



Staff photo by E.J. Harris, File/East Oregonian

in this Jan. 23, 2018, file photo, ballots are counted at the Umatilla County Courthouse in Pendleton for the statewide special election.

Local government is local people

It's understandable that you might be tired of politics in general right now, and political campaigns specifically.

Honestly, 2018 was brutal. Oregon saw record-setting campaign spending in the governor's race and on statewide measures, and contested local races mixed in, too.

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

It all translated into bushels of flyers in our mailboxes and advertisements in all forms of media. It was impossible to avoid, and became a challenge to find the substance underneath the layers of posturing and rhetoric.

This current calm between storms of the 2018 midterms and 2020 general may seem like a good chance to not think about elections for a while.

At the risk of ruining that relaxation, we'd like to talk about the election coming up in May.

Don't freak out. You will not be getting mailers or seeing advertisements on your television. Your inbox will not be flooded (any more than usual). Mud will not be slung.

In fact, many people won't be aware of the election until the day a ballot arrives in their mailboxes. Maybe you're one of those people. But if you perused the classified section in Wednesday's *East Oregonian*, you saw the listing of 45 districts large and small with seats coming open this year.

(A quick side note on the classified section of the newspaper: Much of our local government's work appears there first in the form of budgets, hearings, requests for bid, auctions and other public notices. If the

back half of the B section is not part of your daily reading habit, there is a lot to be learned.)

Districts across the state will take part in the special election, choosing volunteer representatives for all kinds of boards. These are often under-the-radar positions that don't draw nearly the same

level of scrutiny as city councils or county commissioners, much less statewide office. They also attract few applicants and are often filled by write-in candidates if no one files for the position.

But they're a crucial part of our democracy. They represent the commitment of common citizens to make decisions for the good of the whole. The directors are in charge of spending taxpayer money and making decisions about large employers, including the Hermiston and Pendleton school districts, Blue Mountain Community College and the ports. They oversee critical functions like ambulance and fire services, and community services like parks and cemeteries.

It takes all kinds of people with all kinds of expertise to keep local government functioning, and we applaud those who step up to the role. We also encourage more people to sign up for duty. One way or another, the seats will be filled. It's our belief that democracy functions best when the selection process of representation is public, rather than chosen by default.

Filing for the positions begins Feb. 9 and the deadline is March 21. Forms are available at county offices and on the Umatilla County website. Ballots will go out ahead of the May 21 election.

Work, the curse of the drinking class

I noticed in an interview a question about what the interviewee had as his or her first job. This made me recall the first job I ever got paid for. I was about 5 or 6 and the neighbor was loading loose hay into the mow in his barn. The loose hay was dumped in front of the barn and a big Jackson Fork would swoop down and grab a load and the hay would be elevated and run down a track where it dumped in the hay mow. They had about 20 sheep in the loft and my job was to chase the sheep around on the hay to pack it. I think I earned about 25 cents. My next paid job, age 8, was helping the neighbor girl milk cows for a week while her parents were on vacation. By age 10 my Dad had me driving a tractor and doing a little summer fallowing. Later in that year again the neighbor had me helping his son stook oat bundles that had been dropped by a horse drawn binder. I decided early on I didn't need the job, I only needed the money.

At age 11 I finally got a job I loved. The community pasture of about 200,000 acres was not far west of our ranch. The pasture manager had a kid, about 22, that traded a lot of cattle and some ran in that pasture. He would come by with his cattle truck and load my horse and we would gather cattle to a corral and sort out a few and load them. We would jump the horses in with the cattle and be off. On the way home Tommy would pull a couple of beers out from under the seat and we would have a cold one on the way. It was years later I found out that a lot of the cattle Tommy loaded weren't his. I did enjoy rustling.

At age 12 we moved to California and there seemed to be plenty of work there. None of it pleasant. Now that I was hooked on money I found work mowing lawns and other



OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle

menial tasks. Living in the San Joaquin Valley there was always work in the orchards. The first spring job I remember was picking boysenberries. A bunch of us would ride our bikes to the berry patch about 6 a.m. and pick till about 2 p.m. I can't remember how much we were paid per crate but it was more than mowing lawns. Later in the summer I next worked

JUST ABOUT EVERY KID IN MY CLASS WORKED IN THE FRUIT IN THE SUMMER AND IF THE HARVEST WAS LATE THEY WOULD POSTPONE THE OPENING OF SCHOOL TO GET THE WORK DONE.

in a dry yard hauling peaches to the women who cut them and put them on drying trays. First thing in the morning we had to take the trays out of the sulphur houses and spread the trays in the yard. This paid \$1.25 per hour and was hot miserable work. If you were a good worker you could pick peaches for 15 cents a box and maybe pick 125 boxes. I wasn't a good worker so I worked for the \$1.25 per hour swamping the filled boxes onto pallet trailers or propping peach trees. Just about every kid in my class worked in the fruit in the summer and if the harvest was late they would postpone the opening of school to get the work done.

By the time I was 16, 1957, I had saved enough to buy a 4-year-old 1953 ford with 35,000 miles on it. I paid \$730 for this beauty, license number FJN 813.

Now that I had a car dependent on gasoline and repairs I had to step up my employment attendance. It seemed there was no shortage of work in the fields and orchards. In the summer there was harvesting fruit, in the fall grapes and nuts. I once made pretty good money swamping grapes with a kid that would work hard. We were paid 50 cents a ton each to load out grapes. Don almost worked me to death. In the winter you could prune trees and in the early spring you could set out smudge pots in almond orchards or thin peaches.

