

OUR VIEW

Volunteers help make Umatilla County Fair a success

A big shout out to the volunteers who made the Umatilla County Fair such a success this year.

More than 400 people converged on the fair to lend a hand, and Fair Manager Angie McNalley summed up their influence when she said the fair could not happen without them.

The volunteers run the gamut in terms of professions, and they are active throughout the year to help make the county event a success.

We've often used this space to call for more volunteerism in the community because we know how big a difference one or two or even a dozen people can make in their community.

The fair is a great example of what occurs when like-minded people get together and help out — not for monetary gain but to just set a positive example.

In this world we live in, we need more positive actions rather than fewer, so it is always heartening to see what occurs when volunteers arrive.

Volunteering to help your community — in such venues as the fair — is the best way to make a positive impact. But the fair isn't the only place where local residents can help out. There are an array of causes and agencies and nonprofit organizations that could use assistance from volunteers.

The best thing about becoming a volunteer is how easy it is. That ease means someone can step into a volunteer spot and begin to make a difference immediately.

We frankly need more volunteers in our community. The need for assistance for a plethora of issues only grows with each passing month.

The Umatilla County Fair by almost any measure proved to be a rousing success. We think that is excellent because we believe in county fairs. They are a great gathering place every summer where children and adults can find entertainment and see the excellent work of those who are in FFA and 4H.

The volunteers make a difference, but without the great work of McNalley and her staff throughout the year the fair wouldn't be what it is every year. McNalley and her group remain dedicated servants to the fair and that pays real dividends for the residents of Umatilla County. Without a successful fair our county would lose something essential and timeless.



Enter the quantum realm



ALEX HOBBS
PASTURES OF PLENTY

When the first images of the James Webb telescope were released, our collective reaction was — justifiably so — awe. A point in time in which we could finally visualize the vast, recondite reaches of deep space. Gossamer clouds of nebulae unfolding before us, stellar nurseries where protostars accumulate dust against an infinite backdrop.

An occurrence in which if you stop to think about the consequences of the photos for too long, you're likely to spiral into a state of irreversible hyper analysis of universal foundations. Luckily, I have already started to spiral for everyone.

In the first half of the 20th century, scientists began to unspool the very core of the universe. Men such as Niels Bohr, Werner Heisenberg and Erwin Schrodinger peered into the subatomic world and saw chaos. The quantum realm. Derived from the Latin phrase for "how much," quantum physics and its subatomic particles are not governed by classical Newtonian physics.

An atom, the foundation of all life, is not beholden to the same forces as our human bodies. Like Schrodinger's famous feline thought experiment, they are able to simultaneously exist and not exist. In other words, they are able to inhabit multiple truths in a single moment.

But the consensus in the field of

quantum physics, despite the unimaginably esoteric nature of its subject, is that it is just a tool for calculating probabilities. That the quantum realm is merely an abstraction of a mathematical proof.

The fact that a wave function — an infinite collection of numbers used to predict the location of an electron that essentially disappears when measured — doesn't instill the same bewilderment in the very brains who made the discoveries is even more strange than subatomic behavior itself. Because to me, there is nothing more delightful than forging connections.

Despite the fact that a considerable number of quantum physicists posit that reality as we understand it is incompatible with the subatomic, humans are not so unlike the quantum realm (abstraction or not). While my body may be limited by the constraints of Newtonian physics, our brains seem very much capable of behaving subatomically.

That is to say, capable of holding multiple truths and understanding the paradoxical milieu in which we've found ourselves. The irony that our very human minds have such a difficult time grasping the weft of quantum mechanics is not lost on me. We are conceived, born, live and die with such little understanding of our universe that it underscores the true duality of human nature.

We are made of the same atoms borne of billowing nebulae yet fail to contextualize our place in the universe day in and day out.

Take, this as an example: The Federal Bureau of Investigation's "siege" of Mar-a-Lago. An event in

which Facebook patriots all over the country have rallied to the aide of our former president. Orbiting him like frenzied electrons around a bloated nucleus. Over the past few days, we've witnessed a fantastic display of mental gymnastics from the locker-up faction such as Marjorie Taylor Greene's "Defund the FBI" call to action. But one refrain that has been on repeat is that if the FBI can "do this" to a former president, "imagine what they can do to you."

I listen to Trump's children say this with cynical bemusement because I am wondering in what reality does the FBI not already do this to citizens? Certainly, no one person, president or not, should be above the law. And while this is a spectacular moment in history in which the Venn diagram of "incompetence" and "malevolence" is an overlapping circle, liberals would do well to pause before fan-girling the feds. Remember that an atom can theoretically exist in two places at once.

And politics aside, often our most compelling moments occur when we accept multiple truths. That often certainty and uncertainty can coexist. That we can hold these contradictions close to our chests without ripping any fabric of space-time. That we can rid ourselves of the black-and-white constraints of cultural hegemony if only we remember that all around us are inconceivably tiny particles, irrelevant to the laws of classical physics.

That we can choose not to choose.

Alex Hobbs is a former educator turned full-time homeschooling mom. She has a degree in political science.

YOUR VIEWS

B2H will allow Idaho to use Oregon's cleaner energy sources

Many, many years ago when Idaho Power proposed and pushed hard for the B2H line to come through Oregon to serve Idaho only, locals rose up against it and I was active in that cause. So many issues and many negative impacts have still not been addressed or resolved. At that time, I was in Meridian, Idaho, often and was taken aback by the mass development of large single-family homes on large lots often with mandated large lawns, no solar, heavy electric use and little sign of thinking about the future.

Reading many articles, Idaho does seem to be more conservation oriented, and yet with a date of having all clean energy by 2045 they are still behind Oregon, with our goal for clean energy of 2040. Much of what Idaho is counting on is using our cleaner electric sources by putting a 300-mile power line through Oregon private and public lands.

So many Oregonians have spent so much time and money fighting this proposal. In my opinion, Idaho has been so behind in protecting the environment that they have not earned any right to sabotage Oregon and so many special areas close to La Grande.

We are now, with good reason, subject to having our prop-

erties designated high risk for fire, which could impact insurance costs. Some of the B2H line construction and equipment will be in hard-to-access forested areas. Will it impact fire ratings? Do we really need another higher risk project tearing up our state mostly for Idaho's benefit and little that helps Oregon? Not in my opinion.

Maxine Hines
La Grande

Not a single Republican voted in favor of the American Rescue Plan

Regarding Echo's water and waste water system, I'm glad you're getting the millions of dollars in funding to solve your water problem.

But I want to remind you that not one Republican voted in favor of the American Rescue Plan but are now trying to take credit for it. Let's be clear it was initiated by President Joe Biden and not one single Republican voted for it.

Can you thank the president and Democrats for your windfall?

Richard Kelly
Umatilla

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SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801