

Just say no to hiring chief prematurely

A not-funny thing has apparently happened on the way to the City of Enterprise openly communicating with residents about their police force, which, as everyone knows, has been under review.

It seems the city has abandoned that communication goal, or at least postponed it until a time when it won't be of much use to citizens.

Former police chief Wes Kilgore resigned his position in March. Within weeks, city officials were engaging the Oregon Association Chiefs of Police as their primary guide through a process to move the city forward in an orderly manner. The idea — or so the city led us to believe, early on — was to identify any shortcomings in the current departmental setup, and from that point councilors and the mayor could make an informed decision — either to reaffirm the city's longstanding commitment to maintain a police force, or to begin more seriously exploring the obvious alternative, contracting with the sheriff's office.

Meantime, on the advice of the association, the city would advertise the police chief opening because it would give Enterprise a ready pool of qualified candidates — sparing the city an unnecessary delay, if and when it came time to hire someone.

Pendleton Police Chief Stuart Roberts, who led the association's departmental review for Enterprise, recently completed his report. He was to formally present it at a special meeting of the city council hastily scheduled for Wednesday, July 15. On that meeting's agenda: an oral report from Roberts, followed by an executive session, after which the council would return to open session to approve the "final written document to be released for public review."

For reasons unknown to us, the city canceled that special meeting. We're also now informed that officials plan to proceed with hiring a new chief without explaining anything to the public first.

Mind you, Pendleton Chief Roberts continues to say he sees no reason why the city couldn't follow a more open process, and he remains available to take part in a public meeting, if Enterprise's government so desires.

So why won't our councilors and mayor take him up on that offer?

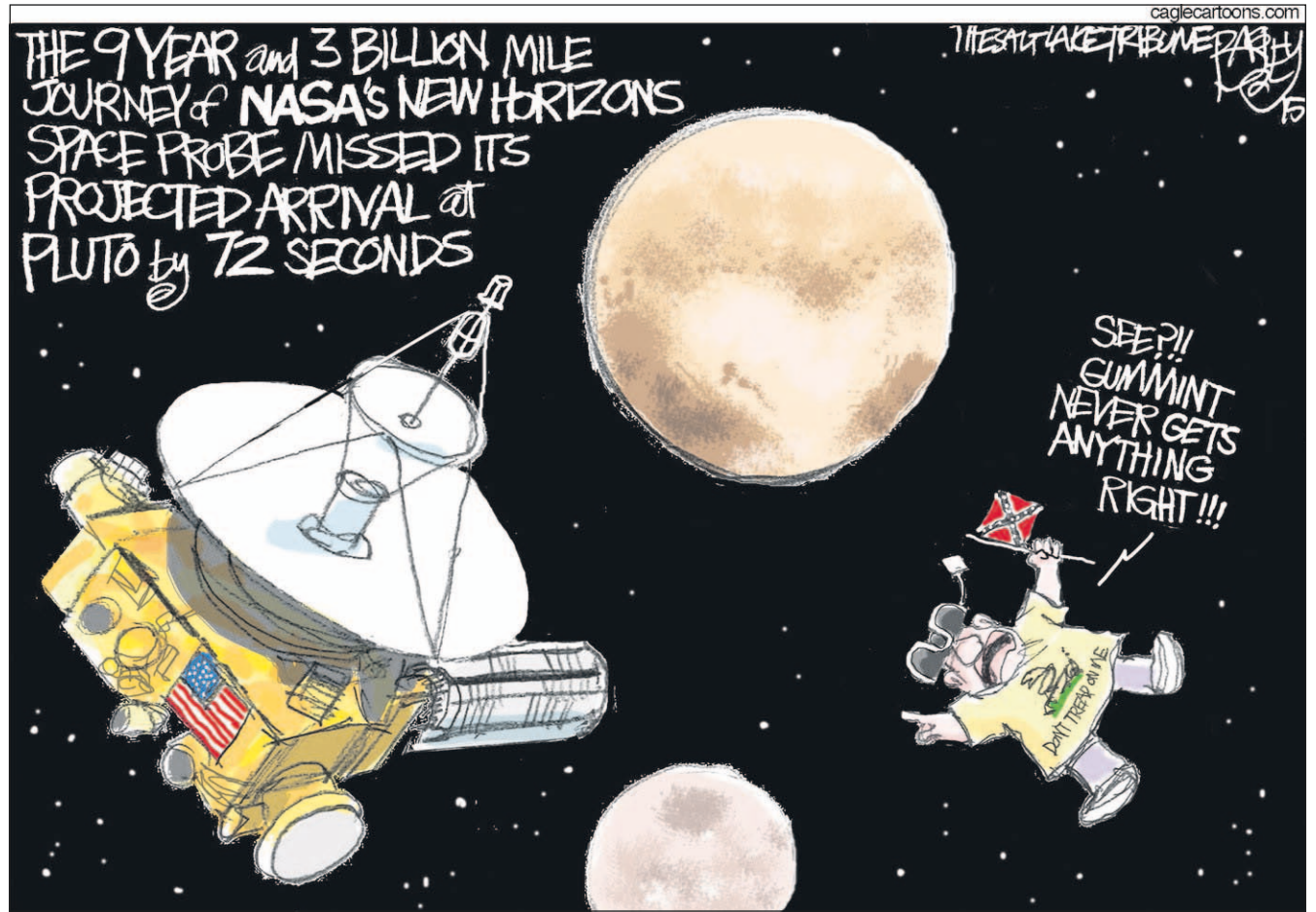
During the past four months, the tone of city officials' statements about the police department points to a de facto default position of keeping the department going. It's also no secret that Sheriff Steve Rogers isn't particularly anxious to add the county seat to his office's primary enforcement duties.

