

## VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

## Helping neighbors is a good way to go

So far, Wallowa County's winter seems to have been one miracle after another.

This past weekend we were destined to be snow-blown and chilled, with high winds and daunting drifts. Never happened. The previous week the weather prognosticators called for possible flooding. Our phones and emails and Facebooks were clogged with concerned friends and relatives wondering if we were ok. And except for relatively minor flooding along the Grande Ronde, and closure of the Troy Road and Redmond grade for several days, we remained high and dry.

But our neighbors in Umatilla County were not so lucky. Wallowa County's Swift Water Search and Rescue team was dispatched in the middle of the night on the 7th to aid in combined rescue efforts that included saving people from roof tops, and assisting families in escaping safely from homes overwhelmed by a fierce and rising Umatilla River. One person, Janet Tobkin Conley, 62, perished in floodwaters. People were rescued by helicopter, and even a front-



Ben Lonergan/East Oregonian

**Bill Koskela returns to the cab of his truck to pull it out of a washed-out road in Thorn Hollow on Feb. 6. Koskela had been using the truck to anchor a boat for an attempted rescue mission when the Umatilla River rose and started sliding the truck. Koskela was able to drive free of the incident while those involved in the rescue attempt were stranded for hours awaiting the arrival of a Black Hawk helicopter from Salem before being flown to safety.**

end loader. The costs of reconstruction and recovery throughout eastern Oregon have not yet been estimated, but will likely be in the many 100's of millions of dollars.

Umatilla County and the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Reservation have already pledged funds and

equipment to help, and the State of Oregon is not far behind. Farmers are shipping hay to help feed livestock. It's heartening to see that neighboring communities, having dodged the winter bullets themselves, are also stepping up to help. Someday it will be our turn to deal with disaster.

Paying it forward is a good way to go.

Paying it forward might also be a good idea when it comes to the four lower Snake River dams. Governor Brown's letter makes it clear that breaching those structures is a high priority. It should be. This is a Wallowa County

issue as well as a Washington one. Every salmon and steelhead in our rivers must navigate those dams. Partly because of that, we are happy to see that her letter calls for breaching and for enforcement of the Nez Perce Tribe approved Flexible Spill and Power agreement. Because there are farms and communities that have come to depend on the infrastructure provided by those four misbegotten dams, there must also be alternative transport provided for downriver grain shipments. But Lewiston does not need to remain a "seaport" for this to happen.

Brown's letter is remiss in not expressing the urgency of these needs. Salmon are in peril. And if the dams are breached before some upgraded infrastructure is available, ag will have a difficult row to hoe for transportation. But time is short, and as a community we must come together, and like those who are aiding Umatilla flood victims, make sacrifices for both fish and farms. We need a timeline and a willingness to do (and spend) what is necessary if Snake River fish are to recover.

## OTHER VOICES

An open letter to Senator Bill Hansell: I was disappointed by your guest editorial in the February 5 edition of the Chieftain. Yes, it was folksy, and yes, it had a cute picture of a pig with lipstick, but it demonstrated a lack of leadership on your part. Nowhere in your editorial did you indicate that you worked in any way to resolve the issues you see with SB 1530, the cap-and-trade bill.

I didn't vote for you so that you could do nothing but complain that SB 1530 is broken. I'm willing to bet that on that big pig farm of yours you had equipment that broke down all the time, management problems that cropped up all the time, and challenges that needed to be solved, not just moaned about. And I'll bet you worked hard to fix that equipment and solve those problems. That's what you were elected to do for your constituents: Figure out how to make things work.

You said, "We can't afford to roll the dice with this. The stakes are just too high." What stakes are you talking about? How about worldwide climate change on a scale that is causing massive harm to people and all other living things every day, and at a pace that will only get worse if we are not courageous and creative enough to craft bold solutions? This is not abstract or hypothetical. We're seeing that harm right here in eastern Oregon, in the form of catastrophic wildfires, erratic and extreme

weather events, and more.

What kind of world do you want your eleven grandchildren to live in when you and I are pushing up daisies?

Is SB 1530 likely to "create a bureaucratic headache for fuel companies?" I hate bureaucracy as much as the next guy, so I'd love for you to come up with specific suggestions for streamlining the process.

Do you think it's "not clear the fuels scheme ... would even work in the first place?" Then add a provision for periodic evaluation and adaptive management.

Are you afraid that increasing gasoline prices by \$0.22 per gallon, or propane prices by \$0.16 per gallon, will place an undue burden on your constituents? Perhaps helping to craft solutions to the widespread housing crisis would more than offset those cost increases.

Concerned that DEQ staffers would have "almost no accountability for their decisions?" Then work to ensure that they ARE held accountable.

Senator Hansell, I have kissed a pig, right on the smackeroo. And it wasn't even wearing lipstick. OK, it was just a piglet. But if I'm willing to kiss a pig, the least you can do is get in the pigpen and wrangle with that pig until it looks like something you'd be willing to show off at the fair.

