

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

The brave challenge of small farming

Most U.S. farms are small by one definition or another. A 100-acre apple orchard in central Washington can be described as small, and so can a 500-acre corn-and-soybean farm in Minnesota.

So can 10 acres of watermelons in Echo or two acres of apples in Milton-Freewater.

Small, as it turns out, is in the eye of the beholder.

The old adage goes that your farm is “small” if it’s smaller than the one down the road.

But something else beyond the number of acres needs to be considered. These days, “small farm” often brings with it a connotation, a state of mind. It’s one where farmers go to great lengths to learn to “do it right” — to care for their land and animals in a way that allows the farm to continue for generations to come.

A great many small farms are also relatively new. Nearly every farm started small. A century-old wheat farm that now includes thousands of acres in eastern Oregon most likely started much smaller. Over time, economics allowed

the family to buy more land. Eventually, the farm reached a “right size” that allowed it achieve economies of scale.

Small-scale farmers are people like Nate and Janis Newsom, who three years ago moved from southern California to 17 acres outside Stayton, in the Willamette Valley. They have been successfully growing a variety of crops at their Bear Branch Farms, selling produce through their community supported agriculture program.

Those who are new to farming often find themselves on a steep learning curve. Someone who wants to “farm” will also need to wear many other hats. Soil science, animal husbandry, botany, horticulture, genetics, hydrology, meteorology, economics, marketing, accounting, financial planning, small engine repair, diesel mechanics, plumbing, welding — even a knowledge of water law and local, state and federal regulations quickly become part of the picture.

But there’s help. With thousands of farmers nationwide approaching retirement, the focus at large land-grant universities has broadened to include



Nate and Janis Newsom arrived in Oregon from southern California three years ago to start Bear Branch Farms outside Stayton. They are among the thousands of small-scale farmers across the nation.

small farmers and how to help them. Classes, programs, workshops and seminars such as the Oregon Small Farm Conference at Oregon State University that took place last week fling open the doors to small farmers of all types to inform and encourage them and help them form networks and relationships with mentors.

This is an exciting time to be a farmer or rancher. Researchers are developing new and more efficient ways of farming and ranching. Conventional farming continues to be

a great way to earn a living and make a lifestyle, and organic farming continues to gain in popularity. Farmers’ markets, community supported agriculture and food hubs all help small-scale farmers make important connections with customers. Farmers and ranchers are constantly finding new niches to explore and develop.

The future has never been brighter for those who choose to cultivate the land, and make a life from it.

We salute all who take up the challenge.

OTHER VIEWS

Conspirator, or just clueless?

Robert Mueller, the special counsel, first indicted Paul Manafort and Rick Gates, the former chairman and deputy chairman of Donald Trump’s presidential campaign, last October on charges including money laundering and conspiracy against the United States. At the time, the White House and its apologists argued that these alleged crimes predated the campaign, and were thus unrelated to any putative election-related conspiracies with Russia. Tweeted Trump, “Sorry, but this is years ago, before Paul Manafort was part of the Trump campaign.”

This wasn’t true then — multiple charges referred to crimes that were said to continue at least through 2016. But Mueller’s new indictments, released last week, render Trump’s defense even more ridiculous. They provide detailed evidence that Manafort and Gates’ alleged financial crimes continued while they were running Trump’s campaign. And despite the White House’s insistence otherwise, the felonies that Manafort is accused of, and the two that Gates pleaded guilty to on Friday, bear directly on the question of Russian collusion.

It’s certainly possible that Trump himself didn’t personally connive with Russia for campaign help. Perhaps, through a combination of carelessness and miserliness, he unwittingly allowed his campaign to be infiltrated at the highest levels by both alleged and admitted criminals with Russian ties. Such a scenario, however, is not exculpatory.

Thanks to Mueller’s indictments and some revelatory journalism, we have a decent picture of the desperate straits Manafort was in when he joined Team Trump. In the charges unsealed last week, Mueller’s team described a two-part criminal scheme by Manafort and Gates. First, they laundered tens of millions of dollars while working for Viktor Yanukovich, then the Kremlin-aligned president of Ukraine, and his political allies.