But, so what? No matter how thoroughly city officials may have already convinced themselves that hiring a new chief is the right thing to do, they're mistaken if they think they are absolved from providing residents a clear picture of what's being bought with local property tax dollars. This is especially true in view of the fact that many residents already have the impression — probably accurate — that they're paying more to maintain a city department than they would in a contract for county enforcement services.

Maybe the city's default support of its own department is justifiable, but if it is, city officials haven't troubled themselves to make that case — now, at the precise moment the case is needed. And unless Enterprise government earnestly makes the attempt, we don't think residents should support any move to hire a new chief.

—RCR

EDITORIAL
The voice of the Chieftain

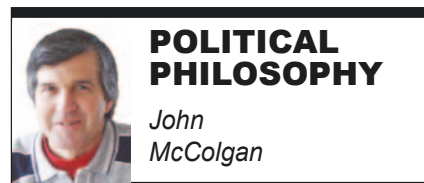


Expecting stocks to cool off

My modest endeavors as a stock market investor began through intermediaries in 1997 during my one-year stint as a schoolteacher. Like millions of other public employees, I chose the "safe" route of allowing professional mutual fund managers to nurture my little nest egg of about \$100/month, which we carefully set aside for one year. About 12 years later, through their shrewd choices (and yearly fees), these pros were able to hand me back a grand total of about \$1,100, which left me somewhat unimpressed by their financial acumen.

In March 2009, after having seen the stock market plunge for more than a year-and-a-half, I felt more optimistic than most people about that moment for investing. So I waited for four consecutive positive days on Wall Street, gave a nod of approval to the newly adopted stimulus package, held my breath, and opened a Scottrade account where I chose stocks myself. Four-and-a-half years later, that account had increased by an average annual rate of about 2%, which was fine by me.

Encouraged by my early success as a manager of my own Wall Street destiny, I converted what I will call my "Oops" fund (named for the famous rocket scientists who managed my retirement account from 1997 until February 2010) into a second Scottrade rollover account. That account, with mostly different stock selections, grew at an annual rate of about 12% from early 2010 until late 2013. Not being greedy by nature, I was also satisfied by that return, since it was a marked improvement over the "I-should-have-kept-it-under-a-mattress" standards



set by my former mutual fund managers.

Since October 2013, more as a consequence of my parents' lifelong frugality than my own financial wizardry, I have been able to set aside additional allotments into my IRA rollover account. My annual returns since then are more difficult to calculate, because I have added chunks of money three times during 2013, 2014, and 2015. But if I just compute all the money I put in against the value I have now, the annual increase comes to about 10% during that period.

But before any reader decides that all this data might mean that I'm pretty good at investing, I would discourage that thought. The overall rates of return in my accounts have mostly mirrored the increases of the stock market as a whole since March 2009. Currently, the Dow Jones average and other major indexes are all nearly triple what they were worth during that low point of the market crash.

Throughout this recent six-year period of historic growth on Wall Street, there have been plenty of Doomsday prophets whose ideological opposition to President Obama blinded them from reaping the benefits of investment gains. During that same time, with an optimistic outlook about the economy, I have derived a lot of fun and satisfaction from choosing stocks and watching my accounts increase.

So it might surprise you to learn that a few months ago, I began to implement a new strategy for my stocks. I have begun selling. In fact, I have sold most of the stock I owned, although the returns are still in cash in those same Scottrade accounts alongside my remaining stocks. Why, you might ask, would an optimist and a cheerleader for President Obama, sell now, rather than buy?

Alas, what goes up must come down, and six-and-a-half years is a solid run for a stock market increase. I did some casual research recently, and I noticed that since World War II, nearly every significant drop in the stock market has occurred either during a presidential election year or during the latter half of the prior year.

The simple explanation for that phenomenon might be that investors dislike uncertainty. The conspiracy theorist's translation would be that greedy billionaires occasionally cash in their chips.

