

OPINION

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Helping those who need it

More people across the region and locally are utilizing food banks and that means those facilities need as much help as they can get from area residents.

The average number of people who accessed fresh food services jumped by 28% in April and May and there was a 23% increase in fresh food box demand across Baker, Grant, Union and Wallowa counties.

While statistics tell only part of the story, the tale they do reveal is troubling. The apparent causes of the rise in services are inflation and the sudden evaporation of federal COVID-19 relief funds.

Finding the cause, though, is only the first step. The next move is to discover how to alleviate the need. Regional food banks receive regular shipments from the Oregon Food Bank. The state food bank deliveries are supplemented by fresh produce donations from local stores and farmers.

Citizens and residents who can, though, need to do more to help. That means finding ways to donate more food on a regular basis to area food banks.

We've lamented food insecurity on a regular basis on this page and that's because in a nation as rich as ours we believe no one should go hungry. We also believe that local problems are best solved at the local level. We have a great capacity locally to fix even the most complex problems, to overcome even the most difficult problems.

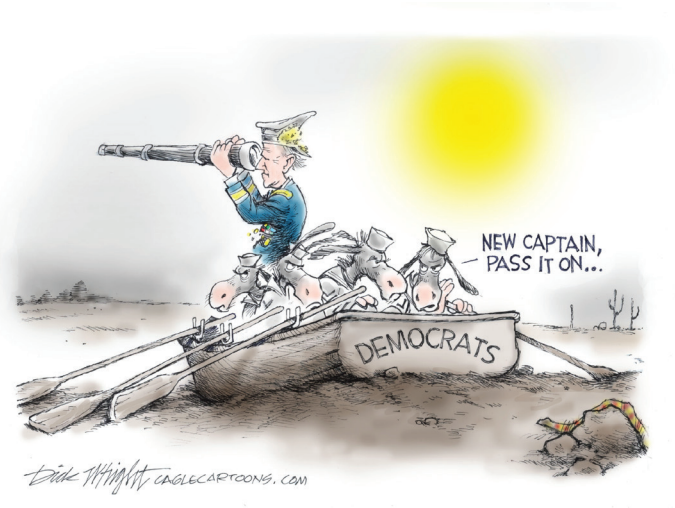
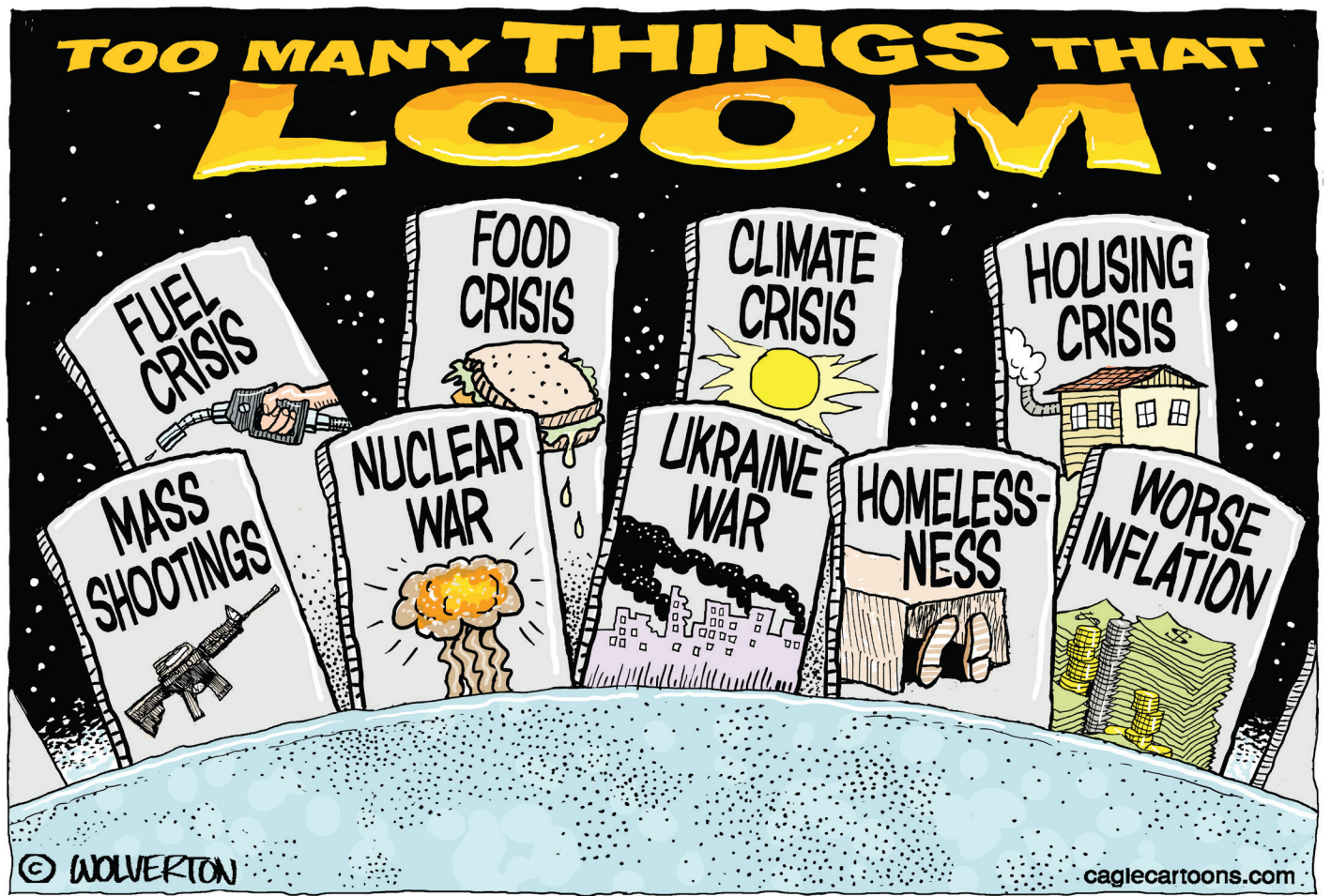
Our region is rich in people who care about one another and we should be able to address the rise in the need for food in a proactive way.

