

EAST OREGONIAN

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OUR VIEW

Love your city and its people

On Saturday, Hermiston residents will turn out for a citywide cleanup and goodwill tour — the next step in the “I Love My City” campaign that rose from the ashes of tragedy.

And there are few things as immediately fulfilling as picking up trash. Litter that was just an eyesore and environmental scar is bagged up and carried away and a cleaner, more beautiful place is revealed.

We hope lots of people show up to beautify Hermiston and create ties and friendships that grow into further community service. There are actions that may not be as immediately fulfilling as collecting trash or clearing overgrown yards — but it is just as important.

Loving your space, your culture, your environment and your fellow man is the key to creating flourishing communities.

Every city in our region — from Milton-Freewater to Boardman, from Pendleton to Ukiah — does this well, but has room for improvement. As politics tries its best to wedge us apart, only community and personal relationships can bridge that gulf.

So how do you love your city? It takes all kinds.

Cleaning up trash and repairing public areas in disrepair is one way. So is speaking and working to keep our air, water and public spaces clean in the first place, and passing

on good stewardship habits to the next generation.

Others can use their entrepreneurial spirit to create family wage jobs in the community. Hard work is a virtue, and here in agriculture country we see the fruits — sometimes literally — of a long day’s work.

A soft touch with neighbors who are struggling is also important, as is keeping watch over the most vulnerable and overlooked.

There are times to be boosters and fans, sitting high in the bleachers and cheering on your local athletes. There is a need to donate money and time to support your community’s best students, and also the most disadvantaged.

There is need to go to public meetings. To run for public office. To make brownies for bake sales. To shop local. To show up for after-school activities. To volunteer at your local homeless shelter or hospital or park or nonprofit.

The opportunities abound if you look for them.

You may never have expected to end up where you are. But whether you’re here for a few months or a lifetime, finding a place to serve and belong makes life better for everyone.

Supporting one another is not just a healthy way to recover from tragedy, but to prevent them.

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.



Contributed photo by Clayton Haight.

Dillon Spencer hands out candy canes at Wal-Mart during a past I Love My City event in December 2016.

Lybrand should be behind bars

I write today to voice my opinion on the Jason Lybrand case, where the owner of local tattoo shop Wicked Kitty was caught selling an assortment of illegal drugs, including steroids and methamphetamine.

We, the people, are disgusted that our own personal lives are micromanaged at every level — yet the public is expected to sympathize with a major drug dealer who gets off without the appropriate punishment meant to deter such activity?

We, the citizens of Pendleton, are officially boycotting the Wicked Kitty Tattoo store to send a clear message: We want the drug dealers out of our community. Those are not the values we represent.

Remember to vote your values in future elections.

Carlin Sacco
Pendleton

New fire station would make firefighters safer

We are writing in support of the bond proposal to replace Fire Station 1 and purchase equipment, such as heart monitors and the “Jaws of Life” extraction tools.

Pendleton is lucky to have a very well respected fire chief and many amazing firefighters.

Our current station does not meet current fire and building codes, it contains hazardous materials and our firefighters are breathing unsafe levels of diesel fumes, which are known to cause cancer. They are also fighting fires and trying to save lives with outdated equipment.

The current fire station would be too costly to renovate, and it does not have sufficient training space. The new station will have faster response times and will have lower maintenance costs and utility bills, with savings estimated at \$50,000 a year.

We residents of Pendleton have a long history of supporting our city. We would like to see our city thrive, and one of the ways we can do that is by putting money into the things that matter. Our firefighters matter. Please vote yes for a new fire station.

Mike and Shannon Collins
Pendleton

Pendleton spending money in wrong places

The city is asking for \$10 million for a fire station. We have at least \$10 million or more in street repair needed done also. Winter increased the amount of road repairs needed in the city due to the freezing and snow. That is \$20 million between the fire station and road repairs.

The city council just allocated \$20,000 for a beautification project on Main Street. That could have been used for street repairs or help update the fire department or equipment some. What are the priorities? Do we fix what’s broke or just keep adding new things to the list to pay for even if they’re not essential to the functioning of the city? I believe there are other things that need done before spending money on beautification of Main Street. If people want to donate funds for beautification projects and do them, go for it.

I would like for Pendleton to have the best fire station in the state. What is it going to cost us? Is the city going to come out next year and say if you want your roads fixed your going to have to approve another \$10 million bond issue?

