

OUR VIEW

Donating time to lend a hand

Area residents will secure an opportunity to give back to the community and help make a difference this weekend during Idaho Power's annual Hells Canyon Clean Up event.

Volunteers are asked to convene at the Oxbow School before 9 a.m. Saturday and then journey out to pick up trash along the Snake River, roads and campgrounds.

As an added plus, there will be a free barbecue for volunteers at Idaho Power's Copperfield Park at the end of the day.

No doubt the event is in a secluded spot but that shouldn't deter people who want to help. The Hells Canyon Clean Up event is one that is needed, and it is a good way for locals who care about our great landscapes to help out.

We'd all like to believe such programs are unnecessary but, unfortunately they are not. While we often take for granted the towering vistas and beautiful country we are so fortunate to see every day, we also all have some responsibility to ensure those cherished panoramas remain pristine.

Volunteers are a crucial part of the overall health of a community. We need people to step up and give their time when they can. Volunteer work can be one of the most rewarding actions we can do, and it pays off in a variety of unseen ways over a long period of time.

We are all busy. Our schedules are filled with jobs and families, and it can appear that squeezing a few hours or a day to help out to be an impossible task.

Yet just donating a few hours as a volunteer can make a real difference. The list of venues that need volunteers is long — from food banks to cleanup projects — and the need never fades. That is why it is so important for those of us who can donate some time.

An effort like the Hells Canyon Clean Up is an excellent method to help the community and the region while ensuring the landscape we all value remains vibrant.

If you can, lend a hand.

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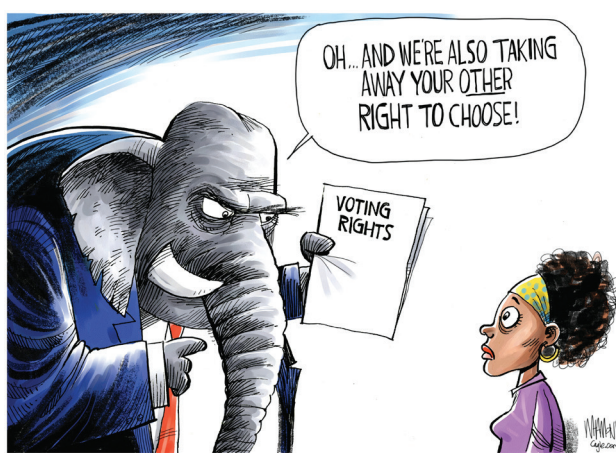
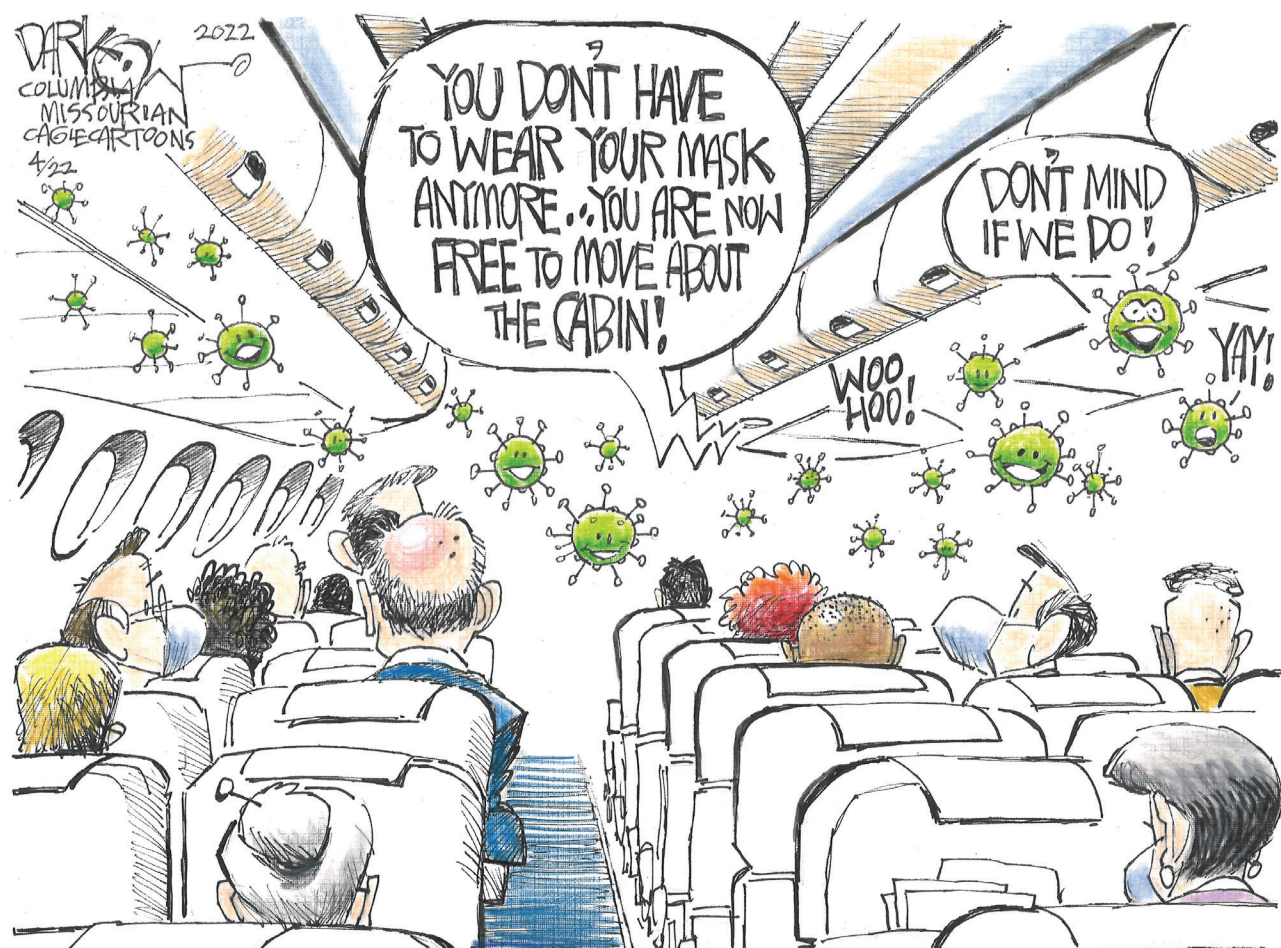
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YOUR VIEWS

