budget amount or even just letting you know how much it will cost forces the use of math skills.

Preschool, kindergarten and first grade students have not had exposure to school supply preparation, but they are aware of it and get excited. Time and conversation with them are pivotal in the building of their understanding and for developing life skills. They are also able to start making some guided choices. Giving them the options between which pencils they would

like to buy and telling you why they made their choice builds their understanding of language at their level. Ask questions such as, "What do you think you will be using these scissors for at school?"

We live in a busy world, and there are times as adults and parents that our "to-do" list is so long it seems easier to go get school supplies bought and ready for kids. If this happens, there are still ways to build that experience with your child. Have them check and see if what you bought matches the list from the school. You can have the kids add up what you spent by using the receipt and locating the price. They can check to make sure everything you bought is there (pull something out and leave it in the car and have them find it). These are life problem-solving skills your children will always

use, and the activity makes for significant interaction with them. It may even keep them busy and give you a chance to catch up on other items.

Setting a couple of hours aside to take your children school shopping is one of the biggest keys to making this activity a success. Having them create their list before going will provide discussion points and boundaries that should make for an enjoyable experience. As busy parents, we want the job done, but don't miss an opportunity for you and your child that they may carry on when their children are headed to school.

Scott Smith is a 40-plus year Umatilla County educator and serves on the Decoding Dyslexia Oregon board as its parent/teacher liaison.



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No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

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