

# Winter a time for good Samaritans

Some days weather makes for nice small talk. Whether it's hot, cold, rainy, windy or just perfect, you can always strike up a conversation with an acquaintance or even a total stranger. It's a shared experience.

Other days, especially days with snow, ice and sub-freezing temperatures, weather must be a shared experience. We must look out for one another, and especially the most vulnerable among us.

It starts on the roads, one of the most dangerous places to be when winter hits hardest. We always worry about the "other guy" on the roads, but remember you are the other guy to other motorists — take it slow, signal early and, as always, get rid of all distractions while you're behind the wheel.

And when that "other guy" loses control, or gets lost, or simply gets stuck, it's time to put on your good Samaritan boots and help out. We've seen many examples of this in the past weeks, and know the

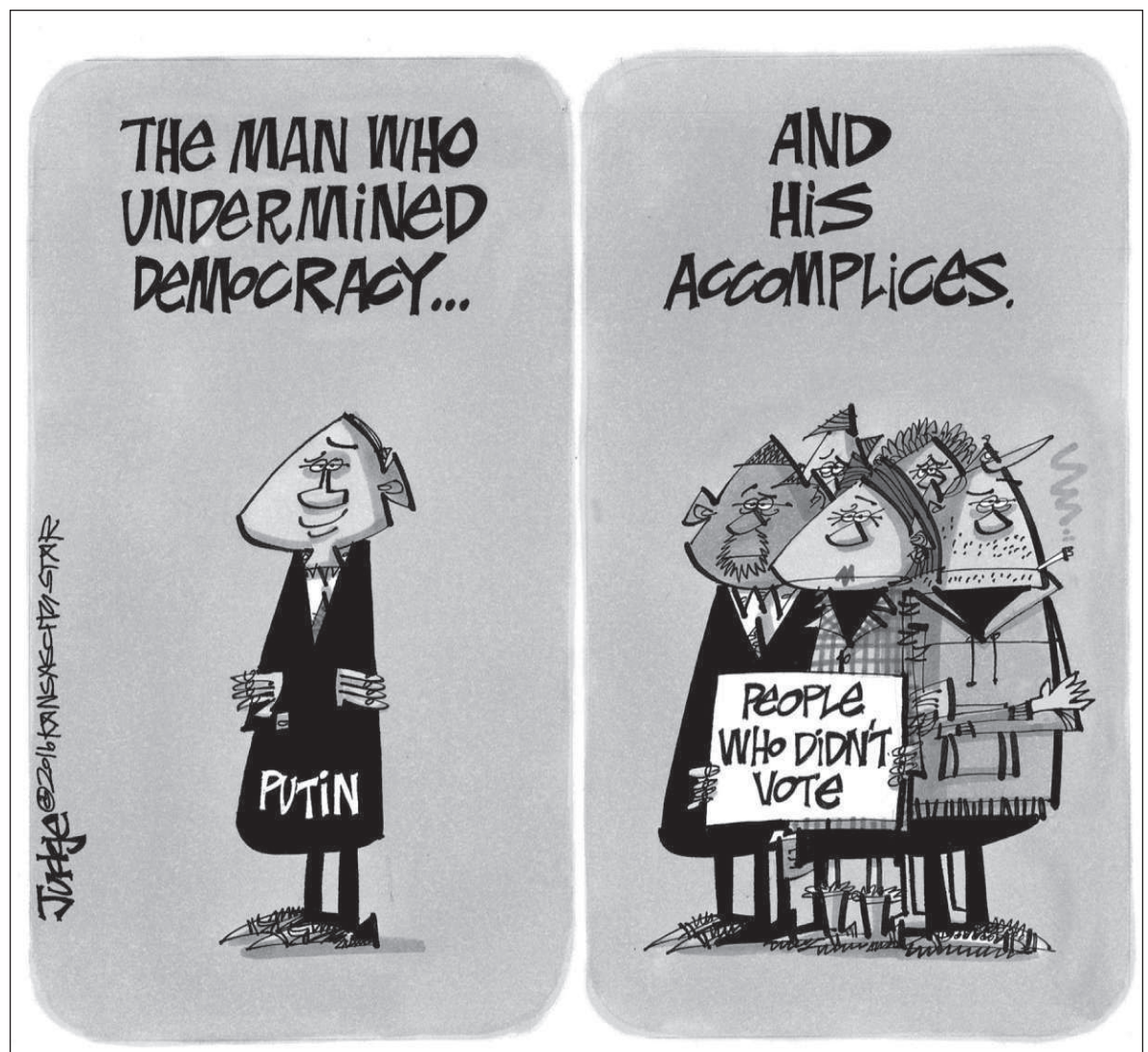
kindness of strangers is alive and well in Eastern Oregon.

