

OPINION

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Learning valuable lessons from history

Typically, Americans don't spend a lot of time looking backward but we must know our own history so we can navigate the future.

That's why projects like the one in Wallowa by the Wallowa History Center is notable. The center seeks to create a four-building home for a sort of historical compound that will include an interpretive center and a research library on 1st and Madison streets.

The project has a ways to go but the fact that such an idea is gaining steam in the community is good news.

There is a lot of history in Eastern Oregon and sometimes we all take it for granted. We shouldn't.

That's because knowing our own heritage helps us form opinions and develop ideas for the future. As Americans, we spend a lot of time moving into the future as fast as possible and fail to stop and reflect on our history.

Projects like the one in Wallowa and existing facilities — such as the National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center near Baker City — can provide citizens with a new, or even different, perspective regarding their ancestors. We need more history, not less, and calm contemplation about what it means for the future.

We don't learn lessons well. The Vietnam War taught a host of lessons but we didn't seem able to apply those experiences effectively in Iraq or Afghanistan.

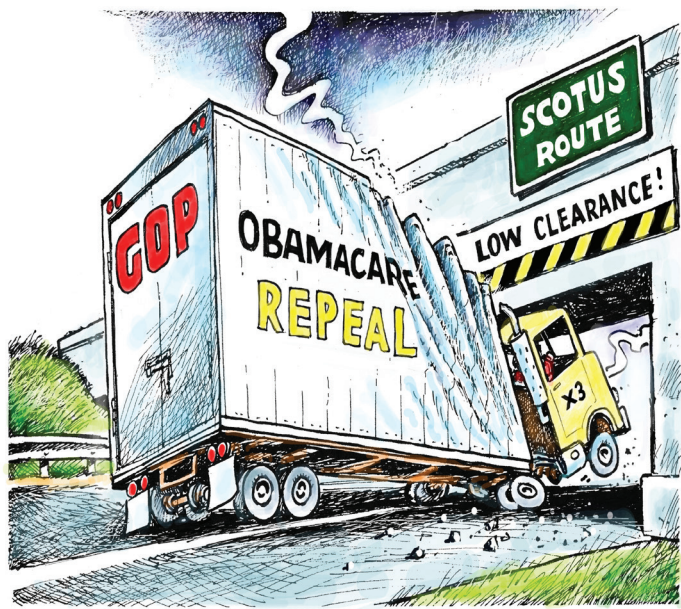
There is the old adage that those who fail to learn from the mistakes of the past are destined to repeat them. While the saying is often misused it should resonate for us all.

Learning about how and why those who came before us acted the way they did or what decision they made under certain circumstances can help us troubleshoot challenges that arise in the future.

Our history in Eastern Oregon is packed with triumphs and tragedies and loss and redemption. Every one of those stories holds a lesson. Let's make sure those lessons don't fade away.

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LETTER to the EDITOR

Has the U.S. turned to tyranny?

Totalitarianism: A system of government that is centralized and dictatorial and requires complete subservience to the state. Anyone noticing the trend with Oregon and the United States? One would have to be a rock not to.

Before totalitarian was a relatively new word, it used to be called tyranny, i.e., a concept or form of government or political system that prohibits opposition parties, restricts individual opposition to the state and its claims, and exercises an extremely high degree of control over public and private life.

Anarchy: A state of disorder due to absence or nonrecognition of authority. Portland is in a state of anarchy due to weak leaders and a weak governor. There is no law and order. If we had a governor

like Tom McCall, Robert Straub or Sen. Maurine Neuberger, Portland would be the great city it once was.

Our elected leaders now use the law of contradiction, which implies that Gov. Kate Brown could not simultaneously hold the COVID-19 pandemic renders church services dangerous to allow, and also that massive protest marches are fine.

I have been to a couple of countries that have reeducation camps, where brainwashing is used to reeducate the clingers of Bibles, guns and free thinking. Propaganda is used daily on most of the news media and by our leaders. Say it often enough and soon one believes it. We do not need reeducation camps, we have them in schools and colleges. Remember Nikita Khrushchev? His speech at the United Nations, while pounding his shoe on the podium, said, "We will not bury you, you will bury yourselves." That was

1959. I was 13 and it frightened me.

I thought that our country was open, trusting and right over wrong, that we would never let that happen. Mistaken I was.

Finally, I had no choice being born white. I am not a white supremacist, homophobe, sycophant or any other gaggle of names and labels those liberals throw at me. I have never met anyone that chose their color of skin. By the way, we fought a world war over the polices that the United States are pursuing now.

Just remember doublethink, i.e.

George Orwell's "1984," Arthur Koester's "Darkness at Noon," Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World," and C. S. Lewis' "That Hideous Strength." These should be mandatory reading, as once they were.

Roesch Kishpaugh
Pendleton

CONTACT your REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111

U.S. SENATORS

Ron Wyden
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

Jeff Merkley
313 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

Cliff Bentz
1239 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515
202-225-6730
Medford office: 541-776-4646

GOVERNOR

Kate Brown
160 State Capitol
900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582

REPRESENTATIVES

Bobby Levy, District 58
900 Court St. NE, H-376
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1458
Rep.BobbyLevy@state.or.us

Greg Smith, District 57
900 Court St. NE, H-482
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

SENATOR

Bill Hansell, District 29
900 Court St. NE, S-423
Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

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SEND LETTERS TO: editor@wallowa.com, or via mail to Wallowa County Chieftain, 209 NW 1st St. Enterprise, OR 97828