

Collaborative expansion a good thing

Generally, news releases from Sen. Jeff Merkley contain the latest condemnation of Pres. Donald Trump, his actions, his appointees. It gets a bit predictable.

However, this week, we were quietly surprised to find a release regarding Merkley's bipartisan efforts to continue and expand collaborative forest work.

Merkley has joined forces with Sen. Mike Crapo of Idaho, a Republican, and several other senators from Colorado, New Mexico and Montana to move this legislation forward.

Credit where credit is due. Thank you, Sen, Merkley, for

EDITORIAL

Voice of the Chieftain

stepping down from your political soapbox long enough to make a difference.

"Collaborative strategies to manage our forests have proven to be a win on many levels: thinning overgrown forests and creating better timber stands, better ecosystems, better fire resistance, more jobs and more sawlogs to the mills," said Merkley.

As a sponsor of the original legislation that established the Collaborative Forest Landscape

Restoration Program, Merkley has first-hand knowledge of how instrumental these collaborative efforts are in promoting the health of our forests and supporting jobs in rural communities.

Merkley goes on to admit there is a significant threat caused by unhealthy forests in Oregon and elsewhere. Who knew.

"By encouraging collaboration among stakeholders at the federal, state and local levels, this program plays a critical role in reducing fire risk, maintaining our forests and empowering rural communities in Oregon and across the country to tackle these challenges head on,"

Merkley's statement said.

The bipartisan legislation would extend the program through 2029, and expand its reach by doubling authorized funding from \$40 million to \$80 million per year.

Since its enactment in 2009, the collaborative has a proven track record of success in managing forests to increase forest health, mitigate wildfires and support rural economies and local voices. To date, 23 projects in 14 states have sold more than 2.5 billion board feet of timber; created \$1.4 billion in local labor income; and improved 760 miles of trails for sports enthusiasts and recreation.

In addition, The collaborative has reduced the risk of megafires on more than 2.9 million acres.

The legislation is supported by a broad cross-section of the timber industry, rural economic development entities and environmental organizations, including Wallowa Resources here in Wallowa County, the Nature Conservancy, Ochoco Lumber Co., Sustainable Northwest, Rural Voices for Conservation Coalition and others.

This is the type of approach that is needed to solve problems. Political posturing doesn't cut the muster.

County has top performers

Bouncing off Rich Wandschneider's column elsewhere on this page, I was reminded of that phrase last week attending the fundraiser concert at OK Theatre.

The event featured performances of the music from the movie, "O Brother Where Art Thou," and included 40 volunteers from the community.

It's fairly rare for that many folks to come together and perform, and it was top-notch. If you missed it, you missed one of the best events of the year.

Kudos to everyone who had a hand in the event.

I'm not sure how many other communities could pull off an event like this, what with people being pulled in 100 different directions and commitment becoming a thing of the past.

Not to mention the quality of the performers, many of whom have sung or played professionally over the years.



WAHL TO WALL

Paul Wahl

Leaving the theatre Thursday night, everyone was asking when this event could be reprised for those who missed it (it was a packed house) or whether another such event were in the works.

Inquiring minds would like to know.

BEFORE CHRISTMAS last December, a number of businesses in Joseph threw open their doors and invited the community in for food, drinks and a preview of what they were offering for gifts.

Saturday, the merchants repeated the event, and a great number of folks turned out. Downtown Joseph was bustling much of the morning and well into the afternoon.

The food was great, and there were drinks of all kinds. Lots of smiling faces.

I found it a great opportunity to see what Joseph retailers had in store so that when we have visitors this summer, we know where to take them shopping.

The the Chocolate Lover's Walk in Enterprise Saturday also brought considerable foot traffic to the downtown area.

It's encouraging to see shop owners being proactive and building interest in shopping in both communities.

LAST FRIDAY, I drove to Baker to catch what I could of the early going of the 1A-4 District Championship Track Meet where Joseph was competing. Then whizzed back up the freeway to Union to capture some of the events in the 2A-6 Wapiti League District Championships where Enterprise was competing.

I believe Mother Nature hates track meets. The weather for both was less than ideal, but both teams soldiered on and will have good representation at the State Track meet later this week.

