

Our strength is in our unity

For many Americans, the unimaginable images of Sept. 11, 2001, are burned into our national fabric, never to be forgotten.

Those searing memories of mass death and destruction resulted from coordinated attacks by the Islamic terrorist group al-Qaeda aboard four hijacked airliners.

Two hijacked jets toppled the Twin Towers of New York's World Trade Center while a third slammed into the Pentagon in Arlington County, Virginia. Aboard the fourth hijacked plane, which initially changed course toward Washington, D.C., passengers bravely fought the terrorists and the plane crashed into a vacant field near Shanksville, Pennsylvania.

In all, the attacks killed 2,997 people, injured more than 6,000 others, and caused at least \$10 billion in infrastructure and property damage. The deaths tragically included more than 325 responding law enforcement officers and nearly 100 firefighters.

The 9/11 legacy, however, goes far beyond the attacks. It rattled our national consciousness, our sense of security and it changed our lives in ways we previously took for granted. A generation of children born that year are now teenagers entering their final years of high school, about to enter adulthood in a world far different than before their birth. They have never experienced our nation at peace.

What they have seen is that the attacks spurred the War on Terrorism, which continues to this day, the longest war in our history. They have learned the 9/11 events also spawned increases in hate crimes, overarching government surveillance and profiling. They have observed that as the war progressed it created bitter political partisanship and has cost billions of tax

dollars. They have watched as it's divided those who believe the money should have been spent to cure deep domestic ills with those who say the far-away fighting is protecting our freedom, security and values.

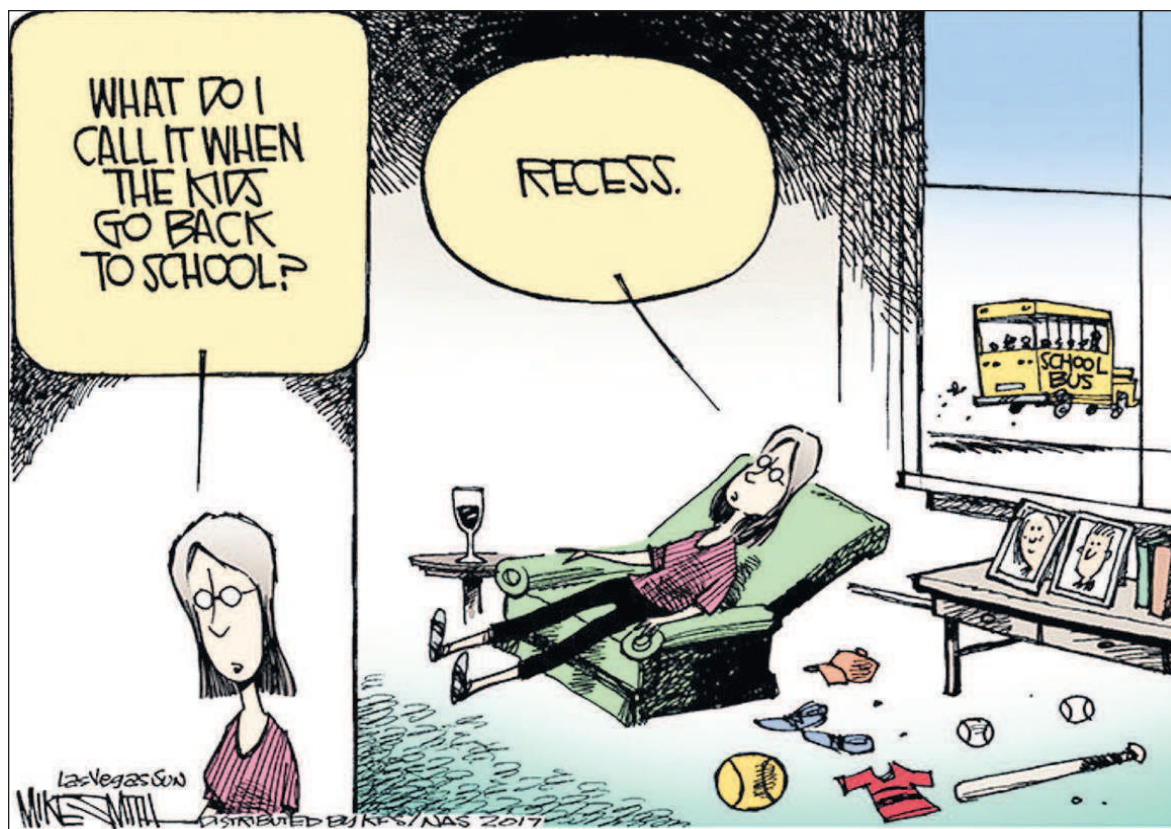
As citizens and taxpayers, we must consider it all as we try to set a positive example for the future. While we need to oppose those who engage in hate and violence and uphold the principles our nation was founded upon, we must always hold government directly accountable when it oversteps or misleads.

