

My Voice

Use a diversity of news sources

Early on as a freshman at the University of Oregon, I happened across “the newspaper room.” In an older part of the library, high-ceilinged, tall-windowed, with rows of wooden tables — and quiet. It quickly became my favorite place to study. Eventually I noticed that “the newspaper room” had newspapers. Lots of newspapers.



**ANNE MORRISON**  
LA GRANDE

From Washington, D.C. And Little Rock. From Los Angeles and Des Moines and

Albuquerque. And more — English and foreign language papers from around the world. From London and Berlin. From Riyadh and Jerusalem. From Montreal and Taipei.

They say that travel transforms a person into a global citizen, providing a broader understanding of the world by exposing travelers to new views, new perspectives and different ways of looking at the world. I couldn’t afford to travel. Still, in the newspaper room, I could read papers from around the country and around the world.

People from other places expressed views that had never occurred to me. People from other countries had opinions about American foreign and domestic policy that I had never seen in any American news source — often strong or critical views and, sometimes, views that made perfect sense.

The Saudi Arabian paper might have a very different take on the transfer of government power in Rhodesia than a paper from Canada. The Buenos Aires Times and the Times of London certainly had different perspectives on the Falkland War that Argentina was waging against Britain. Sometimes I would struggle to read papers in French or Spanish or German.

It was hard to know what was more amazing—the fact that so many perspectives existed, or the actual perspectives themselves.

It is another amazing fact that now, through technology, the same diversity of views I found in the newspaper room is available to anyone who has internet access, at the touch of a few keys. It’s so easy to read a broad variety of news and opinion pieces to get views from different places and perspectives.

Which causes me to think about about the significance of facts.

The MacMillan Dictionary defines a “fact” as “a piece of true information.” Other sources define a fact as “truth” or “reality.”

So of course it was concerning when presidential adviser Kellyanne Conway asserted in 2017 that the new Trump administration would base its policies on “alternate facts” — on some “alternative” to truth or reality. And for four years years now, the Trump administration has deflected criticism of its policies by calling the press “the left-wing media,” “the enemy of the people,” or denouncing negative coverage as “fake news.”

For someone who studied journalism in college, those attacks have been amazing. In journalism classes, students were consistently taught the importance of striving for truthfulness, accuracy, impartiality and public accountability. Most students seemed to accept such principles as an ethical mandate. Given that such principles are commonly taught in schools of journalism, it occurs to me that it would be impossible to corral the entire, irreverent American press into speaking with a single voice.

