

# Who needs more stuff?

By Tim Trainor  
Wallowa County Chieftain

It's almost Christmas, and many Wallowa County procrastinators — myself included — are still searching for the perfect gift.

Perhaps they are window shopping downtown. Perhaps they are working late nights in their shop or quilting chair to finish something beautiful for someone special.

But here's some radical advice this gift giving season: Don't do it.

**EDITORIAL**

*Voice of the Chieftain*

Much of the developed world has hit "peak stuff." Many Americans, and many people all over the world, have too much of everything. And our future happiness depends on realizing that.

This is, relatively, a good thing. We're a materially sufficient society. And it's not necessarily doom and gloom for many retail businesses, or the economy of the future. In fact, some of the world's biggest makers of "stuff" are embracing the idea that the world doesn't need more of that.

NPR reported earlier this year about hitting peak production, peak supply, and peak demand. Beef and sugar sales, for instance, cannot conceivably go any higher. We're also — as a species — coming up against peak population, a hazy number that scientists and philosophers have been debating for centuries.

Still, there has to be a limit somewhere — whether it's humans or candle holders.

"The use of stuff is plateauing out." IKEA executive Steve Howard told NPR last year. IKEA, of course, is a company that sells nothing but stuff — often cheap, easily replaceable stuff.

It reminds me of George Orwell's classic dystopian novel "1984." The government-controlled world of the future is in a perpetual state of war as a means of psychological control, but also as a means to destroy things. Because destroying things eventually requires rebuilding, and that requires the making and buying of stuff. An endless cycle.

Yet perhaps it is cycle we can break.

Those weirdo Europeans, who have a lot more old stuff than we do, are thinking about ways to deal with the glut.

The "Library of Things" in London is one answer — a sort of cooperative where people pay to rent everything from a carpet cleaner to a rake, from a backpack to a garden hose.

It helps city residents save money and save space, and it saves hundreds or thousands of duplicitous things from being purchased and thrown out and purchased again.

For a world that continues to see human populations increase — and steadily migrate from rural spaces into cities, — space is a real concern.

Consider that the U.S. self storage industry generated \$27.2 billion in revenues in 2014, according to the *Wall Street Journal*. The newspaper noted that the industry has been the fastest growing segment of the commercial real estate industry for the last 40 years. About 90 percent of the country's storage units are in use, and about 10 percent of American households currently rent one.

If you have space, Americans are likely to fill it with stuff.

Still, it is important to note that there are plenty of people out there, in this country and in others, who are in real need. They lack the stuff that make a life complete.

The Christmas season is perhaps the best time to think of them, and donate and give of ourselves and our dollars. A toy can brighten a child's day, but food can give more deeper pleasure and a scholarship can brighten a lifetime. An hour of your time, a long-term mentorship and sustained neighborly care, can deeply and powerfully impact a person's life. Teaching your child a family recipe or taking a friend to your favorite secret, snowy trail can fire up new synapses in the brain. Those experiences can nourish the soul and open a new route to happiness. Giving the gift of time, even to yourself, can cure many ails.

Christmas is a spiritual holiday. And while everyone who will wake up Christmas morning to a BMW with a bow on it is bound to feel some real joy, a longer and deeper peace can be found in having and needing less. And besides, renting that BMW means you don't have to change the oil in the middle of the winter.



Trainor



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# Thinking about women, wishing you all a special holiday season

It seems that this is a proper time of year to think about women and their journeys—especially the particular journey of women in America and those individual journeys being traveled by American girls and women today.

Christianity has beloved Mary, the mother of Jesus, at its center. That, at times, has been cause for controversy — humankind can always find reasons to differ—with some adoring the Virgin Mary and others claiming such adoration takes away from the man at Christianity's center. I remember a book from some distant past which traced changing European views of Mary — and thus of women and society — through hundreds of years of Mary portraits.

I can't think of any contemporary portraits, though I am sure there are some, even here in digitized America. Our artists have other, more secular, concerns. Movies and magazine ads, online catalogs and videos and television specials show a wide range of images of women. And show that there is controversy about how women are celebrated and exploited. How should we even LOOK at women? What should we see? Mother? Mistress? Career woman? Helpmate? President?

Although many girls and women see, mimic, or reject and play off of these images, there is an implicit assumption that men are hovering in the background — once again — writing the ads, designing the clothes, producing the movies, making the decisions. Despite women favoring Hillary by 12 points, a like 12 point margin of men favoring Donald Trump pushed him to the Presidency. (OK, I know that women carried Barack Obama in 2012 — that's another column!



**MAIN STREET**

Rich Wandschneider

Of course women did not get to vote for presidents in this country until 1920! At its founding, only white male property owners voted. Women's right to inherit and own property came later. And then the vote. And then rights to equal treatment in employment and education. So that today, the number of women doctors and lawyers is about equal; veterinarians are predominantly women, and women have recently gained the majority of graduate school spots. Men still predominate in financial and technical fields.

