

## READERS' FORUM

## Stop school cat dissection

Continuing cat dissection in our public high school classrooms is not to be simply treated as a nuisance issue conveniently justified and squelched without acknowledging the many nuances associated with it.

By simply allowing this antiquated curriculum to continue, we are perpetuating a multimillion dollar specimen industry that historically is neither transparent nor accountable. It involves the acquisition and, in most other cases, purposeful breeding of countless millions of animals annually killed and packaged as specimens.

I see no reason a student might find this type of exercise beneficial. Years ago, I took part in a high school pig dissection and was surprised that such a thing was still going on in our community. There are now alternatives that many schools have incorporated.

In retrospect, it is clear that the take-away was "animals are disposable." This attitude is not something that needs to be reinforced any further.

The fact is that millions of unwanted pets, particularly cats, are abandoned each year, while at the same time millions more are being born because of uneducated owners. For most of these, there is little hope of a good home, and many will find themselves euthanized in barbaric methods such as the gas chamber and ultimately marketed by corporations as so-called "teaching tools."

The chances of a student ever needing to dissect a house cat post-high school are quite low, but many will find themselves the caretaker of one. Bring the school district into the

21st century, and find another way to accomplish the mandate of educating students without reinforcing a throw-away mentality.

Teach good animal stewardship: the conditions in which these "specimens" were procured would be a start.

Brian Carlson  
Newberg

## We need industrial jobs

I would like to thank the News-Register for reprinting the Statesman Journal editorial, "Pass effective legislation quickly" (Viewpoints, Jan. 18). It is said that recession is when you hear of someone who lost his job, but a depression is when you lose yours.

Oregon really has only two natural resources, hydroelectric and wood products. It is the wood products industry I would like to address, the paper industry in particular.

I have been doing political work for the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers since 2005. There has been a tremendous loss of jobs and plant closures due to extreme environmentalism and, worse, trade agreements established by the federal government, including the coming Trans-Pacific Pact.

We, as citizens, need to keep our industrial jobs, which mainly fall into rural Oregon. Why? If workers are not working and industrial plants are not operating, there are no payroll taxes from the workforce and no property taxes paid by the industrial plants. I hope citizens will understand that we need all of us living whole

lives; marrying, raising children and educating them, and, hopefully, retiring.

When I was living in Chicago, a state tourism board jingle was "Just outside Chicago, there is a state called Illinois." Citizens in downstate Illinois complained, and the jingle was changed to "Just outside your back door, there is a state called Illinois." Oregon is like Illinois — one state, not two.

I hope Senate President Courtney of Salem and House Speaker Kotek of Portland pass legislation that emphasizes and pays attention to rural Oregonians' needs. Rural Oregon is looking not for a handout but a hand up to be productive and whole. I have my fingers crossed for this legislative year.

Mike Sullivan  
McMinnville

## LETTER GUIDELINES

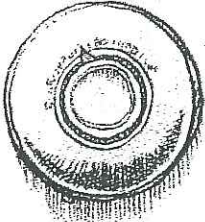
The News-Register welcomes written opinions about the newspaper and local issues.

- Letters should not exceed 300 words.
- Letters may be edited for brevity and libel.
- Include name, street address and daytime telephone number.
- Indicate occupational, financial or other ties to letter topic.
- Letters should be typed or legibly handwritten.
- Writers are limited to one letter in a calendar month.
- With rare exceptions, campaign-related letters are not accepted from political candidates, their immediate family members or campaign staff.
- As a rule, we do not publish letters about conflicts between a private individual and a private business, or letters about the alleged guilt, innocence or evidentiary accuracy of legal/judicial cases.
- The deadline for publication Friday is noon Wednesday.
- Submit to: Readers' Forum, News-Register, PO Box 727, McMinnville, OR 97128; by fax at 503-472-9151; by e-mail at [letters@newsregister.com](mailto:letters@newsregister.com); or in person at 611 N.E. Third St., McMinnville.