Could the city use the PGG building for a fire station with some updates and renovation? It had an in-floor and overhead exhaust system for vehicles to run inside in the shop area. It has more room in the building than anything they have now. Would the PGG building be more cost effective than building a new building? With the lot with it they could build training facilities there later. I do not know if PGG was considered when they started looking for a place for their new fire station or if it is available for purchase?

Are there more cost effective ways to upgrade the fire department than spending \$10 million, or do they just want a new fire station? Just some thoughts and ideas I had on the issue.

Roger Fleming
Pendleton

Good schools need strong citizen support

Historically, Hermiston has strongly supported its schools. Looking purely at the dollars and cents, we can see that our community as a whole significantly benefits from these fantastic facilities.

Hermiston School District has become a vital part of our community’s economic development. When you moved here, what was the first thing you searched out beside a job? For my family and me, it was the schools.

An independent study by EcoNorthwest quantified the economic impacts our community receives from the use of school district facilities by either district-hosted or outside-hosted events. In 2013-14, it was \$7.3 million and is

expect to be more in the subsequent years. That alone creates 78 jobs within our community while also supporting numerous small businesses.

Also, an independent analysis performed by Elesco Limited, found the May 2017 bond election would return a whopping \$184 million over the next ten years. Where else in government can you see a net positive return of almost 2-to-1 on your tax investment?

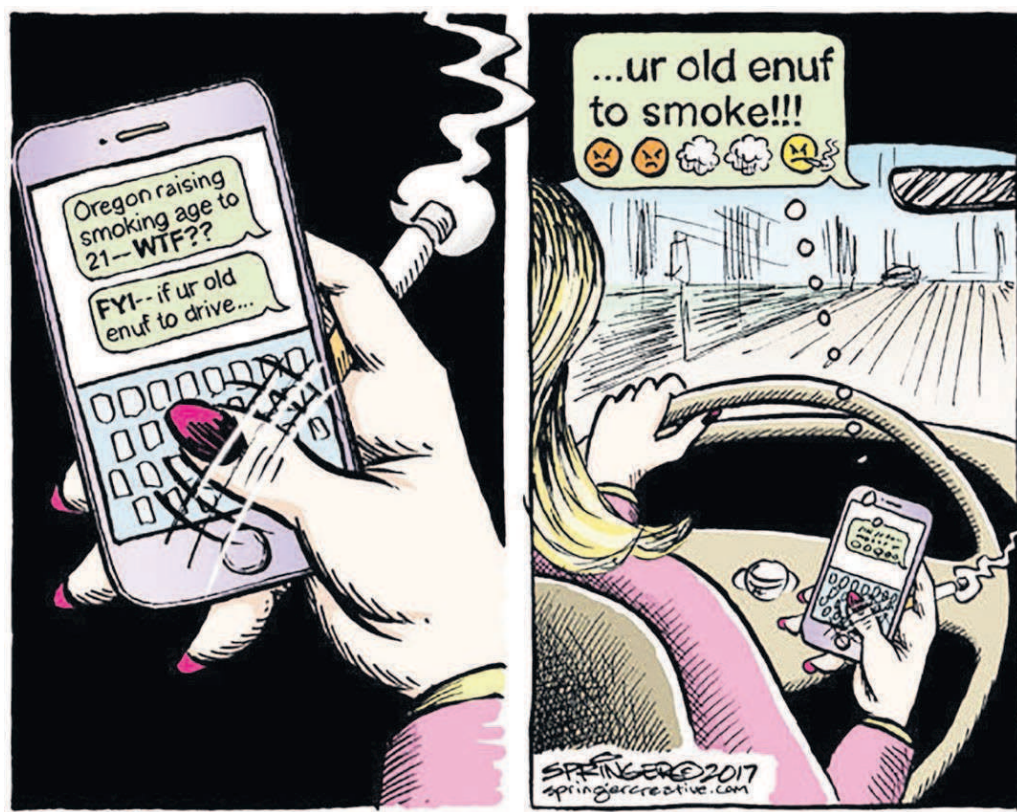
The last bond measure cost \$1.40 per \$1,000 of assessed value for \$69 million; today’s bond is 90 cents per \$1,000 of assessed value for \$104 million. Because our community continues to grow and add businesses and homeowners, we are sharing that cost over a larger taxing base. There is a direct connection between our investment in schools and our increased tax base.

Schools are the very definition of community and a primary source of Hermiston’s economic vitality. Join me in voting yes for the May 16 Hermiston School District Bond election.