That's the obvious, but we implore our readers to consider the less obvious as well. Check in on your elderly or otherwise susceptible neighbors, maybe with a plate of cookies or thermos of hot chocolate. It can be hard to ask for help, but if a friendly face shows up to ask how you're doing you might be willing to express a personal need, if only for groceries, a shoveled sidewalk or an extra blanket.

For those who may be harder to reach, the sheriff's office has offered to provide welfare checks for people who cannot be reached by phone or under normal conditions. Just provide the name and location to the sheriff's office, 541-575-1131.

With winter underway with no signs of stopping, abundant opportunities exist to make a positive impact on your neighborhood and those around you.

Try not to let the "other guy" on the roads bother you too much and be a good Samaritan.



## THE BACKROADS

# The strength of our community

By Sean Hart  
Blue Mountain Eagle



Sean Hart

2016 was a turbulent year — in Grant County, throughout our nation and across the world.

From protests to heated election rhetoric, the year was full of events that divided us. Issues pitted neighbor against neighbor and carved chasms through our communities.

Yet, through the vitriol and polarization, the resilience of our rural community and the genuine compassion for others could not be extinguished.

Despite the negativity that permeated Grant County, much as it spread throughout the country, the true strength of the community shone through when people put aside differences and pulled together to support each other and the common good.

From volunteerism — such as Jim Jerome of John Day, who was named the January volunteer of the month for Boise's Veterans Affairs Medical Center — to the support of local causes — such as December's Carrie Young Memorial that raised \$24,000 for local seniors in need —

the positive spirit of the community was evident in almost everything that was accomplished.

When people worked for the common good, they often achieved it.

Countless stories of camaraderie grace the Eagle's pages from the last year, such as when the Grant County Fair staff, board and volunteers stepped up to fill the large shoes of manager Mary Weaver during this year's event after her cancer recurrence.

When leaders from the cities of John Day and Canyon City sat down at the same table and listened to each other's concerns, they were able to reach an amicable agreement for water and sewer services.

These stories of success, transcending trivial disputes and difficulties, are what separate communities such as ours from places where people merely live in close proximity.

In large cities, lost in the anonymity of bustling crowds, people may rarely see their own neighbors

or feel the bonds of common experience that unite a community.

But in rural America, where even those who disagree share almost everything in common — from schools to stores, from entertainment opportunities to economic opportunities — we are forced to interact with each other. Seeing the faces and hearing the stories of those with whom we share the community provides a greater foundation for empathy and understanding.

In Grant County, it is clear this is what makes the community such a great place to live — in 2016 or any other year.

Not everyone will agree on every issue, on the best way to overcome any particular obstacle. But when everyone agrees to work together, we can overcome every obstacle.

As we turn the page on another year, I hope we all remember the common bonds we share and what makes Grant County great.

I hope we all remember the strength of our community is our community.

Sean Hart is the editor of the Blue Mountain Eagle.

## GUEST COMMENT

# New Year's resolutions strategies

By Bryan Golden  
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Habits are formed by frequent repetition over time. Change occurs by the same process. A resolution is not all or nothing. Partial change is OK. Any progress in the desired direction, regardless of how small, is a success. Accomplishing a resolution is a process, not a one-time effort.

