

Voters wanted for school board election

Voter turnout in school board elections can be low. Only about a quarter of registered voters cast ballots in the May 2017 election for seats on the board of the Bend-La Pine Schools.

The pandemic may have driven more parents than ever to be interested in this May's school board elections. School closures and watching children learn at home can do that.

If you were to write the script for an ideal school board election, the 2021 race in Bend might not be it. Yes, there is a debate about issues. But it hasn't been done in open, non-partisan forums where people could tune in at their leisure and watch the candidates square off. Four of the candidates declined to even be interviewed by The Bulletin's editorial board. And there has been a lot of effort put into candidates complaining about each other, instead of explaining policies they support.

There was also something new — or at least new enough that nobody remembers it happening in the last 20 years or so. One challenger, Maria Lopez-Dauenhauer filed a complaint with the school district about her opponent, school board chair Carrie McPherson Douglass. Lopez-Dauenhauer alleged several things, including that McPherson Douglass posted on Facebook Lopez-Dauenhauer's home address and an aerial map of it. It was apparently part of an argument that Lopez-Dauenhauer is "uber wealthy" and McPherson Douglass needs support.

Is there something legally wrong with that posting that information? We aren't legal experts and can't an-

swer that question. The information is publicly available. McPherson Douglass shared it. Should she have? The post was taken down.

The real question is: Is that the sort of thing that should decide the race? No. It's a sideshow.

Still, the school board scheduled an executive session on Tuesday to discuss it, according to a district email. One good thing seems to have come of it. The complaint exposed a hole in the district's policies. The district told us it does not have a policy for handling complaints against a school board member and it is working to correct that. The Oregon School Boards Association has a recommended policy, which can include referring an investigation to a third party. "After receiving the results of the investigation, the Board shall decide in open session what action, if any, is warranted," the OSBA sample policy says.

It pays to do your homework in school board elections. School board members make big decisions about the future of the district — budgets, new schools, hiring the superintendent and even the calendar. Read the voter's pamphlet. Check out the reporting in The Bulletin about the race. Look at the websites of the candidates. The Bulletin's editorial board endorsed McPherson Douglass, Marcus LeGrand, Shirley Olson and Janet Sarai Llerandi. Whatever you decide, please vote.

Bend has limited power to control oil trains

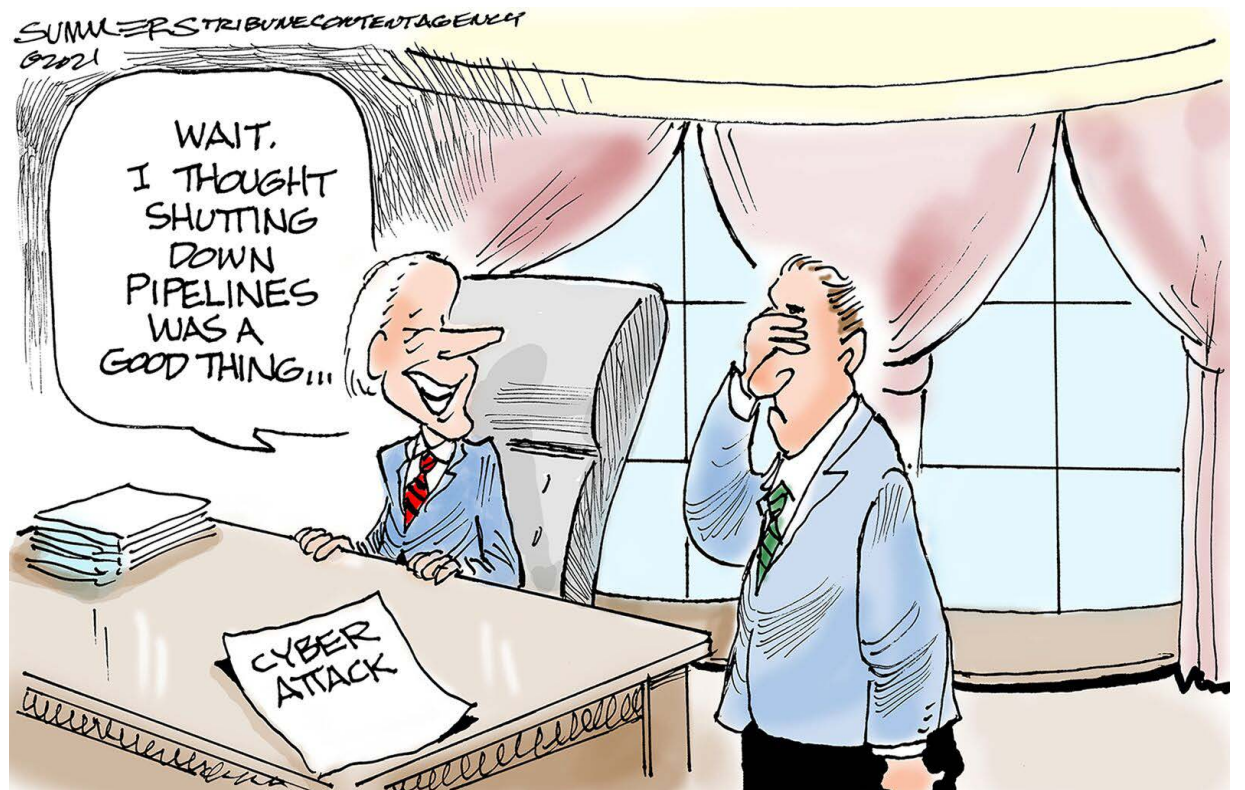
A resolution to raise awareness is about all that the city of Bend has the power to do about oil trains passing through town. That resolution is taking shape in the city's Environment and Climate Committee.

