

# Sitting out the shutdown

Questioning the fundamental usefulness of government is the backbone of some American political factions, notably including the now seldom-mentioned Tea Party. Most of these righteous skeptics don't live off the grid in libertarian enclaves, hatching anarchist plots. Instead, they are good people simply wondering what the heck all our taxes and deficits pay for.

No matter whether a U.S. citizen is anti-government or not, we all will be increasingly noticing just what government does, now that a significant fraction of it has been turned off by a political squabble.

Any attempted discussion of the ongoing partial federal government shutdown inevitably ignites bitter infighting between those who believe President Trump can do no wrong and those who think he's a lightweight conman doing the bidding of radical talk-show hosts. However, here in this mutually reliant Eastern Oregon enclave so far removed from the beltway, we



need not and should not resort to useless finger pointing. It's fair to say that nobody in Washington, D.C., gives a moment's thought to local political analysis in the form of angry Facebook posts.

What we must do is mitigate harm to local people and assets, while calmly pulling toward future election results that put an end to these ridiculous and damaging shenanigans.

Beyond the stark impacts of the government shutdown on some federal workers, this situation threatens to delay payments to the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, better known as food stamps. About 18 percent of the population in Wallowa County is helped by SNAP.

Around half of these households include one or more disabled people, more

than 40 percent include children, and around one-third contain senior citizens.

While this sorry situation grinds on, we all must do our best to help with local food drives, and contribute cash to food banks so they can address what is certain to be a surge in requests for help. State legislators and agencies may need to shuffle spending priorities to ensure our fellow citizens don't go hungry.

Much remains uncertain, starting with whether the shutdown will be allowed to go on for months — as the president has suggested. How will lack of federal salaries and aid reverberate in the local economy, as spending on everything from groceries to cups of coffee begins to dwindle? Is it time to convene emergency community meetings to plan responses?

This shutdown, like those in the past, will eventually be resolved. It's likely most furloughed employees will receive back pay — even those who, unlike the Coast Guard and ICE, aren't still actively on duty. But we should be sure to elect people to Congress and the White House who are prepared to maturely and sensibly confront our national spending addiction, border protection and other priorities without resorting to destructive gamesmanship.

Shutdowns are a ridiculously blunt weapon, when what we really need are national leaders ready to make intelligent decisions.



Contributed photo/Blue Mountain Eagle

Out-of-state hunting can extend the season, but planning ahead is important to acquire preference points.

## Road trippin'

This time of year finds most of us snug on the couch watching football or out on snowmobiles enjoying the snow. But if you dream of taking an out-of-state trip to hunt some day, you need to start planning now. Hunting in other states does take some planning, but it really isn't very difficult. Many people think out-of-state hunts are only for that once-in-a-lifetime trophy, but that doesn't have to be the case. Quality hunts for mature animals aren't difficult to find and participate in every couple of years if you play your cards right. They can also be a great way to extend your season.

For example, Idaho has over-the-counter deer and elk hunts available. Out-of-state kids can hunt there almost as cheaply as hunting here. You could go there every year. If you faithfully buy preference points in Wyoming, you could hunt deer, elk or antelope there every four or five years. Montana is on the spendy side but offers good hunting opportunities. It takes some time to build up the points to hunt deer in Colorado, but not long to have enough points to hunt elk. Also, buying points in Colorado is pretty cheap.

If you do dream of that monster bull or buck and keep telling yourself, "Someday," you need to start working toward it now. Many of the trophy units in Utah, Wyoming or Colorado take 15 or more points to draw. Start building our points now while you're saving your money for the trip. If you have a kid that loves to hunt, start building points for them now. Most states offer deep discounts for kids, making it easy to build up their preference points.



### SHOOTIN' THE BREEZE

Rod Carpenter

Going about it can be a little tricky. The Oregon regulations make me feel like I need a lawyer to interpret them. Other states aren't any easier, and each has its own unique quirks. But with some time and effort, it can be done. There are services like Cabela's TAG service that can do it for you. For a fee, of course. Two magazines I know of that offer good advice and walk you through the application process are Eastmans' Hunting Journal and Huntin' Fool. Neither are cheap, but they both have great information on each of the Western states' drawing systems. You actually have to subscribe to the magazines to get the info. Newsstand copies don't have it.

