

Proposed gun control legislation one of contradictions

The 2015 Oregon Legislature is shaping up to be one of contradictions – more gun control for those who obey the law but possibly more government protection for those who have broken the law.

We’re about to increase background checks on private gun sales, which will do nothing to stop felons from continuing to illegally obtain and use firearms.

At the same time, legislation has been proposed that would make it harder for an employer to do a criminal background check on felons.

Yes, this is a very contentious legislative session. Many bills are on a fast track. If we don’t slow down and become more thoughtful, we’re going to pass some bad laws, and citizens will pay the price.

Last year during the legislature’s brief 35-day session, state Sen. Floyd Prozanski (D-Eugene) tried to rush approval of a gun control bill to expand background checks. He needed just one more vote, and I declined to give it. I didn’t think his bill would reduce

crime. I wish all it took to change human behavior was passing legislation. It doesn’t work that way.

Prozanski is back this year with a similar bill, and this time he has the votes. That doesn’t mean he has a good bill.

His Senate Bill 941 requires that any time a private citizen sells or transfers a firearm both the seller and buyer/recipient must go to a licensed gun dealer, and pay to have the buyer undergo a criminal background check.

On the face of it this seems reasonable. Think about it, though. If you know you have a criminal history, you’ll bypass this law: Have somebody else buy a gun for you, or obtain one on the black market. It’s already against the law for ex-felons to possess a firearm. Yet, how often do we read about ex-felons committing a crime, and they’re armed? It takes more than laws to disarm a criminal.

However, a law can disarm a non-criminal. Under the proposed legislation, a gun owner with no criminal history could find him-

GUEST COLUMN



By
SEN. BETSY JOHNSON

Does [Prozanski] really want to go after violent felons? Or does he want to cause problems for legitimate gun owners?

self in violation if he loans a hunting rifle to a friend without a background check. On a first offense, the punishment could be one year in jail and/or a \$6,250 fine. On a second offense, the punishment could reach 10 years in prison and/or a \$250,000 fine.

Given Prozanski’s legislative history, I have to ask: Does he really want to go after violent felons? Or does he want to cause problems for legitimate gun owners?

Two years ago Prozanski served on the governor’s Commission on Public Safety, where he worked on House Bill 3194. He pushed unsuccessfully to reduce the sentences for some robbery, assault and sexual abuse crimes.

Even more revealing, Prozanski wanted to expand expungement – a way for felons to wipe clean their criminal history to help them find housing and employment. Now here he is sponsoring a bill that requires background checks on gun purchases. What good does it do to require background checks, if you’re also helping felons rewrite their criminal records?

As it is, the public might be surprised how often expungements and sealed records are allowed. I checked with one of the District Attorneys in my district – Clatsop County’s Josh Marquis

– and found that his office alone grants at least 100 expungements or sealed record requests a year.

Once an adult’s criminal record is sealed it may not appear on the Law Enforcement Data System, the National Crime Information Center, the older Oregon Judicial Information Network or the newer Odyssey court system. Prozanski’s bill does not address this.

There are aspects of his gun bill that are worthy – for example, prohibiting persons undergoing court-ordered outpatient treatment from possessing a firearm. However, confidentiality laws make it difficult to even reveal who is mentally ill. The bill does nothing to protect the public from a person whose mental illness expresses itself in violence.

The overriding intent of Prozanski’s bill is not directed at violent behavior but at making gun ownership more inconvenient for the law-abiding.

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Between the Covers ESTHER MOBERG

Spring has sprung and so has a new seed program

Ready for the spring? At the Seaside Public Library, we are starting a new program called The Gardening Seed Exchange. Other libraries throughout Oregon have similar programs, including the Tillamook Library. The idea behind the program is to encourage local gardeners to cultivate and share seeds that are heirloom seeds. You may also have a special variety of plant or seeds that you want to share that can’t be found at our local gardening store. Many gardeners regrow their flowers or vegetables from the same plants year after year. Because the plants are grown in our climate, they often become harder and

more resistant to our local spores or other diseases. If you were unable to attend our kickoff event on April 4, stop by the library to pick up the seed packets and more details regarding how the seed exchange works!

The kickoff event had details regarding how to save seeds and best practices for storing seeds, as well as the difference between heirloom, hybrid, and other seeds. We will be trying to highlight the gardening program at the library throughout the growing season this year. Start your non-hybrid plants now and keep us in mind this year. A special thank you to Coast Hardware for donating seed



ESTHER MOBERG

packets to help us get this program started. Handouts and seed packets for storing your seeds will be available at the library.