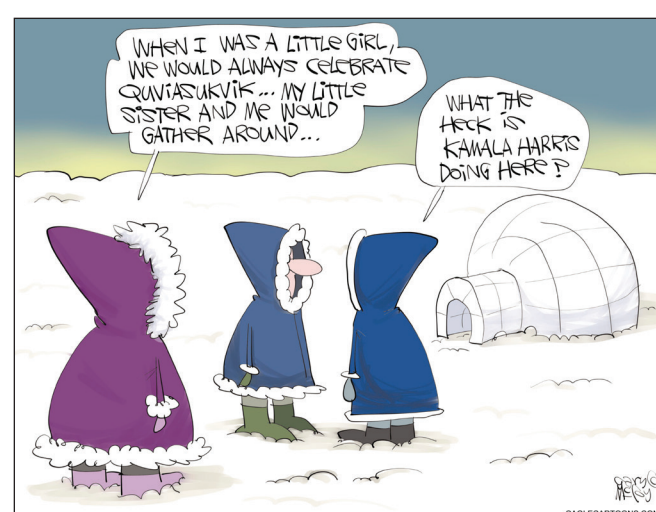
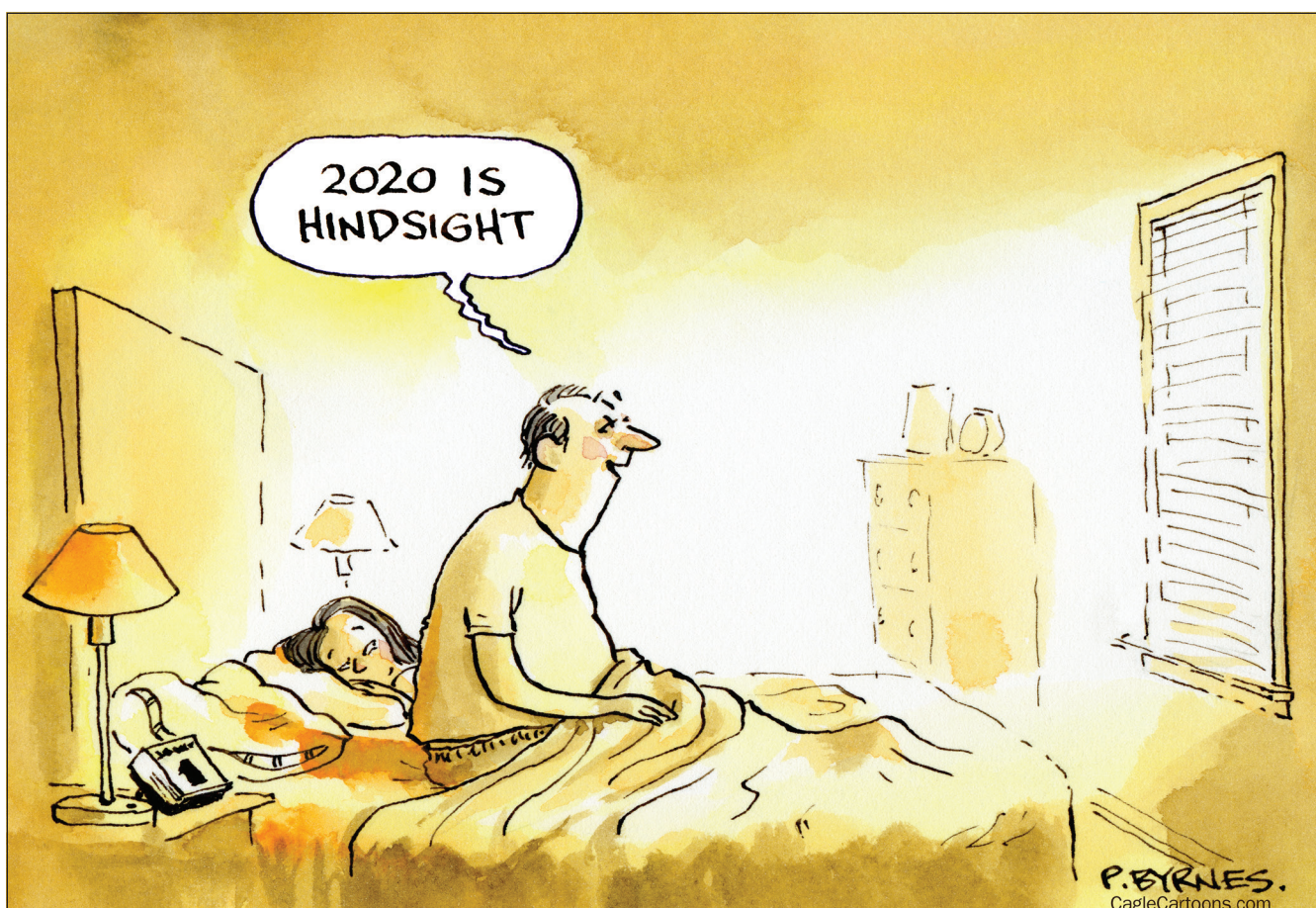
It would be easier to herd cats.

Today, when I watch the news for different perspectives, it’s hard to escape the feeling that “alternate facts” have developed into actual, competing, alternate realities. Every day, nearly 150,000 more Americans are contracting the easily transmissible, potentially deadly coronavirus virus. A stunning 350,000 Americans have died from COVID-19, and it continues to spread like wildfire. Yet millions of Americans still travel, fly, meet in large groups, drink, party and congregate, without masks, and without apparent concern about the virus’ spread or its human and economic costs.

