

Presidential politics run against TPP

Four of the five remaining candidates for the Republican and Democratic nominations for president oppose the Trans-Pacific Partnership, the big 12-nation trade pact awaiting Congressional approval.

That doesn't bode well for agriculture in the Northwest.

Donald Trump says the TPP is "insanity," a "horrible deal designed for China to come in, as they always do, through the back door and totally take advantage of everyone."

Ted Cruz opposes the pact, and always has.

Hillary Clinton was for it, when she was secretary of state, and then was against it when she became a candidate for president. She says the deal doesn't meet her standard for providing Americans good-paying jobs.

Bernie Sanders has called it "a disastrous trade agreement designed to protect the interests of the largest multi-national corporations at the expense of workers, consumers, the environment and the foundations of American democracy."

Only John Kasich, the long-shot Republican candidate, favors the deal. He calls it "critical" to creating economic and strategic alliances.

Seven years in the making, the TPP is important for farmers in the Pacific Northwest.

U.S. agriculture is trade-dependent, especially in the West. Oregon, Washington, Idaho and California export about \$30 billion a year in agricultural goods overseas, mainly to Pacific Rim nations. Included in the TPP are nearly all of those nations: Canada, Mexico, Japan, Australia, Malaysia, Peru, Vietnam, Chile, Brunei, Singapore and New Zealand.

No trade deal is perfect, and there are many things about this one that give even proponents pause. But walking away from the deal would be a disaster for agriculture because U.S. goods would have impossible barriers not imposed on signatories who are also our competitors.

We hope Congress will approve the deal before it gets too caught up in election year politicking.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Replacing our County Court

To the Editor:

It's almost voting, and we need to start replacing our County Court. We need to start replacing our County Court. One more time now. We need to start replacing our County Court.

Recently, the courthouse was filled from wall to wall with county residents asking the county to institute an investigation of the Forest Service as to why many of us lost our homes in the Canyon Creek fire. It was a simple request coming out of the mouths of the many residents that helped put them in office, and the County Court flat turned their back on these deserving taxpayers.

With a huge surplus of money in their coffers, it wouldn't have hurt at all to help this county get some answers.

It is really hard to stomach the fact that life seems to go on for the decision makers that cost us our home and everything we had. They went home after, to a home-cooked meal, a warm bed, their own home. Nothing changed.

The rest of us? Well, we grabbed a meal in a restaurant, stayed at the house of a relative or friend or a motel. We rented and then had to go on search of another house or rebuild our burned out mess.

And the County Court turned their back on us. Do I want to pay my taxes to a county that won't even give us the time of day in return? Well, you figure it out.

I've already figured it out. Join me and a lot of others in replacing our County Court.

Dean Elliott
Prairie City

anyone's freedoms? He should be applauded for his leadership and his message of inclusiveness protected by lawfulness. Unlike Sheriff (Glenn) Palmer who was at that meeting, Chris Labhart was not in uniform associating with armed occupiers from the refuge who were involved in illegal actions.

Kay Steele
Ritter

Consider the actions

To the Editor:

Loyalty to a friend is a good quality, but sometimes it can get in the way of good judgment. Many people support Sheriff (Glenn) Palmer on the basis of their positive interactions with him as a person. But those relationships do not mean that he is a good sheriff for the community, as shown by the information reported in news articles in the Blue Mountain Eagle, the Oregonian and other state and national newspapers over the last two months.

Take the time to read last week's article, "DOJ Opens Case Against Palmer," in the Blue Mountain Eagle. It is a concise summary of Sheriff Palmer's actions during his four terms as an elected official. A second article in the same issue reports "Refuge Occupier Arrested in Mt. Vernon Threatened to Shoot Federal Agents."

Sheriff Palmer's own actions and statements encourage militia supporters to believe that Grant County welcomes their anti-government beliefs and violent tactics, and violates the official oath he swore to "support the Constitutions of the United States and Oregon, and the laws thereof."

Sheriff Palmer has chosen to interpret the Constitution to fit his own beliefs and to refuse to enforce laws that he disagrees with. In doing so, he is putting the safety and security of Grant County's residents at risk. The strength of our county and state and nation is based on the rule of one law for all.

The sheriff's actions and words speak loud and clear. As informed residents of Grant County, we need to speak out against these actions. Remaining silent is accepting this behavior.

Please become informed and speak out.

Adele and Mark Cerny
Bear Valley

Vote yes on Initiative 12-58

To the Editor:

Who's fighting against marijuana and hemp legalization in our country? Why for so many years has there been complete denial of any medical benefits from marijuana by our government and the medical community? After all, marijuana is a plant, and the fact is 74 percent of medications have been derived from plants. Plants are our biggest source of hope in the fight against disease and the cure for cancer. So, why single this one plant out?

Congress even placed marijuana on the same schedule drug as heroin, claiming it had no medical benefits, making clinical trials impossible. Well, the FDA can thank patients in 23 states for conducting years of clinical trials for them. Patient testimonial is probably the most valuable information clinical trials gather. Tens of thousands will testify they benefit medically. Doctors now prescribe cannabis for everything from chronic pain to cancer. Evidence shows it's working. Still no clinical trials. Why? Maybe profits. Have you ever heard of lobbyists?

The guys in Washington, D.C., working for big pharmaceutical

companies and on behalf of other big businesses. Their job is to influence politicians into making decisions that protect their employer's bottom line. So follow the money. Who stands to lose the most from marijuana and hemp production?

