

# Joseph keeps rolling backward on its streets

Some Joseph city officials should be excused if they happen to convey more than a little frustration lately over the latest setback in repairing Joseph's horrible streets. Voters' resounding rejection May 19 of two measures that would have addressed at least a reasonable chunk of an ever-growing backlog of needed work means the problem will now only worsen before it's relieved.

To be fair, most voters were mainly skittish over a provision that would have plugged property taxes into any hole that might have developed in the primary source for bond repayment: a charge of \$11 included in monthly utility bills. The provision required its own ballot measure (hence the presence of two measures pertaining to streets May 19 and not just one), and its margin of failure was far wider than that befalling its companion, the street bond itself.

People who've been rooting for the streets can only feel disheartened, though, when they compare results from the November 2014 election to what occurred last month. Last fall, presented a bond proposal of more than \$2.5 million, Joseph voters indeed rejected it, but only by about 56-44 percent, following only a minimal effort by city leaders to see it passed. The measure had even carried a hefty property tax hike!

In May, voters regarded a project significantly trimmed — to around \$1.3 million. They swatted it down more forcefully, 58-42, despite leaders' more concerted promotion effort this time.

That's not progress, it's lost ground.

In retrospect, perhaps Joseph's mayor and the council majority supporting the plan should have waged a dual campaign: one striving for the project's actual victory through passage of both the needed measures; the other seeking something less, a mere moral victory in approving the bonding measure alone.

The latter campaign could have represented a ready fall-back position. Although it would both anticipate and concede the whole project's defeat in this go-round (because bond approval is useless without the property tax collateral), it could have encouraged voters to affirm the project concept nonetheless in a non-binding way. That fall-back campaign's message could have been: "Defeat the property tax provision and current project if you must, but please vote yes on the bond anyway just to signal that you agree we need to fix our streets."

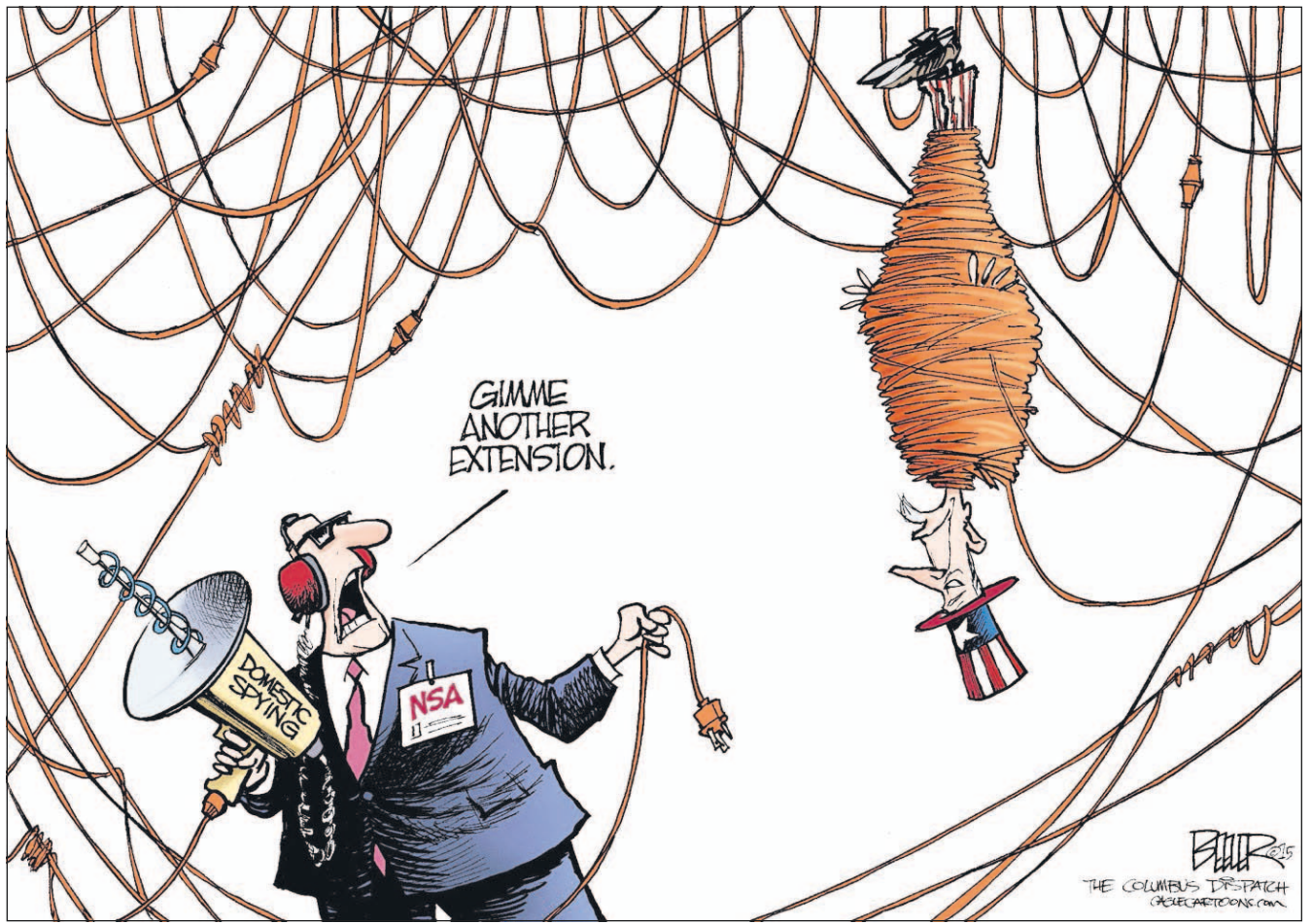
By now that's all by the boards, though, and what's most lacking at this moment is any clear sense of public "buy-in" to anything at all. A year and a half after Joseph government began holding special sessions for public input, and to further develop ideas with hope of eventually reaching public consensus on a plan for Joseph streets, such consensus appears more elusive than ever. The volunteers in Joseph government have been working hard on this thing for nearly two years, but much of the public "input" they're likely to receive on streets today will be brickbats, not constructive remarks targeting practical solutions.

