

Celebrating progress

Many local people have spent countless hours on projects to better our communities, and we believe that focusing on these achievements will inspire more while bringing people together.

To recognize all of the positive changes and the people making things happen, the Eagle is working on a new special publication this year: Progress. It will be its own section in the June 26 newspaper.

In the section, we plan to include a variety of articles showcasing progress made in the various communities and in areas such as the forest, tourism and business. We plan to reach out to each city to learn about the projects they're working on, their goals and the challenges they're facing.

In addition, we've solicited contributions from the Grant County Chamber of Commerce, Grant County Economic Development, Grant County Education Service District, Blue Mountain Hospital District and other organizations to build up the package even further.

The end result will be a section stuffed with articles about positive progress

being made from a variety of different angles, from one end of the county to the other.

We're excited to debut this new section next month, and we think it will be one of the best sections we've ever published.

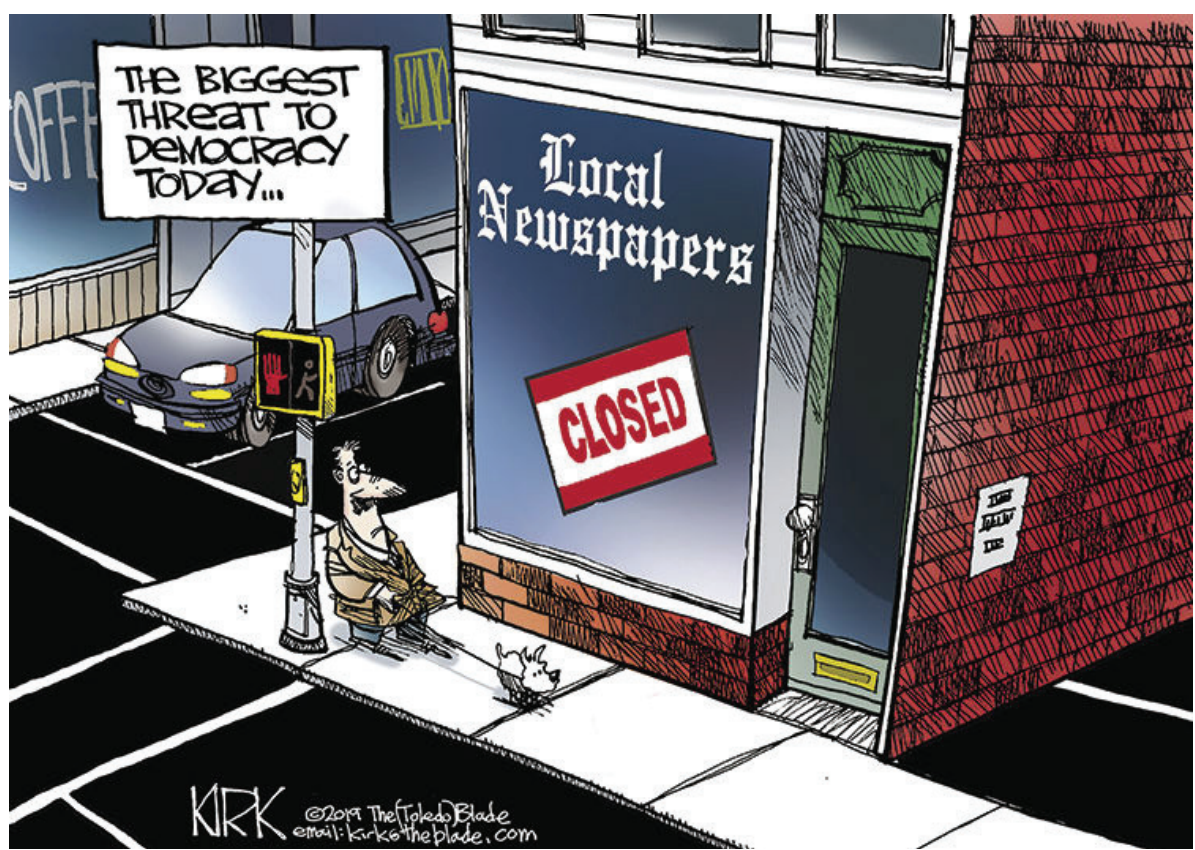
Whereas our annual visitor guide is more catered to tourists, this section is mostly for locals, touting our accomplishments and supporting our communities, so it's a great fit for advertisers to showcase accomplishments they've made.

Doing so also supports this effort to recognize and promote local progress, and we hope to have the support to continue doing this in future years because we think something like this will help bring the community together.

This is also a great opportunity to show your support for your community, the people making things happen and the progress being made.

Although there may not be very many people in Grant County, many people here have done great work to move the county forward.

We thank them for their dedication, and we hope their progress will continue to inspire more.



FARMER'S FATE

Learn, live and hope

In life, every one of us draws a circle. Inside of it are our people — the people we love, fight for and protect no matter what. As we get older, our circles get smaller. People grow up (or they don't), they get married, they move, their values and priorities become different from our own — and slowly, one by one, they fall away from our lives. But a few stay — through thick and thin, migraines and harvest and everything in between. Those are the people you want with you in the trenches.

