

Call it whatever you want, it's impacting our lives

"Climate Change." There, I said it. For years I've cautioned friends, especially my "liberal" friends, not to speak about climate change. "You will just get involved in a war of words about global climate statistics where no one wins, and everyone ends up mad."

What we can talk about, I've said, is how people are reacting to changing weather patterns, how North Dakota farmers are planting corn and soybeans instead of durum wheat with wetter weather, shipping companies are exploring routes through the arctic, and investors are eying islands in the far north as they pop out of the sea with weight loss as ice melts. "Follow the money," I say.



MAIN STREET
Rich Wandschneider

What pushed the climate issue to the front of my mind was watching news coverage of hurricanes and floods in Texas and Florida, and not riding my bike a couple of days in smoke-filled August got my attention.

The Joseph football team practiced indoors for a week, and a game was canceled due to smoke. And we have not had major fires anywhere near us. When I ask, the smoke is coming from Hood River and Brookings in Oregon, and from Idaho, British Columbia and California.

I met people from Brookings who drove out and zigzagged their way across the state looking for respite from smoke — they said we were pretty good compared to the rest of the state.

Location becomes a big question with these changing weather patterns. Would you move to Miami or Houston, buy a place on the coast or in Southern California? Or, for that matter, are you nervous about the Lostine Canyon or the forested foothills here in the Wallowa Valley?

If summer heat is on the rise across the region, what will Portlanders do with another stretch of 100 degree days? Or what will they do with another 140 days of winter rain? Follow the Brookings couple to Wallowa County?

I had dinner this weekend with two German travel writers. They talked about the pressures of immigration in Europe, and noted that the beginning of much of it — including the wars — is in drought. The Sudan and other parts of Africa and big swaths of the Middle East — Syria and Iraq — have suffered for years from severe drought and heat; as the Germans said, people are going to go where there is food and water.

The other thing about climate change is that migrations have always been part of it. In the Great Warming from the 10th century to the 14th century, the Norse went to Iceland, Greenland and Newfoundland, and the population of Europe exploded with wheat in Norway and wine grapes in England.

At the same time, heat and droughts caused the Mayans to move from their irrigated cities back to the countryside, and many of the live oak trees and the people in California just died.

When the table turned and the earth cooled in the 1500s and 1600s, the families of the British Isles sent their children off to America to then sell them as indentured servants in America rather than have them starve at home. Over half of the migrants to North America from 1600 to 1776 were indentured servants.

Years ago, I remember meeting people who had looked at the maps of nuclear drift and moved to the Wallowas as a relatively safe place. If long summers of smoke become normal, would you rather be in Portland, Seattle or here?

If severe summer heat is the new Northwest menu, would you take the blacktop laden Portland suburbs or Joseph and a quick trip to Wallowa Lake? If waves are engulfing the shores, might you sell your beach house for a mountain retreat?

