

OUR VIEW

A declaration of purpose

We didn't stumble accidentally or coincidentally into freedom. We didn't simply awaken from a nightmare of tyranny into the daylight of democracy. The United States of America wasn't a granted gift or a fortuitous discovery.

This nation, which we celebrate today with flags and friends and fireworks, was earned by intellectual, spiritual and physical toil. It's hard to comprehend that momentous effort of 241 years ago, when a group of 56 men started a revolution by signing the Declaration of Independence. They weren't just penning dissatisfaction with the status quo; they were signing a check that would be paid for with 4,435 of their countrymen's lives to begin an experiment with an unknown outcome.

To commemorate that moment on this Fourth of July, we would like to take a closer look at the document that started the war that founded the United States of America.

When in the course of human events it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the



governed — That whenever any form of government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the right of the people to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their safety and happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed.

But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such government, and to provide new

guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former systems of government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over these States. To prove this, let facts be submitted to a candid world.

The document then lists 27 specific grievances against an absent king and his oppressive government. Among them, he refused to allow the creation of new laws to address pressing issues, hindered or eliminated local representation while building up his own administrative state, wouldn't allow foreigners to become citizens in the states, kept standing armies in times of peace, and kept adding taxes while

cutting trade.

The list begins formally, but by the end you can hear both the founders' anger and fear — they declare the king "has plundered our seas, ravaged our coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people," and worry about lack of protection from mercenaries from the sea and the Indians from inland.

More importantly, representatives from all 13 colonies substantiated the complaints and were willing to sign.

We, therefore, the representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the name, and by authority of the good people of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, that these united Colonies are, and of right ought to be free and independent states, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as free and independent states, they have full power to levy war, conclude peace, contract alliances, establish commerce, and to do all other acts and things which independent states may of right do. — And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor.

As we celebrate this country and continue to test the ideal that all people are born with the right to live freely and pursue happiness, we should do so with the independent, optimistic and purposeful spirit with which it was founded.

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.

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YOUR VIEWS

Salmon recovery funds have benefited Oregon

The Milton-Freewater region, and also most of Oregon, has benefited from the federal funding investment of the Pacific Coastal Salmon recovery funds that have come to Oregon to restore salmon and steelhead populations in our rivers.

Locally, in the Milton-Freewater area, the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council has competed for and received PCSRF dollars offered by the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board through a competitive grants program.

The watershed council matches these PCSRF funds with property owner cost share dollars, Bonneville Power Administration funds, other state grants and private foundation funds to improve water quality, water availability, fish passage and fish habitat.

The Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council is a nonprofit in the Milton-Freewater area that has been working with the local community for the last 22 years to implement locally acceptable watershed restoration projects. Competitive grants pay for designing and constructing projects that put Oregonians to work.

As much as possible, the Walla Walla basin council and other watershed councils and soil and water conservation districts in the region use local contracting companies and locally sourced materials such as fencing, irrigation pipe, quarry rock, and trees to build projects.

We appreciate our Oregon congressional delegation's work (U.S. Sens. Jeff Merkley and Ron Wyden and U.S. Rep. Greg Walden) in past years to secure these funds for Oregon. Locally, the Walla Walla Basin Watershed Council has used these dollars to implement river habitat restoration, fish passage, irrigation efficiency, managed aquifer recharge projects, and surface water and groundwater monitoring work in Northeast Umatilla County.

The Pacific Coastal Salmon

Recovery Funds received and used across Oregon have typically been \$10-15 million a year. Hopefully this successful program that benefits Oregon will continue.

John Zerba, chair
Walla Walla Basin watershed council
Milton-Freewater

Trump not looking out for workforce

In 1998, after having lived in the intolerant conservative bastion of Salt Lake City for 15 years, I was looking forward to the move to Oregon and the less narrow-minded viewpoints I thought were prevalent here. Little did I know that Eastern Oregon was just an extension of Utah in a sense. At least in Utah the union members I worked with had the good sense to not vote against their own self interests and align themselves with the union hating Republican Party. Not so here.

Just an example of Trump's antagonism for unions: In Las Vegas, 95 percent of all hotels and casinos are union and pay three dollars more an hour than the non-union ones. Which percentage does the Trump casino belong to? You guessed it. The 5 percent group. When his employees voted to unionize, he took them to court to try and block the move.

Most of the union members I used to work with and native to this area don't realize they are cutting their own throats in supporting anything GOP. Their misguided hatred of Obama has deluded their thought process — even after Obama gave us the best contract ever signed during my 37 years of railroad employment. Trump rescinded all of the union-friendly appointees that Obama put on the labor relations board.