Maybe what Joseph's council should do now is fold its arms and flatly declare there will be no fix of the streets because, frankly, there's just no way.

Then, perhaps, the public will rise up to prove the government wrong. Something like this is already happening in the Enterprise Cemetery District, where a grassroots group has taken charge of getting water to the grass, but that's the subject for another editorial. —RCR

## EDITORIAL

The voice of the Chieftain



# To get lost, hunt mushrooms

My sense of direction is pretty reliable. I start off in a direction until I sense I'm lost, then rely on sheer chance and stumbling around to get back on track. It's no good to panic when you get turned around out in the woods. It's happened enough to me that I stay calm, knowing I'm going to panic, then start zig-zagging and sooner or later get lucky and back where I need to be. So I guess I do panic, but I'm not overly panicked about being panicked while it's happening, if that makes sense. Of course that doesn't make any sense. That's why I own a GPS and bring five pounds of spare batteries any time I go farther than six inches from a road.

On the plus side, you really get to know a place when you criss-cross it in a sweaty lather, wondering if you're going to be spending the night out there. So certain terrain has been seared into my memory after crashing around and recognizing the same landmark for the fifth or sixth time. I use this horrible learning strategy to my advantage by concentrating my hunting and woodcutting in the same general area. I've been gradually getting lost in enough parts of that section of country that terror has imprinted a growing patchwork of memorable trouble spots on my brain. Eventually I'll recognize enough places where I got lost and my hair turned white that I'll be immune to getting lost anymore. It's not a perfect system, I admit. Pretty sure that's not how Lewis and Clark operated.

I heard a terrible story last week about friends getting lost on a mush-



## AND FURTHERMORE

Jon Rombach

room picking outing and the hairs on my arms started to get up out of their chairs because from the description I knew right where they were. It was in my stomping around lost grounds where I know just what it feels like to not know where you are like the back of my hand. These folks eventually got back to their rig, so rest easy. But get this. The morel mushrooms have been going crazy lately on account of all the rain and whatever other hocus-pocus controls wild mushroom production. Mushroomers are a secretive bunch, and in this case the only location mentioned to anybody back in town about where the group would be was very general and also very much an entirely different part of the county from where the group actually went. The ol' misdirection and then lose your own sense of direction trick.

I talked to Search and Rescue member and Wallowa County Sheriff's Deputy Paul Pagano. Turns out saying you're going one place but then not doing that is not recommended. Pagano had some solid common sense rules of thumb for any outdoorsy venture. Leave word with somebody about where you're off to. It's best if they're allergic to mushrooms so you can be honest. Also mention a time you plan on being back, stick to it and

check in. Bring a GPS, Spot or DeLorme satellite messenger device if possible. You can get a handheld GPS unit for under a hundred bucks. The only buyer's remorse I had after getting mine was not doing it years before.

Nobody plans on getting lost. We don't plan on getting flat tires either, but most people carry a jack, lug wrench and spare. So bring enough essentials to make an unplanned overnighter doable. Lighter. Water. Cell phone. Little bit of food. Little first-aid kit. Headlamp. Jacket. If you have extra room, maybe butter, garlic and a cast iron skillet so you can survive on your mushrooms. Perhaps a volleyball to paint a face on and become friends with if it turns into an extended stay.