Another program we are very proud to support here at the Seaside Public Library is the ROCC program or Rural Outreach in Clatsop County. This is a program we have been doing for the past 3 to 5 years. Working together with the five school districts in Clatsop County, and the two other public libraries in our county, we work together to help all children in our community have access to library services regardless of their location and socio-economic needs. Any child in the county that goes to their closest public library can get a library card. We also provide a countywide summer reading program because research has shown that children

who do not read during the summer months can regress as much as an entire grade level in just one summer. We believe in supporting the efforts of our teachers and schools. Literacy is an essential tool for success in life. We have been supported by grants over the past five years but now we are asking for continued community support. If you or children you know have been impacted by this program or you simply believe in supporting literacy for youth in Clatsop County, please consider donating to the Rural Outreach program. For more information you may contact the Seaside Public Library’s director. Donations may be made to The

Friends of the Seaside Library, a 501(c)3, and mailed to the library at 1131 Broadway in Seaside.

Programs are just one way that the Seaside Library serves and supports our community. This month at the library, we will be hosting author and Professor Peter Laufer from the University of Oregon speaking on his book *Organic: the truth behind food labeling*. He has done extensive research in tracking down exactly what the label means and whether every item is truly organic that is labeled organic. This event will be held on April 23 at 7:00 p.m. in the library’s community room.

Scene and Heard CLAIRE LOVELL

Braving the elements part of life, especially on the Oregon coast

Where did “back in the day” come from? Our expression was “in the good old days,” which is still useful. Often, they are from movies or popular books and people just pounce on them.

So long, Don

Don Church has died not long after his wife, Betty Jean. When I took post-graduate work at the high school for my nursing diploma, Don was my chemistry partner. If it hadn’t been for him, I probably would never have passed the course because he did most of the work. We also were partners on the centennial program for Seaside. Don was the last one to go in his family and though he was not the same guy we used to know, his friends

will miss him. Rest in peace, Don.

Weather a mixed bag

Thursday, March 27 was a gorgeous day with the temperature hovering around 70 degrees. I guess all the spring break kids thought it might continue. On Friday, everyone was at the beach but the weather became a day from “H-E-double hockey sticks.” People in cloth hoodies were braving the elements — rain, rain, rain and more rain! There were people with 9- or 10-month-old babies riding on their shoulders in clothes suitable for sunny days — no sweaters, no hats, just this deluge running off their hair. What our town needs is a foul weather shop, selling boots, umbrellas, real raincoats and



CLAIRE LOVELL

Sou’Wester hats. Remember the oilskins of the old days? They were long and waxed with galoshes-type fasteners, while the fisherman’s hats went down the back a ways. Where are they now? Also, on the once-were list, were yellow, rubberized coats, hoods

and even pants. One of my kids thinks fondly of those he wore to deliver papers when boys did such things. He was fully protected.

Sounds of spring

I feel sorry for the astronaut twin who is going into space for a year. He took off on March 28. He says besides his family, he’ll miss the sounds of life — bird songs and the like. I understand. Out one window I watch two collared doves, sparrows, juncos and chickadees at the bird feeder. Another window shows a wild currant bush where humming birds hang out. A third one, at the kitchen sink, reveals a birdhouse with nesting sparrows and all those feathered friends. Sing out, it’s cool.

Author discovery

I think it’s too bad when the library tosses out a book from a talented Oregon author, although their loss is my gain. I had never heard of Wm. Corbin so I had Gary “Google” him and found that his name is really William Corbin McGraw. He and his wife both did a lot of writing. William began as a newspaperman. I forgot her work. He also served in the Navy for a couple of years in the 40s. Then they bought a filbert farm in Oregon and retired to write and raise their two children. The McGraws (Eloise Jarvis Corbin) both died in the 90s. I was hoping he was still alive. When I like anyone’s work, I usually write to tell him or her so. The book I found was “Smoke,” a kids story about a German Shep-

herd dog who escaped from his master and was lost in the woods for a long while, starving some as he lived there, eating whatever was available. (More next time.)

Laugh line:

Here’s a tasteful joke from my sister, Blanche.

Two old sisters, Cora and Dora, feeling the pinch of poverty as they were widowed, threw their lot in together and shared everything — even a set of dentures. Cora, returning from an afternoon tea, put the teeth in their usual resting place.

In a few minutes, Dora, on her way to a party, took the dentures for herself, after which she opened her eyes widely and exclaimed in a satisfied voice, “M-m-m-m! Macaroons!”

Letters to the Editor

It is up to you Clatsop County voters

To the editor,

Our freedoms guaranteed by our Constitution are being whittled away by the liberal democrats. Are we once again to allow the liberals to take away our freedom to choose?