That means all of us can do our part. A simple donation, if possible, to a local food bank can make all the difference in the world to a family or individual who is suddenly food insecure.

Volunteering to assist a local food bank or some other charity that is trying to help those who are less fortunate is another good way to help make a difference.

Making a difference is easy if we want.

We can all work together to help our local and regional food banks and to lend a helping hand.



LETTERS to the EDITOR

Joseph UGB in wrong place

This abridged letter ran in the November 26, 2008 Chieftain edition:

When heading toward Joseph on Ski Run Road just after crossing the bridge over the Wallowa River, the road winds through one of my favorite areas, Boulderfields.

Here the land is covered with glacial erratics of various shapes and sizes, and complex contours that look like waves riding across the landscape. The grasses and shrubs transition into a beautiful ponderosa pine savanna. Marmots and other wildlife make good use of this unique habitat. The green ribbon of vegetation along the Wallowa River corridor flows

through this intact native ecosystem on the edge of town.

A large subdivision is planned for this area, which comprises part of the terminal moraine of Wallowa Lake. This area could soon be converted to houses, roads, buildings and lawns. In the field of ecology this type of land cover conversion from natural environment to suburban is basically irretrievable with habitat values lost.

This follows on the heels of a still-proceeding development just around the corner that is filling a much more sensible location — a cleared field, removed from the Wallowa River corridor, and within an existing neighborhood. Boulderfields is different.

Can we not better prioritize our development to protect

the Wallowa Lake Moraines and their glacial legacy, wildlife corridors, intact plant communities and functioning ecosystems?

If Boulderfields is developed we will be living in a land that is a little less wild, and a little less connected.

David Mildrexler
Enterprise

Debris pile at Joseph Transfer station is a hazard

Over the past four years plus, Rahn Sanitary has spent maybe half a day managing the debris pile at the Joseph Transfer station.

Earlier this year they removed around 20% of the pile, and since then at least the

same amount of material has been added to the pile. The pile is 10 feet tall and at least a 10th of a mile long. It is not just unsightly but is a fire hazard.

Repeated calls to Rahn's have resulted in no action. Indeed, the company fails to return calls. We are now entering into what may well be another dry and dangerous summer.

This eyesore and fire hazard should be dealt with. The Joseph City Council has also been contacted and failed to respond. Public pressure should be placed on both Joseph council and Rahn's Sanitary. This mess needs to be dealt with. It is already close to unmanageable. The time to act is now.

Stephen Kliewer
Joseph

CONTACT your REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT

Joe Biden
The White House
1600 Pennsylvania Ave. 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 St.
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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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.
• Submissions does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

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