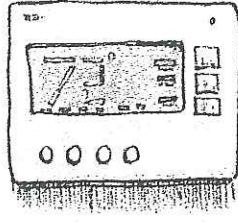
Your guide to

## WALL-MOUNTED TEMPERATURE CONTROLS


ANALOG



DIGITAL



FIST





## OTHERS SAY

## Pass effective legislation quickly

Toward the end of his State of the State speech on Monday, Oregon Gov. John Kitzhaber recited a quotation from Western writer Wallace Stegner:

"One cannot be pessimistic about the West. This is still the native home of hope. When it fully learns that cooperation, not rugged individualism, is the quality that most characterizes and preserves it, then it will have achieved itself and outlived its origins. Then it has a chance to create a society to match its scenery."

It was an apt quote, an appropriate challenge. Just think of what Oregon could achieve if the quality of its political process matched the magnificence of its environment.

Kitzhaber struck the right tone Monday, as did the other two Democrats who addressed the 2013 Legislature — Senate President Peter Courtney of Salem and House Speaker Tina Kotek of Portland. They emphasized that legislative success will come from paying as much attention to the needs of rural Oregonians as to urban areas.

Oregon's slumbering economy — especially outside the Portland metro area — remains the state's No. 1 challenge, and it should be the Legislature's No. 1 priority.

Economic recovery is meaningless, Kitzhaber said, if the Portland area returns to pre-recession employment levels while much of rural Oregon still suffers from "double-digit unemployment, outdated infrastructure and an aging workforce."

Likewise, "economic recovery" is absent if it refers to improved job prospects for white Oregonians but not for African American and Latino Oregonians. Or if nearly one-fourth of Oregon children continue to live in poverty.

The message of Kitzhaber, Courtney and Kotek was: We're all in this together, rural and urban, Republican and Democrat.

The task is to govern in that spirit on a daily basis — to tackle the monstrous budget challenges created by a bulging public pension system, a bulging state prison system and a bulging health care system. Those bulges block one road to an improved economy: re-investing in education and in helping young children get on

the right path from the very beginning.

Most Oregonians share Kitzhaber's passion for public education and for political collaboration. The test, for him and for the Legislature, will be to not merely pay attention to the diverse needs of rural and urban Oregonians but to act on those issues — effectively and expeditiously.

That would be an Oregon political scene as profound as the state's scenery.

— *The Statesman Journal*  
Salem

## Concealed weapon permits should not be open to public

The horror of mass murders may inspire some reasonable initiatives to reduce gun violence in 2013. But Americans should not be stampeded into an unwise backlash against gun ownership.

One example of such backlash is the renewed demand to expose Oregonians who hold concealed handgun licenses.

Oregon law gives county sheriffs authority over concealed carry permits. In the past few years, sheriffs have beaten back demands that they disclose the names of all licensees. They won a court case, and then last year the Legislature affirmed the confidentiality of concealed carry permit lists.

But the drive for disclosure will

be back this year, with some Oregon news media again joining opponents of gun ownership in arguing for the people's alleged right to know.

Public access to government records is generally a good thing. It allows citizens to monitor their officials, making sure they do their jobs correctly. But some documents need confidentiality. Medical records. Personnel files. Business filings that contain trade secrets.

Concealed weapons licenses belong on that list. When a sheriff issues a carry permit, he basically certifies that the applicant has a plausible reason for wanting one, and that the person can be trusted with it. People who pass those two tests have a reasonable expectation that the sheriff won't blab their business all over town.

Because concealed carry permittees are by definition law-abiding citizens, anti-gun advocates can't invoke public safety to justify identifying them. The new mantra is the need to hold sheriffs accountable for how they administer the program.

But sheriffs are plenty accountable. No one wants to be the sheriff who issued a permit to America's next mass murderer.

Certainly, gun violence is an important topic this year. But stripping lawful gun owners of their privacy is not a useful response.

Ghastly, high-profile violence shouldn't lead Oregon to strip lawful gun owners of their privacy.

— *The World*  
Coos Bay