And still own most of the farms and ranches. This was a matter of discussion in the class I taught again this year in La Grande. On a day given to discussion of gender issues in the region, wildlife biologist — and interim director of Oregon State's Ag program at Eastern Oregon University — Pat Kennedy talked about women in agriculture and natural resources. About illustrious women who traveled as husbands' helpmates in academia until the 1970s, when the first women were hired in wildlife, her field, on their own. Our class of 32 range management, animal sciences, and natural resources majors was, by the way, split exactly 16 and 16. And a quick look tells you that the same is true in university agricultural programs across the country.

Pat asked the class to consider the question of ownership of farms and ranches, where women still comprise a very

small percentage. Why?, she asked, and I repeated the question on the final exam: "Given the Civil Rights Act and Title 9, and in light of our class discussions, why do you think are there so few women owner-operators of farms and ranches today? What special obstacles do women face?"

Many students volunteered that in their own families, parents had an equal working relationship, although the farm remained in the father's name. Almost all pointed to physical strength differences between most women and men as an issue, even in today's agriculture. Many pointed to expanded career opportunities for women in other places taking them away from the family farm, and almost all cited 'tradition.'

But the most interesting answer, to me, was the business of family name. With women marrying and taking a different surname, a farm or ranch would not remain the "family" farm or ranch. This notion is probably not even articulated by the moms and dads, granddads and grandmas out there, but my survey of 32 bright young people thinking agriculture put it on the list.

Which got me to thinking that one of the most important legacies of the women's rights movement in America as far as agriculture is concerned might just be women retaining their maiden names at marriage.

So there's a hint to all of you young wannabe farmer and rancher girls in Eastern Oregon — hold onto the name!

And while you're at it, to all the girls and boys, moms, dads, grandmas and grandpas out there, have some great holiday discussions — and a grand holiday season!

# Public land users must join together

The western land use events of the last few years seem to have been analyzed, pondered, condemned, praised and generally discussed into a state of confusion and stalemate. For 40 or so years I have been active in the advocacy for economic natural resource development, mining, timber, grazing and water. In these last few years since the Hage case came the Bullock/Quinn land grab, the Federal intrusion at Bunkerville, the James Redd San Juan County Utah overreaction, the Pautre Fire in South Dakota and most recently the Hammond Family miscarriage of justice and Malheur Refuge and Standing Rock pipeline standoffs. A myriad of new groups have recognized the abuses and failures of the federal management of our resource lands. Despite all good intentions, no focused, unified direction has been established by those affected by federal abuse and mismanagement. Individual states such as Utah and Nevada have made the case internally for legislative changes demanding transfer of most federally managed lands to the state. Most other non-legislative efforts have focused on raising monies to support individuals' efforts to litigate abuses to their private and divided lands use rights. An example is the well orga-

**GUEST COLUMN**

By Tim Smith

nized and well-intentioned but politically entrenched cattlemen's associations. It seems three things are missing in the efforts to eliminate bureaucratic resource abuse: education on existing rights of resource users; taking on the root of the problem rather than fighting the after effects of current management abuse; and selfless unified action.

The fundamental root of the problem in current resource land use development is federal management. The incredibly large mass of land the feds are attempting to manage, under one set of rules, is an abysmal failure for the resource, the environment, the resource user and the taxpayer. This will always be, due to the sheer size and complexity of the lands being mismanaged and the perennial propensity for the fed agencies to grow and be increasingly controlled by absentee upper management. Classic examples of that growth and absentee control is the transfer of tax dollars from resource

production to fire "management" and the onset of traveling teams of fire "incident managers." Fire 'management' or mismanagement is now a huge taxpayer funded business in the West, while the resource production business wanes into obscurity in many regions. Fire is now the Forest Service and BLM's largest segment of their budget. Distributing these lands to state and county management would attack the root of the mismanagement we are currently experiencing. This would increase efficiency, decrease cost to taxpayers, increase response time to resource and environmental threats and establish local jurisdictions. Local jurisdictions could knowledgeably respond to specific resource abuses and damage through local oversight, enforcement and where necessary prosecution by the violators' peers.

No one individual can afford the cost in dollars, time and energy to take on the policies of the federal government. Thus our dedicated group in Harney County was nearly thwarted in our local efforts to help through education and unification. At that time of realization we began to see opportunities to join with others across the West whose realization was the same as ours.

# Plenty of places to catch fish in a river

In response to Emmett Flynn's letter in the Dec. 5 edition:

Reading your letter brought back pleasant memories as a kid fishing the Grande Ronde. I know first-hand that it can be disturbing seeing another fisherman or fisherwoman casting their lines into your favorite hole whether at school or otherwise. Over a half-century ago, I was that youngster that loved to fish for steelhead at Troy. We knew the fishing holes that were named for landmarks such as Mud

**LETTERS to the EDITOR**

Creek, Bear Creek, Wildcat Creek, while others were named for people like the Kiesecker Hole and Thompson Rock (for George Thompson's favorite hole). In the fall, there was even a doctor who was a relentless fisherman on the river. Every Thursday without fail you could count

on Dr. Sharff being on the river trying his luck to catch a steelhead.

What I am trying to say, Emmett, is there are other people on the river that also have their favorite hole and even though they might be trying to fish your favorite hole, you should share and do what all other fishermen do: Use your skills to catch fish right under the other fisherman's nose. Good luck and keep a tight line!

Jon Erwin  
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