Roll up your sleeves and get to work. The stakes are just too high not to.

**Rick Bombaci**

## Who gets to vote? Women and American Indians came late to the ballot box

This year marks 100 since women got the vote across the United States, and we've been doing some research at the Josephy Center in preparation for our March Women's show. We plan to honor women and the 19th Amendment.

Women's suffrage was a long fight, with at least one hero we remember by name: Susan B. Anthony. The suffrage amendment carried her name, and her image was put on a dollar coin a few years ago. The coin and its use were a bust — women still have uphill battles.

There were national suffrage organizations and conventions beginning in the 1860s, and there were individual women and their own organizations across the states that furthered the cause. In general, the West beat the rest of the country hands-down in giving women the vote. Wyoming came into the Union as a territory in 1869 with full voting rights for women. When it became a state in 1890, suffrage was part of the compact. That led to some opposition, but Wyoming stood firm, and thus became the first state to allow women the vote.

It's said that Wyoming was short on women, and that Wyoming men thought this a way to recruit women from the East. But there are other indications that Wyoming men — and men across the West — knew that women could pull their weight in the homesteading world.

In Oregon, Abigail Scott Duniway was our Susan B. Anthony. Married, with children and a disabled husband, she taught school, ran a millenary shop and, in 1871, founded The New Northwest, a weekly newspaper devoted to women's rights. Duniway had subscribers across the region and traveled widely, promoting suffrage in Idaho and Washington and across Oregon. In 1887, she gave a July 4 talk at the head of Wallowa Lake!

Abigail's brother, Harvey Scott, had his own newspaper, the Portland Oregonian, and used it to fight his sister at every turn. Among other things, Scott argued that women did not want to vote. Abigail's persistence paid off in 1912 when Oregon became the seventh state in the U.S. to pass a women's suffrage amendment. Gov. Oswald West asked Abigail to write and sign the proclamation.

We couldn't find much in the way of celebration in Wallowa County in 1912 or 1920. There is a list of subscribers to Duniway's newspaper, and a wonderful piece of information from Lostine City

## MAIN STREET

Rich Wandschneider



Recorder Toni Clary. She found a copy of Lostine's original "Special Laws" from 1903, in which women "having acquired residence within the city limits and the state, and of lawful age, shall have the right to vote." We don't have records of any actual votes, but it might be that women first voted in Oregon in Lostine!

There is further legal language in the Lostine document that women "who have property within the city limits ... shall have the right to vote upon a city tax." The requirement of owning property extended to men as well. This was not a new requirement for voting; it goes back to the earliest days of the Republic.

The Founding Fathers worried that those who did not own property but were a numerical majority would overwhelm property owners. Their compromise was to allow the states to prescribe "The times, places and manner of holding elections for senators and representatives [and the] establishment of the franchise."

The language of the Constitution in 1789 and the habits of the day judged that "equal rights" meant rights shared by property owning white men. Populist Andrew Jackson pushed for extension to all white men, and the post-Civil War amendments extended the vote to freed slaves — although poll taxes and outrageous constitutional exam questions effectively denied many Southern Blacks the vote until the Civil Rights acts of the 1960s.

Women joined the ranks of regular voters in 1920, and American Indians followed when they received citizenship and the vote in 1923. And both groups struggle to win elective office. Today, 21 of 100 women serve as senators, and only nine of the 50 governors are women. Paulette Jordan, a Native woman from Idaho, failed but ran well in the race for governor, and just announced that she is running for the Senate.

But women made the difference in many congressional elections in 2018, and are running and being courted seriously by all candidates in 2020. It only took 100 years.

## LETTERS to the EDITOR

## Global warming and climate change cannot be ignored

A county commissioner in eastern Oregon wants a study of each "ecological and economic part of the state" before considering the "cap-and-trade" bill. Can you imagine the length of time it would take to do a study of the effects of the bill each "area" in the state? At that rate, we could study this bill until 2050, which is when the world may be unlivable.

Some legislators want the emergency clause of the cap-and-trade bill eliminated, because, should the bill ever pass, it would go into effect immediately. They warn against hasty decisions. Hasty decisions! Decades ago, we knew this would happen unless effective action took place.

Instead of discussing economies with business and agriculture before each legislative session, each Oregon legislator should be dispatched to talk with first-graders in schools in the state. In the future,

these 6-year-old constituents will live with the problems left unsolved by our Legislature. Probably the first-graders will understand better than the legislators, but the act of telling them what is being done to their future might have an effect upon the legislators.

If the legislators don't have the information needed to discuss climate change with first-graders, there are scientists (over 90% all scientists in the world) who are able to talk about what we are doing to our planet.

It is convenient to say, "I do not believe those things will happen. I will not change my life style just because some academic makes a prediction."

You could be right, even though thousands of learned scientists have shown that these things are already starting to occur. On the other hand, you could say, "I want my grandchildren and great-grandchildren to have a comfortable life. And I am willing to make some sacrifices that will enable life to continue."

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