

OPINION

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EDITORIAL

Roses and Raspberries

ROSE (roz) n. One of the most beautiful of all flowers, a symbol of fragrance and loveliness. Often given as a sign of appreciation.

RASPBERRY (raz'ber'e) n. A sharp, scornful comment, criticism or rebuke; a derisive, splatting noise, often called the Bronx cheer.

We hereby deliver:
■ **ROSES** to jurors.

It's a coincidence, but the mid-valley has a pair of major trials starting up this week — one civil and one criminal — and that reminded us that trials don't work if there's not a panel of 12 citizens (14, including the alternates) willing to sift through the evidence and arguments and to render a verdict.

In Benton County, the murder trial of William Hargrove got underway this week with jury selection; opening statements in the case could come today. In Linn County, a jury has been seated to hear the civil lawsuit over the state's management of forest trust lands; those jurors will hear opening arguments today.

Both juries likely will be reporting to their respective courthouses for awhile. The Linn County trial is expected to last three weeks. The Hargrove murder trial could stretch out over four weeks.

Of course, the vast majority of legal matters never get to the jury stage. But our legal system just wouldn't function without jurors willing to take time out of their busy lives (sometimes, lots of time) to pass judgment in big-deal cases. And our experience is that the vast majority of jurors take their duties seriously. As their work begins in a pair of major trials, let's take a moment to thank them. (And special thanks to the alternates, who watch all the proceedings but then may never get a chance to participate in the deliberations.)

Speaking of that timber lawsuit:
■ **RASPBERRIES** to the Gazette-Times, for a boneheaded error in Wednesday's editorial about the case. We incorrectly reported the year in which the Oregon Board of Forestry approved a new management plan for the state's forests. The year was 1998.

■ **RASPBERRIES**, as always, to scammers. After so many Roses and Raspberries columns devoted to warnings against scammers, it was almost a thrill when we received several scam calls this week.

Almost.

These particular calls, which came from Deer Park, Texas, notified us that a legal enforcement action had been filed on our Social Security number for "fraudulent activities." The caller said we should call the number back "before you get arrested," a thoughtful sentiment.

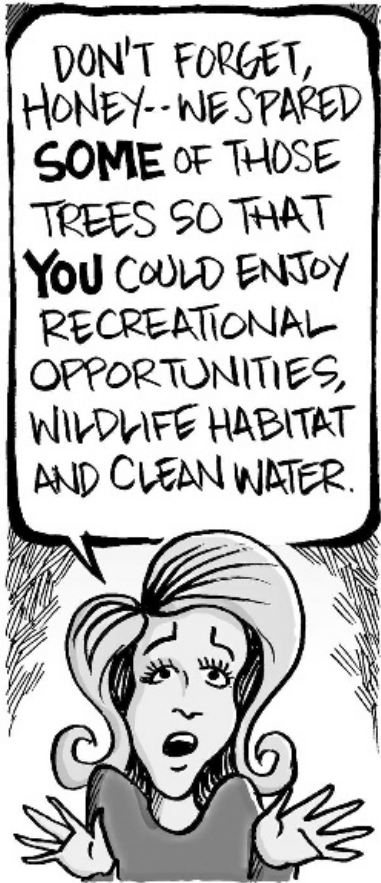
We did not call the number back. You should not either. A reporter in our newsroom, who presumably had little else to do on that morning, did call the number back — and got nowhere fast. While this may be an amusing activity, we cannot recommend it. Our advice remains the same: Hang up immediately if you have any reason to suspect that a scammer is on the line. Then report the call to your local law enforcement agency.

■ **ROSES** to you, if you're thinking of firing up your computer and sending us a letter to the editor regarding the Nov. 5 election. We still are striving to deal with a substantial backlog, but our hope is to run all of your election-themed correspondence before Election Day. But we know from experience that some of you will send your letter on the weekend before the election. If you do that, fine — but we won't be able to run it in print.

So let's set a reasonable deadline: If you want to write a letter to us about one of the races on the Nov. 5 ballot, please send it to us by 11:59 p.m. on Monday, Oct. 28. That should give us enough time to get all your letters into print. Election-themed letters that we receive after that day will run online, but we can't guarantee that they'll appear in print.

In the meantime, here's a reminder: Don't lose track of your ballot. That election is coming up faster than you think. You don't want to be looking around for your ballot on the morning of Election Day.

■ **ROSES** to the recent stretch of sunny days. It's easy after the rainy season starts to forget how breathtakingly beautiful a sunny October day in the mid-valley can be. And maybe it's just our aging eyes, but this year's display of fall color appears unusually vibrant; some of these trees seem to be glowing from within. The forecast calls for sunny weather this weekend. To paraphrase Ferris Bueller: Fall moves pretty fast. If you don't stop and look around once in a while, you could miss it. (mm)



AS I SEE IT

OSU must treat unions with dignity

Earlier this fall, the Oregon State University classified workers' SEIU Local 503 was in bargaining for a new contract with OSU. Watching OSU administrators negotiate with SEIU, it was easy to see that despite the rhetoric about valuing classified workers' labor, the administration's intention was to "reduce costs" associated with classified employees. However, the administration's plan to freeze wages, decrease personal leave time, and increase the burden of health care costs for workers was thwarted by classified workers coming together to protect their labor rights through a strike plan.

An all-too-familiar story is currently playing out as the new faculty union United Academics of OSU (UAOSU) is currently in bargaining with OSU administrators. A recent bargaining session earlier this month ended with UAOSU members walking out after fielding disrespectful counterproposals from the administration's bargaining team.