Pharmaceutical sales of opiate pain killers topped \$11 billion last year. So, do the math. If even 10 percent of patients used marijuana, an inexpensive pain reliever you can grow yourself at home, big pharma loses over \$1 billion.

The denim industry is a \$60 billion industry. I'm sure they want nothing to do with competing against hemp. Clothing made from hemp is far more durable than denim. These are just two examples; I could go down a long list of people who stand to lose from legalization of marijuana and hemp production, but I'm limited to 350 words in this letter. So, research marijuana as a pain reliever, the uses for hemp and hemp seeds.

Then come to your own conclusion. On May 17, vote yes on Initiative 12-58.

Damon Olson
Mt. Vernon

Forest partners and commission have same mission

To the Editor:

(This letter is in response to Frances Preston's letter published March 16 in the Eagle.)

Ms. Preston: I've been with Blue Mountains Forest Partners (BMFP) since 2006. I became its executive director, a paid position, last March. My BMFP work does not include running for public office. No one outside the county supports my campaign.

The majority of BMFP voting members are local, and include ranchers, loggers, mill operators and interested community members — even some Public Forest Commission (PFC) members. Forest Service and other agency staff regularly participate in our meetings, but not as voting members.

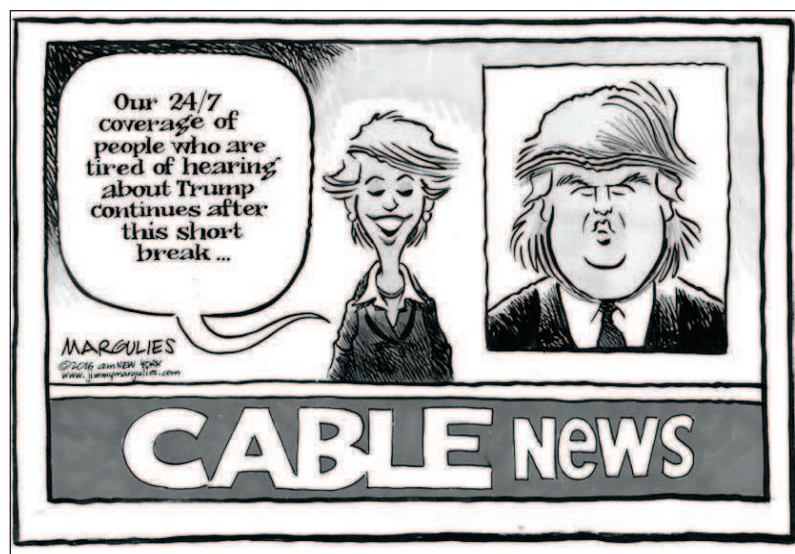
BMFP and PFC are hardly "polar opposites." They have the same focus: public land management in Grant County. And the same mission: creating healthy forests and strong communities in Grant County.

BMFP and PFC do approach their work differently, though. BMFP respects the efforts of Malheur National Forest staff who live in this county and work hard to make it better. BMFP is also solution oriented and believes it is smarter and more effective to work with the Forest Service and other interested parties even though we sometimes disagree about the best way to move forward. PFC doesn't have the same respect for the Forest Service, and its approach to public land management is adversarial.

And that is the important difference: Working with community members and Harney County Restoration Collaborative, BMFP has helped the Malheur increase the pace and scale of its restoration work beyond what is happening on any other National Forest in the nation. This has resulted in healthier forests, a three-fold increase in timber harvest with more logs for area mills, reduced unemployment, higher student body enrollments in some school districts and new interest in forest-related investments by outside entities. BMFP is helping make good things happen in Grant County.

BMFP's approach to creating healthy forests and strong communities is working. PFC's approach to creating healthy forests and strong communities is not working. If elected, my intent is to help make PFC an asset to the county.

Mark Webb
Mt. Vernon



WHERE TO WRITE

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SALEM

• **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.

• **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

An elected leader — protesting for all of us

To the Editor:

Last month, about 150 pro-militia, self-declared "patriots," rallied in front of the Harney County Court House to demand the resignation of elected officials. Countering the militiamen, more than 250 locals (ranchers, main street merchants, students, federal employees, retirees) and a number of invited Grant County residents formed a human wall in support of the elected local officials. The rally was loud and filled with tension at the climax of several hours of chanting and counter-chanting.

At one point, a man among the pro-militiamen that I recognized as a friend of our county sheriff, stepped up to Terry and me, took our picture with our "Grant County-Harney County United" signs, noted our names and with a threatening tone declared, "I promise you, this will go viral!"

Looking out over the two groups, I reflected, "What is it going to take to bring all these people together?" Later, I saw a photo of four people at this rally forming a circle and bowing their heads in prayer. Two were pro-militia/occupiers protesters, and two were pro-"our own voice" for Harney County. I hope they were praying that wisdom prevails for the sake of everyone.

In a letter to the editor last week, County Commissioner Chris Labhart was criticized for protesting the Jan. 26 community meeting at the Senior Center in John Day, where several militiamen from the refuge takeover were present and waiting for the Bundy bunch to arrive. The writer claimed her civil liberties were being trampled upon because an elected official (who was not on duty) was holding a protest sign.

I remember seeing Commissioner Labhart there that night; his sign had two messages, front and back. "America — a Nation of Laws" and "Grant County is for ALL People." How in the world is that trashing

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