



OPINION

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In Our View

CHEERS & JEERS

County planning commission advocates sensible course; mentally ill still languish

Cheers: The Clark County Planning Commission has taken what appears to be a sensible approach to long-term land-use planning. The commission this week declined to support alternatives that would reduce the minimum lot size of subdivided resource lands and rural property in unincorporated portions of the county, noting that it would be difficult to defend such plans in court because of state guidelines. That rejection includes Alternative 4, which was developed unilaterally by county Councilor David Madore without input from professionals who understand land-use planning.

Proponents of the plans that allow for smaller lot sizes argue that they would restore the rights of landowners, and the commission recommends provisions that would provide consideration for landowners on a case-by-case basis. But allowing the creation of thousands of small lots in rural Clark County would lead to sprawl that requires increased infrastructure while providing little relief for the region's housing crunch. The Clark County council — including Madore — should employ similar diligence in considering the suggestions of the planning commission and adopting a final plan.

Jeers: The Washington Department of Social and Health Services and two state hospitals — including one near Tacoma — continue to compile contempt orders and fines related to treatment of some of society's most vulnerable citizens.

In April, a U.S. District Court judge issued a permanent injunction requiring the state to provide mentally ill patients with competency evaluations and treatment within seven days of a state judge's order. But a review of records conducted by the Associated Press reveals that judges throughout Washington frequently find that the state is not living up to that obligation.

Cheers: After languishing for decades in mortuaries and churches throughout the state, the cremated remains of 46 veterans and one military spouse have received a proper military burial at the Washington State Veterans Cemetery in Medical Lake near Spokane. As part of a national effort called Missing in America, the remains of veterans who are without families were identified and scheduled for interment.

The ceremony included a 21-gun salute, taps played on a bugle, and a harp-and-flute rendition of "Amazing Grace" as the veterans, including four from World War I, received the respect they were due. As Gary Condra of the Washington Department of Veterans Affairs, said, "Finally, we're bringing them home."

Bummer: This one comes from the inevitable-march-of-time file. Or maybe it's the hey-I'm-getting-old file. When legendary rock band The Who announced that it is canceling the remainder of its concert tour — including upcoming shows in Portland and Seattle — because singer Roger Daltrey is suffering from viral meningitis, it was a reminder for many fans that even rock 'n' roll is not a fountain of youth.

The Who, which still tours with original members Daltrey and guitarist Pete Townshend, was scheduled to play Portland on Thursday and Seattle on Sept. 27. And the fact that the shows were planned for large basketball arenas is a testament to the enduring power of the band. Daltrey, 71, is expected to make a full recovery, but the irony cannot be lost that this is the band that famously sang the line, "Hope I die before I get old."

Cheers: A sea otter named Mishka at Seattle Aquarium has been diagnosed with asthma and is being taught to use an inhaler to assist with her breathing. The affliction was discovered recently when the 1-year-old otter had difficulty breathing while smoke from nearby wildfires was in the Seattle area.

The medication in the inhaler is the same as that used by humans, and Mishka is being taught to push her nose into the device and take a deep breath.

THE COLUMBIAN'S EDITORIAL BOARD:

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Our Readers' Views

Room to add bridges

Recent stories about regional traffic congestion reported that commuters in the Portland-Vancouver area waste 52 hours and spend \$1,273 annually in their cars due to delay.

The majority of regional traffic congestion problems are in Oregon. Sadly, our Regional Transportation Council does not track or discuss Interstate 5 at the Rose Quarter, which has Oregon's highest accident rate. How many Southwest Washington residents are involved?

The No. 1 cause of congestion is that two-lane section of I-5 at the Rose Quarter. It's a safety issue, yet Oregon refuses to add more lanes and widen I-5.

The second problem is that all of the traffic bound for the Portland suburbs of Beaverton and Hillsboro or the Oregon Coast must go through the three-lane Vista Ridge Tunnel near downtown Portland. A west-side bypass is needed. Oregon continues saying "no" to this common-sense option.