When your contract comes to mediation after the next contract talks stall, guess who appoints the mediator? Don't complain about the gutting you're about to get if you voted for Trump. Time to pay the piper for your ignorance.

David Gracia
Hermiston

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

Bring on the UFOs

When folks think Pendleton, they think Round-Up. I say we should get them thinking "flying saucers."

The *East Oregonian* broke the UFO story 70 years ago that introduced the world to flying saucers, a whole new culture and more. Pendleton has done next to nothing with that history.

Over in McMinnville, a sighting and pair of saucer pics from 1950 spurred McMenamins to hold a UFO festival. The McMenamins Hotel Oregon wrapped up UFOfest No. 19 in May.

Several ufologists — yes, that's a term — held forth on everything from the history of UFOs in the Northwest to alien abductions. Each audience was typically a few hundred large. Each seat came with a ticket that cost at least \$20.

Festival organizers estimated the crowd peaked at 10,000 for the big Saturday UFO Parade.

I checked out that scene in my research for a feature on Ken Arnold's famous sighting of June 24, 1947, and the *EO's* reporting then on the sighting. I heard some incredible claims.

The one that resonates with me was from John, the guy I happened to sit next to for a breakfast presentation. Slim, middle aged, mild mannered, a father, John told the story of the night several years ago when he saw an alien.

He told the story like the hunter who recalls



PHIL WRIGHT
Comment

missing the big buck. John was not shy about what he saw, was not embarrassed. This thing happened. Only the thing was a reptilian alien who locked eyes with him early one morning. Kind of became John's defining moment.

I'm not judging.

And neither should Pendleton.

The community has welcomed cowboys and rodeo fans for more than a hundred years. We've been friendly to lovers of small high school basketball since the mid-'60s. And this July will mark the third year we've opened doors to several thousand people who love motorcycles.

UFOs might be out of this world, but we know what tourism dollars can do. And as strange as aliens might seem, Round-Up packs plenty of weirdness.

Now, I told John I was a reporter, I think I even gave him a business card. I'm not outing him because he revealed his story in the relative comfort and safety of fellow UFO and alien believers.

And that's the core of it. Folks like to gather to discuss, debate, and celebrate what they are passionate about. That's about as downright human as it gets, and that's the very atmosphere Pendleton can provide.

Phil Wright is a reporter for the East Oregonian.

Another failed federal response

By LOREN STOUT

In the last two years there have been two major takeovers of federal property here in Eastern Oregon. One occurred in Harney County and now we have one in progress in Grant County. There are many similarities and some very stark contrasts pertaining to how each incident was handled by the federal government.

One of the similarities is that both takeovers could have been stopped before they happened. In the Harney County incident, the FBI knew beforehand the Bundys were coming into Burns to support a local rancher. Instead of arresting them en route, they chose to teach them a lesson at the expense of the town of Burns. A fairly predictable outcome ensued stemming from this approach. The people involved in the takeover were cleared of all charges and a federal agent is now under indictment. The outrage by the environmentalists due to the resource damage was deafening. These occupiers were a threat to unveil this cozy relationship, especially bringing to light the Canyonlands Monument debacle that was going on at the time.

In the Grant County incident, the federal government was also informed that it was going to occur. According to the reports, a representative of the environmental community, forest service and a tribal member were present when the decision was made for the Rainbow Gathering to take place at Flagtail Meadows. No effort was made to use the existing environmental laws to stop the

proceedings. The trouble the Forest Service had was they were already in the process of trying to put the permitted grazers out of business. Bad timing for them. The one chance they had to stick up for the welfare of a small rural community and they refused to do it.

The environmental carnage that is taking place in this area is indescribable. They are digging trenches and using them for toilet facilities. That is a lot of human waste in a possible burial ground. They are piping water out of undeveloped springs. It would take the normal person three years to develop a spring, even for the benefit of the public. Compaction from that many people is overwhelming. Everything in the government's playbook is in play here. The trouble is none of the environmental laws are being enforced.

This is the stuff the federal government uses to put industries out of business. It is really hard to describe how bad this remote area has been transformed according to the standards the locals have to abide by. I will give the hippies credit for one thing: They are unveiling the discrimination that is behind the implementation of these environmental laws. They are telling the Forest Service to go take a nature hike.

Notice how quiet the liberal press is on this environmental disaster. Not one peep out of our federal senators. Hopefully some new leadership will help to alleviate these discriminatory actions by our own federal government.

Loren Stout is a rancher with property near the Rainbow Gathering.