Back in the days when I used to watch "Who Wants To Be a Millionaire?" I enjoyed yelling this unsolicited advice at the contestants: "Take the Money!" Having made solid gains during this prosperous era on Wall Street, I am content now to have converted most of those gains into cash so that I can wait for the next big market drop before I reinvest.

I'm sure I will be wincing and second-guessing myself whenever one of my old stocks goes up again. But as my own frugality trumps my optimism, this is my new, "safe" strategy moving forward.

John McColgan writes from his home in Joseph, except when he is on vacation.

Walden and staff falling short

To the Editor:

I personally will never vote for Greg Walden again, EVER!!! He refuse to act and keeps moving staff in and out of his La Grande office that will not act upon the Forest Service to enact change on the planning process that targets to restrict and remove our motorized access from our mountains.

If you vote for the man you are openly supporting your restriction and closure from the mountains and I would hope you would share this with everyone from Joseph to Medford.

I've made this public for a reason, share it wide and share it far. The man keeps running staff thru his La Grande office that has no clue as to what's going on, and we keep having to start from scratch because of Greg's ... poor leadership.

The man is so spineless, so useless, that he can't even hold one simple agency like the US Forest Service accountable, or find out what they are planning for the people of Eastern Oregon's access to their mountains. It's either that, or he's actually helping them thru assisting in the stalling or releasing the information.

I AM DONE!!! and I hope you will be too.

John George
Bates

Bike lane silliness

To the Editor:

They painted the road lines in Enterprise last week, and, while they were painting I noticed the bike signs going past the Hurricane Creek Highway turn-off and to the edge of town on 82, past the baseball field and bridge, right to where the wide shoulder narrows and any biker, if he or she follows the signs and stays off the highway, will be on six inches of asphalt — maybe — and then some gravel.

I thought, since the newly paved Hurricane Creek had a nice wide marked shoulder that is a dream to ride a bicycle on, there had been some big mistake. I turned around and caught a painter, who said that he didn't know about Hurricane Creek, but he was painting where the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

plans said he should. I couldn't find an ODOT truck, so marched into the County Commissioners' office, where Susan Roberts told me that although Hurricane Creek had extra wide shoulders, suitable for walking, biking, and horseback travel, it was not a "designated bike path," so could not get the symbols.

This is all, in my mind, just the latest chapter in bike lane silliness. I went to one meeting a few years ago, and made the case for bike lanes from the last mile into Joseph on 82, from Walker Lane, and the first two miles out of Joseph on the Imnaha Highway, to Dobbin Road. Throw in, I said, a bike path from Joseph to the foot of the Lake, and it would all make for safety for bikers and walkers going from town to the Lake, and would safely open up miles and miles of biking from Joseph and, given Hurricane Creek, from Enterprise, and make it safer for the increasing number of cross country bike travelers and Cycle Oregon riders to negotiate the last few turns towards Imnaha and the loop road.

But the great interest was for a bike lane from Joseph to the head of Wallowa Lake. I asked Mike Hayward about it a couple of weeks ago, and he said that the talk had been about that Joseph - Lake run for years, so he was all OK with doing a study on the project.

Well, the study was done, and showed that it would be a \$20 million trail, and, that might, you'd think, end the matter and turn us back to more sensible projects. But there are apparently still dreams of it — as there is continuing opposition from lake-side property owners. Maybe the engineers like the challenge of it!

Meanwhile, the good bike road from Enterprise to Joseph — Hurricane Creek — is a secret to outsiders. May they find a local who tells them the secret, or stay clear of roaring cars and trucks, tractors and hay-haulers out of town on 82. And when they get to Joseph pedal carefully toward the loop road that first couple of

miles — more cars, trucks, hay wagons, etc. — until they reach the place where visibility is longer and traffic spread out. Wallowa Lake visitors who pack their bikes on the back of their RVs can pedal the hills at the head of the Lake, or make a hard ride or haul their bikes into town and stumble onto Dobbin, Swamp Creek, Tenderfoot Valley, and miles more. Some do.

But for now, the cheapest and safest thing to do would be to erase all the bike markers going out of Enterprise after the Hurricane Creek turnoff. At least then riders might stop and ask and, designated bike lane or no, enjoy a safe, pleasant, mostly quiet ride to Joseph.

Rich Wandschneider
Joseph

Trump right to raise immigration issue

To the Editor:


They can build fences to keep out people at the White House, and to keep the prisoners in prison. Why can't they build fences at our border to keep out illegal immigrants.

I am glad Donald Trump has entered the race to at least bring up some of our problems.

Geraldine Eckel
Wallowa

Letters to the Editor are subject to editing and should be limited to 275 words. Writers should also include a phone number with their signature so we can call to verify identity. The Chieftain does not run anonymous letters.

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