

Local county fairs are special institutions

As I was preparing to participate in the 2018 Umatilla County Fair Parade,



LOOK TOWARD LEGISLATION
SEN. BILL HANSELL

it occurred to me what a unique and special institution county fairs are. Each of the 36 Oregon counties have a county fair, including the seven counties I represent in Senate District 29.

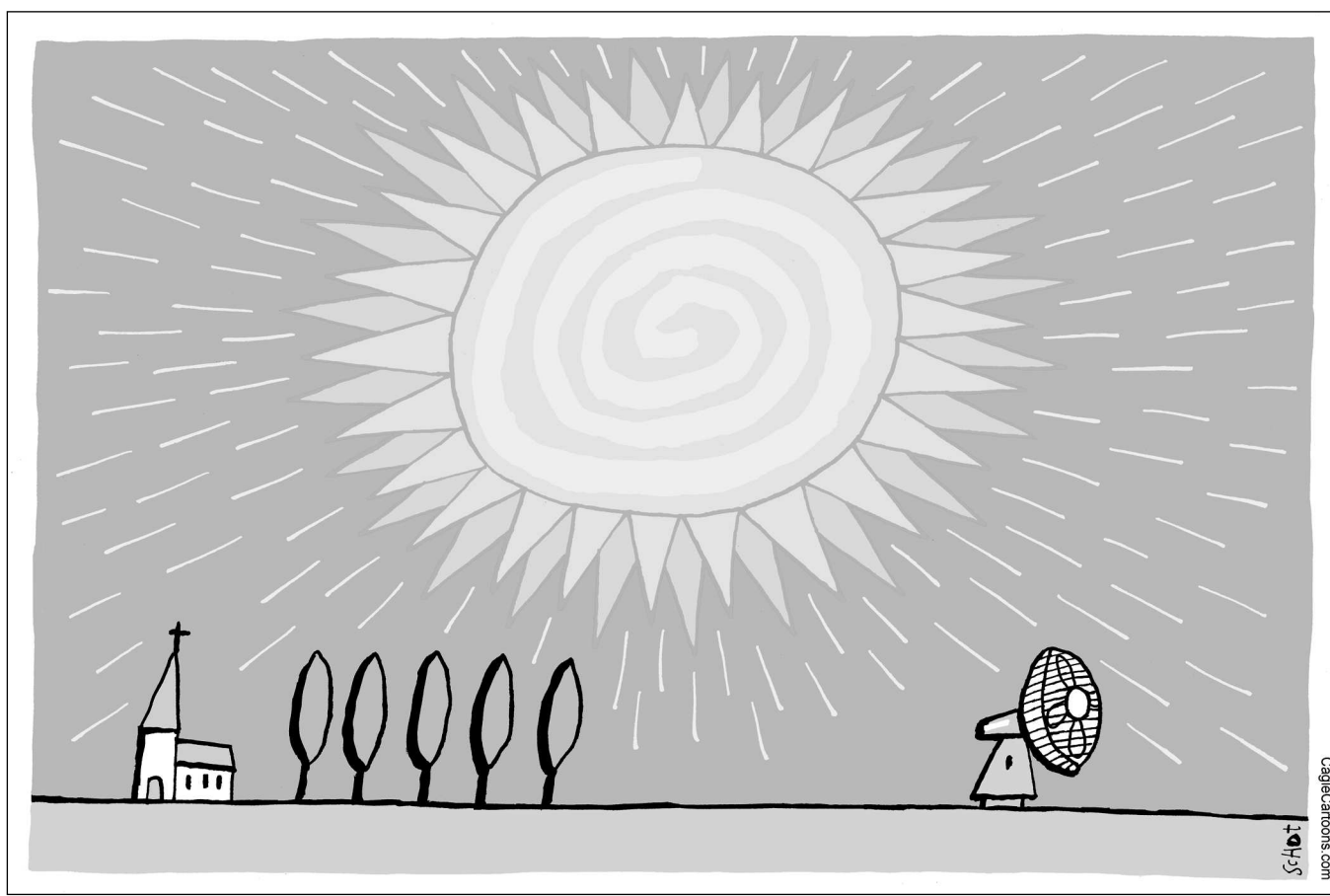
Each year Oregonians gather together to showcase and celebrate at county fairs across our state. There is something for everyone at these gatherings, which were first held before statehood in the mid-1800s.

I have been attending county fairs for decades, as a participant, spectator and parent. In my 30 years serving as a county commissioner, I came to an entirely new appreciation for what these fairs mean to our way of life.

