

SPOKESMAN Opinion

GUEST COLUMN

Life in Redmond has changed, but it's still good

I'm impressed with the direction The Redmond Spokesman is taking under Tim Trainor's leadership.

When he asked if I would consider reviving my column, he didn't have to twist my arm.

My connection with *The Spokesman* began in January 1975, when I became Western Communications' second publisher in Redmond. WesCom had acquired the newspaper from long-time owner Mary Brown in 1971.

In about 1980 I began writing a column which appeared weekly until my retirement in January 2021. Yes, Ginger and I are still here, in the same home on a large lot in north Redmond.



Vertrees

We could think of no other place we'd rather live. We're comfortable with the growth and believe Redmond still has its own personality. We wouldn't go back to the Seattle area where we were born and raised.

The rapid expansion in Central Oregon has resulted in several major benefits: Numerous jobs created by new industries mean our kids don't have to move away, and more doctors and medical facilities allow us older folks to remain here. A dramatic increase in flights and destinations at the Redmond airport means we no longer have to fly north to go south.

Our daughters are married and independent, living in Des Moines, Wash., and McMinnville, Ore. We first became grandparents in 2006. Grace is 16 and a junior at McMinnville High School where her brother Ben, 14, is entering as a freshman. Their cousin Lizzy, also 14 and a freshman, is attending a charter high school in Federal Way.

My first goal after retirement was to take the OSU Master Gardener class. I skipped the next-to-last day of work to attend the first class. We continue to plant a large garden every spring despite our potentially hazardous weather and the critters that occasionally maraud it. Tomatoes are usually our most bountiful crop, starting our own seedlings in April and putting them in the ground in late May. Our changing climate creates new anomalies that provide challenges. The hot summer has hampered pollination, but a warmer September and October will probably facilitate ripening.

Ginger and I have been superintendents of Land Products exhibits at the Deschutes County Fair since 2008 in the open class building, which represents the down-to-earth tenets upon which fairs were established.

Early in retirement we started attending a twice-weekly exercise class designed for older folks. We added additional days of aerobics and weight training, something we had never done before. I believe that routine has helped us become octogenarians. The class also broadened our network of friends to fill in for those who have died or moved away.

And I began making wine, four to six batches a year, from wine kits manufactured in Canada. I discontinued that in 2019 catering to a ruptured heart valve that made lifting six gallons of liquid too strenuous.

We remain relatively healthy. I have most of my originally issued body parts. Ginger has two new knees and a hip to enhance her mobility. We were inoculated against Covid as early as possible, and twice boosted.

We are not snowbirds, but we have learned how to escape occasionally, usually in the late fall or winter when cooler, shorter days make outdoor activities less conducive in Central Oregon. We toured Australia and New Zealand in 2008 and sailed the Mediterranean in 2016.

Before Covid we went on cruises now and then, the last one in 2019 to celebrate 50 years since we departed Alaska where I served three years in the U.S. Navy with Armed Forces Radio. We've discovered the warmth of Kauai and Mexico.

Kiwanis remains my major volunteer activity. I'll relinquish the job of secretary in October after 19 years in that position. I've chaired the wine dinner committee and scholarships. Ginger joined the Redmond Garden Club after she retired two years after I did, from Central Oregon Community College support staff.

The other major change in my personal life occurred on Jan. 6, 2021, when I gave up my lifelong registration as a Republican. The insurrection at the nation's Capitol was too much. I may be moderate politically, but I can tolerate only so much. I've been disenchanted with Oregon's redistricting this year. Living in the same home for nearly 48 years, we've been severed from Redmond with legislative representation from The Dalles and Vale.

Life goes on.

■ Carl Vertrees is a former editor of the Redmond Spokesman and a longtime Redmond resident.

WRITE TO US

Letters policy: We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 300 words and include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of the Spokesman.

Guest columns: Your submissions should be between 600 and 800 words and must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere.

How to submit:

- Email is preferred: news@redmondspokesman.com
- Or mail to: 361 SW Sixth Street, Redmond OR 97756



YOUR VIEWS

Trash, homeless sites reflect poorly on Redmond

I am very concerned about the trash that is on our roads and also for the homeless sites that are popping up on the canal across from the Redmond Cancer Center.

It seems to me that the last thing that the people that are sick and not feeling well needs to be seeing the mess that faces them daily at the center from these sites. These should be eliminated immediately and the roads should be picked up from trash for the people that are here to visit and see what they think of the town.

Ann Richardson
Culver

City councilor supports rec center bond

There will be a vote in November to have a new recreation center built here in Redmond. I am an advocate for this and it is of the utmost importance that it passes.

Our children need and deserve a safe place where they can learn life skills, while at the same time strengthening their minds and bodies.

