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Blogger thinks about logging off Portlander Jack Bogdanski puts his popular Web log on hiatus, dismaying fans of his blunt, funny musings

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Say good-bye to Jack Bogdanski's tell-it-like-it-is Internet alter ego.

As Jack Bog, he has entertained, informed and enraged thousands of Oregonians, including city commissioners, state officials and everyday citizens.

But today, to the dismay of his readers, Jack Bog is posting his final droll observation on the foibles of Oregonians, government and life -- unless, like Cher, he decides to stage a comeback next month.

The widely acknowledged king of Oregon bloggers is taking a monthlong hiatus to consider retiring from the demands of daily blogging, his hobby for the past two years. Bogdanski, like other bloggers, regularly posts his own take on the world -- the literary form is called a blog, a contraction of Web log -- on his own Web site (bojack.org). Often inspired by Bogdanski, dozens more Oregon blogs have been born since Jack Bog's Blog went live on July 6, 2002, with an homage to rhythm-and-blues singer Howard Tate.

Although only 600 readers visit the site each day, the number is high for an Oregon blog and includes many of the region's movers and shakers. Regular readers include Portland City Commissioners Erik Sten and Randy Leonard and former Oregon Labor Commissioner Jack Roberts.

"It didn't take long to figure out that Jack was the main guy, the blogger extraordinaire, in local circles," says Paul Nickell, 49, editor of the Oregon State Bar Bulletin and, under the identity of Worldwide Pablo, himself a blogger. "His posts were coming regularly and abundantly, always original, and hewing to a unique formula of seriousness mixed with fun, and sometimes just downright silliness."

Just imagine Bogdanski's campaign finance analyses juxtaposed with a Photoshopped image of Saddam Hussein in a New York Yankees baseball cap. (That photo drew 20,000 hits in two days.)

"The site . . . has an impressive mix of really thoughtful, intelligent material on one hand and really juvenile, slapsticky goofing around on the other," says Linda Holmes, a former Bogdanski student and current attorney and freelance writer in Minnesota, "and somehow, that enhances credibility. . . . I can't explain that, but it's true."

Bogdanski, who describes himself as politically middle-to-left, uses Jack Bog's Blog to rant loudly and often about what he considers to be government boondoggles.

"It's not the way you say it on 'Meet the Press,' " the Lewis & Clark College law professor says, relaxing in his Irvington living room in front of a fireplace dominated by a copy of Vermeer's "Girl With a Pearl Earring." "It's the way you would say it to your buddies in a bar two drinks after you should have stopped."

A few examples: About the aerial tram that will connect the Willamette River waterfront to Oregon Health & Science University's main Marquam Hill campus: "Rather than building a \$30 million aerial tram, and then spending a million dollars or so each year to operate it, why don't OHSU and the City of Portland buy, say, 100 stretch limousines for \$100,000 each (total: \$10 million) and drive the rich doctors up and down Pill Hill in them?" The Portland Streetcar: ". . . a precious toy . . ." The Oregon Convention Center: ". . . a flop when it was smaller, and it's an even bigger flop now that the city has paid \$116 million to double its largely empty space." Burying Portland's reservoirs: ". . . big, dumb underground tanks."

"I found out there are a lot of people out there who do not agree with your opinions," says Bogdanski, who had hoped -- unsuccessfully, it turns out -- to parlay the blog into a summertime talk-radio gig. He

was surprised to discover the strength of the right wing in a supposedly "lefty community where all the people recycle."

"My politics don't line up with talk radio," he says. "I'm not sure a centrist talk show would attract anyone at all."

Bogdanski, 50, announced his blogging retirement at 6:41 a.m. June 22, citing other responsibilities and the relentless pace needed to create fresh material for the hundreds of readers who visit the site each day. Bogdanski teaches full time and writes about tax law, works as an arbitrator and raises two young daughters with his wife, Nolee Olson.

Within an hour of the announcement, readers began to lament his leaving. Two days later, Bogdanski gave in and agreed to take the next month to decide.

Jesse Cornett, a 28-year-old East Portlander who was the first to post a response, says, "I like that Jack's clearly progressive but questions government excesses and other policies that other Democrats and progressives usually just agree with for the sake of not rocking the boat."

Even Commissioner Leonard weighed in.

"I can get the political stuff elsewhere," he commented on the blog, "but where am I going to find a guy my age, who likes my kind of music, who doesn't mind mixing it up until 2 a.m. on subjects such as gay marriage, and who I have grown to really like a lot?"

Christopher Frankonis, Portland's other acknowledged blogmaster, credited Bogdanski for setting a civil tone in the local blogging community.

"I've never had disagreements with him -- over politics, design and development, whatever -- that disintegrated or devolved into something personal," says the 34-year-old Frankonis, who, as The One True b!X, publishes the Portland Communique blog. "His opinions are strong, and his voice makes them clear. But it never becomes a fight."

Portland Communique (communique.portland.or.us) makes Bogdanski's own list of required blog reading. His other regular Oregon reading includes AboutItAll.com (www.aboutitall.com), Worldwide Pablo (worldwidepablo.blogs.com), UtterlyBoring.com (www.utterlyboring.com) and Isaac Laquedem (isaac.blogs.com).

"I wish all the bloggers could get together," Bogdanski says, "and save the world."

The New Jersey native plans to spend part of July at the Jersey shore with his family.

"I'll sit there and contemplate the blog," he says. "To blog or not to blog."

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