

# Challenges remain as we head into new year



ANDREW CUTLER

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

A year ago, at about roughly this same time I wrote a column about how we as a region might be bloodied but we were unbowed.

Twelve months down the road I don't think I feel much different. I've worked for the past year at an unprecedented time for newspapers in general and for our local area in particular.

Yet, I've been struck during the past two years at the resilience of our region. Time and again — especially as COVID-19 raged — we've faced serious challenges and obstacles and overcome them.

I wasn't surprised, so much as impressed.

I think a firm foundation of grit and resilience is by now a hallmark of our region. I can point to numerous examples of this facet of our time, and I think it is what defines — and sets us apart — from other places in the nation.

We don't shy away from challenges. We take them in stride and that bodes well for the future.

There is no getting around the fact we face more challenges ahead. The omicron variant of the coronavirus appears to be ready to strike within the next couple of weeks and it will probably create another surge in infections.

We're lucky in the sense we've been warned it is just around the corner. That's helps for all of us to prepare. Still, I am confident the people who populate our great region will meet this challenge with the same kind of determination they



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faced when other crisis appeared.

Through it all, I can promise you that the staffs at our newspapers around the local area — in La Grande, Wallowa, Hermiston, Pendleton, Baker City and John Day — will be on station, working hard to give you the news you can use. We

will also be working to make sure you can get as much information as possible around any crisis that develops as fast as possible.

I want to be upbeat about the coming year, but I understand, as we all do, that challenges remain. Yet I believe we, as a region, have the

tools and the resolve to be successful.

*Andrew Cutler is the publisher/editor of the East Oregonian and the regional editorial director for the EO Media Group, overseeing the East Oregonian and five more newspapers in Eastern Oregon.*

# Dealing with loss and failure is a complex skill



SCOTT SMITH

THE EDUCATION CORNER

Quickly babies learn that if they are hungry, with a bit of crying, someone will provide nutrition. As they grow and develop, they promptly refine what response they need to give to resolve what is causing their unhappiness.

The child is beginning to create conflict resolution skills. Yet when they reach a certain point, we as adults often step in and “fix” situations so our children don't become frustrated and have a meltdown causing us possible embarrassment. Our problem-solving skills of avoiding a temper tantrum stop the child from developing this life skill of self-evaluation and resolution. Everyone being a winner does not help our children succeed in dealing with life disappointments independently.

It does teach them that adults will fix things, so they are happy. The older the child gets, the harder it becomes to change those behaviors. Starting young and teaching them how to deal with disappointments and evaluating how they might avoid the situation next time will

serve them the rest of their lives.

Taking the time to teach your children how to deal with loss or failure and not blame is a complex skill they will continue to refine all their life. At some point, you or they will have to deal with failure or loss.

Sooner is better than later. Stepping back and helping them evaluate why they lost or failed is that life-impacting teaching moment.

Asking them, “What could you do next time?” teaches them what they need to do to have success. It is much more challenging than it seems, but the results will have rewards beyond belief. It's a process and takes multiple situations to refine the understanding that failure or loss is actually learning.

As adults, how we deal with the failure of a situation models how our children respond when they experience a loss or failure. Most of us have gone to a school's science fair and observed the students' projects. The student who learns the most if

handled correctly often is the one with the sad-looking cardboard box with notebook paper notes and drawing taped on the box if handled correctly. This child was placed into the natural process of evaluating their project against others.

Therefore, learning to see what others did, they understand adjustments they might try their next project. This student now learns the process of assessing a situation to better the result next time. The more often we allow a child to experience this process, the more their abilities will be enhanced, and they will use these abilities daily.

Timing can be crucial. The night of the science fair when they see no ribbon is the best time to evaluate things. There is a natural process of learning when dealing with loss or failure. The absolute worst thing you can do is push the loss or failure onto someone else or something else.

Later, spend time to reassure your child that you are proud of them and ask them what they noticed about other science proj-

ects and what they might do differently next time. Life learning occurs when we allow the child to evaluate a situation and make life adjustments to prevent replaying the previous experience. Life learning also happens when participating in sports — asking, “What might you try next time to make things better,” cause the child to start the thinking process.

It's easy to blame others when things don't go as planned. The skill of self-evaluation over what the child might change next time activates the thinking process in the child. However, blame won't increase the child's ability to evaluate and improve their skills or change the result.

Looking for ways to acknowledge our children's frustration and learn how to deal with loss or failure is accomplished through questioning as a way of evaluation. Asking questions such as: “What do you think happened?” “What should we do differently next time?” helps build their understanding of evaluating and taking charge of situations in a healthy way.

Loss and failure are a part of life, yet we can control how we deal with it and make things better for ourselves and others.

*Scott Smith, doctor of education, is a 40-plus year Umatilla County educator and serves on the Decoding Dyslexia Oregon board as its parent/teacher liaison.*

# A few nuggets for spicing your holiday chatter



DICK HUGHES

OTHER VIEWS

As you gather 'round the holiday table, or seek to converse via Zoom, where will your small talk take you? Fear not, dear readers, for I offer the following nuggets of news for spicing your chatter.