Once again, OSU administrators are approaching workers with an attitude of "cost-cutting" instead of treating UAOSU members with dignity. You can read more about UAOSU's bargaining experiences at this website: <http://bit.ly/34akuMb>

Many people assume that being faculty immediately means having certain protections and benefits. This may be true for some tenured faculty, but in fact there are many faculty who are struggling to make ends meet. They are not seeing mirrored in their daily lives the material security and stability that seems duly warranted by OSU's success as an institution. OSU administration has a responsibility to fairly compensate its faculty workers, and faculty deserve to be treated with dignity and respect at the bargaining table.

As a grad worker and Coalition of Graduate Employee member at Oregon State University, I am reminded on a daily basis of how students, staff, faculty, and graduate employees are the life force of

our university. We are at our best when we act on the recognition that our successes are interdependent and that our community — off-campus and on-campus — benefits most when our achievements extend beyond ourselves. We are stronger together; this is a core idea of union organizing. It's time for OSU administrators to fulfill their responsibilities to faculty workers. After all, we will all benefit from faculty having more stable, secure, and fairly compensated employment.

I encourage community members to show solidarity with UAOSU by coming to their next bargaining session with OSU administration on Monday, Oct. 28 at the LaSells Stewart Center in the Agricultural Science Room; stop by anytime between 9 a.m. and 1 p.m.

Lzz Johnk is a PhD student in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies at Oregon State University and assistant to the director of undergraduate studies in Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies/ Queer Studies at OSU.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Why Columbus remains significant

There is a lot of blather these days about something called "Indigenous Peoples Day" to replace Columbus Day. Indigenous Peoples, my sainted grandmother. There are no indigenous peoples in the Americas — only some who were earlier immigrants than others. The only continent with truly autochthonous indigenes is Africa.

But, if you're Politically Korrekt, facts don't matter, only feelings do. And Columbus is the only significant one. He wasn't the first European in America — we have archaeological evidence — but Columbus established a permanent connection between Europe and the Americas which has never been broken. That is what is truly significant.

So if you like sitting here reading the Gazette-Times in Oregon, you need to thank Columbus. The Kalapuyas had nothing to do with it.

Jonathan Hayes
Corvallis (Oct. 13)

Here's why people 'pick on' Trump

Apparently some letter-writers wonder why President Trump is being "picked on" and why President Obama wasn't singled out for criticism. It might have something to do with Trump's constant lying, refusal to take responsibility for anything, his bullying attacks on anyone who does criticize him, his supposed "America First" campaign while his and his family have their products made in China, paying off his porn-star mistress, his dismantling of clean air and water regulations, opening monuments and public lands to drilling and mining interests, destroying cactus and butterfly reserves in his haste to build his wall (hey, how's it going getting Mexico to honor your promise that they would pay for it?), his refusal to give up his tax returns, ordering people not to talk to investigators (what does he have

to hide?), and so much more. The man has no honor, while Obama did and does have empathy for others, honor and grace.

Trump has asked foreign governments to interfere in the next election. It's hard to deny, when there are tapes and a video from the White House lawn of him asking China to do it. That is illegal, and just because you don't like it doesn't make it fake news!

Rebecca Stillwell
Albany (Oct. 14)

Vote to approve new 911 district

A "yes" vote on the 911 special service district (Measure 2-124) is essential to providing timely public safety services for the residents and visitors of Benton County.

Over the last 20 years, we have invested in upgrading our ambulance fleet equipment as well as significantly increasing the skills of the crews. County law enforcement and fire agencies have built a shared regional communications system to provide enhanced coverage and the ability to coordinate response actions between agencies. Agencies have also added personnel to respond to the additional calls for service.

Unfortunately, technology in the form of the cellphone has also placed a significant negative impact on the 911 system by generating numerous calls for a single event. Every call must be answered and the caller questioned to determine if this is a new, unreported event.

Dispatchers are the "force multipliers" that allow the investment that we have made in public safety infrastructure (equipment and staff) to really pay off in an emergency. Additionally, the dispatchers coach callers through traumatic events such as delivering babies, performing CPR, and managing domestic violence incidents.

For county residents, who typically have the longest response times, timely dispatch of police and fire is especially critical, since all ambulances (three total) re-

spond from inside the city limits of Corvallis.

This ballot measure will fund two additional dispatchers and a supervisor on each shift to manage the additional call volume while allowing staff to work eight-hour shifts in this high-pressure environment.

Vote "yes" on Measure 2-124.

Jim Swinyard
Corvallis (Oct. 14)

The writer is a former Benton County sheriff.

Take another look at bridge costs

In the Oct. 12 article on the costs of moving the old Van Buren Bridge, in reusable form, were estimated at \$10 million. Where did this number come from? We have seen several river bridges this large or larger moved and raised for a fraction of that cost. Surely no heavy bridge construction firm developed that number.

An educated guess at sliding the 450 foot of main spans to new tower piers would be about \$4 million. The easternmost pony truss could be picked and moved separately for \$200,000. That leaves about 250 foot of approach spans work. Say these approach spans were built 20 feet wide, to pedestrian-bike standard, and with ADA access work for \$300 dollars per square foot, this total project would cost less than \$6 million, with new steel tower piers.

I am sure that if you offered contractors a chance to move the trusses, erect river tower piers, and construct approach spans for this cost, you would have several takers.

Subtract the costs for environmental containment and demolition of the old trusses and additionally subtract the cost of including sidewalks and bike lanes on the new bridge, this \$6 million cost estimate would be dramatically offset. Environmental studies may add about 20% to these costs.

Dennis McGee
Corvallis (Oct. 14)

MODERATELY CONFUSED