However you do it, now is the time to start. Wyoming, Arizona, Utah and Montana all have deadlines in the first three months of the year. Start building your points now. I can't afford a Utah elk hunt now but hope to be able when I've accumulated my 20 points. In 10 years, you may have the money, but if you don't have the points to get the tag, it isn't going to matter.

Rod Carpenter lives in John Day and wrote this column for our sister paper, the Blue Mountain Eagle. Email your comments to shootingthebreeze@bme@gmail.com.

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## Climate change and border walls



### MAIN STREET

Rich Wandschneider

It's ironic that the people most worried about illegal immigration—President Trump included—seem to be most skeptical of climate change. My own tact is to skip those loaded words, and just talk about worldwide drought and its impacts on conflict and migration.

A couple of years ago I read a book called The Great Warming, by Brian Fagan. It's a chronicle of world history from about 800 AD to 1300 AD, a period in which the earth's temperatures warmed, my Norwegian ancestors settled Iceland, Greenland, and Newfoundland, and England produced wine grapes. The population of Europe exploded, but when Fagan gets to Africa and what would become the Americas, the picture turns to drought—and devastation. California's live oak tree forests died and the coastal population was reduced by half. The Mayan cities with their sophisticated irrigation systems collapsed and populations moved to the countryside—archeologists continue to find these ancient cities.

Fagan uses interesting techniques to trace the warming—thousand year records of wine grape harvest dates, core sampling in ice, etc. He says that we are only now beginning to understand the role of ocean currents and sun activity in the huge shifts that move earth's temperatures and annual rainfalls. In high school and college in California in the 1950s and 60s, I don't remember hearing about El Nino and La Nina.

When we are talking about weather and climate impact on migrations, we don't need to account for how much of the changing patterns of temperature and drought are due to El Nino and other ocean currents, sun activity, or our own, human intrusions with fossil fuels and carbon emissions. What we need to look at—and acknowledge—is that people move when they are hungry, and they get hungry when crops don't grow—remember the "Dust Bowl"? They move from flooded coastlands and burning forests. They move when they are scared, and they get scared when resources are limited and the fight over resources explodes in insurrection and war.

I spent some time in the Middle East 50 years ago, and think I have some notion of what goes on their politically, but I completely missed the connection between the Arab Spring and drought. Some people were paying attention.

Henry Fountain wrote in the New York Times in March 2015 that

An extreme drought in Syria between 2006 and 2009 was most likely due to climate change, and... the drought was a factor in the violent uprising that began there in 2011... Studies... showed that the extreme dryness, combined with other factors, including misguided agricultural and water-use policies of the Syrian government, caused crop failures that led to the migration of as many as 1.5 million people from rural to urban areas. This in turn added to social stresses that eventually resulted in the uprising against President Bashar al-Assad in March 2011.

A few years ago an exchange student from tiny Jordan told us that her country's population is 10 million, and has over a million Syrian refugees. Turkey, the country I lived in, has millions of refugees from Syria and Iraq. And Europe, of course, millions more—from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, and from central, eastern, and northern Africa. Way back in 2007, the BBC said that there were over 4 million African refugees in Europe, and the stream of refugees from Africa and hot, drought stricken areas of the Middle East continues.

Closer to home, Gustavo Palencio wrote recently for Reuters that "A severe drought has ravaged crops in Central America and as many as 2.81 million people are struggling to feed themselves." He continues: "The drought, which is also affecting South America, has been particularly hard on the so-called 'dry corridor' of Central America, which includes southern Guatemala, northern Honduras and western El Salvador."

Will a wall keep these hungry people out? From the Great Wall in China to the Maginot Line in France—a line of concrete fortifications, obstacles, and weapon installations built by France in the 1930s to deter an invasion from Germany—walls have not been effective in keeping hungry people from moving. Germany, awash in poverty and outlandish inflation, found a savior in Hitler—a man who promised them "Lebensraum," room to live across a wide swath of Europe. Maginot did not stop him.

In the real world, countries like ours—and places like Wallowa County, Oregon—that are lush, best do what we can to deter world-wide drought, flood and fire, and encourage accommodating development in the dangerous, mostly hot and dry places in the US and in other countries where people live under the extreme stresses of heat, drought, flood, fire, poverty, and human strife. Hungry and scared, wall or no, they'll be at our door.

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