

OPINION

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

A tip of the hat to the area's graduates

We salute the host of college and high school graduates who strolled across the stage this month, clutching their diplomas.

While graduation is certainly a recognized rite of passage, it is also a time of reflection and hope. Now, more than ever, we need every area graduate.

Lofty goals and sentiments are often legion during graduation — as they should be — but the basic fact remains that the nation, the state and the local community needs every one of those graduates to step out into the adult world with a goal to make a difference.

It may appear easy to dismiss the notion that a single person can make an impact, but the truth is each young man and woman who walks off the graduation stage this month can make a difference.

And we need those who want and can make a difference.

At a time when the nation is rife with division, where discord is consumed like an energy drink, America, Oregon, Union and Wallowa counties need young people who still retain the determination of their youth. People who are ready and eager to step up and seek change.

Our greatest resource as a nation is our youth.

Our prospects, our opportunities for success as a county, state and nation rest on the hopes and desires of our young people.

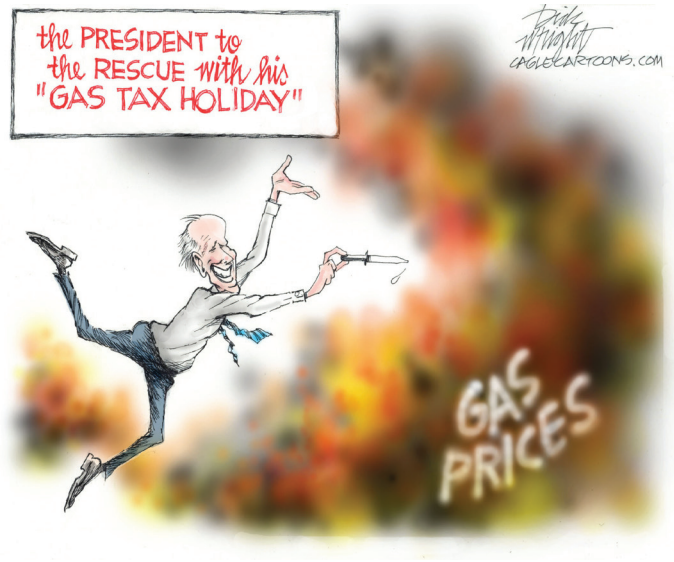
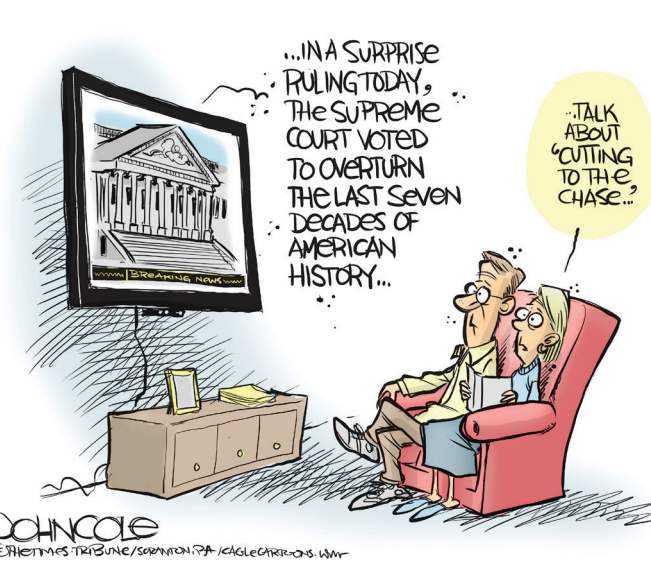
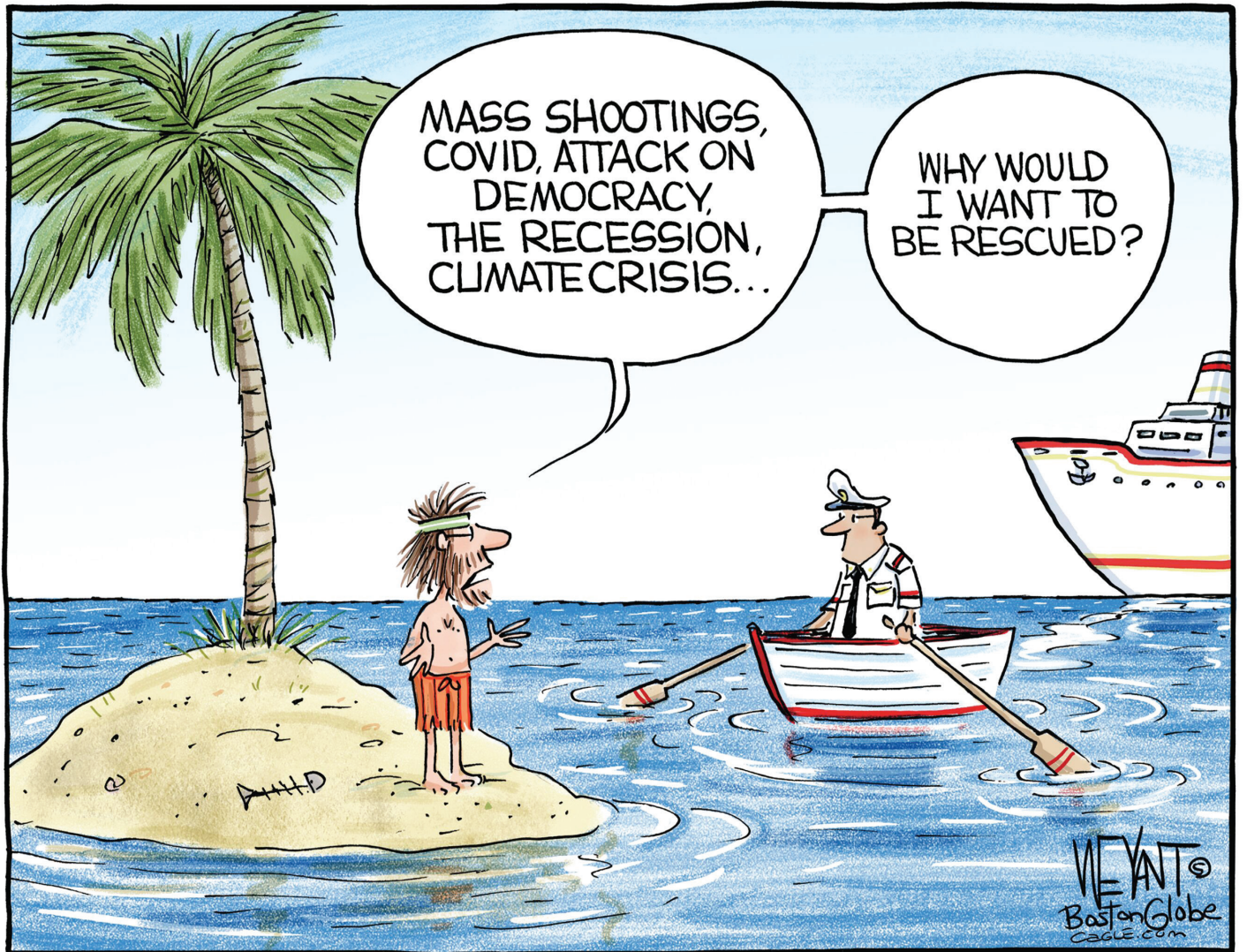
Our young are the agents of our future, and the potential they represent is as valuable as any new policy, law or idea.