Importantly, we must also never forget the pain and loss of life from 9/11, and we must never lose sight of the incredible heroism and sacrifice it provoked or the national unity that surfaced in its wake. On that day and those that immediately followed, we weren't Democrats and Republicans, we weren't divided by race and cultural issues. We unified as one nation, people helping people, sacrificing when necessary, all Americans.

It's not the first time we've had that national unity, and it won't be our last. It's in our blood and dates to our nation's birth. It heroically rises like the American flag hoisted by three firefighters at ground zero in the 9/11 aftermath, and it proudly flies like the Star-Spangled Banner over Fort McHenry in Baltimore 203 years ago this week during the War of 1812.

Each time our freedom is threatened, and whenever the country or a region suffers a calamity, Americans always respond. The outpouring of national support for the victims of hurricanes Katrina, Sandy and Harvey provides recent examples. Our history is filled with countless others.

What we must do is to continue to learn from these lessons. They teach us all that our strength as a country is in our unity, not in our divisiveness.



GUEST COMMENT

Public land collaboratives work

By Bruce Dausavage
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Ochoco Lumber Co. was founded in 1927 to work the vast Ponderosa Pine forests of the Blue Mountains of Eastern Oregon, and in 1983, Ochoco Lumber owner, John Shelk, formed Malheur Lumber Co. in John Day. Today, Malheur Lumber Co. (MLC) draws our raw product primarily from the Malheur National Forest in Grant and Harney counties.

Sourcing raw product for our mills has not always been easy. Tightening timber supplies forced us to consider closing MLC, and we knew that if we wanted to remain in the timber business, we would need to do things differently and to work with people with diverse points of view. That's why Malheur Lumber Co. has been a member of the Blue Mountains Forest Partners since its founding in 2006.

Our company believed then, and is even more committed now, that

collaboration among timber interests, the conservation community, local residents, elected government officials and the Forest Service — which manages about 72 percent of the land base in Grant and Harney counties — was our only option if we wanted to survive into the future. Thankfully, these other stakeholders held a similar view, even though our opinions of a “healthy forest” or “responsible forest management” may have differed at the outset.

Working together, unemployment numbers in Grant and Harney counties have dropped from 14 percent and 11.7 percent, respectively to 6 percent and 5.3 percent. MLC has been able to maintain our operations, increase employment, and are moving forward with investments in our facility to more efficiently process raw logs coming from our stewardship projects.

We have helped develop and implement a 10-year stewardship contract that represents 86 percent

of the private employment within the industry, and all existing wood manufacturing infrastructure, within Grant and Harney counties. Ongoing research is telling us that the Malheur is already more resilient to future wildfire and the effects of climate change as a result of our restoration work.

There are currently 27 collaboratives operating in Oregon to encourage restoration of public lands. The aim is to facilitate compromise and consensus. Contrary to the perspective of someone who has never attended a partners' meeting (Forest collaboratives need to welcome all input, 8/25/17), in our experience, the partners regularly solicit the views of all stakeholders who seek to productively and respectfully advance forest restoration and community well-being on the Malheur National Forest. That's the “Oregon Way,” and it works.