Jump on the wagon — school bond May vote is culmination of 2-year process

Thank you, Phil Myer, for speaking up and letting us know, as bond supporters, where we are falling short of our efforts to educate all voters on the details of bond measure 31-105 (The Observer, letters to the editor, April 12). We would be the first to admit this bond package is a bit hard to believe, perhaps generating a feeling of “too good to be true.” With that said, please know that this measure will not extend the term of the original bond passed by voters in 2014. The bonds will still pay off in 2035 as initially intended and the 2021/2022 tax rate of \$1.93 per \$1,000 of assessed value will not be exceeded during the life of the bonds.

If approved, the \$4.845 million will be used as the required match for an Oregon school facility grant of \$4 million, bringing the total investment in facilities to \$8.845 million. Hard to believe? Yes, it is, but it is absolutely true.

Perhaps voters would also be interested in knowing the May 17 vote is the culmination of a two-year process. Once the La Grande School District board members realized the potential savings from the refinancing of the existing bonds in early 2020, they set their sights on Oregon's matching grant. LGSD was ranked number 75 on the state's “need list”, but many districts with better rankings had already passed bonds and received the grant (including Union, Imbler, North Powder, Enterprise, Willowa and Baker), so there was hope even though funds are limited.

To determine if the district could qualify, an outside firm was hired to help complete the required facilities assessment and long-range plan, with other grants covering the cost of this work. The process was completed in November 2021 and the school board learned in December 2021 its efforts were successful. Passage

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letters@lagrandeobserver.com
or via mail to Editor, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

of bond measure 31-105 is the final requirement.

This could easily be a once in a lifetime opportunity, so please “jump on the wagon,” as suggested by Phil. Let's all vote yes on Measure 31-105 and continue investing in LGSD facilities, at no additional cost to taxpayers. To learn more, visit www.citizensforschoolrenovations.com.

Chris Panike
La Grande

School district bond won't impact household budgets

There are always reasons to oppose any request for approval of bond measures that may have a financial impact on our current family budgets. I encourage our community to look for the many reasons to support the current request for the bond measure to replace the aged middle school annex.

Our school board and the school district's budget committee have formulated a proposed plan to replace a crumbling facility for which repair is no longer a prudent option. The proposal recognizes the sensitive issue of financial impact on our household budgets by redoing the district's current bond measures so that the construction of this needed building results in little to no increase in our current school district tax rate.

This is not an extravagant proposal. Our community not just our schoolchildren will make productive use this facility.

Monk Kalemba
La Grande

McQuisten may be just the candidate for you

We are supporting Kerry McQuisten for governor. We have known Kerry since she was in grade school at Burnt River/Unity.

Kerry is a seventh-generation Oregonian. She grew up on a cattle ranch in Eastern Oregon, so she understands the rural part of Oregon. She had the opportunity to live and work overseas before returning stateside to complete her education at Willamette University. She has had a chance to experience both city and rural living and is now back in Baker City, where she owns her own publishing company, is mayor of Baker City and is raising her two daughters.

Kerry has campaigned in all 36 counties in Oregon to listen to the concerns of all Oregonians. She cares.

If you want someone who has good common sense with conservative values, and someone who will stand up and fight to get our Oregon back, then Kerry McQuisten is just the candidate for you.

Patty Trost
Unity

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