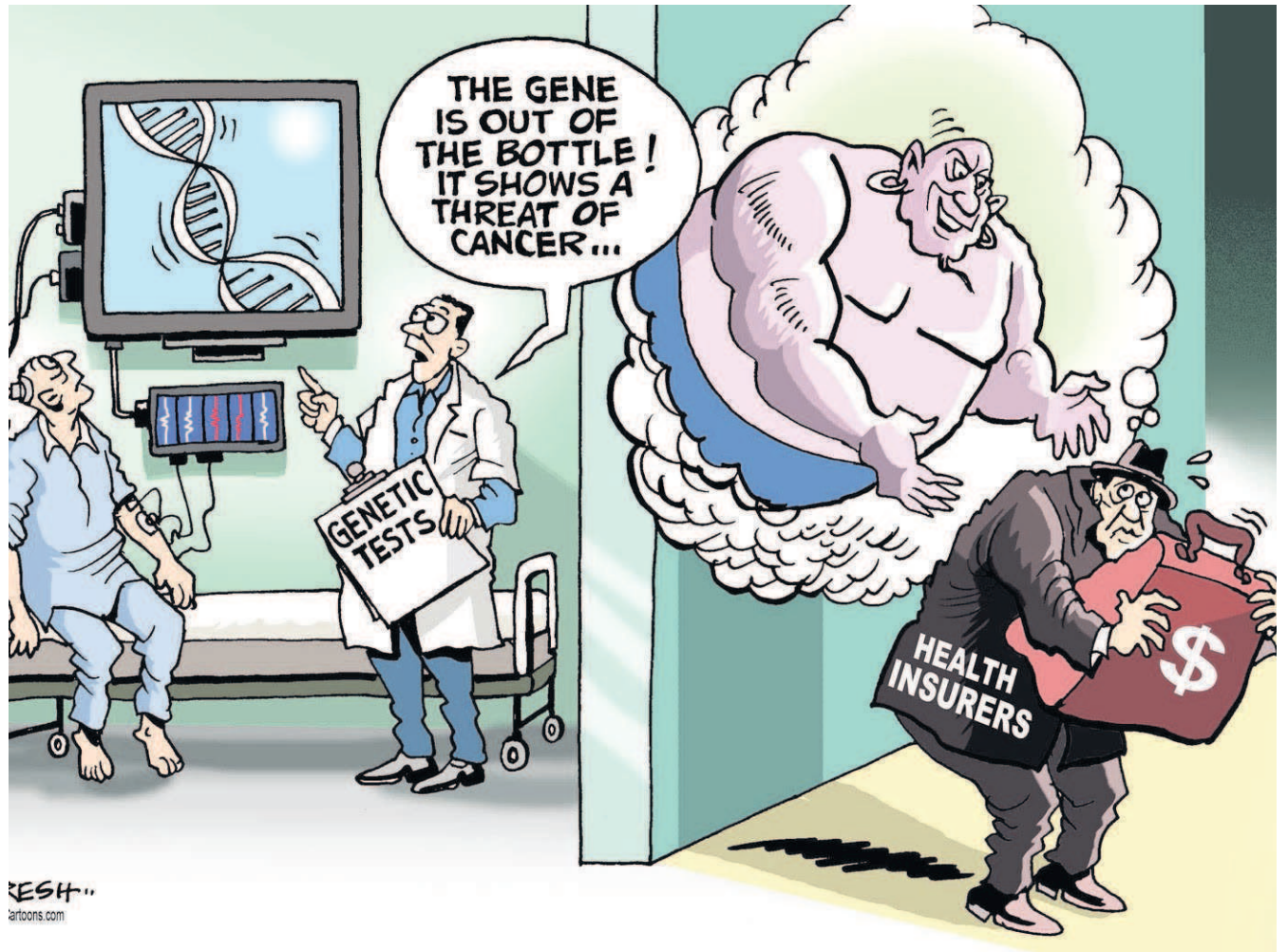
Oops. Make sure your mountain retreat is not at the edge of the fire-prone thickets of lodge pole pine. The fires, hurricanes, floods and droughts that might drive people here are just a forest fire or two from making it a less attractive place.

If climate change is creating problems across the globe and in our hometowns, maybe we should start thinking about it. Not arguing about who caused what, but making small amends to our own lives that serve family, community and the whole.

Some are trying: agriculture and Nez Perce Fisheries are improving irrigation while making more and cooler water for fish. Smaller and more efficient houses can reduce the use of coal fired electrical plants. Thinning trees and preventive burning can reduce the risk of large fires. Buying local food saves a lot of diesel trucking.

We can think about climate change right here.

Rich Wandschneider lives in Joseph.



Communication will be the key to celebrating 'Day of Peace'

Can there be a Day of Peace in Wallowa County? Most of us think that Wallowa County is about as close to Heaven on Earth as any place could be.

We talk about the beauty of the landscape and the friendly people and the willingness to help each other when one of our neighbors is in need. Wallowa County could be a symbol for the International Day of Peace on Sept. 21.

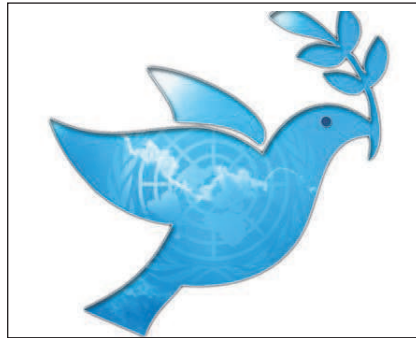
In our remote valley, we are not isolated from the problems of the world. Even when problems are distant, they affect us here. Advances in technology continually remind us of our common humanity with peoples around the world. We cannot escape worry and sadness even though we live in a beautiful place with friendly people.

Even though we feel that our community is peaceful, we are influenced, concerned, even worried about events across our country and in the world. Many people have family members living in another state or in another country. We worry about them.

Because of our family and friend connections, we worry about Hurricanes Harvey and Irma. We worry about the fires in our backyard. We worry about the young people who could be deported instead of

GUEST COLUMN

Evelyn Swart



Day of Peace

getting an education and citizenship. We worry about the threat of nuclear war, the national economy, our military people in the Middle East, education and jobs. We pray for the safety of people we don't know.