The most recent draft is: "A resolution opposing transportation of oil by rail through the city of Bend." It's five pages long with a recitation of facts about the potential dangers of oil trains. There is then an acknowledgment that changes would have to be made at the state or federal level.

The resolution calls for environmental impact statements to be done

for oil train terminals and health impact statements to be done prior to approval of oil transfer and storage permits. It also calls on railroad and/or oil companies to make public information about transportation of oil by rail and plans for any increased shipments.

If you have thoughts about what the resolution should say, Cassie Lacy is the city staff person that works with the committee. You can reach her at clacy@bendoregon.gov. The committee is scheduled to discuss it on Thursday. Presumably its next stop will be the Bend City Council.



My Nickel's Worth

Lawson for Redmond schools

As a dedicated local teacher, I am proud to support Carmen Lawson for the Redmond School Board, where she would serve our community as a strong voice for pragmatic policies that support and develop the best educational experience for our children.

Carmen's years in the classroom give her an awareness of the realities we educators face as we implement school board policies. She knows how these decisions will transfer to the classroom and how our limited resources are best allocated.

As a longtime Redmond resident and a parent of three boys in elementary, middle and high school in the Redmond School District, she understands the pressures families have faced during the pandemic. She will enhance and support what is working and work diligently to address the weaknesses that have been uncovered.

It's no secret that teachers have had an extremely stressful time throughout this distance learning year. Yet, despite these challenges and frequent setbacks, she chooses to lean in and work even harder for her community and our children.

—Macy Crowe, Bend

Getting vaccinated matters

In a recent letter, Gary Miranda states that "the main population that one puts at risk by not getting vaccinated is other people who choose not to get vaccinated." Not getting vaccinated should have no effect,

he claims, on those of us who have already been vaccinated. This argument is false in at least three ways.

First, the unvaccinated often get very sick. St. Charles is currently stretched to its limits with those ill from COVID. Some elective surgeries have been canceled, and the ICU is nearly full. This situation obviously affects our whole community.

Second, the vaccines are, thankfully, very effective at preventing severe illness and death (Johnson and Johnson around 74%, Moderna and Pfizer around 95%). But like all vaccines, they are not 100% effective. Until herd immunity is reached, because of those who are still unvaccinated, we all have to continue to mask and social distance in crowded situations.

Third, we are in a race between the disease evolving into more contagious and deadly variants and attaining herd immunity. Herd immunity will only be reached if somewhere around 80% of our population is vaccinated. Imagine misinformation had prevented large swaths of our population from taking the polio or smallpox vaccines: We would still be fighting those dread diseases. COVID is no different. We will all be dealing with mask-wearing, lockdowns, and major disruptions to our lives until a large portion of our population gets vaccinated.

Not getting vaccinated (unless you have a medical reason not to) does set us all back. The vaccines are safe and highly effective, and the sooner we all get vaccinated, the sooner life can return to normal.

—Mary Depew, Bend

Hartfield, Summers, Cummings and Lopez for Redmond schools

Please join me in voting to re-elect Shawn Hartfield, and elect Michael Summers, Jill Cummings and Keri Lopez to the Redmond School Board. These four candidates have the board experience, business acumen, and financial, insurance and human resource backgrounds necessary to serve our growing school district. Redmond deserves a board who will lead responsibly and focus on serving children and families, giving parents a voice in their child's education and who are committed to representing the entire community and all stakeholders, not just a single constituency.

