

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

Tip of the hat, kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to plans to demolish and replace what's left of the Thorn Hollow Bridge much sooner than expected.

The bridge, located on the Umatilla Indian Reservation, was damaged too badly to continue using during the regional flood of February 2020. Initial plans stated it may take as long as seven years to replace, but officials from the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, Umatilla County and the Oregon Department of Transportation worked together on a funding plan they now say could see the remainder of the bridge demolished by the end of this year.

These sorts of public works projects often take far too long, while those who live and work in the area have their daily commutes significantly disrupted. We're glad to hear of agencies collaborating to help bring this particular problem to an end sooner than expected.

A tip of the hat to the new system in Umatilla and Morrow counties that will let people sign up for text alerts to remind them of their court dates.

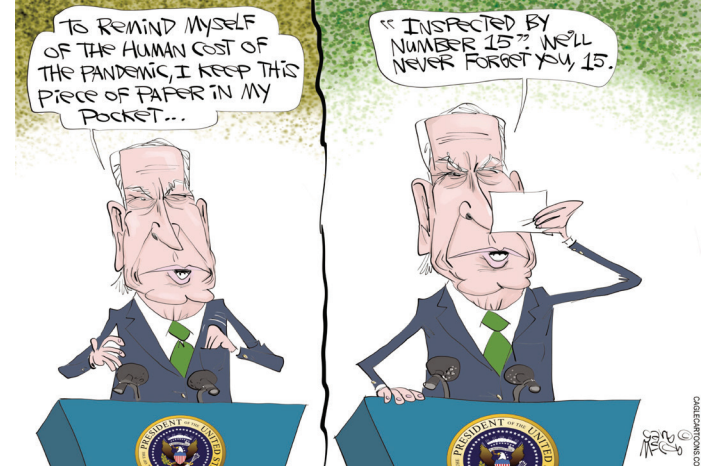
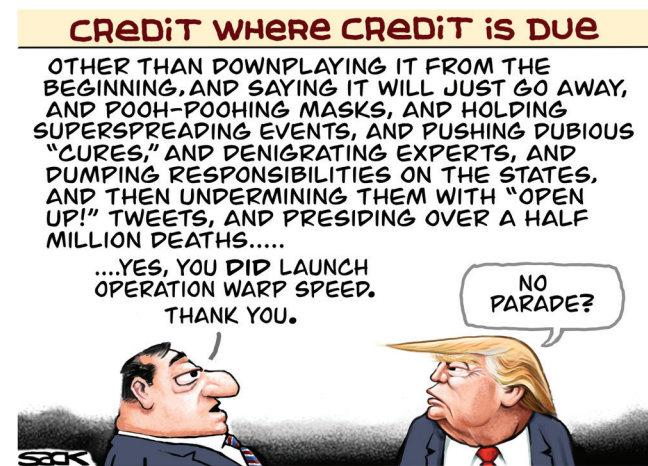
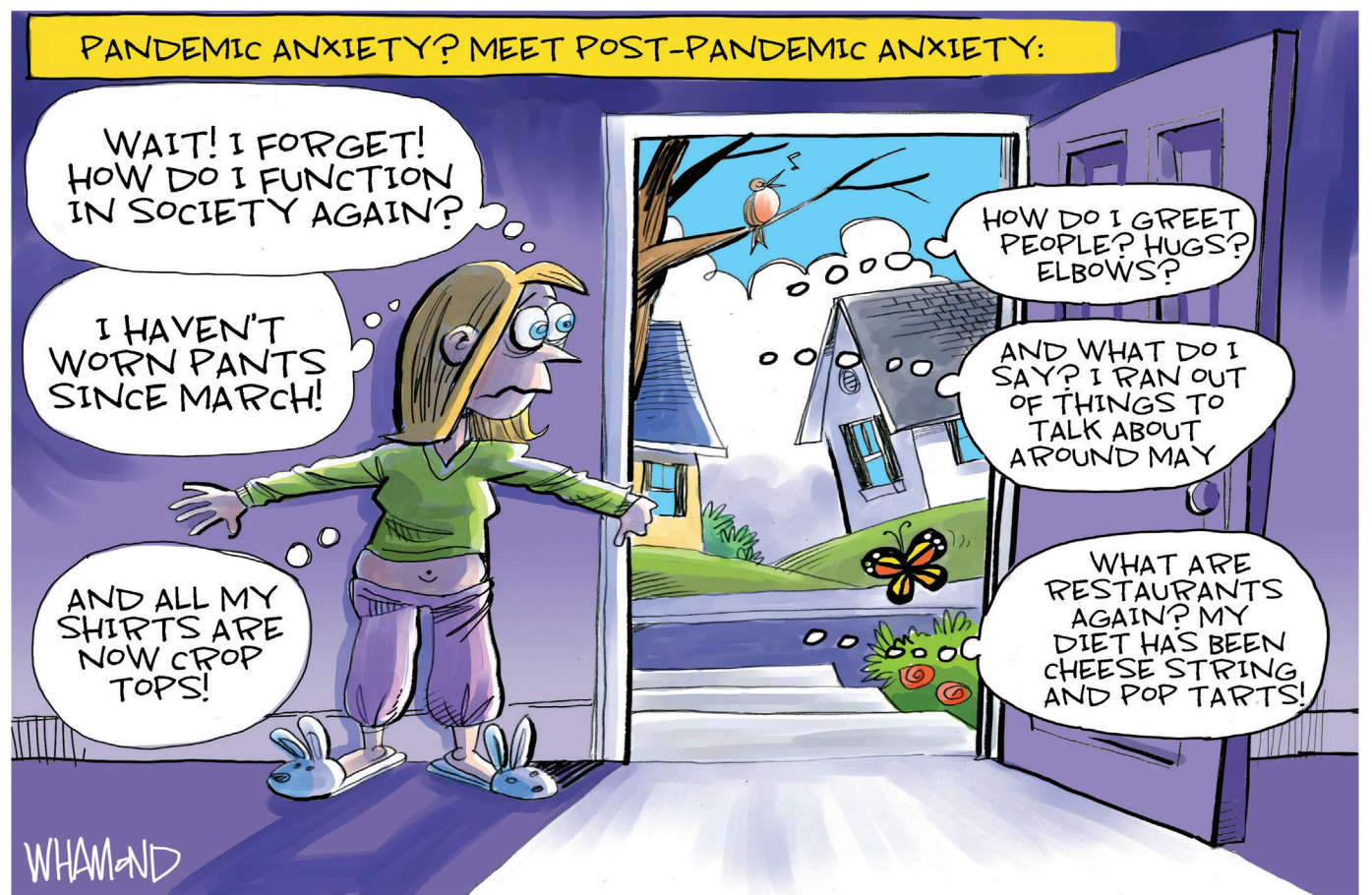
Ideally, everyone would recognize the importance of showing up to court and keep track of dates on their own, but not everyone is at that place in their life yet. A simple reminder could help prevent some defendants from derailing their life further with additional charges or warrants, and avoids wasting the court's time.

Sometimes simple solutions can have a big impact, and we hope this is one of those times.

A tip of the hat to FFA, which has greatly added to generations of students' education in Eastern Oregon and beyond.

While FFA students raise animals and learn about details of agricultural science, they also learn valuable skills that will benefit them no matter what their chosen profession — leadership, public speaking, research, advocacy, business acumen and more.

Like all extracurricular activities, local FFA chapters have seen significant disruption to their plans over the past year. But we're glad to see many local students have stuck with it. During stressful, isolating times it helps to have things to look forward to and the support of a community, and FFA is one outlet for that. We hope despite the tumultuous school year, they have many good experiences with the organization in their future.



