

OUR VIEW

# A first-class show in Union

There is a great deal to be said of tradition, and a prime example is the annual ritual of the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show.

Those who can attend this week's great event should do so.

The livestock show dates back to 1908 and since then it has become a mainstay of the local area. The rodeo takes center stage for many, but the foundation of the week are the animals and the 4-H and FFA youth who raised them. While there isn't a carnival this year, there is plenty of fun to be had.

For Union, the event is an important money-maker. Businesses in town get a huge shot in the arm financially when the livestock show opens, and that kind of economic impact in such a small area goes a long way.

The event owes its success, of course, to the many, many people who support it. From volunteers to those on the EOLS board, all deserve a great deal of thanks from the community for what they do every year.

Without their dedication and determination, the livestock show would not be what it is. It is easy to forget there are local people behind the scenes who give their time and efforts to ensure success. We depend on these people to put together a first-class show, and they do so year in and year out, ensuring the tradition continues.

We are fortunate in a real sense that Union County can look to such an event as the Eastern Oregon Livestock Show every year. Other counties don't have a tradition that marries the allure of the rodeo and horse racing with Future Farmers of America, 4-H and other service groups in a days-long celebration.

So, if you can, drive over to Union this week and take part in what has become an influential event that delivers fun for just about everyone.

We're pretty sure you won't be disappointed.

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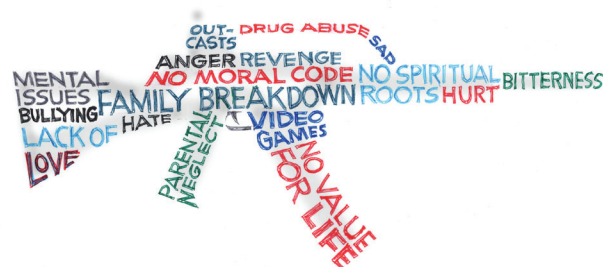
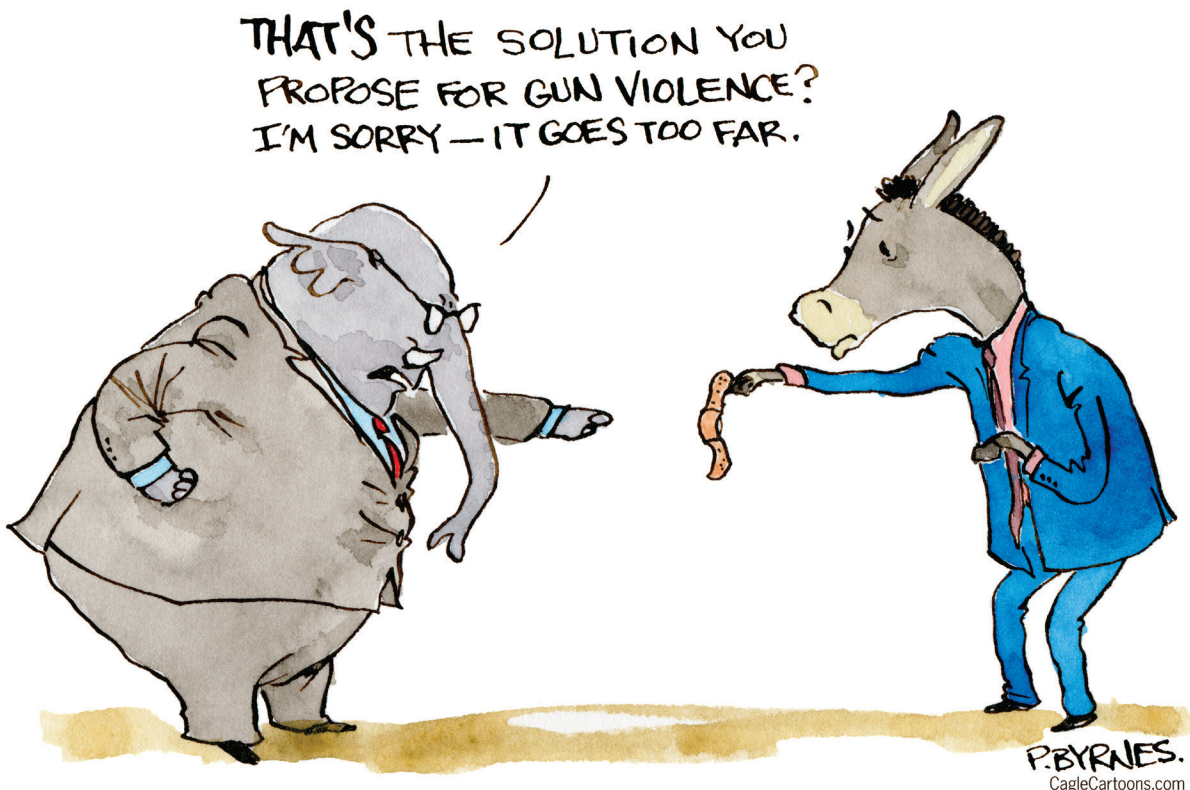
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OTHER VIEWS

