

VIEW FROM THE MOUNTAIN

Reflecting on community

Jim Nantz signed off last month, saying to his viewers, "Thank you for being my friend," a farewell version of his ubiquitous catch phrase (and reminiscent of the theme song to "The Golden Girls").

This month, I get to sign off, as my time at the Mountain Times has come to an end after 13 years. Starting in May, a new owner will take over and I will start a new job.

I don't have a catch phrase, though, so no quippy way to turn something into a sweet goodbye.

The new Owner/Publisher of the Mountain Times is Matt Nelson, who founded Active Media more than 20 years ago.

I'm thrilled that Matt will be at the helm; his passion and enthusiasm for publishing is astonishing, and I am confident he will build on the momentum the Mountain Times has while continuing to reflect and represent the wonderful people and the community.

I'm sure he will share more when he introduces himself in these pages next month.

Over my years at this paper, and four more years working the Mountain beat before that, my focus was on you – the community I was tasked to cover. My job was to capture the who, what, where, when and why on the Mountain and I wanted to share the essence of the people, places and happenings here.

And you all are an amazing, inspiring and creative bunch. It's been a honor to get to know you, to get to share your stories and to earn your trust and friendship.

Although I'm stepping away from the paper, I'm not stepping away from the community.

My new job will keep me around the Mountain, while I'll also continue to be one of the "part timers" who would like to find a way to make that time even more.

I am going to miss a lot about being a part of the Mountain Times, but I feel fortunate that I will get to be in and among this community in my new job.

I won't have to miss continuing to be a part of the Mountain community and I am so grateful this is the case.

Cheers to all for 13 years at the Mountain Times, 17 years covering the community and for the years to come.

– Garth Guibord/Publisher

Rep. Helfrich's April column missed the mark

Rep. Jeff Helfrich's "Inside Salem" April column includes a reference to bills he sponsored that didn't pass, including one that he said would have made kids safer at school. There are no details on that bill or the one assisting homeless veterans in rural areas or reducing crime bills, so don't know what caused them to fail, since they all sound good on the surface.

Helfrich obviously doesn't like Measure 110, which reduces penalties for drug possession, making Oregon the first state to decriminalize the personal possession of illegal drugs. The drug treatment aspect of this measure has not been implemented successfully due to failures by agencies tasked with the job. Oregon's drug problems long existed, long before the measure passed. Does he want to continue to punish low level drug users by putting them in prison?

Regarding his statements about Oregon not being friendly to businesses: tax incentives for business have a very mixed history and tax waivers are often given to companies that promise jobs that never materialize.

Then he declares, "Most Oregonians agree that our laws regarding abortion are extreme, permitting abortion up to the moment of birth."

No, Rep. Helfrich, your ignorance about why an abortion might be needed in the third trimester of pregnancy is appalling, considering your need to meddle and try to make a political issue out of a medical emergency.

I will just say that the only reason a pregnant woman gets an abortion in this late stage is because the fetus has died, is severely damaged and will not survive outside the womb and/or her life is in danger. Period.

The final paragraphs conflate transgender surgeries with gun laws, which is rather astonishing but there we are in America, trying to see every issue from one lens or another.

I do applaud Rep. Helfrich for his advocacy for sheltering homeless veterans. I hope his work on this is successful.

Mary Anderson
Sandy

House District 52 deserves better

As a constituent of Jeff Helfrich, the State House Representative of District 52, I was stunned and appalled by many of his assertions on gun control, as well as his opinions regarding Trans Right to medical care and late-term abortions stated in his April "Inside Salem" op-ed. These are topics many of us in Mr. Helfrich's district take very seriously. Rep. Helfrich's claims that the majority of Oregonians agree that our laws regarding abortion are extreme, permitting abortions up to the moment of birth.

In a recent survey by nonpartisan polling firm DHM research, 65 percent of Oregonians identified as pro-choice. An Oregon Public Broadcasting article dated Nov. 2, 2022 titled, "Right to Life mailers make dubious claims about late term abortions in Oregon," explicitly refutes Mr. Helfrich's assertion that abortions are rarely performed after the end of second trimester – around 27 weeks. The article says that "OHA [Oregon Health Authority], which publishes data on abortion, has no breakdown of whether abortions occur in the 8th or 9th month of pregnancy." But their data says it's rare.

As a matter of fact, OHA reports only 59 abortions occurred last year with fewer than one percent occurring before 12 weeks (in the first trimester). And it goes on to say it is consistent with national trends.

It is dismaying that he equates the age at which youth can receive gender affirming care should be the same age at which they should be allowed to legally carry weapons. In point of fact, the two assumptions are not even remotely related. One component of his assumption involves supplying potentially life-saving medical care, whereas the second component involves supplying dangerous weapons to teens. So where is the connection?

Mr. Helfrich is fond of saying he is proud to serve. But if this pledge is not supported by more thorough research, it amounts to no more than an empty slogan. And apparently, Mr. Helfrich is neither willing nor able to spend the time and energy to review material that contradicts his "opinion."

Mr. Helfrich, you are a key link in helping us solve the many problems and concerns those of us in House District 52 daily face. PLEASE do not let us down.

We deserve better!

Patty Caldwell
Sandy