

The scorned public servant Former Albany City - Oregonian, The (Portland, OR) - January 14, 2011

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Former Albany City Manager Steve Bryant laments the widespread disdain for public servants: "Oklahoma City, Tucson, Panama City and Woodburn have rallied around their public officials in times of crisis. We can do the same in our communities without the need for tragedy to remind us that public service is a noble calling that deserves our appreciation." Read and comment at The Stump.

Pornography and the law

University of Oregon law professor Ofer Raban considers the Oregon Supreme Court's ruling overturning two child pornography convictions: "The Oregon court's opinion was not legally ambitious nor legally significant. All it said was that, given the language of the statute, the Legislature apparently didn't intend mere displaying or viewing of photographs to qualify for the offense. . . . Still, these two cases, putting aside their peculiar factual circumstances, also raise a more substantive issue: the status of actions lying on the borderline of our definitions of criminal offenses." Read and comment at The Stump.

Violence and the media

Syndicated columnist David Sirota finds some truths in today's media culture: "One of those truths is that media can set societal norms and, thus, can help create conditions for violence --whether a mass murder in Tucson, an IRS bombing in Austin or any other future massacre. Another less obvious truth is that the new media economy encourages ever-more violent vitriol because that's now become the most reliable way to build a following and, thus, generate profit." Read and comment at The Stump.

The power of language

"After reading Leonard Pitts' arguments in favor of an uncensored 'Adventures of Huckleberry Finn,' it strikes me that by removing 'the all-too-familiar racial slur,' Mark Twain's novel ceases to be 'Huckleberry Finn' and becomes something more akin to 'Gone With the Wind,' " writes Tim Heath of Portland at the public blog My Oregon, found at The Stump."