

Reasons for being thankful all around

This week as we all gather with friends and family for Thanksgiving Day, we'd like to take a moment to express our gratitude for several of the great aspects of Wallowa County life.

We, the Chieftain staff, feel blessed to work with, and for, such a generous and caring community.

Perusing recent issues of the Chieftain, it's easy to find examples of this pervasive attitude.

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

We're thankful, for example, to have people such as Lead Officer George Kohlhepp and the rest of the officers at the Enterprise Police Department, who've been working extra duties since the resignation of former police chief Wes Kilgore way back in March. Picking up some slack for a brief period is one thing, but the city is eight months into its search for a new police chief and we learned this week that the process is back to square one. Thank you all for stepping up for your community in a big way.

Of course, we're grateful for all our local veterans and the sacrifices they've made for our benefit. But we're also grateful to live in a county that does so much for those local veterans. We've recently published stories about Divide Camp, which promotes healing from the effects of war through outdoors activities such as hunting, fishing and camping. And we were proud come along when the Wallowa Valley Quilters Guild delivered several of their quilts to local vets on the eve of Veteran's Day. These are just two examples of this county's insistence that we never forget the sacrifices that have been made.

And how many communities can come together in a single evening and raise more than \$70,000 for much-needed medical equipment? That's just what happened Nov. 14 during the 20th annual Healthy Futures Dinner Auction at Cloverleaf Hall in Enterprise. We were there, and the generosity of those in attendance and others who either helped with the event or contributed in other ways was palpable. It was a shining example of philanthropy at the community level, and it was a proud night for Wallowa County.

We know we've only scratched the surface. Look all around and you'll see the warmth and kindness that defines our communities. As an added bonus, we just happen to live in one of the most beautiful places in the world, a slice of heaven and a landscape of grandeur. And we're thankful for that as well.

Lastly, we wish to express our gratitude for our loyal readers and advertisers. You're the reason we do what we do. Thank you for allowing us into your homes and businesses and helping us to chronicle this great county.

Have a happy and safe Thanksgiving.



Nate Beeler / The Columbus Dispatch

Want a part-time job that earns \$174K?

Senators, congressmen will work two days per week in 2016

GUEST EDITORIAL

By The Daily Astorian

Want a part-time job that earns \$174,000 with generous benefits and a killer pension? Run for Congress.

Writing Nov. 13, Dana Milbank of The Washington Post reported that Congress will meet only 111 days in 2016. That is two days per week. They will spend the rest of the year using their generous travel allowance to stay in touch with the rest of us.

There was a time when congressmen and senators came to Washington by car or train or even air, did their work over a sustained work period lasting months and then went home

for various recesses, and especially in summer when Washington's heat is beastly.

Two things changed that. Central air conditioning and the commercial jet. Air conditioning made summer palatable. And the jet allowed members to come and go with impunity.

These days, congressmen love to crow about not living in Washington. No, indeed, they proclaim to prize their long weekends at home, being where the real people are. The problem is that a deliberative body such as the House or Senate, only does business when it deliberates, in a chamber in Washing-

ton, D.C. But that's what these men and women seldom do these days.

Because of their frequent rush for the door, congressmen and senators lack the social relationships their predecessors enjoyed. Lacking real relationships, they treat each other like abstract objects. They have much deeper relationships with the narrowly-focused interest lobbies and ideological think tanks. They also have closer relationships with big campaign donors. And that brings us to the phenomenon of the permanent campaign season and year-round fundraising.

One of the best pieces of advice that any employee receives is to make yourself essential to your employer. The men and women of Congress have dug themselves a hole by not facing the pressing needs of the nation. They are inessential.

Modern insights from an ancient text

By John McColgan
Guest Column

GUEST COLUMN

John McColgan

In a recent Republican debate, U.S. Sen. Marco Rubio of Florida made these claims in the context of his pitch for an increased commitment to vocational education: "Welders make more money than philosophers. We need more welders and less philosophers."

It had been my intention in this column to present arguments that included economic data that suggest that Sen. Rubio's first remark was factually inaccurate, and then to proceed to a more philosophical analysis disputing his conclusion. But because I can claim to be both a tradesman with 38 years of experience as a carpenter/contractor and a "philosopher" by virtue of my B.A. in that discipline, I chose to mull over Sen. Rubio's remarks for a few days before putting my thoughts to paper.