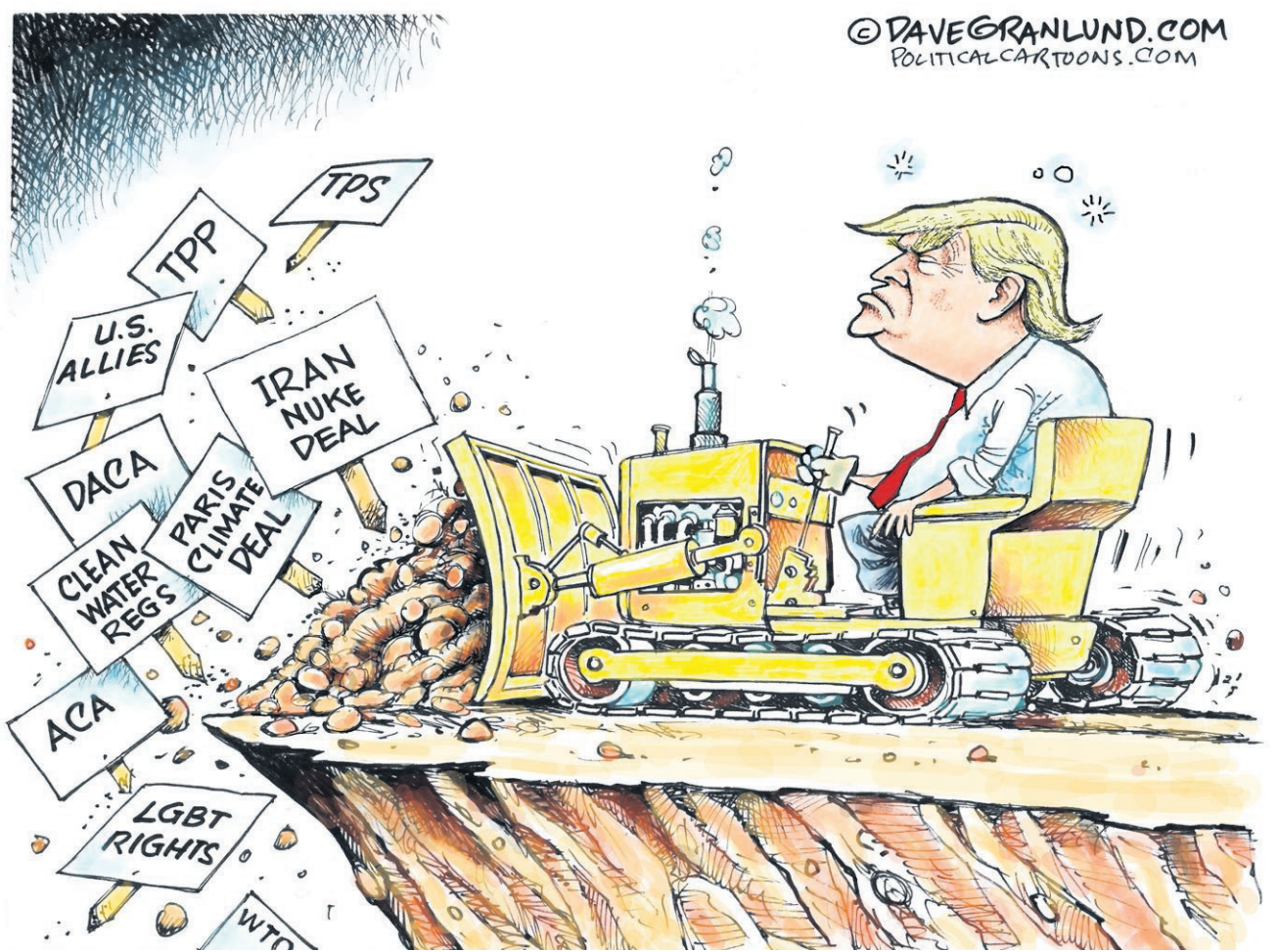
Stories and photos can be found on our sports pages this edition.

Both schools have some amazingly talented athletes.

A while back, I had my first opportunity to watch the Joseph-Wallowa baseball team in action while Steve took a day off. It's another group of athletes who play with heart, skill and enthusiasm.

High school sports is supposed to be fun, and over the years, I've often seen it degenerate into teeth-gnashing and hand-wringing with large amounts of performance anxiety.

Wallowa County athletes and their coaches continue to make it fun — and post wins along the way. These students will remember their sports days forever and how terrific the memories will be good ones.



