

OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat,
kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to those who worked so diligently to ensure that a public-private partnership to purchase more than 1,000 acres of property to protect a high-mountain moraine at Wallowa Lake came to fruition.

The partnership, between Wallowa County and two nonprofit groups, raised \$6.5 million to buy 1,791 acres of the glacier-formed rocky hill known as a moraine, and now the chunk of land will remain free from development and protected for generations.

The land in question is considered sacred by the Nez Perce Tribe and is a key habitat area.

The landowner, the Ronald C. Yanke Family Trust, had considered a proposal to develop the property with three houses and a conference center. Now, it will be owned by Wallowa County and managed for forestry,

grazing, habitat and cultural uses.

Kathleen Ackley, executive director of the Wallowa Land Trust, one of the partners that arranged the purchase, said Wallowa Lake is a textbook example of a lake formed by the retreat of glaciers.

Even when you're standing at the foot of the lake it almost looks fake — like it's an artificially created landscape. It's so perfect," she said. "For many people, it's been the last remaining unprotected iconic landscape in the state of Oregon."

The cooperative effort by the three groups shows what can happen when government and private citizens unite for a common goal.

A tip of the hat to the residents of McKay Creek Estates who recently put together a coat drive for the Pendleton Warming Station. The group collected 13 coats, and sweaters, long



EO Media Group Photo/Ellen Morris Bishop

In this shot from the top of the terminal moraine, the east moraine stretches out like a long arm reaching for the mountains. A public-private partnership that includes Wallowa County, two nonprofit organizations and the Oregon Parks and Recreation Department spent more than a decade arranging the purchase of the east moraine of Wallowa Lake.

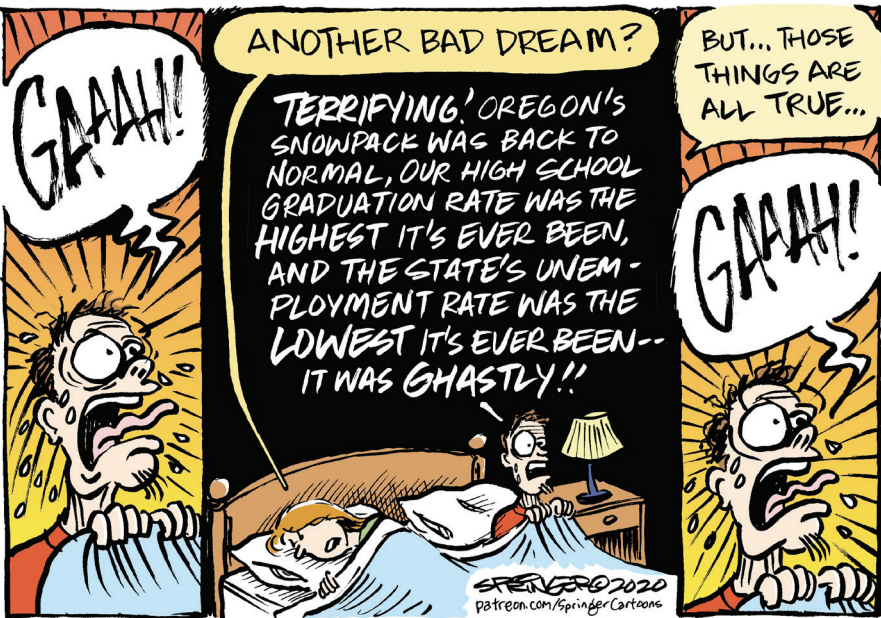
johns, socks and other clothing for the displaced. Thank you to the residents for their generosity.

A kick in the pants to Chinese officials who did not act fast enough to contain a flu-like coronavirus that has spread to many other nations. While the flu-like coronavirus isn't a major global threat yet, it could prove to be a difficult malady to contain. The Chinese allowed this threat to morph into a serious situation when stronger measures, early on, could

have averted such an emergency.

A tip of the hat to the Umatilla County Board of Commissioners who approved enterprise zones for Echo and Stanfield recently. The enterprise zones will give Echo and Stanfield key tools to help both communities generate business and economic development. Enterprise zones allow specific types of industrial and manufacturing development projects to garner tax exemptions. They are key tools to sparking growth.

A POLITICAL CARTOONIST'S NIGHTMARE...



YOUR VIEWS

Travelers on Oregon roads deserve better

We were driving back from a ski trip to Park City, Utah, on Jan. 17, 2020. Heavy snow along the road most of the way, and more in Idaho and Utah than in Oregon. This trip made me sad about the state of my state.

I love Oregon and I have lived here 62 years. We have become lazy, liberal and inattentive in our state government. We have forgotten that the foremost role of government is to protect its citizens.

While there was twice as much snow in Utah and Idaho as we encountered in Oregon, in those states the road was clear and dry. From Ontario to just west of North Powder, the road was packed snow and ice — thin, slick, and treacherous on a clear sunny day. This is totally unnecessary as evidenced by clear clean roads in Utah and Idaho, even in places where it was actively snowing.

