

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Looking forward and moving ahead

A new year beckons just ahead of us, and for some the theme now may be “good riddance” to 2020.

That sentiment would surely be understandable. This year has been unlike any other with a pandemic and a strange election and nationwide protests that stretched the length of the summer. We appear at times to be a nation fractured by strife, a nation battling itself.

There is a lot to be depressed about if we allow ourselves. Many are out of work because of the pandemic. Thousands more have died from the disease.

Yet, as the new year descends upon us, it is appropriate to step back and review a few key facts about our community, state and nation.

That may seem like a hard task, judging by all the bitterness that seeps over the nation about the recent election. The bitterness, to some extent, is understandable. Fact is, though, the election is over, and we are moving ahead.

So, it is important — now perhaps more than ever — we realize that overall, we are still a strong nation with great values set down by brave men and women many years ago.

We remain, for example, a nation where we can, if we want, congregate together and protest peacefully. Still harbor the right to defend ourselves and to bear arms. We are a nation governed by laws with a system of due process and we still hold free elections.

Does our system work perfectly? No. But it does function — most of the time — as it was designed.

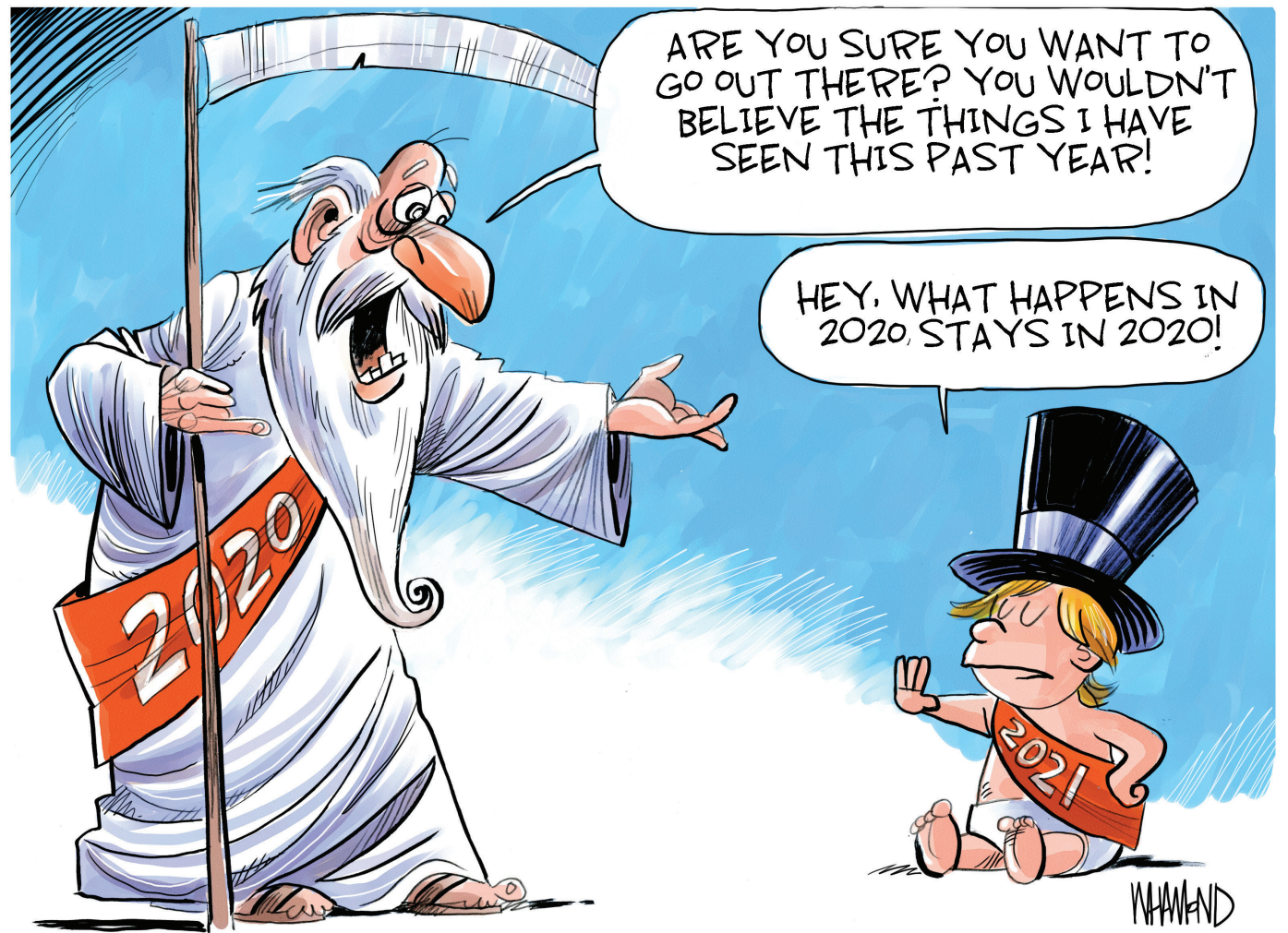
The past year has delivered plenty of negative news and we all focused on it. That isn't a criticism, but a fact. The pandemic touched all of us in one way or another. We still have a long way to go to get out the cloud of the pandemic, but there is a light at the end of the tunnel.