Oregon ignores safety and rejects widening I-5 at the Rose Quarter and rejects a west-side bypass. The only option left is to pursue a third bridge east of Interstate 205. The mayor and city council of Troutdale, Ore., are courting an east-side bridge that connects Clark County with Troutdale and Interstate 84.

Let's hope we can get Oregon legislators interested in building a third bridge across the Columbia River. After all, the city of Portland has nearly a dozen bridges crossing the Willamette River. Why should we be limited to just two bridges across the Columbia River?

John Ley
CAMAS

Voters verbalized choice at primary

Fresh from election victories in states that allow to gerrymander districts and suppress voting rights, the GOP is demonstrating its dark magic once again: transforming a two-candidate election resulting from a top-two primary into one with three candidates. It's like a political sleaze movie with a new twist, necessary because a relatively new election process had to be subverted.

This shenanigan, produced and directed by Christian Berrigan, the local GOP committee officer, stars

state Rep. Liz Pike, R-Camas, famous for proposing more guns in schools as a solution to gun violence and whose fame increased fabulously when she blamed our children's lack of academic preparedness on teacher laziness. Now, she's a write-in candidate for Clark County council chair, a position she claims she never sought and for which will not campaign. This is not the same as William T. Sherman's "If nominated, I will not run; if elected, I will not serve." No. This is "I am running, and I hope the voters won't notice how."

Pike claims that she's listening to the voice of the voters. What voters? County Councilor David Madore and Berrigan? Suddenly she's compelled to hear the voice of none of the people, consulting only her party's disdain for the choices of the voters as expressed in the primaries.

It might be legal, but it stinks.
Joel Littauer
VANCOUVER

Efficiency appreciated

Thank you to the city of Vancouver for having a website option that gets misbehaving traffic lights promptly fixed. My concern shared through city dispatch via its website form was forwarded to Senior Traffic Engineer William Gilchrist. Result: traffic now flowing smoothly on Mill Plain Boulevard at 105th Avenue and 104th Avenue.

Nicely done, city of Vancouver
William DeBoard
VANCOUVER

Agreement short of goal

When I lived in Ankara, Turkey, I recall the day U.S. President Ronald Reagan was inaugurated in 1981. On that same day, the Iranian government renamed "Death to Carter Avenue" in Tehran to read "Death to Reagan Avenue." For me, that event has added historical perspective to the currently discussed Iran nuclear agreement.

In 2012, the media brought to light the illegal activities of London-based Standard Chartered Bank, which used its New York City offices to process foreign currency translations for various Iranian entities. This British bank paid a fine but should have been barred from access to the U.S. financial system for five years. This illustrates the broad unwillingness of Western governments

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Include name, address and daytime phone number for verification, only the name and hometown will be published. Email is preferred.

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to impose sanctions on companies doing business with Iran. This unwillingness will likely increase after the agreement is confirmed by all parties, regardless of infractions by Iran. Also, the billions of dollars in impounded funds, once returned to Iran, will serve as a boon to export-hungry weapons manufacturers in North Korea and Russia, as well as blood-thirsty terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Hezbollah.

Under the agreement, inspectors from the UN's International Atomic Energy Agency will not have access to the Fordo or Parchin nuclear sites or any Iranian military installations, and none of the thousands of Iranian uranium centrifuges will be dismantled.

Before Iran intimidates its neighbors into a culture of appeasement, Congress should go on record with a vote on this agreement.

If nuclear nonproliferation is the goal, this agreement falls far short.
Ron Rasmussen Jr.
VANCOUVER

Choice remains with women

Terrance Popravan Jr.'s cry in his Sept. 11 letter, "How can anyone just stand by?" against population control and equal rights (legalized abortion) informs me that he has never pruned a tree, pulled a weed or stepped on a spider. A true man of nature in harmony with all life. Does he really think the rest of us want to follow him back to the jungle, where killing becomes a main tool of survival? Don't get me wrong; I am not a big proponent of abortion. But that is easy for me to say; I'm a male.

Ron Pulliam
RIDGEFIELD