Recreation centers have a positive impact on our communities. It's a place where kids can go to participate in organized activities or even do homework. A quality recreation center would be an asset to our community and in these trying times we cannot afford to ignore the benefits of building one. It is long overdue.

Recreation centers provide opportunity for education. It creates an active and healthy community, it increases property value, and they make great communities whole. Recreation centers help create leaders in our communities and this is what we want. Keep this in mind: It's easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.

We spend millions of dollars on infrastructure and new equipment year after year, which is necessary. Now we need to focus on investing in our children as well as

their safety and welfare. It doesn't matter if you have kids or not. We are investing in the future of Redmond. What's in it for you is a great city with a great community. We must begin with the end in sight. This is vision, this is the future.

I am asking all of you to please invest in the future of the children by voting for a new recreation center. This is weighing heavy on my heart because this may be our last opportunity to get this passed. We must look at this as a capital investment that we should not and cannot afford to ignore. Please share this with your friends and neighbors and ask them to support this as well. November is close and we don't have much time to get the word out. We have to save all of the children because they are our future and this is how we can begin to do this.

If there is ever an investment that we need to make, this is it. I'd rather invest in a recreation Center than a new jail.

Clifford Evelyn
Redmond city councilor

GUEST COLUMN

Corporate activity tax a failure

BY MICHAEL SIPE

The Oregon Legislature instituted the corporate activities tax (CAT) in 2019. Every Democrat legislator and no Republicans voted for it. Advocates pitched it as a way to fund improvements in the education system. The law was a terrible idea, devoid of business or common sense. Time has proven that CAT is unfair, regressive, oppressive to small businesses, and extremely inflationary. Worst of all, CAT failed to improve public education. The Legislature should immediately give Oregonians cost-of-living relief by repealing the CAT tax. Here's why.



Sipe

CAT is disguised as a tax on corporations; however, it's actually a multiple-level tax that increases the cost of goods and services we buy every day. Most people are familiar with a retail sales tax, where consumers pay a tax on the final retail price of a product. CAT is much worse than this, as it's a complex revenue-based tax imposed at each step of the supply chain. Also, since CAT is imposed on taxable revenue, not net profit, it cuts especially hard on price-constrained, low-margin businesses.

As the market allows, businesses are permitted to pass the tax on at each level, and thus it multiplies, until a product reaches

the retailer, which also passes along the now geometrically increased tax burden to the consumer, who is blind to how the state has inflated the cost of everything from groceries to cars to houses. If you intentionally set out to drive up prices, it would be hard to create a more insidious way to do so.

To understand the inflationary effect of the CAT Tax, consider a homebuilder who builds and sells two houses a year in Central Oregon. Building a house requires materials and labor. On the material side, the company that harvests and sells trees to a sawmill pays a tax on that sale and passes it on to the sawmill. The mill processes the logs into lumber and sells the lumber to a distributor, at a price that includes the CAT tax on the forester's and the mill's revenue. The distributor sells the lumber to a retailer, at a price that includes the CAT tax on the forester's, the mill's, and the distributor's revenue. The retailer sells the lumber to the builder, at a price that includes the CAT tax on the forester's, the mill's, the distributor's, and the retailer's revenue. The builder then uses the lumber to build the two houses, selling them to two local families at prices that include the CAT tax on the forester's, the mill's, the distributor's, the retailer's, and the home builder's revenue.

The CAT's compounding effect on lumber is mirrored with countless other materials used in building a house. It also drives up much of the cost of the labor. Every-

thing that goes into building the houses is increased by the CAT tax. Is it any wonder houses cost so much?

This same effect happens throughout Oregon's economy. The result is that nearly everything we buy is more expensive than it would otherwise be. And the tax our state government imposed is one culprit.

I am sure there are better ways to fund education than CAT, but some might argue all this inflation would be worth it if the CAT actually made Oregon's schools better, as our legislature promised it would. However, the additional billion dollars per year in taxes we pay has made no discernible difference. Not only that, while closing schools by COVID mandate, Governor Kate Brown kept collecting the CAT tax, despite the fact that small businesses across the state were struggling to survive. Yet even with a multi-billion-dollar windfall of funds from the CAT, Oregon schools remain mired at the bottom of national education rankings.

We cannot afford an ill-conceived and inflationary tax that has failed to deliver its promised benefits. The corporate activities tax should be repealed in the next legislative session.

■ Michael Sipe is a local business consultant and the Republican candidate for Oregon House District 53, which includes the northern portion of Bend, Tumalo, Sisters, Black Butte and southwest Redmond. He lives in Tumalo.

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Oregon Legislature: Legislative documents and information are available online at www.leg.state.or.us.

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