

SPOKESMAN Opinion

GUEST COLUMN

Travel delays, cancellations need a long hard look

BY DEE STEWART

Delays and cancellations were all too often the stories of the summer for passengers around the United States and worldwide. While it was natural to cast blame toward the obvious for travel disruptions, the truth is far more complex, with various factors that led to where we are today. With the end-of-year holidays upon us, it is critical to ask if the same will recur, will the perfect storm disrupt travel as millions of Americans are on their way to see their families?



Stewart

While I hoped these problems would have been resolved months ago, little to no headway has been made. The problems that rippled across the delicate system of airports and aircraft operations seem to remain.

Florida is an excellent case study for what occurred and what will recur. As the number of aircraft and aerospace users rapidly grew in the state, the problem of managing each of their needs became nearly impossible.

The number of general aviation flights (private aircraft) increased by 100,000 in one year during the pandemic, as the popularity of Miami, Orlando, Palm Beach and other communities was reflected in the number of people attempting to reach them. In addition, ultra-low-cost carriers such as Spirit, Allegiant and Frontier scrambled for territory, pushing for additional flights, nearly doubling in total number.

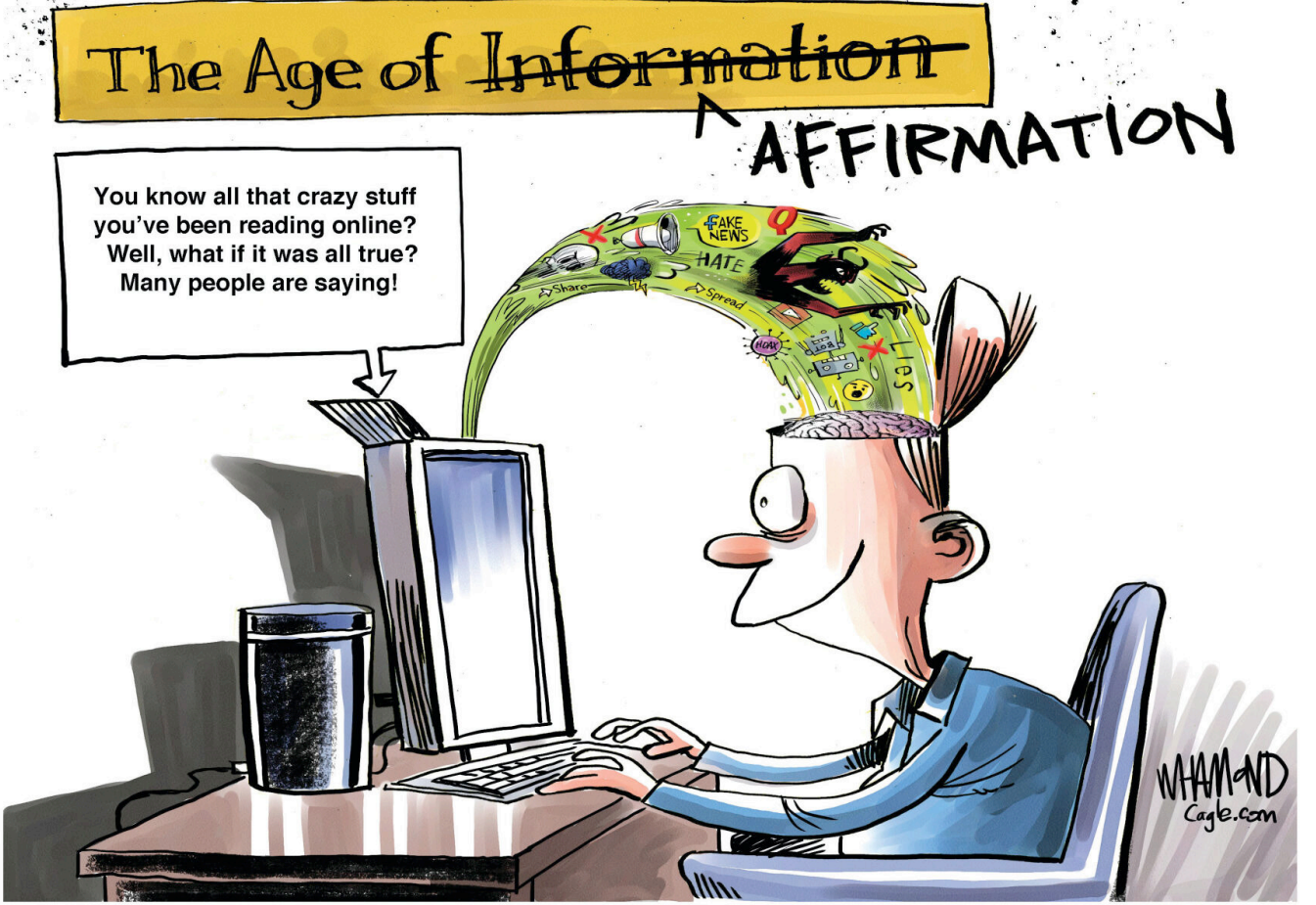
On top of these competing forces are space companies. It is not just Elon Musk but more businesses than ever jumping onto this train, launching rockets that temporarily cut off air routes. While successful space launches are to be celebrated, the likelihood of more disruptive operations in Florida means more headaches, as each rocket requires a wide range of airspace to be closed to protect aircraft. If the current trend holds, with the number of launches increasing, there will be even more closures and potential chaos for passengers to navigate.

