

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

The important value of farmers markets

It's seriously spring in Wallowa County. The balsamroot is blooming on the moraine. Thunder is rolling through the mountains. And lots of us have finally gotten up the nerve to plant our garden.

The health benefits of eating fresh foods, whether vegetables harvested just before dinner, grass-fed beef raised locally with care, or eggs laid by your neighbors free-range, cricket-chomping chickens, have become readily apparent in the past decade. Our physicians sometimes prescribe a Whole 30 diet rather than prescription drugs. There should be little doubt in anyone's mind that fresh, locally raised foods are generally better for us than goods hauled here from afar.

There are other benefits to growing our own foods and eating locally. First, it makes this isolated rural community more self-sufficient. That's something that we have always taken pride in, and still do. Second, we support our neighbors who are growing good food as much as a labor of love as for income. Supporting local farms also helps keep us rural. Third, producing our own food strengthens our economy—in several ways. An article in the very urban Washington Post documents this clearly.

"Every time money changes hands in the community it boosts the community's overall income and level of economic activity, and fuels the creation of jobs. The more times money



Ellen Morris Bishop

Beets are among the many, many locally grown healthy foods available seasonally at farmer's markets.

changes hands within the community before heading elsewhere, the better off the community is," said economist Sarah DeWeerd. "Spending money at a locally-based business has a greater multiplier effect, ... because locally owned businesses are more likely to invest their dollars locally."

The January 2019 issue of the Journal of Agriculture, Food Systems, and Community Development included a study of Moscow, Idaho's Farmers Market. The study indicated "a positive impact on the downtown commu-

nity of Moscow due to direct sales at the market, and direct sales at nearby downtown businesses." Total economic impact was "between \$3.9 million to \$5.5 million, generation of 94 to 129 local jobs, and \$290,000 to \$405,000 in taxes generated in the state." (Of course, Idaho has a sales tax...) The report continues: "Moreover, there is evidence that the market fosters the brick and mortar businesses that may develop as spillover effects of business-to-business activity with market vendors."

Granted, Moscow, Idaho is much larger than Joseph or Wallowa – or even Wallowa County, for that matter. But the basic findings still apply. A robust Farmers Market that purveys local foods is good for us all. Importantly, it attracts visitors and their dollars to the "nearby downtown businesses."

For the City Council of Joseph to exile Wallowa County's upper valley Farmers Market to an obscure parking lot on an outbound highway at the edge of town bespeaks a blatant and foolish disregard for the economy and health of their community. The citizens of Joseph owe a huge debt of gratitude to Stein's Distillery for offering their parking lot to the Farmers Market, where it will be among the first things that many visitors see, and first place they stop. They will likely consider Joseph as a forward thinking, health-conscious community as a result. If the findings in Moscow, Idaho's study hold true here, then some of Joseph's newest businesses—Stein's, Blythe Cricket, La Laguna, Aspen Grove Gallery and even the not-yet established MThrive Organics—may see their business prosper in a revitalized north end of town. And while this outcome is good, it's sad that the Joseph City Council did not have the foresight to embrace and support an organization that provides nothing but good for the entire community of Joseph, and Wallowa County.

WHERE TO WRITE

Washington, D.C.

The White House — 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. E-mail: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Web site: <http://wyden.senate.gov> Fax: 202-228-2717.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. E-mail: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997.

Oregon offices — One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R (Second District) — 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct e-mail because of spam. Web site: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.

Pending Bills

For information on bills in Congress — Phone: 202-225-1772.

Salem

Gov. Kate Brown, D — 160 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-4582. Fax: 503-378-8970. Web site: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

Oregon Legislature — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Web site: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

State Rep. Greg Barreto, R-Cove (District 58) — Room H-384, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1458. E-mail: rep.gregbarreto@state.or.us. Web site: <http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto>

State Sen. Bill Hansell, R (District 29) — Room S-423, State Capitol, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1729. E-mail: Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us. Web site: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell.

Striving for mediocrity

Congratulations to all the high school students who are about to graduate, especially those of you who have worked hard to excel and score high on your SAT test. Getting a high score on this test, along with personal satisfaction, will open a lot of doors for you as far as being admitted to the college of your choice.

I see where there is a movement to change the scoring for the SAT by giving disadvantaged students extra points. If you were raised by a single parent, come from a poor family, are a member of an ethnic minority, etc., you would be awarded extra points. In my opinion this degrades the credibility of the score. Adding points doesn't make a student smarter. It seems to me this artificial score will now qualify unqualified students to enter colleges they are not equipped to succeed in. Adding arbitrary points to someone's SAT score doesn't raise their IQ or expand their knowledge to a point where they will be successful. To handle this problem they will probably lower the standards of the colleges thereby diminishing the value of a degree and the value of the graduate to employers.

There was a time when only the winners got the trophy and the winners were the ones who put in the time and effort to win. Other than personal satisfaction, what reason is there for a kid to try hard and work on skills to excel when the laziest and most useless kids get the same participation trophy. I know what it is like to not win and it isn't good but that is the reason to prac-

OPEN RANGE

Barrie Qualle



tice or study and get better at what you are doing. Why work at something if there is no greater reward than what every other entry is going to receive. There should be some incentive to try. Somehow participation trophies seem pretty socialistic and don't prepare a kid for real life. In fact it is going to make their adult lives tougher.

'WHEN SCHOOL IS OVER AND YOU ARE OUT IN THE OLD COLD WORLD, THE ONES WHO TRIED AND EXCELLED ARE THE ONES WHO MAKE THE BIG MONEY AND HAVE A GOOD LIFE.'

There is a high school in central Oregon where things appear to be decaying. In most sports they don't choose an MVP for fear of hurting someone's feelings. This year the football coaches weakened and allowed it but chose three MVPs thereby diluting the value of the award. The administration also

decided to have the teachers pick the class presidents and select the student council. That should teach the kids something about the election process. Rather than reward the valedictorian with the privilege of giving the graduation speech the administration chose a student they deemed more closely represented the class. A valedictorian shouldn't represent the class average, a valedictorian has tried and excelled and should be rewarded for the time and effort that was necessary to achieve that title. The school mission statement might as well be "Striving for Mediocrity."

Here's a bulletin for any students who are satisfied with a participation trophy or having points added to their SAT. When school is over and you are out in the old cold world, the ones who tried and excelled are the ones who make the big money and have a good life. They are the ones employers really want because they are the ones that make companies succeed. Because they don't struggle financially at a job they hate they have cause to be happier and more content.

Any way, I am proud of the students in this county and all the organizations that provide much needed scholarships for them. On a different note, have any of you noticed the happy flagger where the road work is being done on the Minam grade? She waves and smiles at every car that passes. It kind of makes your day a little better seeing someone that happy and nice. Her name is Lisa.



Ellen Morris Bishop

The Enterprise High School class of 2019 will pursue careers in many different walks of life.

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P.O. Box 338 • Enterprise, OR 97828
Office: 209 NW First St., Enterprise, Ore.
Phone: 541-426-4567 • Fax: 541-426-3921

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