In 2014, Yanukovich fled into exile in Russia, and according to Mueller’s indictment, Manafort and Gates’ “Ukraine income dwindled.” That’s when the second part of their scheme began. From 2015 to 2017, the indictment says they “fraudulently secured more than \$20 million” in bank loans by lying about their finances.

We don’t know why they needed all this money. But we do know that in 2014, lawyers for Russian oligarch Oleg Deripaska filed a petition in the Cayman Islands claiming that Manafort and Gates couldn’t account for almost \$19 million that a company controlled by Deripaska had given them to invest. Deripaska, who is reportedly very close to Vladimir Putin, has been denied entry to the United States because of his suspected ties to Russian organized crime. One would not, presumably, want to owe him a debt that

could not be paid.

By 2015, Manafort was in despair; according to Franklin Foer’s exhaustive profile of him in *The Atlantic*, one of his daughters feared he would commit suicide. But in 2016, he seems to have glimpsed salvation in Trump’s presidential campaign. Manafort wrote to Trump offering to work free, and Trump, famously tightfisted, accepted. He joined the campaign in March, and in May

was promoted to campaign chairman, with Gates as his deputy.

Immediately, Manafort sought to use his role in the campaign to repair his relationship with Deripaska. In April, as *The Washington Post* reported, he emailed an employee in Kiev about his new job, and wrote, apparently in relation to Deripaska, “How do we use to get whole?” In July, Manafort offered to give Deripaska private briefings about the campaign.

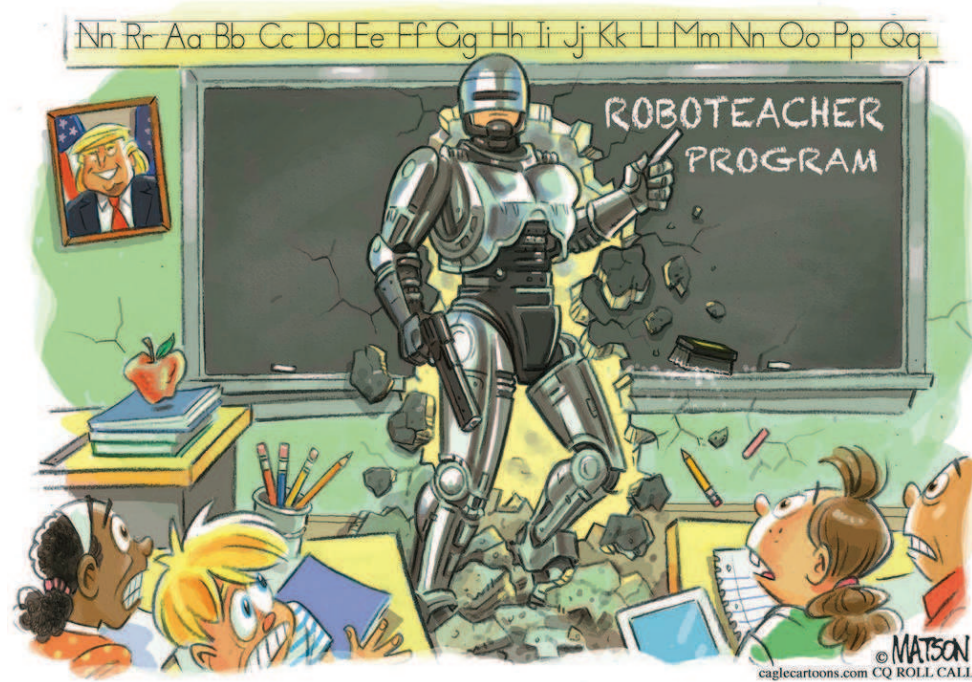
Of course, Manafort wasn’t the only figure in Trump’s campaign with questionable Russian connections. On Saturday, the House Intelligence Committee released a memo written by Rep. Adam Schiff, D-Calif., who is its ranking member, responding to Republican claims about the surveillance of former Trump foreign policy adviser Carter Page. Buried inside was an important new detail about the Russia investigation.

