

## Letters

### Conservative proud to serve with Johnson

To the Editor:

A conservative Republican's thoughts on Senator Betsy Johnson.

Over the last seven years it has been my privilege to work with Senator Betsy Johnson. Like myself, Senator Betsy Johnson represents the Oregon Coast and I can testify that she has been nothing but a tireless advocate for her district's

coastal residents. She is well versed on the issues and brings common sense solutions to the problems of Oregon and never misses an opportunity to bring economic opportunity to her district or anywhere in the state.

I am troubled by these unfair personal attacks on Senator Johnson and her family. I believe that it is the job of our news media to simply report the facts and let Oregonians make up their own mind how to

think. Mischaracterizing legislators and their motives does not serve the public and is detrimental to the legislative process.

Sen. Johnson is a woman of the highest integrity. She treats everyone with respect, regardless of party affiliation, and always has an open door for both Democrats and Republicans. To her, a good idea is a good idea. Period. Even when she disagrees with me on policy issues the communication is

open, honest and respectful.

The Johnson family has roots in Oregon that date back before the 1900s, and Betsy has carried on a long family tradition of public service in our state.

I am proud to call her a colleague and a friend.

I stand in strong support of Senator Betsy Johnson.

**Wayne Krieger  
Representative, District 1**

### Johnson supported by Gov. Kitzhaber

To the Editor:

I have known and worked with Senator Betsy Johnson since I ran for governor in 1994. She is among the most dedicated elected officials I know with an unwavering commitment to the larger public interest. That is why I find the recent press controversy surrounding her to be so disturbing.

Certainly incorrectly filing disclosure forms for the wrong year on a property transaction needed to be righted. It did not surprise me that she acknowledged the mistake, took responsibility for it and corrected it. The attendant press coverage, however, is not only unfair; it takes this issue entirely out of context.

Though she doesn't talk about it, Senator Johnson is president of her family's foundation, the Samuel S. Johnson Foundation, which has given millions of dollars to charities over the years. This year alone, the foundation will give hundreds of thousands of dollars to conservation initiatives, rural hospitals, social service agencies and programs benefiting children and seniors.

And although Senator Johnson had a privileged childhood, growing up in a wealthy timber family, her parents instilled in her a strong ethic of public service. Her mother, Elizabeth Johnson, served in the U.S. Navy, was elected to the Redmond School Board and was appointed to the Oregon Board of Higher Education. Her father,

Sam Johnson, served seven terms in the Oregon legislature and two terms as Mayor of Redmond.

Today, as a law school graduate, business owner and heir, Betsy Johnson could be living in the lap of luxury. She could ignore the problems caused by unemployment or lack of health care. She could ignore the dozens of phone calls she gets each day asking for her help. Instead, she and her husband live in a modest house in Scappoose. She earns \$18,000 a year as a state legislator and quietly spends her free time as a philanthropist.

In 1993, she acquired the family home in Camp Sherman and since the death of her parents, has been solely responsible for the care of 160 acres near the headwaters of the Metolius River. Recently she has been criticized for supporting legislation to protect the Metolius basin from the development of destination resorts. What has been forgotten, however, is that 50 years ago her parents donated the headwaters themselves and the surrounding land to the United States Forest Service to ensure that this set of crystal clear springs emerging from the base of Black Butte would be protected for all Oregonians to enjoy.

The remaining family property is extremely valuable and would almost certainly qualify for a claim under Measure 37. And yet Senator Johnson recognizes that it will be even more valuable to future generations if it is left just as it is — wild, natural and beautiful.

There are few people who choose public service over private enrichment — and fewer still that choose to give away their family fortune to those who are less fortunate. Oregon, more than ever, needs leaders who hold these values. Betsy Johnson is one of them.

**John A. Kitzhaber, M.D.  
Governor of Oregon  
1995-2003**

### Salem Scene

By Representative Brad Witt  
Oregon District 31



As you already know, the Legislature has adjourned. The final two weeks were a blur, with the House considering 20-50 bills daily, depending on whether there was lengthy debate on the issues to be decided. The days were long, but the work has been rewarding

and I'm constantly reminded of how proud I am to represent our district. I'd like to review a couple of important bills that I was particularly involved with in the final days.

As the primary sponsor of HB 3364A, I spoke in favor of expanding the Underproductive Forestland Conversion Tax Credit Program. In 1979, this program was established to encourage private woodland owners to convert brush, burned areas and marginal pasturelands into well stocked forestland. Most of the land eligible for this program is family-owned forestlands.

The program has two specific applications. First, to fully stock land that does not contain commercial timber stands; second, to restock a forest destroyed by natural disaster such as wildfire. The extension of the credit creates an incentive to complete small projects. Currently, the \$500 application fee costs more than the tax credit may be worth. This financial disincentive has caused the number of small woodland owners participating in the program to decline 44% between 2005 and 2006. Allowing the application fee to be included in the program will reduce the cost of the fee to woodland owners by 50% and in turn, will provide an incentive to reforest small acreages, expand the benefits of additional forestland and lead to additional tax revenue in the future. I am proud to report that HB 3364A passed the House unanimously.

My position on SJR 18 was not nearly so popular. Nonetheless, I consider the issue to be of paramount importance, that in the United States of America, everyone is presumed innocent of a crime until proven guilty. Under SJR 18, which is a referral to the voters, a person's property may be confiscated before a criminal conviction.

Back in 2000, Oregon voters approved Ballot Measure 3, which required a conviction prior to any kind of property forfeiture. In 2001, the Legislature codified those changes and in so doing,

placed the burden of proof on the state to show that the property was indeed subject to forfeiture. That's where we have been until the passage of SJR 18A.

While I have no problem with our government seizing property used in the commission of a crime when guilt has been determined, SJR 18A seizes property prior to a conviction. This bill puts us back to where we were before the passage of BM3. The state can also seize property that is owned jointly, even though only one of the parties is being accused. It also allows state and local law enforcement to share in the proceeds from the sale of forfeited properties, which is expressly prohibited under current statute.

I was one of only two Representatives to vote against this bill, but I did so convinced that one of our nation's basic legal tenets is at issue. The voters and the Legislature have already spoken on this issue, in line I believe, with my floor vote. Voters will have another chance to express their position on this issue in November.

### Ike Says . . .

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had managed to get the spot in the evening and we started hauling in crappie and some bluegills. The boats around us started getting closer and closer, a few binoculars started coming out and a few braved the question of what we were using. Crickets!

We took the boys up to the spot — which we were lucky to get each evening — and filled two five-gallon buckets each time. The bluegills were becoming suicidal; all you had to do was dangle a "cricket" a few feet below the bottom of the boat and they would fight over who got to eat it. I even caught a few on a bare hook! But down deep amongst the thousands of bluegills and average size crappie were the slabs. They seemed to move in and out, usually at least 25 counts deep and they were just imaginations of a bite on the end of your line. The other boats looked on as they caught an occasional fish. We probably weren't popular, with the exception of the few people that we let in on the cricket secret.

Oh, by the way did you Weller boys check the cricket traps?

**Izaak Walton League, Nehalem Valley Chapter** meets monthly on the 3rd Thursday at 7:00 p.m. Call 503-428-7193 for location.

### Policy on Letters

The INDEPENDENT will not publish letters that include personal attacks on private citizens. Because of space limitations, preference will be given to brief letters, 300 words or less.

All letters must be signed and include a verifiable address or phone number, and all letters are subject to editing for clarity or length.