## No regular citizen should have an AR-15

I am writing because I am beyond heartsick about mass gun shootings. No one is going to take anyone's gun away from them, that's pretty obvious at this point. Congress is afraid that their constituents will not vote for them if they take action on gun control. Well, I'm here to say that I don't think anyone should vote for them until someone stands up and does something to at least try to help the situation.

Honest and upstanding gun owners need to lead the way to solutions. But all I ever see or hear is about the NRA and "Don't take my guns away." No-nonsense gun owners know that what is going on is insane. Come on people, stand up for what's right. Show Congress that you stand with them on a solution. Guns are everywhere, which means that it could happen here. It shouldn't happen anywhere. Get a grip and show your humanity and your sense of community.

No regular citizen should have an AR-15. If you need one to hit a target, get glasses or stop shooting. If you hunt, you have a rifle to do that. People that purchase an AR-15 do so because they can, not because they need one. It's a status symbol or ego trip. Are all these children really a threat to you?

Show the world that you care and want everyone to know you are a responsible, family-loving gun owner, I am begging you. Show your red, white and blue colors. We have to show Congress that it has to stop, and it must start with you.

**Kay Durham**  
La Grande

## Investment in county deputies must not be wasted

I just read the article on the Union County budget ("Proposed Union County budget calls for cuts," The

LETTERS

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

Observer, May 28). We taxpayers have spent thousands of our dollars to hire and train law enforcement personnel either jailers or deputies. Now the commissioners are willing to throw that investment away. The sheriff's department needs more deputies not less. Find the money, pass a bond, do something to save our investment.

**Kenneth Parsons**  
La Grande

## We need humane and effective mental health institutions

I am writing because it appears that those suffering acute mental illness are not receiving adequate treatment. This is despite the best efforts of law enforcement and mental health providers. My concern is for both the individual patient and the safety of our community. There is an urgent need for a new approach.

I served as Circuit Court Judge for Union and Wallowa counties beginning in 1974 and continuing on either a full-time or part-time basis until 2014, a span of 40 years. Early in my tenure, if a person was brought into court and found to be mentally ill due to danger to self or others, that person could be committed to the Mental Health Division for treatment at the state-run mental hospital. Then that person could be treated with medication and released if the condition stabilized. It was not uncommon for the release to occur in a matter of days,

but usually on a supervised basis. If the person failed to follow the terms of release, re-hospitalization could be required for further treatment. However, the other option available at that time was to hospitalize that person for an extended period of time if the illness was serious enough to warrant that treatment.

This process was, for the most part, disbanded as state-run hospitals were closed and replaced with care provided on a local basis. As a result, today we may find the mentally ill living on the streets as homeless in difficult conditions and they are often self-medicated with drugs or alcohol. Or, we may find them in jails or prisons because they have committed crimes, sometimes tragic crimes such as shootings. Or, we may find that the mentally ill person has returned home and on occasion that return has caused pain and trauma to family members. And sadly, we may find that the mentally ill person has committed suicide, which is the second leading cause of death of people ages 15 to 34.

We need mental health institutions that are safe, humane and effective. We need the legal means to compel treatment at these institutions while recognizing the civil liberties and due process rights of the mentally ill. The current method of treatment has been an experiment that has often failed the patient and the community.

**Warner Wasley**  
La Grande

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