Last night, remarkably — and I believe, providentially — as I was settling into bed, I moved along in my reading to the next chapter of Ecclesiasticus, a deuterocanonical book that is accepted in the Catholic Old Testament but is not included in Protestant versions of the Bible, and was not regarded as scriptural by the ancient Jewish Synagogue. As such, it might be viewed by some readers as a wisdom writing or a work of philosophy. The book was written in Hebrew and was translated into Greek by the author's grandson in 132, B.C. It

was attributed to Jesus Ben Sirach, and so it is sometimes called the Book of Sirach in Catholic versions of the Bible.

Included in Chapters 38 and 39, which were the next chapters that God had laid in my path that night, were the following passages that provide a far more thoughtful and elegant response to Sen. Rubio than I would have mustered on my own:

"So it is with the blacksmith sitting by his anvil. He considers what to do with the pig iron. The breath of the fire scorches his skin, as he contends with the heat of the furnace. He batters his ear with the din of the hammer. His eyes are fixed on the pattern. He sets his heart on completing his work, and stays up putting the finishing touches."

"All these (workmen and craftsmen, such as the plowman, blacksmith and potter) put their trust in their hands, and each is skilled at his own craft. A town could not be built without them. There would be no settling, no traveling. But they are not required at the council. They do not hold high rank in the assembly. They do not sit on the judicial bench, and have no grasp of the law. They are not respected for culture or sound judgment, and are not found among the inventors of maxims. But they give solidity to the created world,

while their prayer is concerned with what pertains to their trade."

"It is otherwise with the man who devotes his soul to reflecting on the Law of the Most High. He researches into the wisdom of all the Ancients. He occupies his time with the prophecies. He preserves the discourses of famous men. He is at home with the niceties of parables. ... He enters the service of princes. He is seen in the presence of rulers. He travels in foreign countries. He has experienced human good and human evil."

"If it is the will of the great Lord, he will be filled with the spirit of understanding. He will shower forth words of wisdom, and in prayer give thanks to the Lord. He will grow upright in purpose and learning. He will ponder the Lord's hidden mysteries."

"If he lives long, his name will be more glorious than a thousand others, and if he dies, that will satisfy him just as well."

"All the works of the Lord are good, and He will supply every want in due time. You must not say, 'This is worse than that,' for everything will prove its value in its time. So now, sing with all your heart and voice, and bless the name of the Lord."

I invite you to read further in Ecclesiasticus, and to ponder for yourselves.

John McColgan majored in Philosophy as well as Government at the College of William and Mary. He writes from his home in Joseph.

Permanent homes for more of Oregon's children

Each year, November is recognized as National Adoption Awareness Month. This year the nation will focus on the adoption of older youth from foster care. In the United States today, there are more than 108,000 foster children waiting to be adopted. Nearly 45 percent of these waiting children are age nine or older. For many, age creates challenges in finding them a loving, permanent home.

The statistics are similar in Oregon. Child welfare workers find it difficult to find foster placements and adoptive homes for older youth. In 2014, 836 children in foster care were adopted. More than 75 percent of the adoptions were children 8 years old and younger.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Only 33 of those adoptions were for youth older than age 14.

Studies show that youth who are adopted from foster care are more likely to finish high school, go to college and be more emotionally secure than their peers who remain in, or age out of foster care. That's why finding permanent, loving families for these children and youth is so important. Adoptive parents, just like any other parents, provide the essential guidance children need to successfully navigate a strong and successful path to adulthood.

This November, we want to stress the importance of creating lifelong connections for young people, before they age out of foster care. Like all youth, children who experience foster care need stability and support as they age into adulthood and throughout their lives. Please ask yourself if you have room in your home and heart for a foster youth. To learn more about foster care adoptions please call 1-800-331-0503 or visit Oregon DHS, Adoption Services: <http://www.oregon.gov/dhs/children/adoption/pages/index.aspx>.

Lois Day,
Oregon Child Welfare Director
Salem

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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P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.
Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

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MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

PUBLISHER **Marissa Williams**, marissa@bmeagle.com
EDITOR **Rob Ruth**, editor@wallowa.com
REPORTER **Stephen Tool**, stool@wallowa.com
REPORTER **Kathleen Eilyn**, kellyn@wallowa.com
NEWSROOM ASSISTANT **Elliott Seyler**, eseyley@wallowa.com
AD SALES CONSULTANT **Brooke Pace**, bp@wallowa.com
GRAPHIC DESIGNER **Robby Day**, rday@wallowa.com
OFFICE MANAGER **Cheryl Jenkins**, cjenkins@wallowa.com

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