YOUR VIEWS

What will become of our great republic?

Fuel has raised 50 days out of the last 54 days. Oil futures are starting to raise to \$100 a barrel. The world runs on oil; with the rise of fuel every consumer good will also rise. Yet, the liberals want to eliminate oil. Just what are we to use to lubricate our mighty wind turbines? Each turbine has 80 gallons of oil in a generator.

Our border is now overrun with, shall I dare say it, illegal people. So much for a sovereign nation.

The math that may now be taught in Oregon will not one produce one engineer, physicist, chemist or accountant. The rest of the world will teach math as an exact science, so our forementioned will come from foreigners.

Governor Kate Brown proposes mandatory vaccinations and wearing a mask. If we have mandatory vaccination and I refuse to obtain one, will I go vaccine prison? So long life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. By the way, Oregon is third last in the vaccine rollout.

The new recreation center for the homeless will only attract more. What those poor individuals need is a purpose in life, which will not be given to them. Who will pay the taxes, water, and electric bill on the homeless motel?

On Pendleton canceling culture, Pendleton is named after Colonel Pendleton. One might want to look him up. He did many great things: He created the civil servant structure for America, but he also convinced Andrew Jackson to have slaves sent back to the South after they made it to the free states to become free. They were sent back.

If anyone can remember the French Revolution, all hell will soon break out.

The Roman empire fell because of, get ready for this, morals, taxes, and too many slaves. Once the bar is lowered it is difficult to raise the bar up again. Most of the immigrants work for less, likewise foreign labor, which would make them slaves to my way of thinking. Ask the businesses why they want foreign labor — could it be for greater profits for them? I suspect so.

We are losing our great republic.

Roesch Kishpaugh
Pendleton

Phinney's CUJ tenure not without its problems

I am writing this in response to the recent front-page *East Oregonian* article on Wil Phinney's tenure as the editor of the *Confederated Umatilla Journal*.

First of all, Debra Crosswell, former deputy executive director of the tribal administration, and now the executive managing director of Cayuse Holdings, does not speak for the tribal community ("Phinney put in the time to earn the respect of the tribal community").

I never did respect Phinney's work as *CUJ* editor because he always provided biased, one-sided, feel-good reporting clearly in favor of the tribal government. However, when situations arose that were genuinely and legitimately newsworthy, but wherein the tribal administration was at fault, Phinney simply covered up the situation, and refused to write about the situation.

For example, several years ago, Crosswell, Phinney and then-*CUJ* Publisher Chuck Sams were sued in tribal court by a former tribal member employee for including her confidential personal information in a front-page story. At the time, I was a member of the Board of

Trustees, and I advised them to write a general article on the situation since it was a matter of the tribal public record (tribal public court), and in the spirit of transparency. However, they refused to, and eventually the employee forced Phinney, etc., to financially settle the case.

Another example of a cover-up was not too long ago; a situation arose at our CTUIR-owned resort casino wherein tribal member customers were being unilaterally banned from the business on allegations of misconduct, without due process. This situation was common knowledge in our community, but the *CUJ*, under the editorship of Phinney, refused to report on this newsworthy situation because it might make the tribe "look bad."

Also, a directly related issue on Phinney's editorship concerns tribal members' right to free speech. Twice Phinney and Sams denied my free speech rights because of the content of what I wrote. Specifically, I pointed out that tribally owned Cayuse Technologies, now Cayuse Holdings, for years was failing to contribute to the overall tribal operating budget.

At the time, Sams was the chair of the board of directors of Cayuse, and they obviously did not like my mild criticism of Cayuse, so they retaliated by unjustifiably denying my free speech rights. I had to hire an attorney, and the situation was resolved before going to court.

It is obvious that Phinney now fancies himself an "expert" on tribal issues, and probably even considers himself an elder statesman on tribal issues. However, I do wish him well in his retirement.

Bob Shippentower
Pendleton

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LETTERS

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