

OPINION

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Hood River News

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The Legacy of Ordinance 5

By ARTHUR BABITZ

History has a funny way of offering perspective. A couple of weeks ago, I was researching Hood River's 125th anniversary and came across something which I filed away as a "fun fact" to pull out some day. Today is that day, though the "fun fact" no longer seems fun.

Ordinance 5 was the first real law the Hood River City Council enacted, after they finished all the technical stuff you have to do to create a new city. It addressed contagious disease. Ordinance 5 created rules for everything from how you report disease to what color flags you put in your front yard to indicate quarantine, and who burns the clothing of the infected person.

The fact this was our city's first real action wasn't a random choice. Every person alive at that time lived in constant fear a random contact one day could leave them seriously ill the next. Contagious disease for which there was no effective treatment was a basic fact of life.

There was no particular outbreak going on here in 1895. There was simply the fact that if the purpose of their new government was to promote the general welfare, the first thing they needed to address was how the community should deal with contagion. This fear wasn't a temporary or novel condition. It was the human condition, and it had been so for all time.

Until recently, most of us forgot to be afraid of contagious disease. The fact people were debating vaccination a couple of weeks ago shows how deeply we had buried that fear. Or perhaps it's more accurate to say recent generations have replaced that fear with new ones: Nuclear winter, terrorism, school shootings, climate change. We've had monsters hiding under our beds, but contagious disease wasn't one of them. And now it is.

Despite living with this constant fear of contagious disease, the authors of Ordinance 5 proceeded to invent our modern city. They got to work on sanitation, water and electricity. They installed sidewalks. They cut down the oaks in the middle of Oak Street so they could grade and pave the street. And, for some reason, they regulated jugglers (Ordinance 7).

I am sure you would like to know what history says about how long this will last. I can't answer that question, but I can tell you that as a community, we learn to live with our fears. The authors of Ordinance 5 figured out how to live their lives day to day, taking the appropriate precautions to deal with fear and risk, and they built the remarkable little community which is now ours. It has withstood disease, ice storms, war and economic collapse, and it has thrived.

The fear, the economic disruption, the losses and all the heartbreak that come with this pandemic will become history as well. What will be its legacy? History suggests trials and times of darkness trigger creative impulses. You may have heard Isaac Newton formulated the basic concepts of calculus and William Shakespeare wrote "King Lear" and "Macbeth" while under isolation during bubonic plague epidemics.

I already see creativity emerging from our current hardships. Every day people are sharing new ideas with me. Some have ideas for a new product, others have a new idea about how they can help their community or advance a favorite cause. We process our fear, then we start solving problems. We put in place our personal "Ordinance 5" then get on to more productive pursuits.

So while some are predicting we will emerge from our social distancing cocoons to a baby boom, I predict a surge in entrepreneurial and philanthropic activity. We're pretty good thinking creatively once we have figured out how to process our fear.

Are there any shortcuts to quiet the mind so you can get back to creative thought? I suggest you ignore Ordinance 7 and try juggling.

Thank you

Dear Hood River Community,

I am writing this letter to thank you all for your generous donations to the FISH Food Bank and Spirit of Grace Garden. The garden is a combined project between the Oregon State University Central Gorge Master Gardeners, Spirit of Grace Church, and FISH Food Bank that works to fight food insecurity in our community by growing fresh and nutritious vegetables for distribution to FISH clients. With your help the garden received all the items needed to successfully get started on spring planting. Thanks to the generosity of the community, the garden will be able to continue growing and producing nutritious vegetables for FISH clients well into the growing season.

Thank you once again for your donations and generosity.

Tessa Yoo
FISH Garden Coordinator

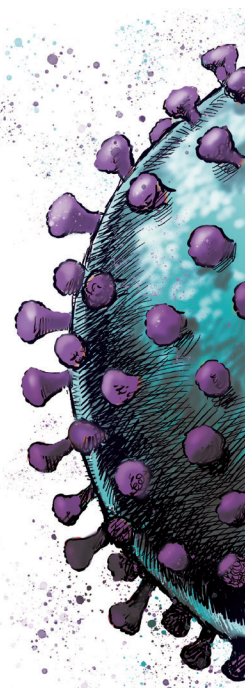
'No new property taxes'

New property taxes on top of our recently devastated economy will add insult to injury and should not be approved in May. COVID-19 is not anyone's fault. Our community and the country fell overnight from its best economy in history, to a disastrous public health crisis that has fundamentally threatened our way of life and prosperity. It's unprecedented. We're locked in our homes; we're locked out of our jobs; schools are closed; people are dying; and we're shut off from social interaction. In just a matter of days: Businesses closed, job layoffs, stock market crash, retirement savings wiped out and a government relief package. Most people (who don't have guaranteed state funded pensions) depend on risky personal investments and the stock market for retirement income.