I did have two jobs that were better than working in the fruit. I landed a job taking care of the swimming pool that wasn't too bad. I also worked for Oliver's Flying A gas station pumping gas. One day a couple of boys about 18 pulled in to get gas. I knew them and wasn't too fond of them. I had just started putting \$2 worth of gas in their car when Mr. McGee flew into the gas station and jumped out of his car. He ran over to the passenger side of the car and pulls JC Phillips half way out the window and gave him a real good beating. He then left. It turned out that these two boys were driving by Mrs. McGhee, who was carrying a bag of groceries into her driveway, and threw a bunch of grapes hitting her. They didn't see Mr. McGhee sitting on the front porch. Herman McGhee, though only 145 pounds, wasn't one to call the cops.

Talking to my grandfather one day he was extolling the virtues of living in Saskatchewan. I asked him what was so great about a country that got down to 40 below in the winter and had mosquitos that would carry you off in the summer. He answered, think about it, if you were smart enough to stick to grain growing and not raise cattle, you only had to work 40 days a year. He made a lot of sense.

OUR VIEW

Anti-vaxxers put us all at risk

Over the past few weeks, we have received reports of an outbreak of measles in southwestern Washington, which has now hit more than 50 patients.

"But I thought we eradicated measles along with polio and a host of other serious diseases through vaccination," you might be thinking to yourself.

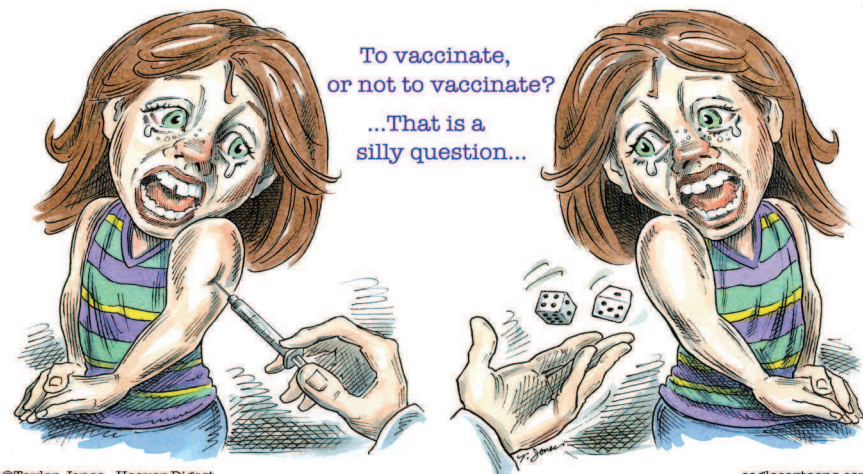
You'd be right about that. The U.S., for all practical purposes, had indeed eradicated these pestilences as vaccines developed by top health care pioneers like the legendary Dr. Jonas Salk virtually wiped out these dreaded afflictions. So what has changed?

In the Clark County (Vancouver), Wash., case, it has been reported that 42 out of the 49 known patients who have contracted the measles were not vaccinated.

One patient had only received a partial vaccination and the status of the six others was unknown. Health officials suspect the outbreak can be traced to exposure at the Portland International Airport, the Moda Center and other possible sites in and around the Portland area.

A separate group of cases have been reported among the Orthodox Jewish community in New York State.

What ties these two diverse population groups together is they are both at the heart of an anti-vaccination movement in the U.S.



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Whether refusal to be vaccinated is based upon religious conviction or the misguided belief that children can be healthier without them, many parents are refusing to have their children immunized. They place us all at higher risk.

As one Washington state epidemiologist stated, "This is entirely preventable."

It is indeed preventable, but only if we can successfully inoculate the entire population, so as to protect the most vulnerable among us — the young, the aged, and those with already-compromised immune systems.

Perhaps with the passage of time, we as a society have forgotten what terrible consequences these maladies can

wreak upon human populations when left unchecked. Maybe it's time for a new round of education, just as the older generation among us received back in the 1950s and '60s when these vaccinations were becoming widespread.

Meanwhile, the apparently growing ranks of "anti-vaxxers," as they have become known, are holding proven science, best health care practices, and the rest of us hostage.

If you have children, please ensure that they are vaccinated and follow the recommended immunization schedule that virtually every state and local health department advocates. Do it for them and do it for all of us.

LETTERS to the EDITOR

Let's remember, we are a great country

To the citizens of our area and especially to the ones in Wallowa County: We are a great country already in spite of the slogan "Make America Great Again". The Wallowa County Chamber of Commerce Citizens Awards banquet recognized just a very few of those who have and who know that America is great already. I was shocked and completely surprised to be honored by

the Wallowa Mountain Quilters Guild and the Chamber with the Unsung Hero award. I thank all involved. There are so many of us who go about our every day lives to make this a wonderful place to live and work. They deserve to be rewarded too.

When we take note of the situations around the world, how many of us consider the fact that out of the billions of people that inhabit our planet, that, by the grace of God, you as the reader of this and I as the writer are two of those billions to live in the United States of America. We all have been rewarded with freedom, advantages and opportunities to do something to benefit others and to help ourselves.

It was so nice to be reminded of my efforts. I thank you WMQG again for singling me out for this very special award.

Hope McLaughlin
Enterprise

Trump should pay for wall

Let's make this short and simple: If our billionaire president wants a wall that won't cost the American one dime as promised, how about he and some of his billionaire pals pay for it themselves.

Jeff Irish
Enterprise

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