

It's time for Salem to fund FFA

We seem to forget about the things that work in America. Or at least we quit paying for them.

Future Farmers of America is one of those proven values. Anyone who has judged an FFA public speaking contest has seen the remarkable

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

poise that FFA gives its students. Anyone who has seen FFA kids with animals at county fairs has been impressed with their mastery of animal husbandry.

Kathleen Ellyn's story in this issue describes the legislative drive to restore state funding to FFA. Since 2011, FFA programs have been kept alive by private fund-raising.

Our two legislators – Sen. Bill Hansell of Pendleton and Rep. Greg Baretto of Cove – are doing yeoman's work in pushing the funding legislation. As Ellyn's reporting indicates, urban legislators are the bill's co-sponsors.

It is not easy sledding in Salem. There will be program cuts. But we must always remember that some programs will be funded. It may as well be ours.

Legislators continuously debate whether certain programs are effective. By that measure, the Hansell-Baretto bill holds a high card. FFA works. Let's fund it.

Can mathematicians end gerrymandering?

by Dick Hughes

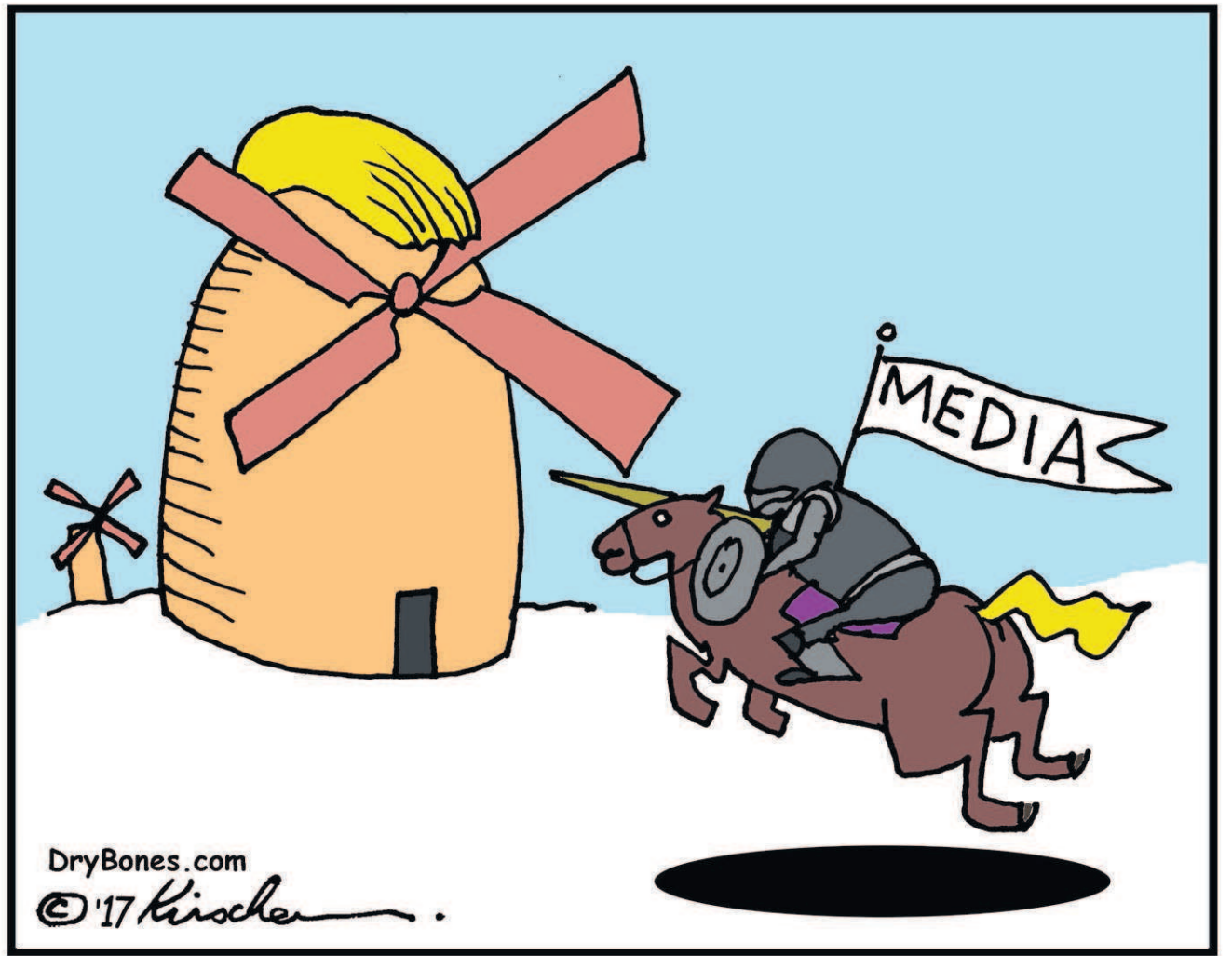
Too many legislative and congressional districts follow bizarre boundaries that were drawn to ensure a political party's dominance. That gerrymandering is why the vast majority of legislative and congressional incumbents win re-election.

