

# Is our form of government sustainable?

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley opened his appearance at Wallowa Senior Center on Saturday noting that America needed more opportunities for people to come together and be heard.

Fortunately for Merkley, it was a warm and friendly audience, in stark contrast to a similar visit from Rep. Greg Walden earlier this year.

## EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

Walden was excoriated repeatedly and loudly for supporting what was then a bill in the U.S. House to replace Obamacare.

Merkley was lobbed repeated softball questions on the same topic with the bill now pending in the U.S. Senate. No one brought signs. There was no chanting.

So what made the difference?

Merkley used a ticket system to take questions — each person who wanted to speak was given half of a raffle ticket. If your number was called, you were invited to the microphone.

Most but not all of the tickets were drawn in the one-hour appearance.

Perhaps there were republicans who did not get a chance to ask. Perhaps no republicans attended, although a few notable conservative faces were in the audience.

What transpired in Wallowa Saturday was not what anyone would describe as a lively exchange of viewpoints. It was an affirmation of Merkley's votes, which generally follow the party line.

Drawing conclusions without jumping to them, there are a couple considerations here.

Have republicans, who control the White House and Congress, become so cocksure of themselves that they no longer feel the need to engage in discourse?

Another possibility is that republicans — at least in Wallowa County — don't agree with the proposals put forth on health care.

Or perhaps they are simply fed up with the entire process and boycotted the presentation. Many on both sides of the issue are rapidly falling into that category.

Merkley came nowhere near being challenged on positions on any of the topics of the day.

An uninitiated observer could easily have mistaken the gathering for a Merkley re-election campaign stop.

Merkley's visit is yet another harbinger of how far askew politics has become in the United States. There are those who wonder whether we've gone too far down the road of partisan divide we may never bring back rational debate.

Shortly after the Constitutional Convention of 1787, a lady asked Ben Franklin, one of our founding fathers, "Well, doctor, what have we got — a Republic or a Monarchy?"

Franklin is widely credited for saying, "a Republic, if you can keep it."

Franklin's answer has a solid ring of truth in 2017. So, can we?



# New-fangled ways to earn money



## OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle

Over the years I have noticed fads, especially in attire, come and go.

Bell bottom jeans have come and gone, and miniskirts are also on the list of attire that has had its day. Too bad, I thought they were great.

Even cowboy clothes have cycled through different styles. I have a pair of Paul Bond boots from the early '60s with two-inch underslung heels and a toe that is so sharp you can kill bugs in a corner. I call them my Puerto Rican nose-pickers.

I have another pair from the '70s that do not have quite so sharp of a toe and a pair from the '90s with a round toe. The current style seems to be a square toe. The style I like and are now a special order, is the '40s type that Roy Rogers and John Wayne wore. They wore them with their pants cuffed, something you don't see any more unless you catch me with a new pair of Wranglers that are too long till they have been washed a few times.

Over the years, I have been amused by changes in attire, mainly because there is not much I can do about it. A couple of years ago, I noticed girls wearing jeans with large holes in them and paying extra for jeans they would have thrown away a few years ago.

Things have reached new territory lately. They now successfully market permanently prestained jeans with dirt stains on the legs. These dandy looking togs sell for in excess of \$400. Not to be outdone,



Barrie Qualle/Special to the Chieftain

**In light of the trend toward extremely worn clothing and boots being worth a fortune, I figure these should be worth at least \$900.**

the shoe companies are marketing ragged looking tennis shoes with holes worn in them for more than \$1,400.

The craziness in fashion is exceeded only by the art world. I was watching the news the other day and saw a picture by a black American artist, now deceased, sold for more than a million and is now the most expensive painting ever sold. It sold for more than any of the old masters like Van Gogh or Renoir.

It sold for more than even a Charlie Russell painting (someone who really had talent). They showed this high-dollar painting on the screen, and it looked like something a second-grader with no talent might have scribbled. You could barely tell what it was supposed to be.

This has proven to me that no idea is too far out or stupid to try. P.T. Barnum

had it right, a sucker is born every minute. I think P.T. may have underestimated the number of suckers.

To this end, I have come up with a great idea for making a fortune. I have decided to test market preworn and prestained underwear.

There will be two styles, boxer and jockey. By fall, I hope to have prestained long underwear. These will not be cheap, as each pair will be unique. I am sure Under Armor will jump on this idea. I plan to staff up and enlist people of different sizes to assure we will have the correct size on hand.