How good were the 'good old days?'

The good old days can mean different times for different people, but when the President and others of my generation refer to it, its code for the '50s. And when pushed, they'll go back to the post-World War II '40s, and into the early '60s, when Kennedy's assassination, urban riots and the Vietnam War ushered in things entirely different.

I was born in 1942, and my first memories are from 1945-46. For me, the period extends from my uncle's casket coming home from the Pacific all the way to 1964, when I graduated from college — debt free.

I sometimes get emails from friends who lived it with me spouting lists like this: the '55 Chevies we drove and the Temptations we listened to, after-game dances, blue-suede shoes, back-and-white TV, "Gunsmoke," Mickey Mantle, Marilyn Monroe and Mickey Mouse.

And its easy for me to slide right back into it — to think about fishing with Uncle Al, learning to water ski and handle the boat, beach volleyball and high school sports, staring at the phone in the hallway screwing up courage to call for a date, sanding and prepping my '52 Ford for a paint job; Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Chubby Checker and "rock n' roll" and late parties at "Ma Belle's" house without a chaperon.

Historian Stephanie Coontz wrote a book about the good old days called "The Way we Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap." And in my own



MAIN STREET

Rich Wandschneider

mind, I divide the period into the life I led and my awareness of the world around me at the time — and what I later learned about that easy life and the real world I walked in.

On reflection, although those high school teams had Mexicans, a few African-Americans, and fewer Samoans on them, our beach parties were mostly white. The Mexican part of town called "Posole Town" had few paved streets and the police didn't patrol it — we knew because we cruised long enough to know were the cops were and then darted into Posole Town to buy beer.

My parents came of age in the Great Depression and didn't go to college, so my brother and I would. And the sisters? They could maybe go to junior college and get a secretarial or nursing degree. In fact, my sisters, four and 10 years younger than me, did go to four-year colleges, but the most popular girls in my class stayed home to marry older boys with the hottest cars.

That is of course a generalization, but like "Leave it to Beaver," there's truth in it.

Gender and racial divides were part of the landscape in the good old days, but the seeds of change were also part of the times.

Some argue that the GI Bill, enacted in 1944 as the war came to an end, created the middle class in America.

Established hospitals, made low-interest mortgages available and covered tuition and expenses for veterans attending college or trade schools. I can't remember a male teacher who was not a vet who'd gone to school on the GI Bill, and most were the first in their families to do so. President Truman integrated the military in 1948, and in the '50s, television and "I-Like-Ike" Eisenhower's interstate highway system knitted the country from coast to coast. Jackie Robinson broke the color barrier in Major League Baseball in 1947, and colleges — starting in the East, the North and the West — began recruiting black ball-players. But it wasn't until the '70s that Mississippi and Alabama had black athletes.

The biggest triumphs of the '50s — and the ones least remembered by the nostalgia troop — were economic. The middle class expanded rapidly among white Americans and set the stage for women and blacks to enter it because education was almost free and we taxed the heck out of high-income earners to pay for it. Tax rates on earned income (although not on investments) were 91 percent in 1954.

The ideal of "equal opportunity" was real for most white American males in the '50s, and, more importantly for our own times, close enough to taste for women and people of color.

The news versus the opinions; there is a difference between them

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Too many readers of The Chieftain and users of Facebook seem to have skipped civics class on the day when their classmates learned how to read a newspaper.

To review: In any reputable newspaper (not supermarket tabloids), there are two distinct kinds of pages: news and opinion.

News pages, including sports pages, cover — what else? — the news. In the case of The Chieftain, it's my considered opinion that news

coverage is as fair and balanced as possible, considering how much there is to cover, the available time, the news space to be filled and that there are only two reporters plus the editor.

As a newshound for more than 50 years, I have a pretty sharp BS detector, and I see no significant

"bias" in Chieftain news stories.

Opinion pages, also known as the editorial pages, are an entirely different animal. They are supposed to contain opinions written by the editor, columnists and citizens.

Yes, there is "bias" there, as there should be. If there are more opinion pieces on one side of an issue than

the other, that's the nature of the opinion pages.

If you don't like that, stop complaining and submit your own opinion piece.

Chuck Anderson

Enterprise

Anderson is the retired editor and publisher of The Chieftain.

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