Yet even in our valley, there are deep divisions. We avoid talking about

IF YOU GO

The art of communication is one of the planned topics in the program at the International Day of Peace observance at Joseph Center in Joseph 6 p.m. Thursday, Sept. 21.

some of the most important things. We don't want to cause a rift in our friendships. Or we are afraid of controversy.

We may feel we do not know enough about some problem to discuss them. Possibly the biggest problem is that we just don't know how to discuss serious subjects with people who may disagree with us. So we miss out on valuable sources of knowledge here in our neighborhoods.

Indeed, in this beautiful valley it is possible to discuss our worries and perhaps do something about them. If we could learn the art of communication and be able to discuss important local and international issues without letting our emotions get in the way, we probably would start looking up facts and checking to ensure our facts are true. We do not need to agree; we do not need to respect each other.

Evelyn Swart lives in Joseph with her husband, Don.

No good deed goes unpunished

Each time I read about a local issue inflating to World War III on Facebook, I smile on the outside, but inside I die a little.

Because of the anonymity of the places on the Internet like Facebook, people lose all inhibitions, blow things out of proportion and sprinkle in as many half-truths as possible. Then they pour gasoline on the whole thing and set it ablaze.

I am convinced Facebook sites that allow this injustice are the cause of much of the uncivil discourse we have in society today.

The most recent thread that came to my attention last week had to do with the Wallowa Valley Soccer Association. Seems there were a few folks who didn't get the message about when signups were due and their children wound up on the sidelines.

Naturally, that had to be the fault of the volunteers who run the association because it certainly couldn't have been due to the fact that parents often pay little attention to materials brought home by



WAHL TO WALL
Paul Wahl

their children. Having lived with a classroom educator for 29 years, I can tell you the problem is rampant.

As far as I can tell, the association did what it has always done in sending a notice home at the end of the school year, then finalizing the signups in the early part of August. Play began this week.

So those who missed the boat take to Facebook and gripe, complain and otherwise malign an all-volunteer organization that's doing its best to provide recreation for young folks in the county.

How petty can it get? It's youth soccer, not the NFL.

For days, posters in this thread droned on questioning the motives of those who lead the association and otherwise just plain and simply acting like bullies.

The Chieftain also has a Facebook

page. When someone posts a question or wonders about an issue, the first thing we do is call the sources involved and post the facts. Then if people want to debate those facts, they are more than free to do so, but we try not to let things degenerate into an electronic fistfight.

That's the responsible thing to do, but of course, it's not nearly as fun as listening to people vent their spleen without facts and generally without humanity.

I would suggest one thing to the association and others who are trying to do good things in Wallowa County. Let us help. We would have been pleased to publish information about signups and perhaps this unpleasantness could have been avoided.

Kudos to all of the volunteer coaches who will be busy with games over the next few weeks.

Meanwhile, I will leave everyone trying to do something good in our community with this Latin aphorism: Illegitimi non carborundum. You'll have to look it up.

TV translator service must be restored today

The recent shutdown of our local translator TV channels from Portland affiliates leaves residents without important news feeds from issues concerning Oregonians.

I understand that the budget for Rural Oregon Wireless Television and Wallowa County have been limited lately with the reduction of library, garbage and now news media services. However, I feel it is important for residents of Wallowa County to have services that provide opportunities to learn and stay informed on issues relating to our local news and politics.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

I know myself and other citizens of Wallowa County relied on the local translator channels for one our primary sources of information on Oregon related and regional news coverage.

Without the support of Rural Oregon Wireless translator TV channels, residents of Wallowa County have few options for Oregon-based news.

Satellite TV subscriptions use the Spokane, Wash., market for CBS, ABC, NBC and FOX and local TV news still draws

more support compared with cable TV coverage, according to Pew Research Center.

I am encouraged that the library services are receiving support from local citizens and the garbage services are continuing. Contact our local commissioners and Rural Oregon Wireless Television if you would like to see these services restored.

In the past, a volunteer reimbursement from citizens contributed to the operation of the translator channels. I would be willing to pay for these services for the benefit of myself and Wallowa County residents.

Ian Wilson
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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.

In terms of content, writers should refrain from personal attacks. It's acceptable, however, to attack (or support) another party's ideas.

We do not routinely run thank-you 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. (Drop down the "Opinion" menu on the navigation bar to see the relevant link).