Granted, we remain the greatest nation on Earth in terms of goals and values, and at no time in our shared history have chances of a happy life for our youths been more acute than now.

Yet challenges, risks, also remain for our youths. There is no way to deny that the obstacles the nation and the state face are significant. The perceived problems stack up easily, and solutions often are fleeting.

That is why the views, the ambitions, of those who have just graduated are so important to our collective prosperity. We need every one of the new graduates to feel they can make a difference, that they can help their community, their state and even their nation.

We salute every single graduate from Eastern Oregon University and all of our area high schools. We hope that they will be able to move ahead in life with a calm but steady resolve to give back to their community and spark change for the good of all.



LETTERS to the EDITOR

The issue with collaboratives

Chieftain readers may be puzzled by Mark Webb's harsh rebuttal of Rob Klavins' essay on Forest Collaboratives, seeing that The Chieftain didn't print Klavins' piece. But Webb certainly proves one of Klavins' points: the collaboratives are quick to crush any dissent.

I was a member of the Wallowa-Whitman Collaborative (now the Northern Blues Forest Collaborative) but left after realizing decisions were biased towards extraction rather than responsible forest management.

I attended a Wallowa-Whitman briefing on the proposed Morgan-Nesbit project and viewed proposed cuts. This is nominally a restoration project, but the examples I was shown included aggressive logging of big old trees in previously uncut backcountry forests.

The 21-inch screens no longer protect big trees, contrary to what Webb says, because the rule was weakened and changed from a standard to an unenforceable guideline. Furthermore, logging projects of 16,000 acres (recently in the Fremont-Winema National Forest) are happening as categorical exclusions that sidestep environmental impact statements and significant environmental review.

Labeling big trees as hazards has become a consistent tactic in justifying a

return to logging big timber. Huge ponderosa, hundreds of years old, were cut along the Imnaha River under this rubric and others. Go count the rings.

This tactic was used on the Big Mosquito project where big trees near the lift cable route and landing were cut down after being labeled hazardous. Cable lifts are planned elsewhere in the Big Mosquito cut. If they don't try to stop it, the collaboratives are complicit.

I believe there is a public consensus that big old trees be conserved, for environmental and ethical reasons. The forest service skirts this consensus by disingenuous labeling and collaborative support. Perhaps in Big Mosquito saving big trees should have priority over extraction. If the logging can't be done without cutting old growth, those units should be dropped.

Forest collaboratives are enabling the Forest Service to log old-growth timber.

Wally Sykes
Joseph

Wolves

In response to Connie Dunham's opinion article (June 1, Chieftain), I feel her anxiety. Ever since our mother read us "Little Red Riding Hood" we seldom go far from the house.

Canadian wolves were not aware of state or country boundaries, they traveled

at will. If Canadian wolves are so fearsome I puzzle that any livestock ranches survive in Canada.

So according to Google and other studies by Western Wildlife Outreach, "wolves are extremely wary of humans, not aggressive toward them by nature", "wolf attacks are the rarest of all large predator attacks." Google Facts: "In North America there have been only 41 nonfatal wolf attacks ever recorded." However, dog related fatalities 1982-2010 number 324!

So ... Yellowstone biologists tell us face to face, and in numerous written articles, that wolves in the park have thinned the herd, made it healthier while trees and brush that now shade creeks and rivers help cool the waters for better fish habitat. It's hunters looking for trophies that are responsible for harming the gene pool by harvesting the biggest and best animals.

The overall picture here is that powerful rancher lobbyists have aided ranchers for over a hundred years, allowing them cheap forage on public land and providing a U.S. Fish & Game Deptment to hunt and kill wildlife predators by the thousands, protecting livestock at public expense.

I sincerely urge reading "Welfare Ranching, The Subsidized Destruction of the American West."

Boyd McAvoy
Joseph

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published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

• Longer community comment columns, such as Other Views, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author's name, address and phone number.
• Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

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