Republican Secretary of State Dennis Richardson created the Nonpartisan Redistricting Task Force this year to propose a more evenhanded approach. That has the Legislature's majority Democrats worried. Maybe they have good reason. One topic during Wednesday's task force meeting was the decline of America's two-party system. Progressive Party leader Dan Meek noted that 40 percent of Oregon voters are neither Republican nor Democrat, and only 8 percent of voters registered under Oregon's "motor voter" law are signing up as Republican or Democrat.

The task force is leaning toward recommending that Oregon take redistricting out of the Legislature's hands and turn that work over to an independent commission. The Portland City Club has recommended such a system. Meanwhile, a math professor at Tufts University has another approach. Moon Duchin is launching a summer-school class to train mathematicians on how to testify in court about which geometric shapes legitimately make sense for a legislative district.

According to a story in The Chronicle of Higher Education about Duchin's work, "Because of the increase in cases challenging new electoral maps, she says, there's a need for expert witnesses who understand the mathematical concepts applicable to gerrymandering."

Dick Hughes has been covering the Oregon political scene since 1976. He is a columnist for the Salem statehouse bureau of EO Media Group and Pamplin Media.



How to write a cookbook

What's cookin', Wallowa County? I'll tell you what. Today we're going to walk through the steps on how to write a cookbook. I just became an authority on trying to do this, because I've been struggling to write a cookbook the last couple months. A lot of people ask me, "Jon, how is it that you became a tremendously acclaimed chef with no formal training and very little to no understanding of basic kitchen stuff?" Great question. I tell people in my seminars all the time that anything you can imagine doing – anything at all – is probably going to be much, much harder than you think. A lot harder. So you should just stick with what you know.

Now and then you will be forced into trying new things, so in those situations it's best to keep resisting, making excuses and trying to duck out until finally you just have no choice. That's exactly how I learned to cook, on Wallowa County riverbanks as an aspiring guide for Winding Waters River Expeditions.

Rowing a boat through rapids I'd never been through was far less scary than helping prepare meals. What if I burn the tenderloin, or don't cook it enough? What is a dutch oven? Where, exactly, is the thin yellow line between over-easy and over-medium? So many questions. The answer for all of these was to watch people who knew what they were doing and copy them.

There's a lot of gifted cooks and chefs and bakers here in the Wallowas, which may account for our unusually robust potluck culture. A recent study of what



AND FURTHERMORE

Jon Rombach

I think confirmed that Wallowa County probably has more potlucks per capita and square mile than other places. Just think about that statistic.

Now stop thinking about that and let's focus again on writing your cookbook. Use whatever ingredients you like in terms of recipes. I'm working on a great-hits collection of recipes requested by guests on river trips over the years.

OK. Let's begin. First step is to pre-heat where you will be writing. I use a drafty shack on my property as an office. It has a temperamental woodstove that's hard to get going. Here's a helpful tip: collect a wide range of different cookbooks from used bookstores and garage sales. Not to read. You don't want to be copying how other people do it. I use the old cookbooks to get the fire going. It can sometimes take fifteen or twenty crumpled recipes.

Once your writing shack has reached 70-some degrees it's time to start adding words. In a blank document, combine your dry facts. This will be the cups of flour and the title and the teaspoons and whatever. Boring stuff. That's really the secret to writing. Put all the boring things down first, and while your fingers are already typing, trick them into adding all

The gifted cooks, chefs and bakers in the Wallowas may account for our unusually robust potluck culture

the other stuff until you run out of room and then you're done. Easy.