What makes county fairs so special and attractive? Let me share my reasons, in no particular order (except for the first). My top 10 reasons why county fairs are special.

1. Elephant ears, corn dogs and ice cream! It doesn't get any better than this.
2. Something for everyone. It doesn't matter whether you are young or old. This is one reason why in 2017 more than 1.5 million guests attended fairs in Oregon.
3. Showcasing achievement. Last year, according to the Oregon Fairs Association, there were more than 58,000 4-H and FFA exhibits. Add to this figure roughly 46,000 adult and 22,000 youth exhibits, and you have thousands of Oregonians showcasing their talents and achievements.
4. Parade. Everyone loves a parade, and the County Fair Parade is always a fun one.
5. Volunteers make it happen. Every fair has a hard-working fair board and an army of volunteers. Many fair board members take their vacations to live in a trailer on the fairgrounds. And as far as I know, they receive not a dime for their services. In fact, for most board members, it costs them money to serve. Their contributions make county fairs happen.
6. Fairs are a gathering place. I have many lifelong friendships and memories that began in 4-H and FFA, at county fairs.
7. Heritage and culture. Our county fairs provide the venue to express and keep alive our heritage and culture — past, present and future.
8. Entertainment. I have enjoyed big names like The Oakridge Boys and The Charlie Daniels Band. There is daily entertainment and local groups on the stages at county fairs. All for the price of an admission ticket.
9. The carnival and rides. I have to admit when it comes to rides or games of skill, I'm not much of a participant. Rides and elephant ears don't go together for me, and I'll choose the "ears" every time. But if you get a wristband, you can ride to your heart's content. I do like to watch.
10. County fairs are a bridge. They bridge generations, urban-rural, ethnic backgrounds, politics, regions and so much more.

Sen. Bill Hansell is a huge supporter of county fairs and has exhibited both as a youth and adult. He even took home a blue ribbon for a watercolor painting at the Umatilla County Fair. He and his wife, Margaret, reside in Athena. All six of their children were livestock exhibitors, which helped pay for their college educations.



'Ignoring Oregonians' does not describe Walden or Barreto

I feel compelled to reply to Matt Cooper's recent "My Voice" related to Rep. Greg Walden ("Walden rubber-stamps Trump while he ignores Oregonians"). If anyone wants to know the facts about what Greg Walden or any other elected official is doing, all one has to do is subscribe to that public servant's newsletter.

Yes, we have a booming job market, but open borders is not the solution for employment issues. This country should allow new citizens with needed job skills to enter only by legally crossing our borders. Allowing a free flow of illegal aliens into any country is a fool's errand. Just look across Europe and the problems they are having. If American citizens illegally cross into Mexico, they are immediately jailed. If they foolishly took any minor children with them, I'm confident the children wouldn't be incarcerated with the adults.

By USA law, a U.S. citizen committing a felony is separated from minor children and those minor children are placed in the care of proper authorities. Why would a foreign national be treated any differently? If children from foreign nations are sleeping on mats on concrete floors and given three meals a day while living under a roof, is that not better than homeless citizens in many liberal cities on the West Coast? Many past presidents from both parties have advocated border security, but Congress has failed to supply the money. The expense to build the wall is a small price to pay for protecting our internal security and for the costs of education, law

enforcement, detention, immigration courts, hospital/medical, etc. We now have a president who wants to keep his word and protect the USA.

Comments that Republicans are not willing to discuss issues are laughable. All legislators should follow their sworn duty to vote independently on what is good for the country, not just listen to their party leader.

What has Greg Walden done? He has voted for a national tax cut resulting in reducing unemployment to all-time lows, increased GNP to decade highs, fought hard alongside many Oregonians to get Dwight and Steven Hammond pardoned as well as change laws so the "Oklahoma Terrorist Legislation" can't be inappropriately used for ranchers, and as chair of the Energy and Commerce Committee continues to investigate fraud and abuse within the opioid treatment industry.

Walden has been meeting with Eastern Oregon cattlemen regarding broadband expansion in rural areas. Just this week he is in Medford and calling for the Senate to support legislation already passed by the House as part of the farm bill. This would allow harvesting of burned dead trees while they still have value. The funds would help pay for replanting a new healthy forest for our grandkids' generation. This common sense plan would also help with thinning and removing fuel loads so nature's balance is returned.

"Ignoring Oregonians" does not describe our representative Greg Walden or our state representative Greg Barreto. Please get informed.

Write to us MY VOICE

Kenneth Parsons, 75, lives in La Grande. He is retired after working in law enforcement,



farming and small business. My Voice columns should be 500 words. Submissions should include a portrait-type

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