

Election results widen urban-rural divide

We have spoken often in this space about the “urban-rural divide,” the differences, real and imagined, that separate people who live in cities and people who don’t.

Nothing illustrates this divide better, perhaps, than the recent election. Throughout the country, the Northwest included, rural areas generally voted for Donald Trump while urban areas generally voted for Hillary Clinton.

Trump has won, and urban voters are distraught. They have taken to the streets in Portland, Seattle and San Francisco. Why would rural voters in their own states reject their candidate?

They lack the perspective to understand.

The federal government holds more than half the land in the West. The economic and civic fabric of rural communities depends on trees cut from the forest, livestock grazed on the range and minerals gleaned from the mining claims.

The government once encouraged these activities in the service of the country’s growing population and in fulfillment of its manifest destiny. Now, policies have changed and that same government seems to be draining the lifeblood of the rural West.

Many in the rural West don’t think their government listens to them and that their concerns are given short shrift. They believe their livelihood, their very way of life, is in the hands of bureaucrats controlled by interests outside their communities.

Displaced workers in the Rust Belt and in the coal fields have similar grievances. Life as they knew it changed for the worse,

and they hold the federal government unresponsive, if not responsible.

Trump supporters, both rural and urban, voted their self interest, as they saw it. They do not fit the archetypes ascribed by pundits. They are in the main no more racist, misogynist, xenophobic or homophobic than the average Clinton voter. They want their families and communities to thrive, just as Clinton voters do.

For their part, rural voters understand urban disappointment with the election’s outcome, but not the continuing demonstrations against Trump’s election.

They have accepted without protest the results of elections that broke against them.

The division is stark and deep.

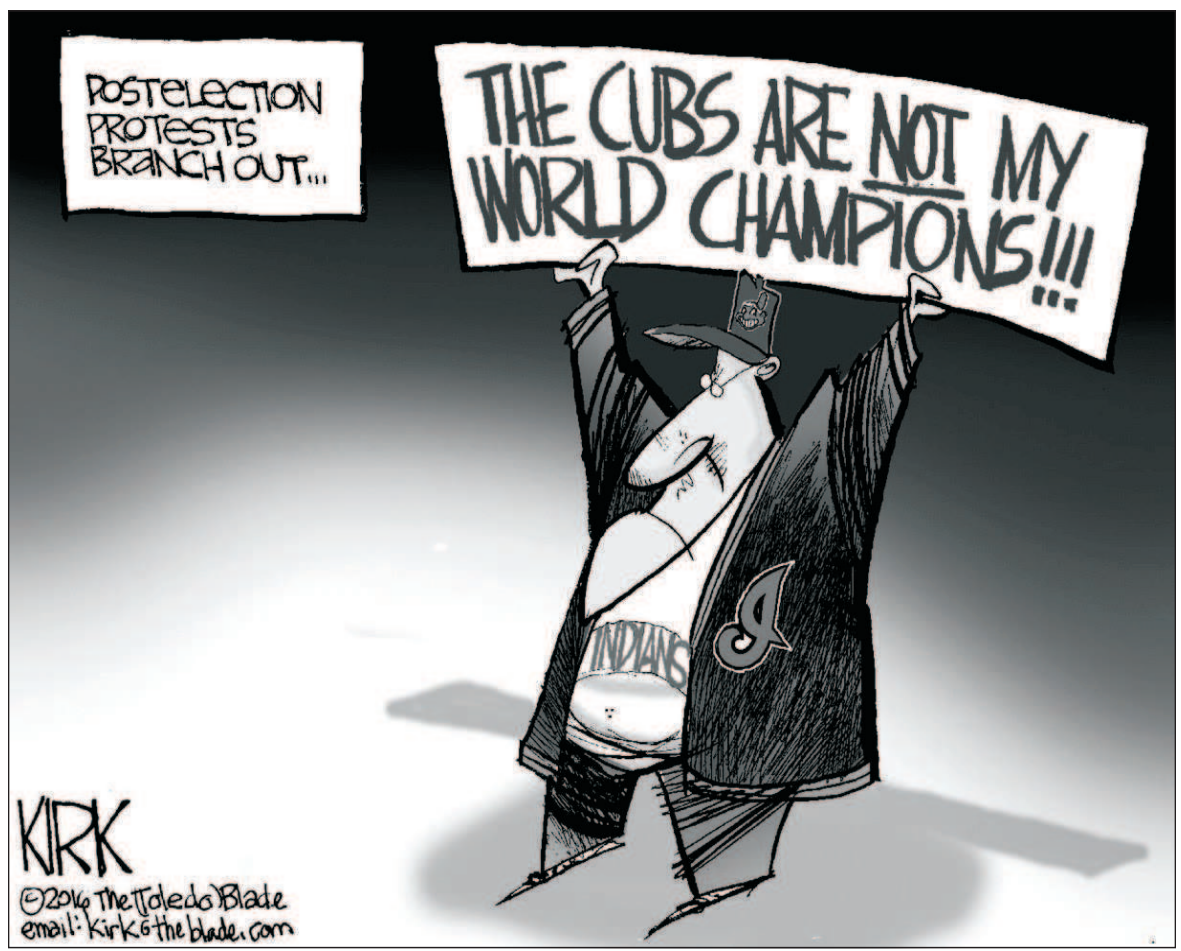
As is often the case, we find the words of Abraham Lincoln speak as powerfully to our present circumstances as they did 150 years ago.