I think that a starting price should be in the \$90 range, more for the long-johns. If this works out, I hope to get into women's underwear the following year.

To take advantage of the shoe deal, I plan to test market a pair of not only worn out cowboy boots, but a pair that has also been modified to accommodate broken ankles and legs I have had over the years. I am thinking these are probably worth as much as \$900 each. Check the picture, and I think you will agree.

If any of you have not heard the CD Caleb Sample recorded of his songs, you should go by the Grain Growers and pick one up. Caleb wrote the music and played a lot of the instruments and sang. There are 14 songs, all good and about five that are truly great.

I see different groups performing and making a fortune that have half the talent that is on this CD. We are truly fortunate to have so much talent in this small county.

Thanks to all who made the 10th annual CJD Ranch Rodeo a success.

There was a lot of planning, work and monthly meetings involved. Thanks also to all the participants. This was the best ever.

# People do the darndest things

Art Linkletter made famous the television show "Kids Say the Darndest Things." It was a delightful show in which he interviewed children. And they did say some crazy things.

On occasion, I borrow from Linkletter for a column I call "People Do the Darndest Things."

For some reason, these all have to do with restaurants. Here's what I mean.

A while back and in another state, I went to lunch with an acquaintance. We picked a Chinese restaurant that smelled heavenly. Menus were placed in front of us, and the first thing my friend said was, "Do you use MSG in your food?"

The waiter assured him there was no MSG in the food. He must have asked a half-dozen times during the course of the meal. Each time the answer was the same.

We had a great lunch and rose to leave. We were no more than four steps from the restaurant when my associate stuck a cigarette between his lips and began inhaling tobacco smoke.

The irony didn't strike me in that moment until he made another comment about MSG. "I think they were fibbing about the MSG," he grumped.

I had to bite down extremely hard on



## WAHL TO WALL

Paul Wahl

my tongue not to point out that far more people have died from smoking than MSG.

A similar incident, this one also involving a restaurant in another state, comes to mind.

Same premise. My lunch guest fussed and fumed over the menu in an attempt to determine what she as a vegan might be able to eat. She also gave the server nightmares demanding to know which if any foods on the menu were vegan.

The server exhibited far more patience than I would have, and a dish was eventually selected.

Act II, same as above. We were no more than two yards from the door when my guest pulled out a cigarette and lit up.

I do believe cigarette smoke will kill you much quicker than eating a few bits of something that may not have been vegan.

Another incident, this in a restaurant

recently but not in Wallowa County, involved the wait staff itself. My wife and I ducked into a small bistro-style restaurant a bit before it was ready to close, looked over the menu and made our selections.

My wife ordered biscuits and gravy. Her roots are in Arkansas and Oklahoma where biscuits and gravy is a food group.

The server glanced back toward the kitchen and then announced that, alas, the biscuits and gravy had run out. Understandable. It was close to closing time. She ordered something else.

Not more than a couple minutes later, we saw two heaping plates of biscuits and gravy wafting by our table on the way to a table where several staff members had gathered. We as paying customers were told they were out in order to serve the staff. What ever happened to "customer" service?

First time either one of us had seen that happen.

I could go on, but I will save the rest of the stories for a future column.

*Wahl is editor of the Chieftain and doesn't dine out as much this column might suggest.*

# Keep out the elk; let's build a wall

The Harshfield elk problem is a climax of what has been happening to farmers and ranchers for years.

There is a solution, but I will probably be laughed at because of the truth of this matter.

When I was dry land farming grain, the loss to us was a real problem. Reason number one was that when we were combining, we counted 147 elk beds in four rounds of a 20-acre field of spring grain.

I sent a bill to the Oregon Open Space Consortium for the damage. They sent a

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

really nice letter stating they didn't pay for damages but would be happy to use preventative measures.

Those measures would never take care of the real problem.

When the dry land farmers starved out, and with no hay or grain to get into, what did the elk do? They headed for the valley

where the picking is easy.

The elk are spread throughout the valley in places like Harshfield's, Smackle's, Henderson's, Fox's, Schaeffer's, Johnson's, Werst's, Brock's Wolf's and ranchers along the Warnock Road corridor, to name a few.

The solution is to put a tight game fence along the valley to Wallowa and back to the south side of the valley to the Lostine River. This is the answer to the problem.

**Dallas McCrae**  
Wallowa

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