

OUR VIEW

When every day is an emergency, oversight is required

Now more than a year on, state legislators across the country are taking steps to check the nearly unlimited emergency powers governors have assumed to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic.

It's about time.

A year ago, few of us would have envisioned an emergency that would prompt a governor to shut down large segments of the economy for undetermined lengths of time, to close private and public schools and colleges, to forbid religious services and private gatherings, declare some businesses "essential" and others not, to rewrite the terms of rental contracts, and restrict access to common health care procedures — all by decree and without the explicit consent of the people's elected representatives.

The COVID-19 outbreak presented a clear and present danger as it unfolded in the early spring. Little was known about the disease when it arrived in the United States, but the catastrophic experiences of victims in other countries — China, Iran and Italy in particular — demonstrated the need for some swift action to curb infections.

Most Americans understood the need and accepted, even if reluctantly, that the exigencies of the situation required that governors use the powers available to them under state law to meet the immediate emergency.

State laws generally give governors extraordinary powers to deal with emergencies. But in only a few instances did lawmakers have the forethought to put into place mandatory legislative oversight or time limitations on emergency declarations.

And in those states, such as Oregon, where the law gives legislatures discretionary authority to weigh in, few have cast votes to either affirm or challenge emergency declarations and the diktats issued in their name.

Until now. The *New York Times* reports there are now more than 300 proposals across the country that would curb gubernatorial emergency powers.

Good.

We appreciate the necessity for quick and decisive action in the early hours and days of an emergency. Governors must be able to restore a semblance of order and safety without delay. But as the days stretch into weeks, the people, through their representatives, must be heard.

No elected official should be allowed to rule indefinitely by decree. Emergency powers should be limited in duration and subject to mandatory legislative oversight. A benevolent dictatorship in all but name is nonetheless tyranny.

EDITORIALS

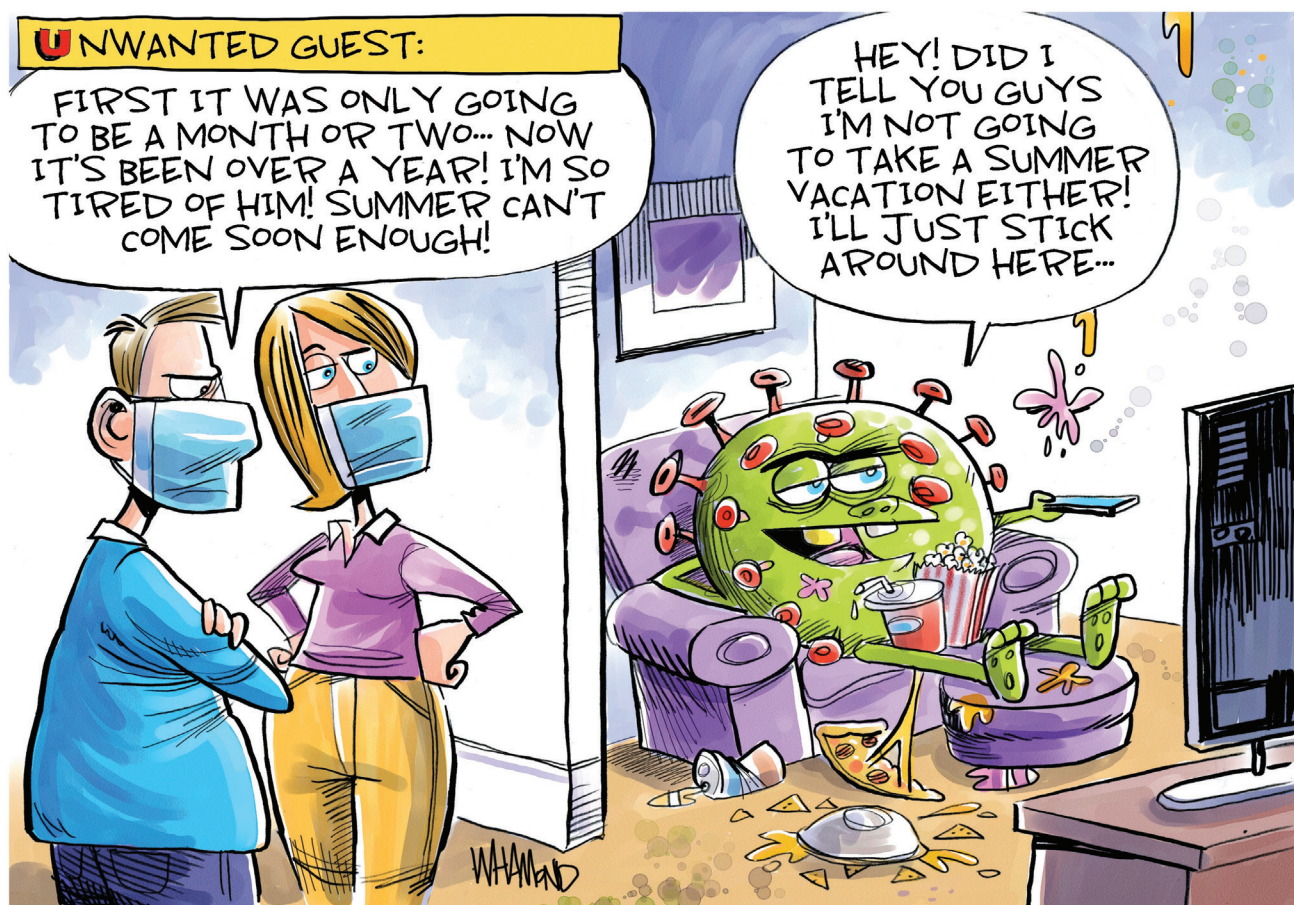
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LETTERS