Lincoln was the winner of the contentious 1860 election. He wasn’t even on the ballot in 10 states, and failed to win the majority of the popular vote. The country was on a path to a civil war that killed 500,000 Americans, certainly a greater division than created by our most recent contest.

He closed his first inaugural address with a plea for reconciliation that stands today.

“We are not enemies, but friends. We must not be enemies. Though passion may have strained, it must not break our bonds of affection. The mystic chords of memory will swell when again touched, as surely they will be, by the better angels of our nature.”

We are more alike than we are different.



GUEST COMMENT

Thanksgiving: Have an attitude of gratitude

By Bryan Golden
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Thanksgiving is much more than a big meal with family and friends. It’s a time to reflect on, and be thankful for, all of the good things you have. It’s important to be grateful, not just on Thanksgiving, but each and every day. Rather than lamenting what you feel is lacking in your life, begin each new day by developing an attitude of gratitude. Take inventory of your blessings, and you will be surprised at just how much you have to be thankful for.

If you have enough to eat, a place to live, a way to get around, people who care about you or people you care about, then you are wealthy. If you lack any of these elements, you must still be grateful for what you do have, while striving to obtain whatever is absent.

Focus on all positive aspects of your life. Take nothing for granted. Every morning, recharge your appreciation. Be happy for everything there is, not upset over what you feel is missing.

Dreams of the future shouldn’t diminish appreciation for the present. If all you do is concentrate on what you want, you won’t enjoy today. Don’t be jealous of others;

what they do or have has no bearing on you.

You can feel bitter or resentful for a variety of reasons. Perhaps you feel something is missing from your life, things aren’t going your way or you have been treated unfairly. You may wonder, “Why do these things always happen to me?”

Life’s problems tend to dominate your thoughts, turning your focus to what you feel is wrong. You may start to resent those who appear to be better off. You’re apt to dwell on things you think would make your life better if you had them. If only you had more money, more time, a bigger house, a different car, a different job, a different boss, had picked a different career, etc.

Once your attitude becomes one of deficiency instead of abundance and appreciation, you can become overwhelmed by feelings of frustration and feel like a victim. As this happens, a consuming vicious cycle starts.

Being bitter or resentful blows situations out of proportion. People who are bitter frequently find that their situations deteriorate, and their mental and physical health decays.

It’s difficult, if not impossible, to achieve your goals while you are bitter or resentful. Regardless of what challenges might befall you, bitterness makes finding solutions much more elusive.

There is no point in feeling bitter since it accomplishes nothing, harms you and makes things worse. Filling yourself with gratitude on a daily basis makes you feel good, while driving out negative feelings.

Begin your practice of gratitude each morning as soon as you wake. Every day is a great day. If you have any doubts, try missing one. Take inventory of everything, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant, that is good in your life.