All this recent recipe writing has me convinced that teaspoon and tablespoon look way too much alike and we need a new term for one of them. Even the abbreviated versions are uncomfortably similar. Observe: tbsp and tsp. Wait, what? Oh, there's a little "b" in there. Of course. No, not good enough. I hereby nominate "coffeespoon" instead of teaspoon. Now we got 1 tbsp of this and 1 csp of that. Aw, man, now "csp" and "cup" look too much alike.

You see what I'm up against. The cookbook genre is actually a pretty tough racket. I may have to start consulting those reference guides instead of using them as kindling.

Good luck out there with your own cooking endeavors and we'll be seeing you soon once spring gets here and potluck season kicks off. Just remember to keep your teaspoons and teaspoons straight. Wait, no, tablespoons. See? So confusing.

Jon Rombach is a local columnist for the Chieftain.

Are you tough enough?

"Katherine," a friend recently observed, "You're a pleasant person to be around, but I can see you're not someone to be trifled with."

Well, Old Man Winter has messed with me long enough. I will allow 100 words to gripe and then return to my pleasant self.

- The triflings:
1. A 360 spin on top of Tollgate.
 2. One week of flu.
 3. Missing a turn during a white-out and becoming snowbound. I appreciated the timely arrival of Mike's Towing, but that cash layout hurt.
 4. Getting high-centered in my snow and ice covered driveway four times.
 5. Slipping and falling when I walked in frustration to an appointment.
 6. Missing my friends because snow berms prohibited parking.
 7. Being trapped in the house with a tomadic terrier and a moody shepherd dog because below zero weather kept us inside.

Okay, so that was 90 words.

In spite of all this, however, I am grateful for:

1. Heidi Muller's song, "In Wallowa." I played this several times to avoid loading up my car and leaving. (That my vehicle was stuck in the snow was irrelevant at that moment.) The refrain, "We're sticking it out in Wallowa" was quite apropos.



WALLOWA GAL

Katherine Stickroth

2. Neighbors who helped dig me out more than one occasion.
 3. Larry at Sports Corral placing newly purchased snow cleats on my boots. (My hands weren't strong enough.)
 4. Friends who brought me soup.
 5. People who were mindful to stay home when they had a cold so as not to share it.
 6. Lots of time to write.
 7. The local Facebook community.
 8. Dependable people from Grain Growers who kept my propane tank full.
 9. Joyful reunions with friends at Safeway when I dashed out between storms to restock.
 10. Bouncing calves cavorting around their mothers along the highway between Joseph and Enterprise.
 11. A sneak-away to Imnaha to see if Spring might be coming. Saw robins!
 12. Reported sightings of first buttercups.
- A t-shirt should be designed with these words on front "Survivor-Wallowa Winter 2017." On the back it could read

Old Man Winter has messed with me long enough

"Are you tough enough?"

Speaking of tough, last week my 102 year old grandmother's sister, whom I called Aunt Carrie, passed away.

She never had children of her own, and was widowed at a young age. As a Southern lady to the nth degree, she had strong opinions (think Miss Daisy) and certain expectations of how young girls should grow up ladylike and proper. I was a consternation to her at times, but she taught me so much about determination, strength of character, and doing the right thing.

She was a classy dresser and at 100 years old sent a letter to Jergens crediting her lifelong beauty to using their lotion since she was 13 years old.

Aunt Carrie helped raise three generations of children. When she was hospitalized recently and family called, she insisted, "Don't worry about me. I'm fine."

Remembering her only brings a smile. She was tough all right, a real Steel Magnolia.

Katherine Stickroth is a freelance writer who blogs at awallowagal.com.

Cemetery flourishing

LETTERS to the EDITOR

The Enterprise Cemetery has flourished greatly over the last two years. This has happened because of great efforts by the elected board of directors and public volunteerism. The current board members are seeking replacement members so that they can enjoy their retirements. There are 5 positions that need candidates to file by the 16 March

deadline. Any resident of Enterprise is eligible to file and run and the rewards, though intrinsic, are visible when one walks from their home to and through our cemetery and back home again. A monthly business meeting of an hour or so is required as well as a desire to continue improving a community icon. Please consider and file by 16 March for a board position.

David Hayslip,
Board member candidate
Enterprise, Oregon

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.

You can submit a letter to the Wallowa County Chieftain in person; by mail to P.O. Box 338, Enterprise, OR 97828; by email to editor@wallowa.com; or via the submission form at the newspaper's website, located at wallowa.com.

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