These problems are not isolated to Florida. Private jet travel accounts for nearly 12 percent of flights, while space launches are open to more than just the Sunshine State. The agency overseeing it all — the Federal Aviation Administration — is trying to weigh all these demands.

The airspace traffic jams could happen more frequently and in more locations around the country. Travelers are now bystanders as multiple forces compete over the limited room in the sky. In 2022, the federal government directed nearly \$1 billion in funding to airports to improve terminals and build air-traffic control towers. Now it is time to help the agency monitoring the day-to-day operations of those airports.

It should be a priority to get passengers to their final destinations, not discourage travel and the spending that goes with it. There are definite benefits to keeping commercial flights delivering hundreds of passengers on schedule. When travelers can consistently count on their flights landing on time, that's a win for the entire aviation industry. Congress and the administration should examine ways to help the FAA complete its mission and make passengers happier.

Dee Stewart is president of the Americans for a Balanced Budget, an advocacy organization. He wrote this for InsideSources.com.



GUEST COLUMNS

Redmond council meetings should not start with a prayer

I enjoy going to Redmond city hall to go to Redmond city council meetings to listen and participate in our local government. Usually there is a prayer before the proceedings. This does not seem like a big deal and this probably is not a big deal. However, I would like to see this practice discontinued for many different reasons, which I will now list.



Baer

There always has and always will be a separation of church

and state in our nation. This is the law. This is a good and logical law. It is up to the city councilors to uphold this law and they are not doing their jobs.

Religion has always worked against freedom and democracy and progress in all levels of society forever, everywhere, and still does. Religion is pulling us back into the past when we need to move forward into the future. People use religion as an excuse to use violence and treason to intimidate others right here in America right now — and this practice seems to be increasing.

We need to move forward with new solutions to new problems. This new city council

needs to make a clean break from the past. We need to rely on logic and common sense to address these new issues of the future. We are not going to get any assistance from some ghost floating around in the clouds. This new city council is going to be progressive and look at the big picture and we need to start off fresh with a big improvement, a big jump forward. There should no more prayers in Redmond city council meetings.

Christian prayers in Redmond city council meetings are disrespectful to non-Christians. City council meetings are for all of us, and to single out Christians with a Christian prayer is the same thing as saying that

non-Christians are second class and are marginalized. This is wrong and it should not be allowed to continue.

My views are not anti-Christian or anti-religion. I support everyone's right to worship whatever they want, or to not worship at all. My point is that Redmond city hall is not the place for this for many, many reasons.

2023 is going to be a big and important year for all of us, so let's start it off right. Let's start it off better. Let's start it off with Redmond city council meetings to be only about Redmond city council issues, in a fair and equal way.

Charles Webster Baer is a former candidate for Redmond city council.

Redmond library needed more space to serve patrons

BY CYNTHIA CLARIDGE

Thank you for sharing the necessary information concerning the Redmond Public Library construction meetings and the location for patrons to continue to check out books. This information will help patrons understand what is taking place at the current location.

Living in Redmond since 1979 and having been involved with the library since it was previously housed in the present Chamber of Commerce building, I've seen the drastic needs grow for Redmond and the library. I taught for 23 years in Evergreen School, which now houses our city hall. Visiting the library across the street with my students and also checking out books for my class was a delightful privilege for me.

Serving on the Deschutes

Public Library Board has been an honor and most definitely a responsibility to respect the community's needs and the future of Redmond.

I was disappointed that the Spokesman created a less than positive perspective on both the construction and temporary library. Destroying a building, and most definitely one as long-standing as Jessie Hill School, was not something I came to easily.

But after we heard from engineers and architects, the prospect of renovating a nearly 100-year-old building to provide citizens of Redmond with a library that will deliver services necessary into the future was not cost effective or possible. Wanting to maintain some of the history of the building, we requested that the architects' designs of

the interior of the building include the "teacher wall" that has remained inside the library since the first renovation of the school into the present library.

The architects are planning on using historic photographs of Jessie Hill School and previous students to enrich the interior of the building.

Keeping the library in downtown Redmond was a key component for me. Not only did I teach at Evergreen, but I also owned a bookstore in the downtown. I understand the city's development of the downtown core and believe the library's current location is central to that enterprise. City staff also requested the library remain in the city core if at all possible.

The location chosen to maintain library services was the largest space in Redmond we

could find that met the needs of a library. It is 5,000 square feet and allows customers to have access to books, materials and several computers. The library staff is going to do everything possible to help Redmond patrons access the materials they need as well as still provide programs and story times. Staff has worked diligently to find partner locations throughout Redmond to host programs for children and adults.

I understand that not everyone may understand or agree with every decision concerning the library, but I am hoping that it is understood that the decisions made are to provide the citizens of Redmond with a library they deserve and one that will serve them well into the future.

Cynthia Claridge is a member of the Deschutes Public Library board.

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