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SEND LETTERS TO:

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Pendleton aviators play key role in World War II



BRIGIT FARLEY

PAST AND PROLOGUE

“April is the cruellest month,” wrote T. S. Eliot in his poem “The Waste Land.” April has certainly seen its share of tragedies through the centuries. But 79 years ago, on April 18, combat aviators training here at Pendleton Field helped lift the spirits of a town and nation in shock from a war they hoped never to see.

As the 1940s dawned in America, the world situation was perilous. Nazi Germany had conquered Europe, Mussolini's forces threatened North Africa and Japan was creating a colonial empire in the Pacific. Despite these looming threats, the ongoing Great Depression kept Americans preoccupied with domestic affairs. But President Franklin Roosevelt was quietly preparing the country for what he knew would come. It is safe to say few Pendletonians suspected that their town would play a key role in this process.

Aviation became a major priority for military planners as World War II began. First utilized in World War I primarily for reconnaissance, it had made great — and deadly — strides by 1940. During Nazi Germany's conquest of Poland and Western Europe, its air force had used bombing with devastating effect and supplemented frontal assaults with airborne infantry. As the U.S. ramped up its own efforts, the War Department searched for suitable training and operations facilities.

Pendleton got the nod on Nov. 29, 1940.

The city's designation as an Army Air Corps base surprised some locals, but it made sense. The city had a working airport,

having offered United Air Lines passenger service for a few years already, and it was close to major Pacific Northwest cities, yet far enough inland to avoid becoming a target for surprise attacks.

In the next few months, the base took shape — runways underwent expansion, construction of housing commenced and personnel began arriving, including members of the 17th Bombardment Group. Flight operations were well underway when the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Dec. 7, 1941. Just days later, Nazi Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S. The country grimly braced itself to fight on two fronts.

After Pearl Harbor, crews of the 17th group began to fly patrols along the Pacific Coast, hunting for Japanese submarines. In February 1942, they were abruptly transferred to Columbia Air Base in South Carolina. Officially, they would continue with patrols along the Atlantic Coast, but in fact something bigger was in the works. As British Prime Minister Winston Churchill had sent the Royal Air Force to bomb Germany during the Blitz, so President Roosevelt ordered a raid on Japan, to boost morale in the U.S. and shake the confidence of Japanese citizens in their leadership.