According to Schiff’s memo, when the Justice Department sought a warrant to surveil Page in 2016, it presented the court with contextual information about Russian election interference. The court was told that Russian agents “previewed their hack and dissemination of stolen emails” to George Papadopoulos, another Trump foreign policy adviser. Papadopoulos has since pleaded guilty to lying to the FBI about his Russian contacts, and we knew he’d been told that Russia had emails that could embarrass Hillary Clinton.

“The language in the memo is new, and I think significant,” Schiff told me. When Manafort, Donald Trump Jr. and Jared Kushner had their infamous meeting with Russian emissaries at Trump Tower in 2016, “at least someone on the campaign was aware that not only did the Russians have dirt on Clinton, they had emails, and they were prepared to disseminate them in anonymous fashion.”

Perhaps Trump didn’t realize that his campaign was being run by alleged Russian money launderers, that at least two of his foreign policy advisers had entanglements with Russian intelligence, and that his campaign had a heads up about Russian plans to dump stolen Clinton emails online. None of last week’s new information proves that Trump is too disloyal to his own country to be president. But the only alternative is that he’s too clueless.

Michelle Goldberg is a *New York Times* op-ed columnist.



YOUR VIEWS

Drone development will help Pendleton and its airport

As you know, I have been critical of the drone program. It did get me a tour of the command center.

I will say that I was impressed with the center and the people in charge of the program. There is progress; companies are interested in what we have to offer at the airport. They would not let me see a drone because these companies are in competition with each other. Oh well, maybe next time.

I do now think we should continue to support the drone program. They are starting to make some money. There will be high-paying jobs coming. I was told these companies are looking for people who have experience in electronics or are electricians. If they pass the company’s tests, they will send you to school and train you. I don’t think there will be hundreds of jobs, but there will be some.

Pendleton High School is interested in the drone program. The airport has made room for the making of robots by high school students. Could work themselves into a career.

The drones will not give a bunch of jobs, but I think it will help Pendleton.

Rex J. Morehouse
Pendleton

State should demand lower pollution from Carty

Portland General Electric, Carty plant’s proposed air quality permit should be denied if it allows self-monitoring of pollutants and here is why.

As a former Union Pacific train conductor that delivered PGE coal to this plant, we witnessed many large tanker trucks applying hazardous waste to the stockpiles of coal. I was told by PGE employees this waste (coal tar pitch) was coming from the aluminum plants along the Columbia River. The coal tar pitch they were mixing and burning with the coal is a

known carcinogen when burned.

This unpermitted burning of hazardous waste was brought to the attention of Oregon Public Utilities Commission during a recorded hearing I attended at the PGE Carty coal-fire plant. After the hazardous waste disclosure we never saw the tank trucks again. In the years since this happened, I have often wondered why this was not disclosed to the press. I am certain the wheat, potato and melon farmers would be interested in this news. The state agencies involved (PUC and DEQ) were bad actors if they helped with a news blackout.

We were also told by some of the PGE Carty plant operators that their supervisors were making them turn off the stack scrubbers at night. My impression from the people saying this, they were not happy. If this was true what were the health effects from the fly ash that was being dispersed into the air? What poisons were being released?

If my memory serves me right, the state of Oregon allowed this plant to be constructed and then immediately put into mothball for many, many years. Was this done so they could operate a dirtier plant in the future when clean air standards would be stricter? The state should never have permitted this plant in a way that would allow PGE to circumvent future clean air rules. This is morally wrong if it shortens people’s lives.

It does not serve the public interest, that we would allow this plant the ability to increase pollution. PGE Carty coal plant gamed the clean air rules at the initial startup. This plant has always polluted more than they should have including the time they were illegally burning hazardous waste.

The state of Oregon should require this plant to pollute less not more. The public should be informed of this plant’s dark history that affects our public health.

Charles Erickson
Oregon City