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OUR VIEW

The most important industry in the world

Nothing is more thrilling to a farmer than planting a seed and standing back to see what happens. Every year about 2.1 million U.S. farmers do just that.

Some plant thousands of acres; others plant a patch of land the size of a small backyard. Still others take former industrial sites in places such as Detroit and Philadelphia and convert them into urban farms.

They are all participating in a 12,000-year-old ritual that has allowed humans to escape the role of hunter-gatherer and create a society where big ideas can be pursued. Once crops could be grown efficiently and animals could be domesticated for milk and meat, humans were free to think beyond their next meal.

Today, farming is done across the globe. In China, farmers have cultivated rice for more than 7,500 years. In Bolivia, another ancient crop, quinoa, attracts extraordinarily high prices among so-called foodies in the U.S. In Brazil, ranchers raise beef cattle similar to those first brought to South America from India.

Agriculture is important everywhere, but nowhere is it more important than in the United States. It was agriculture that helped a handful of colonies blossom into a booming economic powerhouse and world leader. Last year, U.S. farmers raised more than \$400 billion in crops and livestock on slightly more than 900 million acres.

U.S. farmers feed their fellow Americans — and much of the world. U.S. wheat, for example, can be found in noodles sold by a Tokyo street vendor, in flat bread baked in a stone oven in Algiers or in a steamed bun sold in a Jakarta restaurant.

Other crops and products fill the shelves of shops and stores around the world, helping to feed 7 billion people.

Who is the American farmer? Though statistics tell us that the average age is about 58 and the average farm is a little more than 400 acres, no farmer is typical. Just as every family is different, so too is every farmer. Some families have farming in their blood; they have tilled the land for generations. Others are new to it. Starting small, they add equal parts of inspiration and perspiration in an effort to grow new life and a livelihood from the land.

Ours is a society that reveres high technology. Smart phones, electric cars and all manner of computer-enhanced gizmos are seen as the wave of the future.

Yet, without agriculture, without food and fiber, none of that would exist. Before there could be iPhones, there had to be plows and tractors and combines.

This is National Ag Week, a perfect time to talk about how food is produced, and about the integral role farming and ranching play in society.

And it is a celebration of the most important industry in the world.

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board of Publisher Kathryn Brown, Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, and Opinion Page Editor Tim Trainor. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.



Decaying morals lead to national free fall

Homeland terrorist attacks are only one aspect of possible impending disasters as this nation continues to “free fall” from within. Both state and national officials act as though they were exempt and above the law, thus ignoring the basic principles on which this nation was founded.

Breaking the laws and deceiving the public by those elected to govern in the best interest of the majority is unacceptable. That type of behavior seems to go hand in hand with the current acceptance of low moral standards that have become the norm in our society.

It’s really sad when our president and his disciples, like Susan Rice, spent days spinning a false narrative about the Benghazi attack that killed four brave Americans. Two years later, we still haven’t been given the complete story of what appears to be a definite leadership flaw of not reacting promptly after receiving advanced notification of impending disaster at that embassy.

Now it appears that former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton ignored laws governing that office by not using a secure federal

server for her emails. Saying that she didn’t want to carry more than one device just doesn’t cut it. She too must be technologically challenged. In a matter of minutes, a hand held iPhone or other device can be changed to send or receive emails to more than one server. The fact that she wasn’t using a secure site while sending or receiving confidential government business is appalling, as is her refusal to turn over her personal server. When leaving that office those persons are required by law to sign a statement that states that all government emails and other government-related correspondence is retained by that office. She should have kept her skirts clean if she aspires to become president, but then maybe some of her husband’s “skirting” traits have rubbed off on her. It’s obvious that by suppressing the facts about the Benghazi attack it helped Obama win re-election.

Back to our state’s issues, when did it become acceptable for a governor’s fiancée to be accepted as “First Lady”? This is an old school point of view as to cohabitation without being married. As to Kitzhaber’s significant other, she was not his “first” and now there seems to be a question about the scruples of this woman who

had the courtesy label of “lady” bestowed upon her. However, they both muddled the waters with their actions.

Merlyn Robinson
Heppner

Drivers must yield to pedestrians

As a life-long Pendleton resident I have seen a minor inconvenience turn into a systemic problem, one that risks my very life at least once a week if not more. The only recourse I have is to shout or make noise in hopes the next person close to me is a police officer.

The problem I speak of is drivers failing to honor right of way to pedestrians. The Oregon Drivers handbook states: Drivers must recognize the special safety needs of pedestrians. Drivers should be especially alert for pedestrians who are young, elderly, disabled, or intoxicated. They are the most

frequent victims in auto pedestrian collisions.

Generally, pedestrians have the right of way at all intersections. There is a crosswalk at every intersection, even if it is not marked by painted lines. AND at an intersection where pedestrians are crossing, you must wait until the pedestrians have cleared your lane and the entire next lane before you may go. If you are turning at a signal, you must stop and wait until pedestrians clear the lane you are turning in to, plus six feet of the next lane.

I am sorry to fill the letter with this information but I believe it is not being followed at all. The last Oregon law I will quote is the most important, a class B infraction ORS 811.028 (look it up at OregonLaws.com) resulting in a possible \$260 fine and possibly injuring or killing the pedestrians.

My solution for this is to make every Oregon driver read and

memorize the driver handbook. I know my words will not help much but as a person and a walker I must bring it to attention a situation that risks my life every week. I thank you for reading this and giving me the ink on the page.

