

OUR VIEW

Liberty Theatre project deserves residents' help

Few projects in recent memory carry the kind of feel-good sentiments as the effort to restore the Liberty Theatre in La Grande and that is why area residents should support a campaign to raise funds to finish the renovation work.

The new campaign's objectives are simple: raise \$350,000 in private donations to supplement an effort to garner \$250,000 in grants. The goal is to raise the money by July 1.

If that amount of money is collected, the venue — which was built around 1910 — could be open again this year.

It is an ambitious goal, no doubt about it, but a lot of work has already been completed, such as the restoration of the facility's 100-year-old chandelier.

Plumbing, electrical and heating work is still being completed.

The beauty of the theater renovation project rests in its historical significance and economic importance. The facility will be more than another building in La Grande's downtown. The theater, once restored, could very well be the linchpin in economic development in terms of attracting tourists. The theater will also be another one of those intangible elements that make a small city more attractive to its residents.

Plans to finish the restoration effort were stymied when the pandemic hit. The pandemic pushed back construction completion dates and, with a subsequent rise in prices in materials, the goal of finishing the restoration is in a holding pattern.

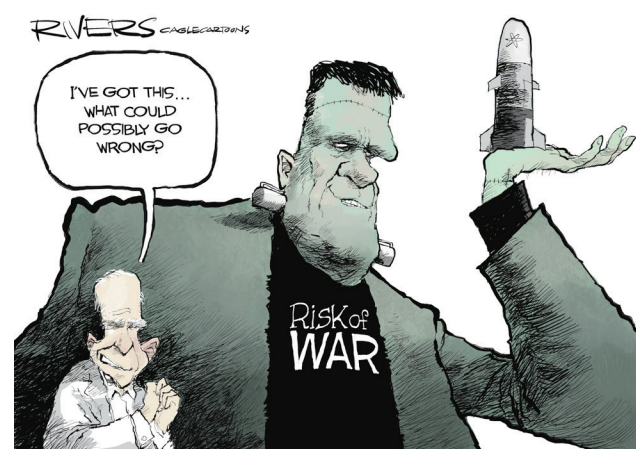
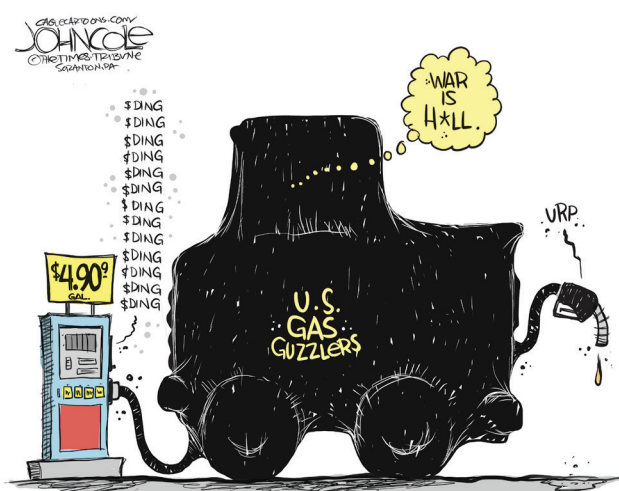
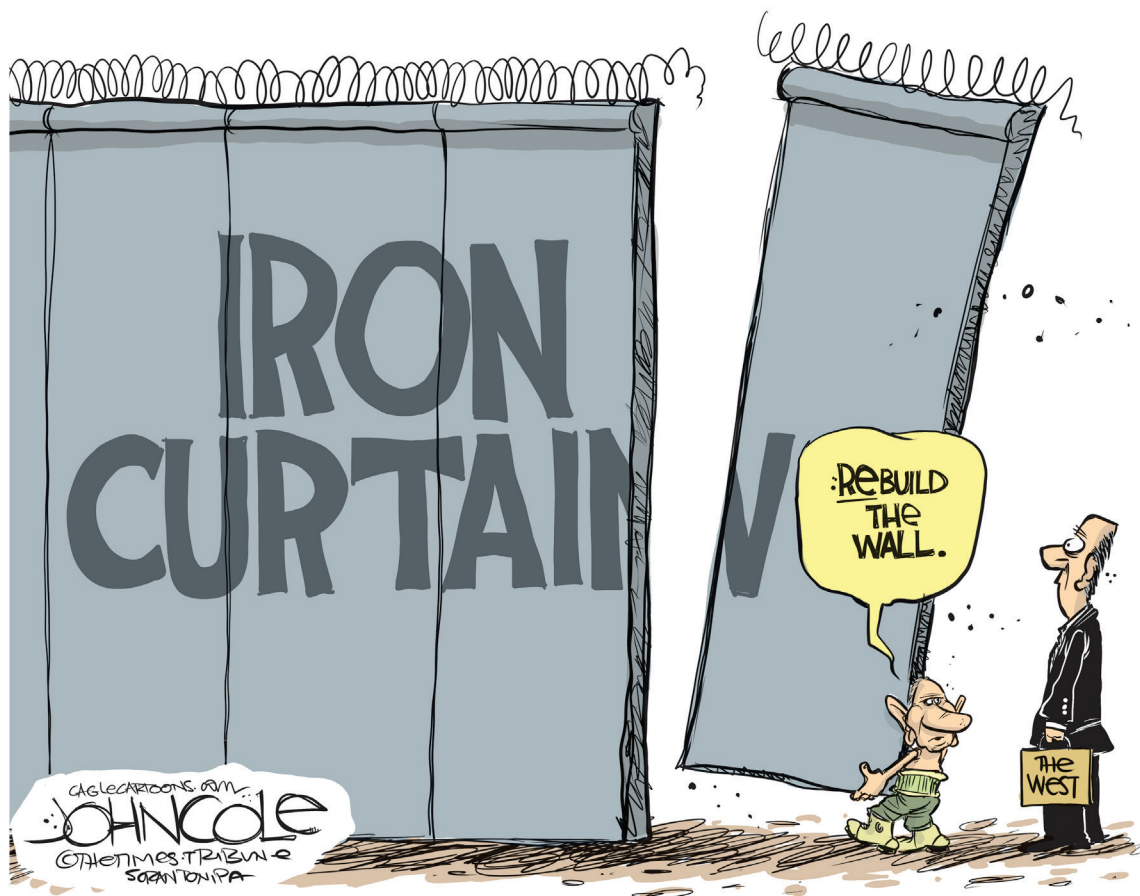
That is why the fundraising effort is so important. The money needed isn't going to go into a black hole where area residents never see it again. The benefits of a cash infusion will be evident once the theater renovation is done for all to see, and, hopefully, enjoy.