Dave Drotzmann, mayor
Hermiston

LETTERS POLICY

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and policies for publication in the newspaper and on website. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a phone number. Send letters to 211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801 or email editor@eastoregonian.com.



OTHER VIEWS

The soul of a corporation

We know from an infamous Supreme Court ruling that corporations are people. They may be heartless, like the pharmaceutical company that jacks up the price of a lifesaving drug. Or clueless, like Pepsi with its latest ad solving racism by having a fashion model give a can of colored sugar water to a cop.

But can a corporation also have a soul? If the answer is yes, that soul passed on to higher ground a few days ago, when Mary Anderson, a co-founder of the outdoor retailer REI, died at the age of 107.

The wonder is not that she lived to triple digits. She loved clean air, a good fight and a well-told joke. The wonder is that someone born in 1909, when many veterans of the Civil War were still arguing over slavery, could live to see her common-sensical values flourish in an otherwise unrecognizable brave new world.

The corporations of 2017 that strive to do well while doing good, the ones that want to step up as global citizens while the Trump administration steps back, owe a part of their enlightened self-interest to Mary Anderson.

She was the longest-standing member of REI, formerly called Recreational Equipment Inc., the company she founded with her husband, Lloyd Anderson, in 1938. Initially, they ran the operation out of the home they built in West Seattle. Their attic was the warehouse. Their kitchen was where Mary stitched together tents. From that farmhouse grew an empire of goose down and freeze-dried fettuccine.

I interviewed this founding couple a few years before Lloyd Anderson died in 2000, at the age of 98. Mary started out as a public-school teacher. Lloyd was a city transit worker. They loved the mountains. But they were frustrated that you couldn’t buy decent climbing gear without getting gouged.

And so they started importing ice axes from Austria, selling them to fellow climbers at cost. The first 23 members contributed \$1 each. This was in the 1930s, the Great Depression, and also the height of the cooperative movement. The Pacific Northwest was full of Scandinavians who didn’t think consumer-owned companies were communist plots. Seattle’s public power utility, City Light, and a medical cooperative, Group Health, grew from the same soil.

And maybe one day, if Medicare-for-all emerges as the obvious solution to our dysfunctional and incomprehensible health care system, we’ll see a little bit of the co-op spirit there as well.

The Andersons instilled their company with an unusual business ethic. “I never thought a man should make money off his friends,” as



TIMOTHY EGAN
Comment

Lloyd said.

To this day, REI is not a corporation in the normal sense of the word. It’s a consumer cooperative — the nation’s largest — owned not by shareholders, but by members. There are more than 6 million active members, and Mary Anderson, officially, was member No. 2.

While other retailers are struggling, REI is thriving. With more than 140 stores in 36 states, the company just recorded record revenue of \$2.56 billion for 2016. It fell astray at times. As it grew into a national behemoth, the company forced the Andersons out of their role in guiding REI’s operations.

But the Anderson influence remained. REI now gives back more than 70 percent of its profits to the outdoor community and other worthwhile projects. One of the company’s biggest initiatives this year is an effort to boost the profile of future Mary Andersons — women who love nature — to change the image of male-dominated outdoor sports.

A few years ago on Black Friday, that horrid stampede of Christmas season greed, REI did something revolutionary — it closed. Employees were given a paid day off and told to take a hike or spend some time with family.

Corporations behaving badly tend to get most of our attention. It will take years for Wells Fargo to dig itself out of the fiasco it created with customers who were burdened with accounts they didn’t authorize. Volkswagen, once known for the little Beetle that was many a baby boomer’s first car, stumbled badly when it rolled out autos that could cheat emissions tests. And Fox News, with its numerous sexual harassment settlements, is beginning to look more and more like a criminal enterprise.

On the other hand, you have Patagonia, another outdoor retailer, pulling out of the annual industry show in Utah this year to protest the state’s hostility toward the public land that the company’s customers depend on.

Business schools study this sort of thing — how to achieve a branding of authenticity, how to be seen as a corporation with a conscience. But it’s not that complicated.

“In founding REI as a co-op, Lloyd and Mary saw a higher purpose in their work,” said Sally Jewell, an interior secretary under President Barack Obama and a former chief executive officer of REI. The Andersons proved that a higher purpose with a solid bottom line does not have to be an oxymoron.

Timothy Egan worked for 18 years as a writer for The New York Times, first as the Pacific Northwest correspondent, then as a national enterprise reporter

YOUR VIEWS