This month our circle got smaller. One of our friends felt the burdens of life were just too much to bear. It came as a shock, as he was one of the most upbeat and positive people I know. The kind of person who doesn't just call when he has time — but he makes time to give you a call. Standing at his funeral while person after person, young and old, wealthy and poor, took the microphone and told their story of how this young man had helped them — it was pretty evident that many people had felt his kindness. He had repeatedly taken out the trash at his favorite restaurant, he baby-sat for the simple pleasure of playing with the kids, and he was always just a phone call away. It was no different for us.

My husband likes to tell stories about when they were little. My husband was about 12 years old when he was carrying our friend (then about 2) on his shoulders. Walking around during a church potluck, they were stand-



Brianna Walker

ing next to a little old lady, her head just inches away from the 2-year-old fingers. Suddenly, with ninja speed, those little fingers reached out and plucked the hair from her head like feathers off a turkey! I wasn't there, but I am sure his 2-year-old cuteness was the only thing keeping him from a swat from the little, old — and now bald — lady.

Sometimes on his way home from work he'd stop by our house just to play with our kids. He'd tease them and chase them, throwing them into the air amid lots of laughter and squealing. He'd tickle them until they could barely gasp "uncle," then he would just laugh and say he was "toughening them up, like their dad had done to him when he was little." Sometimes when seeing him come up the sidewalk, the kids would lock the door and then dance in the window and giggle watching his great theatrics attempting to get to them — and they ate up every second in anticipation.

His visits weren't always just for fun, though. He gave the best massages I've ever had in my life — and sometimes when a headache got too much, he would get a sad, pathetic phone call or text, pleading for his assistance. Never once did he say he couldn't — most times coming right away regardless of what he was currently doing. Once, on the sixth day of a migraine, my husband called ask-

ing if he could come help. I had spent the last few days being sick on the bathroom floor. He quickly set up his table in the living room, and half-dragged-half-carried me onto it. My nausea was bad, and he grabbed a bowl and put it under the table, holding my hair and gently rubbing my shoulders as I dry-heaved. Much later that evening, when the pain started subsiding, I realized I had vomit all in my hair — and he hadn't said a word. He could have teased me about it later — but embarrassing someone wasn't his style.

All these stories and more crashed into each other as I realized these moments had changed from normal life to memories. I wanted to shout, "You are loved. Your life matters!"

As our days go round and round, some days we laugh, some days we cry, but on the days we have to say goodbye, we recognize one universal truth — life is difficult, always and for all of us.

Einstein once said, "Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow." My challenge (to you and myself) is to learn to be as kind as our friend, to live a life that makes people dance with anticipation when they see you strolling up the sidewalk, and hopefully one day, to be the friend who loves you even when you have day-old vomit stuck in your hair. God may not have called our friend home, but I have no doubt he'll be there with open arms to welcome him in.

Brianna Walker occasionally writes about the Farmer's Fate for the Blue Mountain Eagle.



SATs to add "Adversity Score" for college admissions

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- Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
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- Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).
- Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.
- Sen. Cliff Bentz, R-Ontario** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/Bentz. Email: Sen.CliffBentz@oregonlegislature.gov.
- Rep. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, H-475, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: Rep.LynnFindley@oregonlegislature.gov.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Stand or comply

To the Editor:

Just one Grant County citizen writing in appreciation of our county court and their recent resolution in defense of our constitutional right to keep and bear arms.

We seem to be in an ongoing battle of resolutions, regulations and government intrusion. What we choose to defend determines our future and who we are. This is true as shown by our county court's recent stand on this issue.

"America will never be destroyed from the outside. If we falter and lose our freedoms, it will be because we destroyed ourselves." — Abraham Lincoln.

Michael R. Christensen
John Day

No wisdom from a position of hate

To the Editor:

Reg LeQueieu wrote the May 14 commentary "Why I hate wolves." It is hard to understand why he thought anthropomorphic hysteria could lead to considered discus-

sions. I immediately dismissed his arguments, as there was nothing an emotional rant against wolves offered to cause a person to pause, think or to take seriously. If one follows his rationale, you can list a whole lot of predators that likewise deserve condemnation. He may as well have called for the eradication of the African lion, all leopards, mountain lions, jaguars, mink, jackals, hyenas, crocs, alligators, eagles, bears, great white sharks, tigers, Komodo dragons, orcas (killer whales!), piranha and sea lions. Are you getting the picture? If Noah, himself, embraced LeQueieu's mindset, I'm afraid his ark would have been half empty.

Conflicts between the natural world and the human-centered world will always be with us. Good arguments can be made questioning the wisdom of reintroducing wolves to domesticated areas where private ranches, for example, have genuine losses due to predation. But there are limited locations in Oregon that could and should support a limited number of wolves. To say that it is "legitimate" or "ethical" to "supplant" natural predators with human

hunters is just wrong. Should the wolf be managed? Yes — this is a reality of co-existing with wildlife in modern times. However, I have to question the premise that man has adequate judgment to determine that wolves or any predators should be eliminated from nature.

Without predators, deer and elk, for example, would over-populate the carrying capacity of the land. This could increase the spread of diseases and cause undernourished herds. Meanwhile, hunters would wish to target the biggest and best of bucks and bulls, so the strength of the gene pools of herds would be diminished over time — producing even less healthy populations.

Serious study and reasoned discussions must address the issues involving wolves — not hysteria.

The natural world is "inhumane," according to LeQueieu. What an unfitting characterization! Think about the fact that the natural world (including predators) is God's creation. Is it wise to think man knows better than God, himself?

Kay Steele
Ritter

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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