Crossing the Blue Mountains, it was the same even though the temperature was 20 degrees higher. These roads have been closed, and accidents occurred in just the previous few days. We were in a long line of traffic that nearly came to

a stop. All of this should be a direct liability to the state of Oregon. Other states can do this. Our state can do this.

Evidence: The Ladd Canyon road crew must get preferential treatment and more money (or just work harder?). Something is different. The miles from North Powder to La Grande were also perfectly clear. A small area clear — between two uncared for disasters of roads at the edge of the state and over the Blue Mountains. Lives are being endangered unnecessarily.

Our citizens and guests to the state deserve better. Our state government is busy spending our tax money on frivolous causes instead protecting its citizens with the basics of safe roads. Government should be people coming together to spend their money on services that we all share and cannot provide independently. Our state receives the same federal highway dollars for the interstate highway as Idaho and Utah. Where is Oregon spending this money?

Oregon residents need to demand that our state maintain our infrastructure and protect our personal safety.

Kerry Rietmann Ione

FROM THE TRACTOR SEAT

The importance of filters
for a comfortable life

According to the calendar, winter has officially been with us for about a month, and with it comes the concomitant tasks of shoveling snow, breaking ice in the water trough and installing the half-of-a-pizza box in front of the radiator on the old 1959 International Harvester pickup in an attempt to coax just a little more warmth out of the heater in the cab.

Other necessary winter chores related to personal comfort include stuffing fresh straw into the dog's house (who says I'm not an animal welfare advocate) and changing the air filter and fuel filter on our "vintage" house furnace. Though our furnace was installed by the previous owner of the place about 1988, it still performs admirably well — a fact for which I'm thankful, especially after watching Ralphie's "old man" — beautifully portrayed by actor Darren McGavin in one of my favorite movies "A Christmas Story" — in his furnace fighting escapades.

Regular maintenance is a key component in keeping almost anything mechanical running smoothly and filters are a seemingly simple, yet frequently overlooked, part of any maintenance program. This past summer, son Willie bought an extremely low-mileage, 40-year-old wheat truck from its original owner. Being in a shed most of its life maintained its excellent condition but, unfortunately it had not been driven much in the past decade. Once the old fuel was drained and a new carburetor installed, the rig ran like a champ — for a few days. One day after several trips to haul grain to the elevator, the engine ran progressively worse and lost power terribly. We contemplated replacing the fuel pump, adding an auxiliary electric "booster" pump and several other possible remedies. But first, I suggested changing the fuel filter, based upon past similar experience and also the fact that I am, let's just say, frugal, by nature.

Alas, it worked! Even though the filter and carburetor were new only days before, residual sediment in the tank and/or line had broken loose and clogged the new filter in short order. Upon changing the filter, it was as if we had added a supercharger to the recently anemic machine.

This episode made me ponder a couple of things. First of all, many problems, though admittedly not all problems, can be solved quickly and efficiently (cheaply!) if we use a little common sense and deductive reasoning. (My wife would respond to this asser-

tion that I should take my own advice more often.)

Secondly, filters are important — both literally and metaphorically.

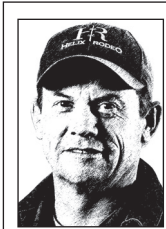
For many years, George Carlin was my favorite comedian. Though some of his material was nothing short of "lewd and lascivious" (his own description) and downright vulgar, many of his observations on the human condition and the world around us I found to be nothing short of genius. Though somewhat libertarian by nature, I can't help but think, however, that, to a degree, censorship has its place in regard to a guy like George Carlin. HBO specials are one thing, but I would not have wanted to watch him while sitting in the living room with my grandmother watching "regular" TV.

Similarly, I believe good parenting involves a certain amount of filtering. I certainly was far more likely to watch Fred Rogers than George Carlin with my kids when they were little. I also see nothing wrong with filtering the content on a kids' smartphone when they are underage, especially if Mom and Dad are still paying the monthly bill for phone and internet service. Besides, if they are on the phone all the time, how are they gonna get the lawn mowed?

At the risk of becoming uncharacteristically controversial, I believe we need a few filters on a national macrocosmic level, too. While I can embrace multiculturalism and I've yet to put in a bid for building part of that wall, we can't just have a free-for-all along our borders, either. Sensible and reasonable vetting can be beneficial to public health and safety and long-term economic prosperity.

There may have been a time in my earlier (more naïve) existence when I was an advocate for national elections being decided simply by counting ballots and declaring that she or he who has the most votes is the winner. Now that I am firmly ensconced in middle age, however, I can buy into the logical and pragmatic filtering provided by the Electoral College method.

I won't give any opinion or advice on exactly for whom you should vote — enough other folks do that already. But I can and will unequivocally recommend that if your jalopy's performance leaves something to be desired, change the fuel and air filters before you pull the engine and overhaul it.



MATT WOOD
COMMENT

Matt Wood, a community columnist for the East Oregonian, lives and farms near Helix.

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