Positive goals are more effective than negative ones. Rather than saying you will eat less, resolve to have a healthier diet. Instead of spending less time at work you can endeavor to spend more time at home. Bad habits can't just be eliminated; they have to be replaced by good ones.

Identify potential obstacles so they don't surprise you. If you experience a setback, don't give up. Don't blame yourself if you stumble. Failure only occurs when you stop trying. Difficulties are an opportunity to learn. If you slide backwards, get back on track, get back in gear and resume your progress.

Don't keep your plans a secret. Develop a support system utilizing friends and family. Visualize how great you will feel as you succeed. Take credit for all accomplishments. It doesn't matter if your progress is slower than you would like.

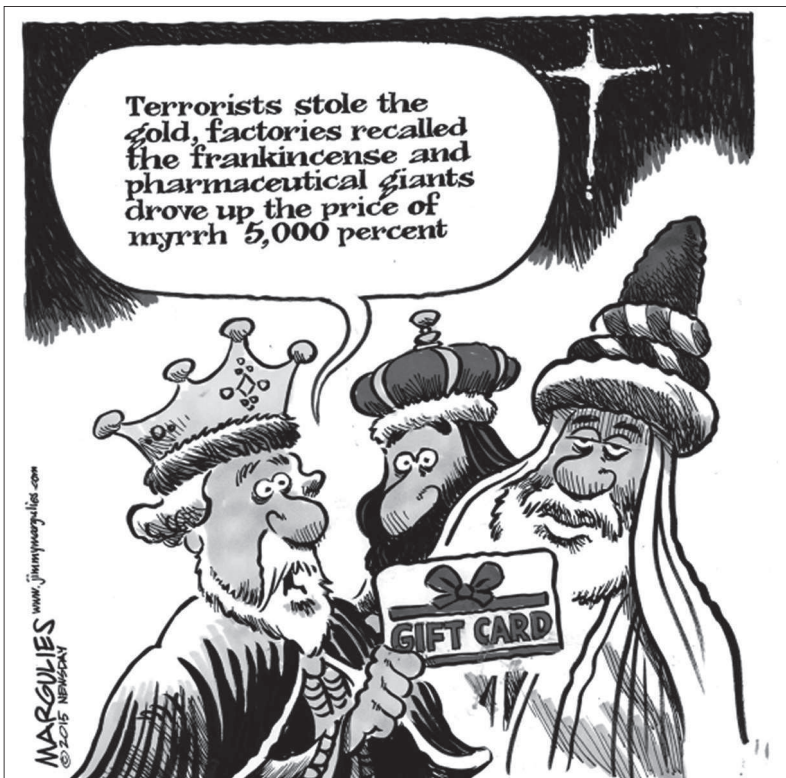
Don't try to change too many

things at once or you risk becoming overwhelmed and discouraged. You can have a long list of resolutions so long as you realize all of the items don't have to be addressed simultaneously. Each accomplishment can be followed by another. Change can begin at any time, not just on Jan. 1.

Believe in yourself and your ability to change. Change can feel difficult, uncomfortable or painful, but you can do it. Become determined to succeed. Don't procrastinate. Although doing nothing is often an appealing alternative, it leads to frustration.

Each day is a new opportunity to work on your resolutions. If you were successful yesterday, fantastic, keep going. If yesterday was a disappointment, today is a new chance to make progress. Replace the word "try" with "will." Do whatever it takes to get the results you want.

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## WHERE TO WRITE

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- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol,

Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: [www.leg.state.or.us](http://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](mailto:rep.cliffbentz@state.or.us). Website: [www.leg.state.or.us/bentz/home.htm](http://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: [sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us](mailto:sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us). Email: [TFER2@aol.com](mailto:TFER2@aol.com). Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: [www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli](http://www.leg.state.or.us/ferrioli).

• **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

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