

# Change transit to better meet transit need

**B**end may not have the level of bus service some would like the city to have. It does continue to have something special: For now, it's free.

And on May 1, which for many readers is today, bus service on Saturday returns. Dial-A-Ride will also offer Saturday and Sunday service. That's welcome news for people who ride the bus or to anybody who wants to see more use of transit.

But has the pandemic changed the appetite for transit? Will transit be changing with it? It seems likely what people call microtransit will grow.

Traditional, fixed-route buses can still be the right answer in many cases. One example may be the Ride the River Shuttle. That's used by many people who float the river in Bend. Another is the shuttle out to Lava Butte. Cascades East Transit is proposing an increased fare for the river shuttle from \$3 to \$4 a day. A fare increase is also proposed for the Lava Butte shuttle from \$2 to \$3. The board of Central Oregon Intergovernmental Council is scheduled to vote on those next week.

Those proposed increases are in part driven by the pandemic. Oregon Health Authority guidelines mean fewer people can ride on each bus. CET will likely have to run more shuttles with more drivers to meet demand.

Overall ridership for all CET services has been down because of the pandemic — even after CET

switched to no-cost bus fares. For instance, total ridership was down 30% year over year comparing March 2020 to March 2021.

We do wonder how much after the pandemic the future needs for transit have been reshaped. Some people will not be returning to work as often. Telecommuting may become more permanent. Many people will still need transit to get to work, get to the store and get to other places they want to go. Microtransit may better suit their needs and provide more flexibility for CET.

Microtransit is more of an on-demand system with smaller vans that can vary service level according to demand or even take people right to their destination. Typically passengers can request rides through apps on their phones. There's already been some experiments with that in Bend, and CET has more pilots in its planning documents.

People may find it more appealing, as long as the fare is reasonable. It can be an excellent way to meet demand during off-hours or in areas where there is low demand for service. The hourly unit cost can also be lower than a fixed-route bus.

The pandemic may have shifted the need of transit. And more microtransit could better meet the need.

# Historical editorial: Money and politics

■ *Editor's note: The following historical editorial originally appeared in what was then called The Bend Bulletin on May 11, 1906.*

The result of the late primary election in the main seems to have been satisfactory to the people of the state but they have had to pay roundly for the privilege of nominating the candidate of their choice.

In Multnomah County each vote cost the tax payers 50 cents and in some of the outside counties the cost was as high as \$1 for each cast. Experience shows that the primary is more expensive than the election. In as much as there is no limit to the number of candidates that can seek office at the primary and as that number is limited at the election, much more time will be consumed in counting votes cast as the former than at the latter with a corresponding increase in cost.