If it helps, make a written list of all things you are grateful for. Read your list every day. As you do this, you will build and reinforce your attitude of gratitude. Don’t waste any time with what you feel you don’t have.

Keep things in perspective. Consider all the people who have overcome difficulties far worse than yours. Don’t be consumed by your problems; there is always a solution. Maintaining an attitude of gratitude allows your mind to devise a resolution for your circumstances.

Make everyday a day of Thanksgiving and you will be amazed how much better your life will become.

Golden is the author of “Dare to Live Without Limits.” Contact Bryan Golden at Bryan@columlist.com or visit www.DareToLiveWithoutLimits.com. Copyright 2016 Bryan Golden.

WHERE TO WRITE

GRANT COUNTY

- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net.
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
- **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

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).

- **State Rep. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** (District: 60), Room H-475, State Capitol, 900 Court St. N.E., Salem OR 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Email: rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm.

- **State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R** — (District 30) Room S-223, State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-986-1950. Email: tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli.

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WASHINGTON, D.C.

- **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.
- **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: <http://wyden.senate.gov> Fax: 202-228-2717.
- **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Email: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997. Oregon offices include One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.
- **U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R** — (Second District) 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct email because of spam. Website: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Forest Service a service for the people

To the Editor:

This letter concerns the Public Forest Commission and its nullification. It should not be disbanded — but expanded! The Forest Service is just what it implies: a service for the people. There are no Forest Service lands.

From the U.S. Department of Agriculture 1907 publication “The Use of National Forests” by forester Gifford Pinchot:

“...Management by the people.

“National Forests are made for and owned by the people. They should also be managed by the people. They are made, not to give the officers in charge of them a chance to work out theories, but to give the people who use them, and those who are affected by their use, a chance to work out their own best profit. This means that if National Forests are going to accomplish anything while the people must know all about them and

must take a very active part in their management. The officers are paid by the people to act as their agents and to see that all the resources of the Forests are used in the best interest of everyone concerned. What the people as a whole want will be done. To do it it is necessary that the people carefully consider and plainly state just what they want and then take a very active part in seeing that they get it.

“There are many great interests on the National Forests which sometimes conflict a little. They must all be made to fit into one another so that the machine runs smoothly as a whole. It is often necessary for one man to give way a little here, another a little there. But by giving way a little at present they both profit by it a great deal in the end. There must be hearty cooperation from everyone. National Forests are new in the United States, and the management of their vast resources is a very difficult task. Mistakes are bound to be made at first, and have been made. It is the users themselves who can

be of chief assistance in doing away with bad methods. ...”

Michael R. Christensen
John Day

Leaving dog ‘not cool’

To the Editor:

To the owners of an old, obese and arthritic female dog with a black body, gray nose and blue points, I say not cool! To leave her on the highway — even if she fell off a rig — or got lost, not cool. To ignore the radio, Facebook, signs, etc., not cool. After food, water and a warm straw-lined doghouse, I spent some time asking around town, but no one knew anything. I’m sorry if her age and condition was too much for you to handle. It can be hard to care for the “elderly” (people, horses or dogs), but we are all held accountable. Last I knew, she would go to a no-kill shelter (safe at last).

Mya Ennis
Mt. Vernon

Letters policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to one letter per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters to editor@bmeagle.com, or Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or fax to 541-575-1244.



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- PUBLISHER..... MARISSA WILLIAMS, MARISSA@BMEAGLE.COM
- EDITOR..... SEAN HART, EDITOR@BMEAGLE.COM
- ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT..... JACKIE OSBORNE, JACKIE@BMEAGLE.COM
- REPORTER..... RYLAN BOGGS, RYLAN@BMEAGLE.COM
- COMMUNITY NEWS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
- SPORTS..... ANGEL CARPENTER, ANGEL@BMEAGLE.COM
- MARKETING REP..... KIM KELL, ADS@BMEAGLE.COM
- OFFICE MANAGER..... LINDSAY BULLOCK, OFFICE@BMEAGLE.COM

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