As with many recent elections, this nonpartisan race has become politicized where equity, mental health, work-life balance and gift cards for teachers have become the primary platforms for the candidates backed by the teacher's union. The Redmond community deserves leaders who are analytical and able to support their decisions with facts and data. We need to keep education in public education. Let's bring the focus back to educational excellence, sound policy, safe schools and how we make up for the learning lost in this past year.

Vote for the candidates who will encourage student achievement through high standards, rigorous curriculum and high quality teachers. Vote Hartfield, Summers, Cummings and Lopez — the future of Redmond schools depends on it.

—Ali Muilenburg, Redmond

Letters policy

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.

How to submit

Please address your submission to either My Nickel's Worth or Guest Column and send it to The Bulletin. Email submissions preferred. Email: letters@bendbulletin.com

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.

If China's population shrinks, it's the world's financial problem

BY DANIEL MOSS
Bloomberg

China's slowest population growth in decades may be felt more acutely beyond its borders than within them. The economy will keep humming and incomes can continue to climb, albeit at a slower rate. The rest of us, however, will need to adjust to a persistently slacker pace of global expansion and the prospective ebbing of deflationary pressure. The caricature of China as an unlimited supplier of cheap labor holding down the cost of everything from dishwashers to dolls should be consigned to the history books.

Beijing's once-in-a-decade census showed there were 1.412 billion people in China last year. The annual average growth of 0.53% in the past decade was the slowest since 1953. Longstanding trends became more pronounced: The working-age population slumped to 63.4% from more than 70% a decade ago, while the share of residents aged 60 and above jumped.

More than half of Chinese citizens now live in cities. While it's possible that China's headcount will actually decline in a few years, that doesn't mean a crisis is looming. Some of the world's wealthiest economies have wrestled with population retreat — or something close to it. Japan's popula-



Beijing, China

tion peaked in 2010, and South Korea logged its first dip in 2020. Singapore reported its first decline since 2003 last year.

Each of these nations has long contended with an aging society and a diminished fertility rate, while citizens have consistently resisted prodding by officials to churn out more kids. Yet each has first-class infrastructure, great schools, high standards of living and a niche in technology supply chains that gives them a shot at long-term prosperity in the pandemic era.

China need not fear for its commer-

cial viability just because this inevitable byproduct of progress has caught up with it. After all, it's a relatively common pattern of economic development: Living standards rise, people spend more time in school, get married later, wrestle with more expensive living costs and want to spend more on the children they do have. Even if Beijing has taken steps to reverse the damaging one-child policy imposed under Deng Xiaoping, I doubt it will make much difference. The broader global trend may be too entrenched for even Beijing's state muscle.

The consequences for the rest of the planet may be more significant. The world's economic output has been driven by China the past few decades, especially since the financial crisis of 2007-2009. Its gross domestic product has increased at an average annual rate of about 8% since 2000. The equivalent figure for the U.S. has been a bit less than 2%.

As things stand, China will contribute more than one-fifth of the total increase in global GDP in the five years through 2026, according to Bloomberg calculations based on International Monetary Fund forecasts published in April. The U.S. will account for 14.8%, with India and Japan chipping in 8.4% and 3.5%, respectively. Anemic population growth, or an outright drop, is likely to mean slower overall expansion, even if GDP per capita may continue to climb. Assumptions about any expected contribution may need to be rethought.

Also up for debate is persistently low inflation, something central banks everywhere first welcomed but now increasingly worry about. China's ascent from an impoverished backwater to the workshop of the world and premier exporter reflected, in large part, the country's ability to offer vast amounts of relatively cheap labor to multinational companies and their

suppliers. In the process, the country was a major force in holding down prices of goods destined for shelves in the U.S. and Europe. The benefits of this era may now be past, thanks to a contracting labor market.

"China's role in the global economy has now changed from being an exporter of deflation to a more neutral one now and increasingly inflationary into the future," wrote Charles Goodhart and Manoj Pradhan in their 2020 book "The Great Demographic Reversal: Ageing Societies, Waning Inequality, and an Inflation Revival."

This isn't all bad news, at least right away. A Chinese model no longer based on inexpensive labor pumping out bargain-basement goods will erode one of the props that has kept inflation low, dangerously so in the view of doves at the Fed. Meanwhile, a stroll around parks, nightlife areas and shopping malls of pre-pandemic Tokyo show a declining population can still have plenty of vitality. The U.S. saw the second-slowest population growth rate in history last decade at 7.4% — just ahead of 7.3% during the Depression era — yet life goes on.

If China aspires to world economic leadership, this is what it looks like. Sluggish demographics are part of the deal.

■ Daniel Moss is a columnist for Bloomberg.