The man charged with this mission specialized in the difficult and daring. He had been the first pilot to cross the United States in 12 hours. Then-Col. James Doolittle recruited 79 Pendleton-trained volunteers for what he described only as a dangerous undertaking.

Unaware of the operational details, the crews likely wondered why they were practicing takeoffs from short runways. On April 2, the crews and 16 B-25 bombers were all on board the aircraft carrier Hornet and steamed west from San Francisco with Task Force 18. Only after departure did crew members learn that they would launch from the carrier to bomb the

Japanese mainland.

Grainy footage from the April 18 launch shows Col. Doolittle piloting the first of 16 heavy bombers into strong winds from the Hornet's deck, farther from Japan than planned owing to fear of detection. His comrades followed and headed for Japan, where they dropped bombs on industrial sites in Tokyo and nearby major cities.

The raid itself proved to be the easy part. Afterward, the crews were to go to China — a dicey task since Japan occupied much of China — to land near a safe Nationalist Chinese stronghold, but bad weather and depleted fuel supplies scrambled these plans. Doolittle and his crew ditched their bomber over Eastern China and fortunately reunited quickly, with the help of Chinese civilians. The other crews met various fates, but nearly all survived to be repatriated to the U.S.

Doolittle initially believed the raid had failed. Damage to Japan was minimal and the Americans had suffered losses of men and materials. The nation disagreed, newspapers announcing in bold, enthusiastic headlines the news of this daring mission. And when Pendleton learned that all the raiders, save Doolittle, had trained at Pendleton Field, citizens were elated — and newly hopeful that the tide of war would turn.

Pendleton's flyers had struck the first blow against Japan. As one of the speakers memorably declared at the city's celebratory parade, this “would not be the last rodeo” for Japan's opponents in the Pacific.

The road to Tokyo remained long and hard, but Pendleton's intrepid aviators had demonstrated it was not impossible.

Brigit Farley is a Washington State University professor, student of history, adventurer and Irish heritage girl living in Pendleton.

YOUR VIEWS

Wolfe the clear choice for UEC District 3

Umatilla Electric members have the opportunity to vote for a true leader and champion for local development in Bryan Wolfe.

All members who have received a ballot have until Saturday, April 10, to return it in order to make their voice heard in the upcoming election. Bryan has more than earned my support for another term on the board.

First, he has helped fulfill the mission of a cooperative — putting members first through fiscally responsible budget decisions that have resulted in larger annual membership checks. Bryan and the board have also ensured members have access to utilities and financial assistance through the difficult times of 2020.

Second, he has created a business-friendly environment by maintaining low electric rates, which allows both large- and small-scale developments to do business here. This investment will pay dividends well into the future.

And third, he has helped create a strong support system for the employees and line workers who serve our members.

The combination of these three priorities have made Umatilla Electric a stron-

ger organization, and Wolfe has my vote to keep up the good work.

**Brian Medelez
Hermiston**

Wolfe investing in the future for UEC

Bryan Wolfe has his priorities straight when it comes to Umatilla Electric's role in our community. He also has the long-term vision and track record of strong leadership to earn reelection to the UEC Board of Directors.

In Bryan's eight terms on the board he has championed local development and local members. He has played an integral

role in maintaining low rates to create a business-friendly environment, leading to billions of dollars in economic development. He has also ensured members receive the maximum returns in annual checks through wise financial investments.

Umatilla Electric is truly a member-owned cooperative, and Bryan puts those members first. As our region continues to grow, these investments will ensure we're all seeing the benefits of new development.

Bryan Wolfe has earned another term on the UEC Board of Directors. Please join me in voting for him.

**Bill Kirk
Hermiston**

LETTERS DEADLINE FOR MAY 18 ELECTIONS

The *East Oregonian* does not run endorsements of more than 400 words. The *East Oregonian* will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary. We run the letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to East Oregonian, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801. We will publish our last letters on Saturday, May 15. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is May 18.