Each tidbit is intriguing but doesn't merit a column on its own. The late Oregon columnist Ron Blankenbaker referred to such items as “pieces of string too short to save.”

Without further ado, and in no particular order ...

• When the Oregon Employment Department eventually rolls out its new technology, Oregonians will know whom to thank, or blame: Frances.

The IT project will handle unemployment insurance and the future paid family and medical leave insurance program. The project is long from completion. But last week officials announced, “Exciting news! The name of our new modernized system.” The name they chose honors Frances Perkins, who was President Franklin D. Roosevelt's long-serving secretary of labor.

• Mike Cully's demise is one of the strangest I can recall. The League of Oregon Cities' executive director got into a Twitter fight — about tipping fast food workers — with Beaverton Mayor Lacey Beaty. Really.

Beaty filed a complaint with the league about Cully's inappropriate and reportedly profane language. The league board accepted Cully's resignation last week. By

the way, Cully's profile on LinkedIn refers to his “Transformative Leadership.”

• By next summer, Oregon will have been under a COVID-19 state of emergency for more than two years. Last week, Gov. Kate Brown extended her pandemic emergency declaration through June 30.

• As of Thursday, Dec. 23, 12 Democrats and 11 Republicans had filed to run for Oregon governor. Former New York Times columnist Nick Kristof is the latest, filing last week as a Democrat. Kristof resides on the family farm outside Yamhill. But as was first reported by Oregon Public Broadcasting, state election officials want more information before determining whether he meets the three-year residency requirement.

The filings are for the May 17 primary election for the Republican and Democratic parties. They do not include independent candidates, such as former state Sen. Betsy Johnson.

Now that Oregon courts have upheld the congressional legislative redistricting maps, candidates can begin filing on Jan. 1 to run for U.S. representative, state senator and state representative. Filing continues through March 8. Unlike candidates for the U.S. House, legislative candidates must live within their district.

• What will the 60-member Oregon House look like in 2023? Women — 22 Democrats and 12 Republicans — are in the majority. The newest member is Rep. Jessica George, R-St. Paul, who was sworn in this month to replace former Rep. Bill Post, R-Keizer. He resigned after moving to Nevada.

There could have been a 35th woman in the House. The Marion County commissioners, all Republicans, selected Salem City Councilor Chris Hoy over three women applicants to finish the term of former Rep.

Brian Clem, D-Salem, who resigned. By law, an appointed legislator must be from the same political party as the person who left the office.

Meanwhile, a number of House members are forgoing reelection and choosing to retire or seek higher office. The most recent announcements include Rep. Sheri Schouten, D-Beaverton, who is retiring, and Rep. Raquel Moore-Green, R-Salem, who is running for the Senate.

Schouten's story is unique. She met her future husband, then-Washington County Commissioner Dick Schouten, on the campaign trail. Both were widowed. During then-Rep. Malstrom's first term in 2017, he proposed to her on the House floor. The next year, Gov. Brown officiated at their wedding.

• The Legislature officially has two new top managers. Interim Legislative Administrator Brett Hanes had “interim” removed from his title. Legislative Administration includes human resources, facilities, finance, information technology and visitor services. Amanda Beitel was named legislative fiscal officer, leading the nonpartisan staff that works on state budgets and analyzes the fiscal impact of legislation.

• Legislators participated from all over for a virtual meeting of the Emergency Board, which appointed Beitel. Sen. Bill Hansell, R-Athens, called in from the Walla Walla Regional Airport in Washington state. Rep. Rob Nosse, D-Portland, was on video from his car. (He said he wasn't driving.)

The Club for Growth Foundation has gathered statistics on individual legislators' attendance. The average state senator in Oregon missed 7% of floor votes during this year's regular legislative session, compared with 8% for state representatives. A few

lawmakers scored perfect attendance.

• Sen. Chris Gorsek, D-Troutdale, said the Oregon Task Force on School Safety will take a deep look into school resource officers next year. Gorsek opposes their unilateral removal from schools. He is a task force member, a former police officer and a longtime instructor of criminal justice at Mount Hood Community College.

• The new president of the Oregon Farm Bureau comes from the state's most populous county, Multnomah. Angi Bailey operates a Gresham nursery that specializes in Japanese maples. Elected this month to a two-year term, she has filled the presidential role since last spring when Barb Iverson stepped aside for health reasons.

• U.S. Rep. Peter DeFazio recently announced big money for Oregon from the federal infrastructure bill — \$662 million for improving roads, highways and bridges, and \$42 million for airports. U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici announced \$92 million from that same legislation to fix and expand drinking water and wastewater systems in Oregon.

• Thanks to successful petition drives, voters in Douglas and Klamath counties will consider May ballot measures that would take small steps toward the possibility of eastern and southern Oregon becoming part of Idaho.

• In its list of holiday-sounding places, the U.S. Census Bureau includes Unity. The town in Baker County has 40 residents. No mention is made of incorporated Christmas Valley in Lake County. The Census Bureau also says the U.S. has more bookstores than either home-improvement centers or department stores. Really.

*Dick Hughes has been covering the Oregon political scene since 1976.*