Presently the voters of Clatsop County choose the Port of Astoria’s commissioners from a slate of prospective candidates. Both petitions that are being presented, if passed, will take away our freedom to choose whom our Clatsop County Port commissioners should be. The Port is an important source of revenue for the whole county, not just Astoria or Warrenton. We should be allowed as a county to choose who these people are who will be the administrators of this public service, the Port of Astoria.

Dianne Widdop, mayor of Gearhart, proposes that the governor of our state appoint the commissioners. Apparently, she believes that the voters are not intelligent enough to make good decisions or the right decision.

Mr. Taylor who is the chairman of the Democratic Party of Clatsop County believes that, again the voters need help, so we should divide the county up into districts. If this passes, you will only be allowed to choose a candidate from your small district, not the whole county.

Will we allow the liberal Democrats to take away our freedom to choose? It is up to you Clatsop County voters to stop them now. Don’t sign the petitions, read them, be informed, by all means, but think of what you will give away if either proposal passes.

**Karen Custer
Seaside**

Call before you dig!

To the editor,

Spring is in the air and gardeners in Seaside will soon start working in their yards. If that work includes digging, NW Natural reminds you to first call 811 – the Utility Notification Center – to locate underground gas and other utility lines.

This is a free service and it’s not only a smart thing to do to help prevent damage, it’s the law. Once you call, a technician will visit the property within two business days to locate your gas and utility lines.

If a gas line has been accidentally damaged, remember to: Smell. Go. Let us know. If you smell rotten eggs or hear a hissing sound, immediately leave the area on foot and then call 911 and NW Natural’s 24-hour emergency line at 800-882-3377.

Be safe this spring and be sure to call before you dig.

**Teresa Accuardi
NW Natural Community
Affairs Manager**

Thanks for return of wallet

To the editor,

We would like to thank the anonymous person who found my husband’s wallet on March 27 in Gearhart. The contents were mailed to Seattle, all cards intact.

**Cathy Hughson
Seattle**

‘Let’s play well with others’

To the editor,

To Harold Gable, Dan Jessie and the rest of the Gearhart dissidents. I would like to thank you, as one of the silent majority, for raking MY

town through your muck!

I realize it is your right as American citizens to be able to protest the way any government body is handling the events of the time, but for, what appears to be, a personal vendetta is wrong.

Mr. Jessie, if you think it is so disheartening to have one person on the council with whom you cannot agree, perhaps it should be you who resigns. I did not vote for a bunch of “children” who cannot get along with one another, and embarrass MY town where our family has had a presence since the 1800s. This goes for the entire council.

As for the dissidents, this recall is going to cost the taxpayers of Gearhart, according to officials, about \$7,000. I’m sure the city could find better use of these funds! My suggestion is: the petitioners should personally have to pay this cost. Perhaps, next time, you might want to wait until whomever it is you don’t like comes up for re-election and mount your own campaign to replace them. This is the true American way. In the meantime, let’s all try to play well with others.

**Preston Devereaux
Gearhart**

Tsunami evacuation information critical

To the editor,

In the previous edition of the Seaside Signal, there was an article regarding the controversy of providing tsunami evacuation information to Seaside’s hotel and motel visitors. Having worked at a Seaside motel, I know that many of the staff is completely in the dark regarding a tsunami’s impact and what to do to help guests become aware of actions they must take to provide for their safety. The idea, suggested by some, of not providing this information

because it might scare guests is an idea that is almost beyond belief. Shall we take down all the existing fire evacuation information?

During Seaside’s recent election for mayor, I was asked only one question in the single town hall that was conducted, “Why are you opposed to rebuilding the Avenue U bridge since it is functionally obsolete?” I replied, that “functional obsolescence does not mean structural obsolescence and that bridge rebuilding priority should be given to the Broadway bridge, which is structurally deficient and to the 101 bridge at the north end of town.” What I wasn’t given time to explain was that these two bridges play a critical part in the Seaside tsunami evacuation plan while the Avenue U bridge — because of its location — plays no part in an evacuation plan.

Using tsunami inundation maps from the State of Oregon, the City of Seaside developed evacuation routes and erected signage. The object of the tsunami evacuation plan for a Cascadia Fault earthquake is to walk to high ground (80 ft. elevation) within a 15 to 20 minute period. Since a reasonably fit person can walk about three miles per hour, that puts the maximum distance to safety at one mile. Those near Avenue U and west of the Necanicum River are about three-quarters of a mile from high ground if they proceed south and then west along the cove toward Tillamook Head. If they follow the city’s existing tsunami evacuation signage and map, they will walk inland one and a half miles and will not reach safety in the required time.

Even if you believe that the tsunami danger in Seaside is overstated, the published maps and signs must show the correct route to safety.

**John Dunzer
Seaside**