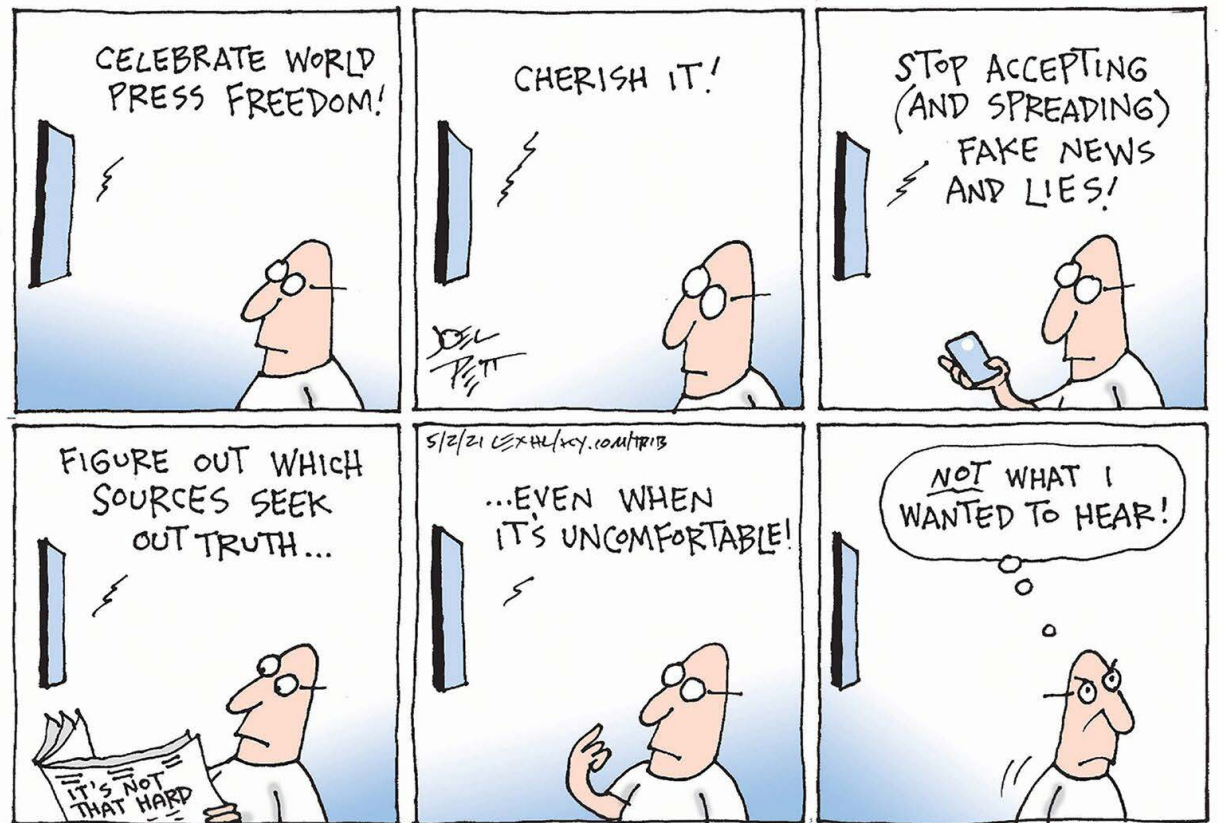
Doubtless after the novelty wears

away fewer candidates will seek nomination at the primary but there will always be plenty of public spirited citizens who believe that the people want them and who are willing to sacrifice themselves and incidentally to swell the cost of primary elections.

The cost to candidates seems much greater than under the convention system. Bourne, the successful candidate for senator, paid out over \$12,000 for postage alone; his expenditure for printing and newspaper advertising, which is now apparently the chief expenditure for candidates, must have been several times that amount. It is said that an unsuccessful candidate for a state office paid out \$24,000 while the man who received the nomination got off with \$10,000.

These sums are out of all reason and are prohibitive to any man of moderate means who aspires to higher office....

Editorials reflect the views of The Bulletin's editorial board, Publisher Heidi Wright, Editor Gerry O'Brien and Editorial Page Editor Richard Coe. They are written by Richard Coe.



# My Nickel's Worth

## Vote Douglass for Bend schools

Carrie McPherson Douglass has been a strong leader of the Bend-La Pine School Board. She is not an extremist. She listens to all sides of arguments in our increasingly polarized world. She has an excellent financial background and understands how school budgets work. Her business background makes her uniquely qualified to represent the views of both business and education in her decision-making. She has led the board during the pandemic with balance, transparency and community engagement. She has appeared in candidate forums and has been willing to answer tough questions from The Bulletin editorial board. We are grateful to her for agreeing to run again.

Carrie will take the right actions for our students, teachers and taxpayers.

I urge you to reelect Carrie McPherson Douglass to the Bend-La Pine School Board.

— Mike Hollern, Bend

## Poor county leadership

I am extremely disappointed by the rise in COVID-19 infection rates in Deschutes County, causing a return to extreme risk category. Across Oregon, we have worked very hard in the past year, resulting in nationwide lows in infections and deaths. I and many others have volunteered this year at the mass vaccination site at the fairgrounds, helping get life-saving shots in arms. The site will exceed 100,000 vaccinations this week. However, our infection rate has risen

by 67% in the last two weeks, and 700 students are now quarantined in our county. On the heels of this news, in a stunning display of poor leadership, County Commissioners Patti Adair and Tony DeBono have signed a letter petitioning the governor to ease restrictions! Instead of whining to the governor, these two commissioners should be traveling the county, urging citizens to adhere to proven safety behaviors such as masking, physical distancing, avoiding large indoor gatherings and getting vaccinations. That is the only way to crush this disease and allow all of us to safely return to normal.

— David Buhaly, Sunriver

## Why I am voting for Janet Sarai Llerandi for Bend schools

Janet Sarai Llerandi wants to give a voice to families in our community who are left out. Janet wants to help our education system gain the knowledge and resources to enable all students to succeed. She has lived experience as a Latina mother and years of personal and professional advocacy. Janet sees the students who bridge the communication gap between their school and their family. She sees LGBTQ youth and their families. We will all benefit from the time, energy and expertise Janet is offering to us on the school board. We should take this opportunity to uplift a Latina leader in our community and show our youth we care about them and their families. Thank you, Janet, for your commitment to making our community welcoming. Thank you, Janet, for valuing equity and rep-

resentation so that all students and families can thrive and feel included. Please join me in voting for Janet Sarai Llerandi.

— Renee Goan, Bend

## Reelect Doug Cox and Jerry Hubbard to La Pine Fire

Both Doug Cox and Jerry Hubbard have demonstrated the ability to provide board oversight and leadership to the La Pine Fire District. They have worked with fire staff to establish critical long-range planning for the district's standard of cover and strategic plan. Most importantly, through their stewardship they have closely managed taxpayer dollars to provide the best level of fire and ambulance services possible with the limited resources available. It should be noted that the district is debt-free, which is unusual for fire districts in general. The district is also known as an innovator and is highly regarded by its peers.

In the 1980s, district taxpayers authorized the fire district to commence EMS ambulance services to transport critical patients in need of Advanced Life Support procedures to St. Charles Hospital in Bend. Both Cox and Hubbard have adhered to what the taxpayers expected and authorized. These services for ALS were stipulated by the taxpayers to be fee based and not taxpayer supported.