There are two deep rooted problems within the county's budget: (1) rising cost of PERS; (2) property assessment inequities created by Measure 50 in 1997. Until these two issues are addressed by the county and resolved with state government, the result is over-burdened taxpayers. The easy way out is to inequitably raise taxes locally rather than address these problems at the state level.

County commissioners have decided to keep the property tax measure on the May ballot. Part of the justification, if approved, to avoid the need for difficult cuts in the budget. As we have seen in just a few days: Rising unemployment; bankruptcies; and business closures across the country. It's likely most of us have heard of friends or family impacted by job losses. This is not anyone's fault, but it's real and harsh. Now is not the time to take money out of the hands of people. The global economy has been shut down and the economic consequences could be staggering. The U.S., Oregon and local economies will collapse and loss of life will continue unless the COVID-19 crisis can be stopped. Making dif-

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icult choices, retention of only essential services, and budget cuts must be done. This tax increase measure should be voted down and the county should work with the state to fix underlying revenue issues.

Mark Smith
Hood River

National Vote-by-Mail

The coronavirus pandemic threatens to massively disrupt the 2020 presidential elections, now just over 5 months away. There is no way to know what the state of the pandemic will be in November, and whether it will be safe for anyone, voters and poll workers alike, to be out waiting in lines and crowding into polling places.

Past crises have not stopped elections. Americans voted even during wars. It can and most certainly should be done this time too. The Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act, proposed by Senators Wyden and Klobuchar, would allow this to happen safely and dependably by:

- Expanding vote-by-mail (VBM) to all states,
- Allowing for no-excuse absentee voting for anyone requesting an absentee ballot, and
- Lengthening early voting perhaps by 20 days to reduce crowding.

The bill could be improved to allow mailed ballots for all voters, not just those who ask for them, and to include funding as part of Congress's pandemic response.

It is likely that this obvious and sensible strategy will meet with firm opposition from factions that invite foreign interference and/or have traditionally relied on voter suppression to win elections. It's up to all of us to urge our federal representatives to support the Natural Disaster and Emergency Ballot Act, with the improvements noted above.

(Sen. Ron Wyden, 202-224-5244; Sen. Jeff Merkley, 202-224-3753; Rep. Greg Walden, 202-225-6730.)

Daniel Fritz
Mosier

Community support

A few years ago, a colleague I worked with in Sherman County died. News of her death and memorial service was posted at markets in the small towns of Moro and Wasco. Shortly thereafter, a large portion of the community gathered at the small school in Grass Valley

to celebrate her life as well as to mourn her death. It was a touching moment, especially considering the very small-town way that notice of her death and the service was disseminated.

We're substantially more populated here in Hood River and The Dalles. Here we rely heavily on our small-town newspapers, the Hood River News and The Dalles Chronicle. They serve as singular circulation hubs for information, unlike web-based news sources. In our small-town papers we learn about deaths, births, engagements, social gatherings and sports events. We also learn about, discuss and argue local political and social issues. As a friend expressed, the paper helps "define our sense of community."

The consolidation of the News and the Chronicle makes financial sense. I'm glad that they've united to survive. It's clear that their long-term survival depends on community support. Please consider subscribing to our local paper if you don't already do it. Our community will be the better for it.

Paul Crowley
Hood River

Bailout

Boeing is going to receive billions from the package passed by Congress. Boeing isn't just Boeing Commercial Airplane, it's actually five divisions; BCA builds multiple planes, from the 737 including the failed Max, up to and including business jets, the 767, 777, 787 and others. This doesn't include the other divisions, such as Boeing Defense, Boeing Phantom Works, Boeing capital, and Shared Services.

Ask yourself why does a company like Boeing needs a bailout. The Max is just one of its 737 line. This is what's known as socialism for the wealthy. While this is going on, our country has shown what its fractured health system is capable of, which is very little. We can't even get tested for the virus, there are no test kits available unless you're willing to buy your own from a private company. They run as high as \$190 per kit, and with a family of four, that's nearly \$800 for a kit that's difficult to use and quite painful when used correctly.