Wandering around through the trees with your head down searching for mushrooms that might be anywhere is a great recipe for losing track of where you are and where you've been. Another great recipe is sautéed morels from who knows where you were in the woods, served with backstrap from a deer you wandered around looking for and in the process maybe got just a tiny bit turned around too. I call that dish GPS mignon.

So enjoy this morel boom while it lasts. Remember to enter a waypoint before traipsing into the forest and let's spare our Search and Rescue folks any outings of their own that could have been avoided.

Jon Rombach is a local columnist for the Chieftain who knows his way around getting lost.

# Popping 'Deflategate' hype

I wanted to write a column about "Deflategate" as far back as January, but I had to wait four months until the five million dollar Wells Investigation was completed before I could weigh in on its too-long anticipated findings.

Many of us who consider ourselves part of Patriots Nation prefer to call this media-hype scandal "DeHatergate," because our first line of defense against the rest of the football world is, "They hate us because they ain't us." In the midst of all the snow that has fallen since the AFC Championship game, it is worth remembering that the only thing that really should have wound up deflated after a 45-7 drubbing by the Patriots was the Colts' collective self-respect, especially considering that in the second half, with footballs that were all supposedly properly inflated, the Patriots dominated by 28-0.

What you will encounter in this article is not a summary of the 243-page Wells Report, nor the 20,000-word, thorough rebuttal that the Patriots issued on their website, wellsreportcontext.com (both of which I have read in their entirety), nor



## POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

John McColgan

a discussion of what might or might not have happened when a Patriots locker room attendant brought two bags of footballs into a bathroom before game time for less than two minutes for the purpose of what everyone seems to agree was "taking a leak," but rather an exposé of some of the weakest points in Ted Wells' case against the Patriots.

Although Wells casually dismisses any "sting operation" that might have been arranged before game time by the Indianapolis Colts and the NFL hierarchy, the facts in his report actually point in the opposite direction. Wells acknowledges that the Colts sent the NFL office a pre-game email that warned officials to be on guard that the Patriots might try to deflate footballs, essentially because "everybody knows they do it," and that NFL VP Dean Blandino advised head referee Walt An-

derson to be vigilant on this issue.

Given the Colts' preemptive complaint, three things revealed in the report become all the more mind-boggling: the fact that Wells instructed his research team, Exponent, to consider the Colts' footballs "the control group" and beyond any suspicion of tampering; that Walt Anderson failed to record one single measurement for any footballs for either team before kickoff; and that while Anderson's "best recollections" form the entire baseline for all pre-game football psi measurements, his recollection on one key point is discounted by Wells and Exponent when it proved inconsistent with their case against the Patriots.

Let me clue you in to just a few ways that the Colts could have tipped the psi scales in their favor, knowing in advance that their footballs would be used for comparison. They could have inflated their footballs toward the higher end of the acceptable range, which the report freely acknowledges that they did, to 13.0 - 13.1 psi.

See PATRIOTS, Page A10

# Urge USFS to release report

To the Editor:

It's been described as a shell game, it's been delivered as a saving grace for the "sustainability" of our nation, and it is so important that it has taken at least 5 forest supervisors and 8 years to complete but one thing is for certain, they don't want you knowing what you're getting in the travel management plan, and they surely do not want you having a true voice in the discussion.

Currently the Wallowa-Whitman National Forest is working on Subpart A of the plan, this part is where the forest service decides how many and what roads are needed (or more importantly not needed) to manage the forest. One would think the supervisor's office would hold meetings with the residents of the region to find out their specific

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

uses and needs and work that into the equation, unfortunately that isn't the case. I personally, have a request in from September of 2014 for the draft document outlining those minimum roads numbers, as of today, I still have no document.

Why you might ask, well it's pretty simple, because they don't want us to know. See, it's pretty hard to sneak something thru when everyone knows what you're doing, and so the Forest Service simply keeps us in the dark until they file the report with their regional office in Portland. They'll say, we asked them to

participate in the maps session and that should count for meeting their needs, but it doesn't.

Currently in Eastern Oregon exists a draft document of the Subpart A report, and the roads it intends to identify for closure. And by the end of 2015 the WWNF will release that plan to the regional office for acceptance.

The question is, will you allow them to do it without standing up and saying no?

If you have time, please send an email to [tmontoya@fs.fed.us](mailto:tmontoya@fs.fed.us) requesting the draft Subpart A report and tell him travel management planning cannot move forward until all uses are protected in the Subpart A report.

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