Cox and Hubbard have demonstrated how board members should interface with district staff, taxpayers and others and deserve your continued support.

— Richard Swails, Sunriver

## Letters policy

We welcome your letters. Letters should be limited to one issue, contain no more than 250 words and include the writer's signature, phone number and address for verification. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject poetry, personal attacks, form letters, letters submitted elsewhere and those appropriate for other sections of The Bulletin. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## Guest columns

Your submissions should be between 550 and 650 words; they must be signed; and they must include the writer's phone number and address for verification. We edit submissions for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We reject those submitted elsewhere. Locally submitted columns alternate with national columnists and commentaries. Writers are limited to one letter or guest column every 30 days.

## How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and mail, fax or email it to The Bulletin. Email submissions are preferred.

Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

Write: My Nickel's Worth/Guest Column  
P.O. Box 6020  
Bend, OR 97708

Fax: 541-385-5804

# How to decide what activities to bring back once you're vaccinated

BY LEANA WEN

Special to The Washington Post

**W**ith 30% of Americans fully vaccinated against COVID-19 and a larger segment that either won't or can't yet receive the vaccine, the United States is in an "in-between" place. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has issued new, color-coded charts intended to show what people can do once we've received our shots, but they are confusing, impractical and overly cautious. The only useful takeaway is that vaccination makes every activity safer.

So how should people navigate this uncertain period? I think we need to acknowledge that there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Though vaccines are extremely effective, they won't protect us 100%. Most of us are not willing to wait years for the pandemic to be over to resume our lives, so we need to live with risk and accept the idea that others will make very different choices from us.

I'd encourage vaccinated people to consider three factors when deciding which activities to bring back to your

lives: medical risk of your household; personal risk tolerance; and circumstances involved.

First, what's the risk profile of your household? It's low if everyone is vaccinated. The exception is if a family member is severely immunocompromised — for example, an organ transplant recipient taking anti-rejection medications. There is a small chance that vaccinated people can still transmit the coronavirus.

Then there are families with unvaccinated members. That does not necessarily mean that the household must take extra precautions. If all adults are inoculated but the children are not yet, and the kids are generally healthy, I'd consider the household to have a low risk profile overall. Children are much less likely to become severely ill from the coronavirus than adults. Since the beginning of the pandemic, 3.7 million children have been diagnosed with COVID-19. Of the states reporting the age distribution of hospitalizations, only 0.8% of pediatric infections have resulted in hospitalizations. As of April

22, based on data from 43 states, New York City, Puerto Rico and Guam, 296 children have died of COVID-19; in comparison, annual pediatric deaths from influenza have ranged from 35 to 186 in recent years.

Of course, the coronavirus carries the potential of long-haul COVID-19 and unknown long-term consequences, including in children. In addition, breakthrough infections could occur: Out of more than 87 million fully vaccinated people, the CDC received reports of 7,157 COVID-19 infections. Of these, 498 people were hospitalized and 88 died.

This is why the second question really matters: What's your tolerance of risk? To those who are risk-averse, the possibility of being among the tragic few who die looms large. They are concerned about emerging variants, and they would rather continue hunkering down. Others will see the 0.008% chance of infection and 0.0001% chance of death and decide that they can take off their masks and return to pre-pandemic normal.

Most people are probably somewhere in between. In that case, I'd advise them to move on to the third factor and assess the risk of each activity. An indoor restaurant that follows CDC guidelines for distancing has much lower risk than a packed bar with hundreds of patrons. An outdoor wedding with 50 people where proof of vaccination is required is much safer than an indoor banquet of 200 with guests of unknown vaccination status.

This is how my family would apply the three factors. My husband and I would go to well-distanced and well-ventilated restaurants but not crowded bars; we wouldn't bring the kids except to outdoor eateries. I'd attend full-capacity church services where everyone is masked. My toddler has playdates, always outdoors, mask-optional. He's going back to preschool, where masks are required indoors. We'd have no problem with the family taking an airplane for short flights. If a social gathering won't have masks or distancing, I'd go if it's out-

doors or requires proof of vaccination.

Others with a different risk profile and tolerance will choose differently. Some won't dine in a restaurant or travel until the level of community transmission is lower. Others will have no concerns resuming all activities as long as they themselves are vaccinated. These are both reasonable decisions. We shouldn't mock the cautious for taking things at their own pace, nor should we condemn those who engage in activities we might not dare ourselves. After all, vaccinated people pose very little threat to public health; our energy is better spent getting the unvaccinated to get the shots.

Ultimately, getting through this "in-between" time requires that we have tolerance for one another's individual choices, as we keep making the case that vaccination is our society's pathway back to normalcy.

■ Leana Wen is a visiting professor at George Washington University Milken Institute School of Public Health and author of the forthcoming book "Lifelines: A Doctor's Journey in the Fight for the Public's Health."