Bruce Dausavage is president of Ochoco and Malheur Lumber companies.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Electricity rate hike does not add up

I read in the Aug. 23 Blue Mountain Eagle that Oregon Trail Electric Cooperative will be increasing our electricity costs due to a 5.4 percent power rate and 0.7 percent transmission rate increase from Bonneville Power.

We may be in trouble. I recently applied to OTEC for a friend's capital credits. Documents from OTEC said capital credits less than 15 years old were subject to a discount rate of “5.3 percent”. Anything older than 15 years were paid 100 percent. When I went to school, 5.3 percent of \$100 was \$5.30; of \$1,000.00 was \$53.00 and 5.3 percent on his capital credits totaling \$1,472.99 would be \$78.07. OTEC withheld \$343.52 from \$1,472.99. That is almost 24 percent (23.32127).

I sent OTEC a letter on June 19 asking how they calculated the “5.3 percent discount,” but they never responded. Plus some of his capital credits were probably older than 15 years and exempt from withholding.

I admit, I went to school before the schools started teaching what they referred to as “the new math.” I don't know if OTEC is using the “new math” or creative math to calculate their capital credits refunds.

Maybe one of the math teachers who read this letter can tell me what is wrong with my math calculations. Or maybe the math teachers can give OTEC lessons on how to calculate percentages before they use their creative math to calculate the rate increases they will charge us in October.

Linda Smarr
Canyon City

VA staff ‘give vets the best care they can’

Greetings to the Harney/Grant County veteran communities and general community members.

Just a quick note to inform those interested, especially our veterans and their families in Harney and Grant counties, that I retired at the end of August after serving for over nine years as the clinic manager and clinical therapist/social worker of the Burns-Hines VA Clinic. It has been an honor to serve you veterans, from whom I've learned a great deal not only about your physical wounds of military life and war but the internal ones that others can't see.

I started the clinic with Dr. Fitzpatrick in 2008. Since then it has been a privilege to serve not only with him but also the hard-working, conscientious staff who continuously made/make extra efforts to serve our veteran population: previously Diane, Steve, Marsha, Ashley, and Emily, and now our current staff of Michelle, Mark, Terri, and Zoe.

Our staff work with limited resources due to our rural setting, and also can be hampered by some VA policies that are not always user-friendly. Still staff work through these situations to give vets the best care they can, which hopefully vets appreciate and thank them for.

Best wishes to all.

Steve Bull
Retired Burns-Hines VA Clinic manager

When to call an untruth to light

Mark Webb, executive director of Blue Mountain Forest Partners, stated during the Aug. 18 meeting

that part of the decision from the operations committee to deny membership to citizens was because of gossip on the street. GOSSIP! Hearsay evidence was used to discriminate against citizens qualified under the rules of membership by BMFP. Desperation is being employed to keep people from joining. Why?

No one accused anyone of lying at the July 20 meeting when the first denial of membership was made by Mark Webb. A civil discussion concerning membership followed the meeting. It was only after interviews and subsequent denials at the August meeting did the subject of lying come up. When executive members denied saying a prospective member was not trustworthy, a BMFP member who was present at the particular interview interjected with, “Yes, you did say that!”

The question here is just how does a reasonable person react when someone prevaricates? Does one say, “That's a fib!” or “Liar, liar, pants on fire!” Or just be blunt and challenge, “You are lying!” as many in Grant County would be prone to do. A lie spoken publicly will become believable if not contested. No responsible citizen should ever be afraid to sound off and state emphatically, “That is not the truth!” And if the lie is not retracted, then it is fair game to ask for “Book, chapter and verse” to back up what was said.

It is pitiful when those who are caught up in lying will plaintively say, “They called me/us liars.” As if that somehow absolves them of lying in the first place. The moral here is simply this, don't lie!

The Blue Mountain Forest Partners executive branch needs to clean up its act to retain any credibility.

Roger McKinley
Prairie City

WHERE TO WRITE

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• **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.

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• **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.

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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).

• **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: 202-224-5244. Email: sen.tedferrioli@state.or.us. Email: TFER2@aol.com. Phone: 541-490-6528. Website: 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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• **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.

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