Donating money for this effort is very much about giving back to the community in a real way. The theater work is important and any help from the public will be welcome. The work is important because any time a community can do something to enhance the livability of a town, everyone wins. We support this new campaign to get cash to finish this project and we hope residents feel the same way.

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YOUR VIEWS

Musical production a welcomed return of quality on-campus performance

The EOU Chamber Choir and Music Department's song and dance performance, "We've Got Your Number," was so much fun and extremely well done. I had a hard time staying seated, and behind my mask was a perpetual grin spanning from ear to ear. The show was a welcomed return to the quality musical entertainment so often performed on campus, and it was much needed after months of COVID cancellations and current events.

Bravo to Dr. Peter Wordelman, Chamber Choir conductor. The success of this show hinged on the direction of EOU's premier professor of music. His stamp of excellence prevailed. I know from experience he's a calming presence amongst a flutter of nerves. Bravo to EOU's music department staff Mio Aoiike, pianist extraordinaire, and Luke McKern, guitar aficionado, who, along with fellow band members, played during and in between each number on an elevated stage, and, like "The Big Lebowski's" rug, "tied the room together." Bravo to the Los Angeles choreography team of Billy Rugh and Michelle Benton, whose numerous accolades many of us might not fully realize, but whose work masterfully paced original scores with clever dance routines and delivered a visual sensation far surpassing my expectations for this community. Come back, again, please.

Finally, bravo to the EOU students involved, the Chamber Choir. This was your show and you brought your "A" game, performing a trove of popular tunes. Your hours of practice showed with convincing achievements. Your soloists rose to each occasion and your dancing was a joy. All performers, support staff and theater technicians should be super proud.

And while I'm at it, kudos to those who made the recent upgrades at McKenzie Theatre a reality. Those upgrades were on full display and included new seats, stage floor and curtain, lighting, sound and a drop-down big screen and projector. On the new screen we viewed a video introduction from the show's sponsor, Red Cross Drug Store — a faithful EOU sponsor for years.

Well done, all. Your hard work is appreciated immensely by this community of art and music lovers.

Mike Brouwer
La Grande

Move to Idaho and leave the rest of us alone

We want to stay in Oregon. We have lived here all our lives. Everything is established here, our homes are here.

If people want to be part of Idaho, then move there and leave the rest of us alone. And it shouldn't be up to the commissioners to sell us out. They have no right to.

Linda Page
La Grande

We should be as concerned about our borders as we are about Ukraine's

On Jan. 25 of this year, news journalist Tucker Carlson reported a story about Nancy Pelosi that had to do with national borders. Carlson said that "national borders are central to national security because without borders you can't have a country." Carlson quoted Pelosi as saying borders should "be impossible to breach, walled up and buttoned-down."

When I heard this I was shocked because the Biden administration has done little to secure our southern border and have been

responsible for much of the chaos.

As the news story continued, I thought Pelosi must have had an awakening about the nature of national sovereignty, but then I realized she wasn't talking about our borders — she was talking about Ukraine's borders, and the broadcast showed her introducing to the House of Representatives an act called "Defending Ukraine's Sovereignty Act." She said this act was "developed to insure Ukraine's sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity."

Now granted, an armed conflict between Russia and Ukraine is an international crisis, but the mess we are experiencing on our southern border has already created a humanitarian crisis here at home.

Immigrants are crossing the border and vetting has been pretty much nonexistent and/or ineffective. Progressives and liberals suppose that conservatives are appalled at this influx due to lack of compassion for poverty-stricken people from south of the border and others from around the world.

Also, there is a concern about reports that there has been little or no screenings for COVID, that government agencies have given services that are unavailable to needy American citizens and some of these "illegals" are shipped to all parts of the U.S. Added to all that is the crisis of trafficking people and huge amounts of drugs by the cartels.

But the truth is, compassion is not lacking. The result of all this is anarchy, and those seeking political amnesty, or work, would be much better served if the border was administered in an ordered and reasonable way.

It's hard not to question Nancy Pelosi's veracity — she is, after all, Speaker of the House of Representatives of the United States of America — but under the circumstances, it's hard not to.

Vicki Correll
Summerville

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