

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

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OUR VIEW

A tip of the hat, a kick in the pants



A tip of the hat to Arbor Day activities, including communities' spring cleanup events coming up soon and a giveaway of 1,500 trees in Hermiston sponsored by the city and the Rotary Club on Saturday, April 3.

After a year of spending more time in our homes than usual, this spring seems like a particularly great time to get outdoors and spend some time cleaning out old junk and planting new trees. Spending more time outdoors this spring and summer will be good for everyone's health in a multitude of ways, from getting needed Vitamin D from the sunshine to decreasing the risk of COVID-19 transmission. So let's make our outdoor spaces the nicest they can be.

A kick in the pants to ongoing troubles with Boardman's Lost Valley Farms.

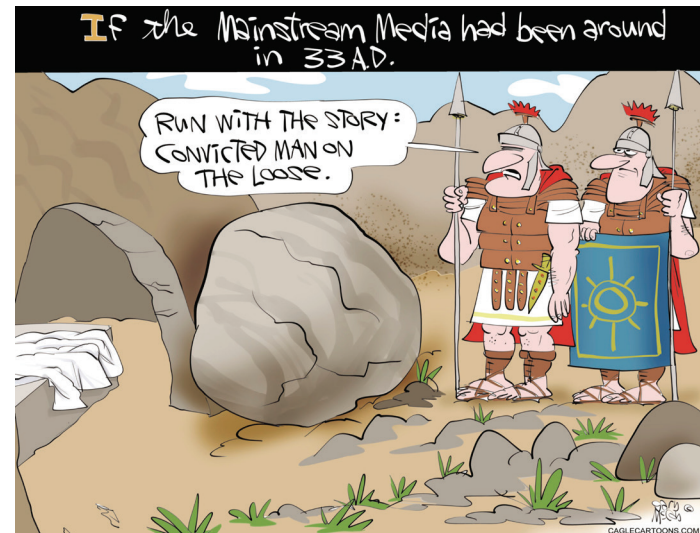
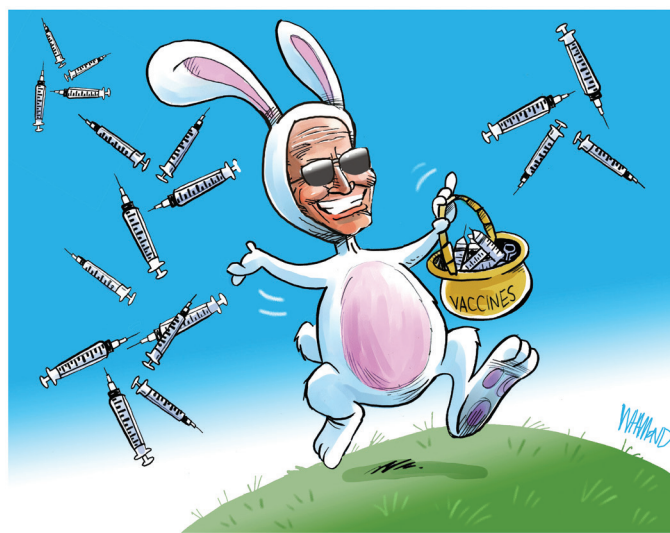
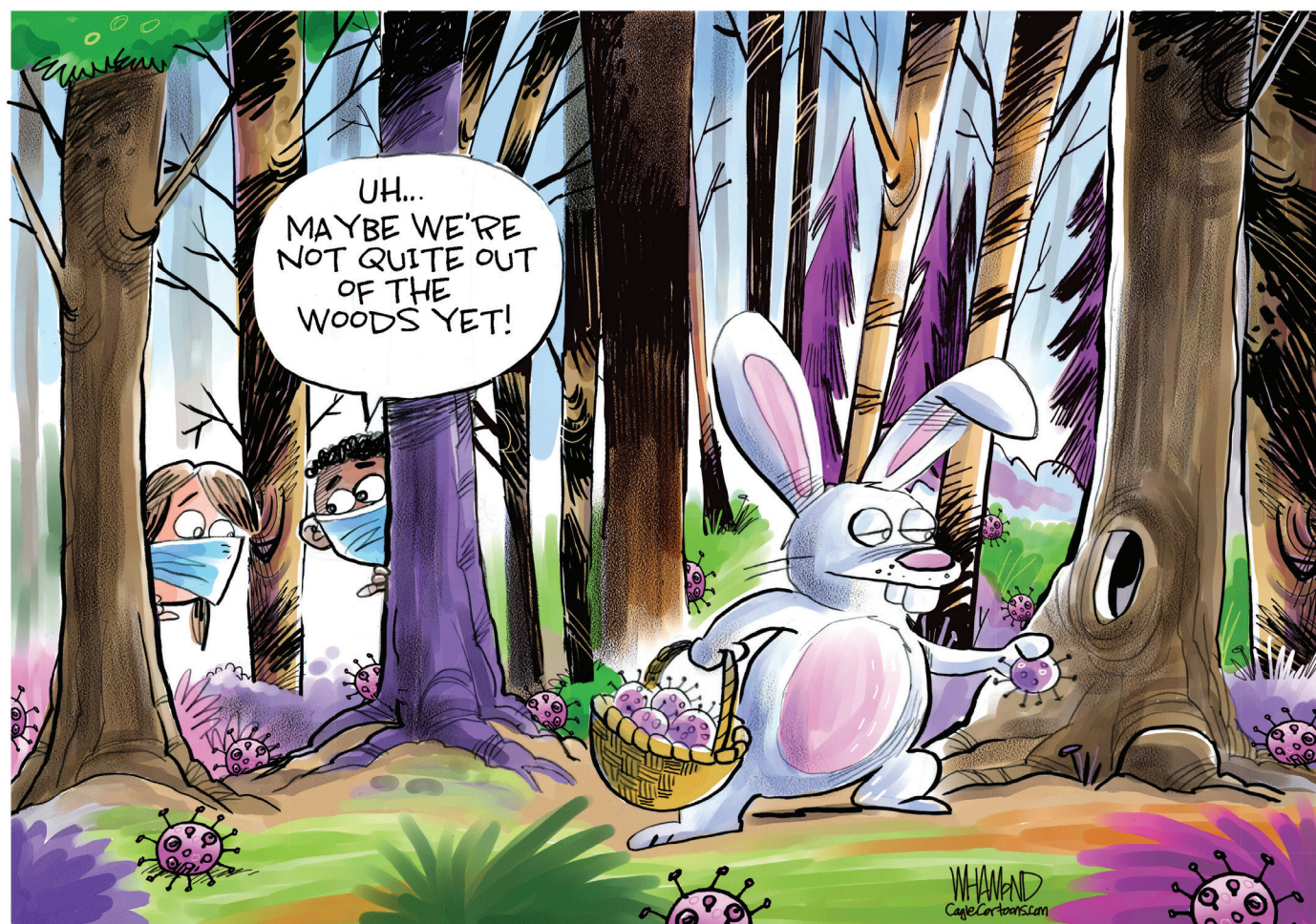
The mega-dairy's last owner was given the boot after erratic behavior and legal trouble that included allegations related to drugs, bribery and patronizing prostitutes. The farm went through bankruptcy, and racked up environmental violations that drew hundreds of thousands of dollars in fines. Now the new owner, Cody Easterday of Easterday Farms, has pled guilty to defrauding Tyson Foods and another company out of more than \$244 million by charging them for the care and feeding of cattle that didn't exist, allegedly to cover more than \$200 million in commodity futures contracts trading losses.