Faced with these two irreconcilable realities — these very different views of the world — we might all be smarter if we obtained news from a variety of sources, to help us separate facts from fiction and to get different perspectives on what’s really going on out there.

And it’s so interesting.

*Anne Morrison is a La Grande resident and retired attorney who has lived in Union County since 2000.*



Letters

Runners – be wary of cold weather lung injury

I was in U.S. Army Special Forces for years.

In SF the Army policy was that, since approximately \$100,000 had been spent to train each soldier, the Army would not take a chance of losing service of that valuable soldier by having the soldier run and do violent exercises outside when the temperature was below freezing.

Cold weather injuries are real and can be very debilitating, causing serious lung damage that can be long lasting and cause the injured person even to be bedridden or unable to work.

So, I want to pass on to our runners here in the valley that they, too, are too valuable to us to risk cold weather injuries and to hurt

themselves by the need or desire to get in shape or stay in shape.

Please don’t press your luck. We have enough danger from the virus, and you can train inside when we have freezing weather.

*Nick Smith  
La Grande*

Wearing a mask is not asking too much of us

I read with great interest forensic scientist Michael Howard’s Other Views piece on the COVID-19 pandemic because it meshed with an experience I had Monday, Dec. 14, 2020, while shopping at a local, employee-owned big box store.

I was looking for wild bird seed, batteries, etc., when I heard a disturbance at the front of the business. There were several shop-

pers, masked, not crowded. Someone was yelling and cursing, and I went to check it out. A woman in her 30s or 40s was spewing foul language at an employee who had obviously stopped her because she was not wearing a mask. Signs outside informed customers of mask requirements, which she flouted.

I thought maybe I could calm the person down, but she exited the store still yelling, possibly broadcasting virus to us all.

The next day I mentioned this to a neighbor, and she simply stated “selfishness,” which were exactly my thoughts. This is not about the Constitution, not about freedom or liberty, not about the government. It is pure, unabashed, cussed selfishness. What I think, what I do, what I believe is more important than your health and well-

being. Very simple, isn’t it? Don’t hide behind the skirts of highfalutin words. Proclaim to the world that you are the center of the universe and the rest of us be damned. It’s nothing more or less than that.

Life has boiled down to the essentials for many of us. Pretty black and white. We want to survive these extraordinary times. We do not want to end up in the hospital with tubes up our nose. We do not want to infect or be infected by other individuals. We want to maintain a semblance of normality until the world rights itself. We want to feed our families. We want to enjoy this place we love. We want to see winter evolve into the new life of spring.

Not asking much is it? Please wear a mask.  
*M.R. Rosenbaum  
La Grande*

Contact your public officials

Local officials

**La Grande:** City Manager Robert Strope, 541-962-1309, fax 541-963-3333; RStrope@cityoflagrande.org; P.O. Box 670, La Grande, OR 97850; Mayor Steve Clements, mayor@cityoflagrande.org; Councilors Gary Lillard (mayor pro tem), glillard@cityoflagrande.org; Nicole Howard, nhoward@cityoflagrande.org; Corrine Dutto, cdutto@cityoflagrande.org; Mary Ann Miesner, miesner@cityoflagrande.org; Justin Rock, jrock@cityoflagrande.org; and through the city manager’s office.  
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**Union County:** County Courthouse: 1106 K Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-963-1001; fax 541-963-1079; Commissioners Donna Beverage, dbeverage@union-county.org, Matt Scarfo, mscarfo@union-county.org, and Paul Anderes, panderes@union-county.org; administrative officer Shelley Burgess, sburgess@union-county.org.  
**Wallowa County:** Courthouse, 101 S. River St., Enterprise OR 97828, 541-426-4543 ext. 15; fax 541-426-0582; Commissioners Susan Roberts, ext.133, sroberts@co.wallowa.or.us; Todd Nash, ext.132, tnash@co.wallowa.or.us;

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**United States officials**  
**President Donald Trump:** The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

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