Two vaccines are going out across the nation. Millions will soon be able to get inoculated with it. That is great news.

We must remember to evade the trap of falling into a paradigm of pessimism, but instead focus on the future that will surely be better than today. In the end, we must mourn those we've lost but celebrate the things that remain.

The new year will deliver many high-spirited revelers around the area and we would be remiss if we did not remind everyone who indulge to be prudent and safe and responsible.

And Happy New Year from the *East Oregonian*.



Focusing on what's important in 2021



ANDREW CUTLER
FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I'm not sure why — maybe pandemic fatigue, holiday indifference or just absentmindedness — but the end of 2020 has sort of snuck up on me.

Make no mistake, I'm as ready for this year to be done and in the rearview mirror as everyone else. I just hadn't put much thought into the fact that this is the final week of a rather forgettable year.

Maybe some of my year-end apathy can be attributed to the fact that as I've gotten older, I've lost my tolerance for making resolutions. I'm not sure what specifically triggered the change, but I'm of the opinion now that if I want to improve something in my life, why would I wait until the first of the year to do it? When I was younger and would ring in the new year with a pledge to be a better person in some way, I, like so many others, failed miserably to make it stick. Come to think of it, that might be the exact reason I stopped.

After all, nothing reeks of absolute failure quite like the resolution to lose

weight only to somehow pack on the pounds during the first few months of the new year. I mean, who among us haven't tried the “I'm going to hit the gym every day of the week” resolution? I know I have, and I should have known that I would fail from the get-go. If going to the gym equalled driving past the gym on my way to somewhere else, then I did indeed accomplish my resolution.

I have also tried the “I'm going to read a book a month this year” resolution. That, once again, was a complete failure, unless you count the times I looked at a book on my way to picking up the TV remote, tablet, cellphone or any number of electronic devices to keep myself entertained.

I just don't do resolutions. That being said, maybe 2021 will be the year I think about fine-tuning certain aspects of my life.

I spent most of our Christmas break doing a lot of thinking. It was the first Christmas holiday without my father, who passed away in June. Truth be told, it was probably my first chance to really mourn the loss — or rather allow myself to mourn the loss. I spent a lot of time remembering prior holidays and what they were like with him around. That emptiness, I believe, is something that I will probably live with for

a while. On the flip side, Christmas 2020 was my first as a grandparent. My grandson, Hudson, was born in November. So, the holiday afforded the chance to be optimistic about the future and to look forward to providing the same kind of special memories for my grandson that my father provided for his grandchildren.

My Christmas reflections reminded me that the value of my life — really anyone's life — should be defined by the connections made with family and friends, and I'm hoping I can use that as a guide for focusing on what's important in 2021.

No, I'm not going to make any resolutions to save money or lose weight; instead, my focus will center on continuing to build meaningful and lasting relationships — both personally and professionally — and making sure friends and family all know what they mean to me. Life, as 2020 has certainly pointed out to all of us, is too short to take for granted.

That's what I'm shooting for in 2021, and I hope our readers and subscribers also find what makes them happy most in the new year.

Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the *East Oregonian*.

YOUR VIEWS

Respect my rights and views as I respect yours

I have always prided myself on being open-minded and welcoming of different views. However, in the past few weeks, the vitriolic terms and calling of names, none of which are flattering, that have been given to conservative President Trump supporters have driven me to respond to those narrow-minded persons as best I know how.

Conservative people have been called “deplorables” and have now graduated to “sycophants.” And these assumingly educated name callers seem to have forgotten (if they ever

were taught) the First Amendment of the Constitution of the United States, which, simply stated, allows every person the freedom of speech.

I don't begrudge anyone the right to voice their opinion. But I have that same freedom afforded to me, the right to have and voice a different opinion without being called a disparaging name.

I really thought Hal McCune, the former editor of this fine paper, would understand and respect that right. Or does he not understand or respect the Constitution of the United States of America?

Patti Graham
Pendleton

Pendleton welcomes new neighbors

It is my pleasure to welcome the Arnold family to Pendleton, in reference to the Dec. 29, 2020, *East Oregonian* article “The Purple Unicorns of Pendleton.”

I have always been proud to live in a town that is so warm and welcoming and I'm sure, once we can get out and socialize again, you will be anxious to meet them in person. I have known Emily for 18 years and I know she and her family will be an asset to Pendleton.

Alice Hepburn, president
PFLAG Pendleton

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LETTERS

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