The dairy has potential, but it needs competent, ethical leadership committed to environmentally and financially sound practices. We're still waiting for that to happen.

A kick in the pants to conditions that seem to have started fire season early in Oregon this year, with wildfires already forcing evacuations in Central Oregon this week before March was even over.

A fire sparked up along the Oxbow Trail in Hermiston last week that was almost certainly human-caused, and a firefighter on scene said the department had already seen some fires from burn piles that got away from people.

Please, consider now the start of the summer fire season by being extra careful to follow all burn rules, never leave fires unattended, clear flammable brush away from buildings, use fireworks with caution, keep branches trimmed away from power lines and properly dispose of cigarette butts.



YOUR VIEWS

Vaccine success deserves many thanks

Having just received my first dose of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine, I am relieved and very, very grateful.

Thanks go to Aristotle for his insights regarding how to derive deductions and principles based on observation.

Thank you to Sir Francis Bacon for inventing the scientific method.

Shout out to Robert Koch for his postulates — the four criteria designed to establish a causative relationship between a microbe and a disease.

Great work Russian scientist Dmitry Ivanovsky and Dutch scientist Martinus W. Beijerinck for discovering viruses and demonstrating that viruses can — and do — cause disease.

Thank you Moderna and Hamilton Bennett — Moderna's senior director of vaccine access and partnerships.

And definitely thank you to Anthony Fauci. His perseverance and leadership in the face of anti-intellectual, know-nothing and dangerous leadership continues to amaze.

I am also particularly grateful to the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation for their thoughtful leadership, careful planning and delivery of vaccinations to tribal members, as well as to others outside of their immediate community. This has been deeply inspiring. Thank you.

And of course, thank you BiMart and their excellent pharmacist Itzel who helped me get an appointment and receive the vaccine.

Just as it takes a village to raise a child, it takes the long arc of scien-

tific inquiry to vaccinate a population, complimented by hard-working, dedicated professionals who work every day to make us all safer.

Thank you, all.

Andrew Picken
Pendleton

City Hall's housing investments fail to pay off

Over in Hermiston, privately financed construction of single-family houses is booming with 101 permits issued in 2020. This was driven by the strong growth in living-wage jobs, made possible by a plentiful supply of both water and power considered essential for strong industrial development, and the city's emphasis on providing the required infrastructure.

During the same period, Pendleton issued 77 single-family building permits, a 10-year record. A major portion of our local economy revolves around the hospitality sector, a sector that provides notoriously low-paying minimum wage jobs requiring more low-income housing. Projects the city has supported with financial backing; Pendleton Heights, the Ivanhoff Project on Westgate, conversion of the old Forest Service building to apartments, and the replacement of housing destroyed in the recent flood have all languished. Even the proposed 70-unit Horizon project is just that, a proposal. Low-income housing intended to replace units in Riverside destroyed in the flood are not due to be completed for 2-3 years. That provides little comfort for those who were displaced.

Accolades praising the selected contractor were followed by timetable for construction. Weeks, followed by months, and finally, in some cases, years passed with broken promises and little progress. These delays accompanied by rapidly escalating material prices will ultimately add thousands to the costs of the projects, and adequate financing will continue to be a major stumbling block despite past claims from City Hall that all was well.

Developers are in the business to turn a profit. Low-income housing projects are not a priority simply because, despite those generous incentives, a substantial return on their investment is just not there. The approach our city management has taken to spur housing development has just not worked. It mirrors the failure of "the road to nowhere" when the project began with no assurances from local utility providers that adequate service would even be available. It goes to the question that developers continue to ask, why make a major investment in a piece of property without the required infrastructure? After two decades, city industrial property along that road continues to sit undeveloped, lacking basic utilities.

City Hall has tied our future economic prosperity to the development of additional dog parks rather than the infrastructure sought by developers. Without a significant change in thinking at City Hall, the stagnation will continue.

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