Zac Wiseman
Pendleton

Plass a perfect fit for BMCC

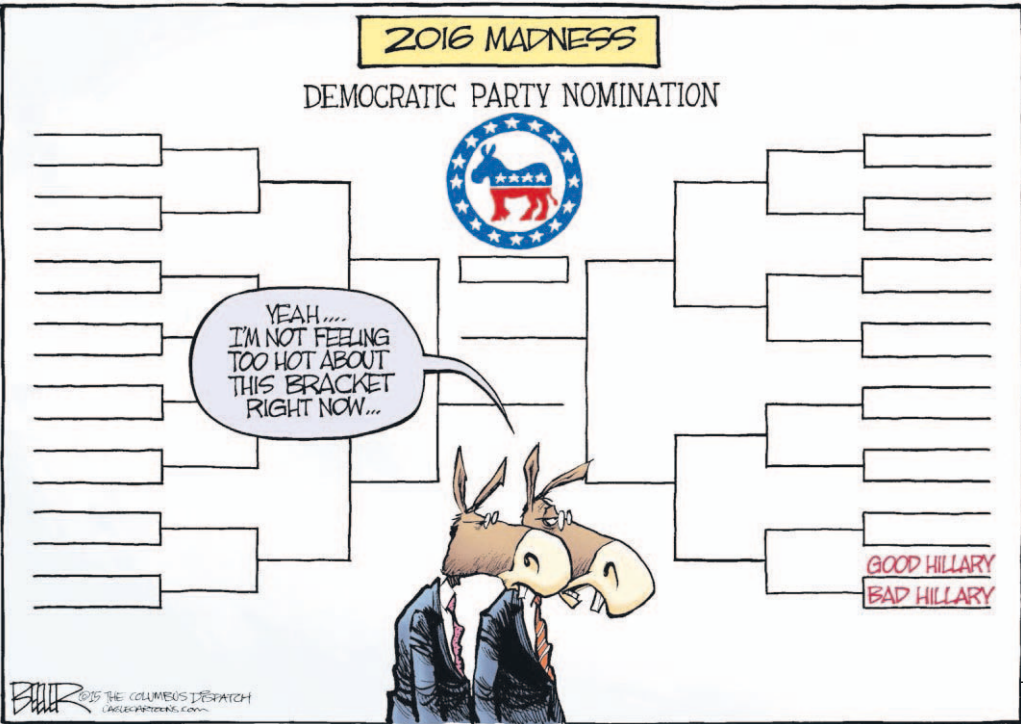
It is our pleasure to support the candidacy of Susan Plass for the Blue Mountain Community College Board of Education. Susan has been living in our community for a number of years and is an active participant in the area. She is a thoughtful, dedicated person who would be a real asset to the board. Please give her your support in the upcoming election.

John and Carolyn McBea
Pendleton

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual services and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Submitted letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published. Send letters to Managing Editor Daniel Wattenburger, 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.

OTHER VIEWS



Hillary comes back

Right now you’re probably asking yourself: What am I supposed to do with all this Hillary Clinton stuff? True, I am a concerned citizen, but I have a big deadline at work and a lot of social activities scheduled for the weekend.

We feel your pain, concerned citizen. It’s exhausting. The nation has been obsessed with the Hillary email crisis for more than a week now, but, still, so many unanswered questions.

One of which is: Clinton says she sent and received about 62,000 emails while she was secretary of state. By my extremely



GAIL COLLINS
Comment

“Guernica,” which has to be the worst possible imagery you want to be associated with when you’re trying to tell the nation that everything’s hunky-dory.

Is this just a bad start or a preview of the next 20 months? Hillary supporters say everything’s fine: Her problems just stem from the fact that she’s a presidential candidate without a presidential campaign. Once she gets a staff in place and makes the announcement — an event that could come any time between Palm Sunday and Mother’s Day — she’ll be organized, focused and happily digging away at the Republicans who sent that snotty letter to the leaders of Iran.

Well, maybe. Sort of. If Hillary had been supported by a campaign staff this week, she definitely would have been doing her news conference alongside a better picture. But nobody’s going to make her into a different candidate in time for the presidential race. It’s like telling your older sister that you’d appreciate it if she’d develop a new personality before the family reunion.

There won’t be a new Hillary. What voters can hope for is the best possible version of her flawed self.

Clinton is both the best and worst retail politician on the national stage. She’s not a gifted orator, and unless she’s coming back from some disaster, her speeches can be a snooze. But she makes terrific contact with average voters when she’s talking with them about boring, important issues. I have a fond memory of an event in New Hampshire early in the 2008 race in which she went on slowly and explicitly about why she wanted to get rid of a Wall Street tax break for financiers known as “carried interest.” It was an eat-your-vegetables kind of moment, but the audience was agog. (When the Clinton campaign launches, watch for the return of this particular crusade against Wall Street. If it doesn’t show up, feel free to throw in the towel. Really, there are limits.)

There won’t be a new Hillary. What voters can hope for is the best possible version of her flawed self. That while there will be messes, she will force herself to be open during the cleanup. That while she might not be a transformative speaker, she will be able to explain how she can take the issues she’s been pursuing for decades and turn them into a plan for serious change.

Also, she should keep building on her talent for holding firm during crises. But it’d be nice to have a little peace in between.

Gail Collins joined The New York Times in 1995 as a member of the editorial board and later as an Op-Ed columnist. In 2001 she became the first woman ever appointed editor of the Times’s editorial page.