Eighty years ago, the greatest generation, leaving behind the Great Depression, went to work and built hospitals — the Kaiser system was one — built shipyards for Kaiser, which produced Liberty ships some of which were built in days. Now we're told we can't

build ventilators in less than months? We can't produce masks and PPEs for our front line healthcare workers who are swamped and being infected with the virus? I remember watching those ships go down the ways in Vancouver, watching my father at the rail as that ship slid into the Columbia. I refuse to believe we can't do that and more today.

Rob Brostoff
Cascade Locks

Withdraw the recall

As a resident of the Hood River Valley for over 27 years, I've seen our community respond to a variety of challenges over the years and seen how these challenges can bring our community together. The current Coronavirus crisis is no exception. Its heart-warming for me to see our county coming together to support one another through this tough time. However, I am concerned about what I see as a major threat to our unity.

The campaign to recall Chuck Thomsen from the State Senate began when Hood River Democrat Lara Dunn filed a recall petition. She said she disagreed with how Chuck took a stand to demand that Oregonians should be able to vote on the controversial Cap and Trade bill. Her personal objections to Chuck have now been taken over by the big money political operatives in Portland. Up to now, they have spent nearly \$100,000 to hire door-to-door canvassers to invade our county during the current pandemic in pursuit of the signatures they need to put the recall on the ballot. This money is nothing compared to what they would be willing to spend in an actual recall election. Our mailboxes and airwaves will be filled with all kinds of divisive mudslinging, all intended to increase the Democrat super majorities that already exist in Salem. In the process of doing this, the community spirit that we are currently enjoying as we come together to survive this public health crisis, will be lost in a bitter partisan fight.

Is that what we want right now Hood River? It doesn't have to be that way. I call on Mark Reynolds (organization chair) and the Hood River Democrats to have Lara Dunn withdraw her recall petition and I encourage others to do so as well. We can agree to disagree on policy but let's not jeopardize the fabric of our community.

Rick Larsen
Hood River

Behind the Scenes

Seriously: Thank you

By TRISHA WALKER
News staff writer

I cleaned out my desk on Friday.

I'd learned, not 24 hours before, that the Eagle Newspaper board had decided to disband the company.

No more Hood River News. No more The Dalles Chronicle or White Salmon Enterprise. No more Gorge Magazine.

I am devastated. But I'm grateful we have the opportunity to put out this edition. I'm glad we get to say good-bye.

I've been trying to figure out what I want to cover in this last column. I have a notebook filled with story ideas ranging from topics for Behind the Scenes (the history of the portraits that hang in the front office, for example) to possible Kaleidoscopes (there's a coffee group that has been meeting in Parkdale for 50 years) to articles (the radon pockets in the valley, the career center at the high school). None of those ideas are helping me here.

I think what I want to say is this:

I have learned so much about journalism and reporting from editor Kirby Neumann-Rea, and I'm thankful he took me on in 2000 as the Odell Community Columnist, because that gig is what later opened the door for my front office position when I applied in 2011. He has helped me gain confidence not only as a writer, but as a member of the newsroom. And I will forever be impressed with his ability to Crank Stories Out.

I am going to miss reporter Emily Fitzgerald so much — she's amazing. She has tackled such tough topics for the News and she never complains. I count on her eyes and her opinion for my own articles, and I just enjoy working with her in general. I have told her this numerous times, but I'm going to say it again: We lucked out when they moved her from the Chronicle to the News.

And also EF: It's FINE.

Ditto for LisaAnn Kawachi at the front desk. I remember the first time she came back into editorial to help us with proofing the paper — it was evident that She Knew What She Was Doing and our paper has been better for it. I will miss talking to her. I will miss her coming into editorial with a proof filled with red marks and saying, "Trisha, you're not going to like this ..." and getting to say, "No sweat, LisaAnn Kawachi, I will make whatever changes you want. Except that one."

I want to thank Chelsea Marr, our publisher, for all of the support and kind words over the years. I want to thank our ad staff, particularly Jody Thompson, Suzette Gehring, Niki Piacente and Tamara Emler Ball, for keeping the lights on for so long. Thanks to Classified Manager Kelly Gallagher for being such a cheerful spot in the office. Thank you to former reporters Ben Mitchell, Patrick Mulvihill, RJ Chavez and Caleb Lundquist, who have moved on from the News but still check in and let me know what they're up to. And to Gabriel Bravo, our newest staff member — I hope I do see you around, and we will reminisce about the good ol' days.

And I also want to thank you for reading, for subscribing, for supporting us on this mission. It has meant more to me than I can say.

Well ... the end, I guess.