

Legislation threatens any last shred of goodwill

As predicted, Democrats in the Oregon Legislature quickly led their climate change bill out onto center stage as soon as the 2020 Legislature convened earlier this month, reigniting a contentious debate over carbon emissions that stymied much of the 2019 session.

As predicted, Republican senators boycotted the Legislature on Monday in protest, denying a quorum and preventing any action on cap-and-trade legislation. Senate Republican spokeswoman Kate Gillem said they may return once they are assured the bill will be referred to Oregon voters.

The idea behind the Democrats' effort — to slash the state's carbon emissions and help reverse climate change — is commendable. Yet, the carbon emissions effort always suffered from a lack of perspective, not science. The truth is the largest carbon producers in the world don't exist in Oregon or even here in the United States, but overseas in places like China.

Oregon's carbon footprint is tiny when compared to other nations, so the obvious question has always been, what gains, or benefits would such an Oregon emission limit deliver to the nation and the world? The answer is none. Making statements about a hot point issue is fine, even admirable, but we believe this legislation will have an extraordinarily adverse impact that far outweighs the tiny reduction in total global carbon emissions it would create.

Even with the concessions

made to soften the effects of the legislation on rural industries and communities, it carries the very real potential of expanding the chasm between urban and rural Oregon interests. It could, in fact, create an unbridgeable divide with long-term consequences. The legislation, regardless of its noble origins, will further divide our state, not unify it.

A better plan would be to fully embrace our existing robust hydroelectric — the original clean energy — infrastructure on the Snake and Columbia rivers. Added to that should be a more in-depth effort to plant more trees than any other state in the union and for politicians on both sides of the political fence to work together to find a universally accepted solution to the climate challenge that a clear majority of our state can get behind.

Our fear is this legislation will leave a legacy of bitterness and create a broken alliance between voters and those they elected. If the current Democratic carbon emission legislation is as good an idea as advertised, then put it before the voters of the state, as Republican legislators have suggested. A vote to enact this legislation on purely partisan lines, though, could destroy any last shred of goodwill and make Oregon's political landscape radioactive for decades to come.

We believe Democratic and Republican lawmakers want to do the right thing. To do the right thing means shelving this piece of legislation, and then focusing on the art of the possible instead of the impossible.



FARMER'S FATE 29 with 11 years experience

You get up one day, young and vibrant, feed the animals, sit down for breakfast, drink a cup of coffee — then boom, you're middle age, just like that. At least that's how I felt when I awoke on my birthday. I suddenly found myself 10 years older than I was on this day last year. The 11th anniversary of my 29th birthday — or, as my husband insisted on repeating, "my 40th."

I suppose no one feels like they are getting older, until something stabs you with uncomfortable growing pains — jarring you with the realization that, while you still have a full deck, you're shuffling slower.

One of those moments happened last year as I was driving a college student to an appointment. I was telling her a story about a couple of girls.

"How old were they?" she asked. "I don't know exactly," I answered, "around my age."

"Oh, you mean women," she exclaimed.

I sat in silence for a moment. Women? I gulped hard, and could almost feel chin wattle growth in that age-increasing moment.

Months passed, and Saturday night found us with another group of college students. Music was the evening's topic. They were really jazzed about the "classic music" they had been listening to.

"The stuff is old, but it's actually pretty cool!" one of the guys said.

"What kind of stuff are you listening to?" I ask, imagining some of my favorite singers from the '60s and '70s.

"Oh, it's really, really old stuff," another kid says. "All the way back to 2000! Like Britney Spears!"

How thankful I am that growing wrinkles doesn't hurt — because in that moment I'm pretty sure I added half a dozen.



Brianna Walker

As the sun sank on the funeral of my 39th year, my dad and sisters arrived unexpectedly with games and a Lego cake my sister had made. I protested that it wasn't technically my birthday, but it didn't stop me from eating my favorite flavor of frosting. Things were starting to wind down when my sisters suddenly declared their intentions to kidnap me for the night.

Soon, I had clothes and toiletries thrown together, and I kissed my boys before scurrying away into the night. It was nearly midnight when we arrived at the hotel. First, we

hour drive home. We'd only been home minutes when two girlfriends came strolling up the sidewalk.

"We're kidnapping you!" they announced.

Before I could even say goodbye to my sisters, they had hustled me out of the house and into their car. Off to the coffee shop. It was early evening, and I had to smile — the day was nearly over, and by now it was too late for any party my husband may have tried to host.

Our conversation drifted from old-age to my new sewing machine, which supposedly can even embroider thin wood.

My girlfriend jumped at this, "Would you have time to swing by my house? I just bought a wooden basket, and I'd love to have our last name embroidered on it!"

I have a one-track mind when it comes to crafts, and the entire way to her house, I was envisioning swirls and leaves in coordinating colors around her name. It wasn't until we pulled around the corner of her house — and I saw all the farm-plated vehicles — that I knew I'd been had.

Forty black balloons greeted me inside the door — along with friends and family, and more college students (to remind me just how old 40 is.) A giant green cake, made to look like a hay field filled with rows of swathed hay and a tractor and baler, sat prominently in the kitchen.

I looked around the faces of my loved ones as the candles were lit. I made a wish and blew out all 40 candles (I'm sure it was more like spitting on the cake by the time I got down to the last three).

As the last candle fizzled, I realized the secret of staying young is to forgive quickly, kiss slowly, laugh uncontrollably, avoid college students and never buy more than one box of birthday candles!

"THAT'S THE TROUBLE WITH US. WE NUMBER EVERYTHING. TAKE WOMEN, FOR EXAMPLE. I THINK THEY DESERVE TO HAVE MORE THAN 12 YEARS BETWEEN THE AGES OF 28 AND 40."

—James Thurber, 1960

ordered pizza. Then we spent the next several hours pretending we were 20 again and actually enjoyed staying up late for no reason. We put on pajamas and face masks, and played board games. We stifled our yawns and tried to subtly wipe our watery eyes. It had been years since I have seen that side of midnight purely for pleasure — no hay to bale, or produce to deliver — just simply because we wanted to.

The day of my birthday dawned bright and much too early. We sat in a glassed nook overlooking the river and celebrated the first day of my fourth decade. The day passed in a whirlwind of sisterly fun: coffee, pedicures and an escape room. It was one of those days that was so good, I was heavy hearted when my sister declared the fun was over as she still had a five-

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Shooting the Breeze' a great addition to the Eagle

To the Editor:
I've been wanting to comment for some time on the addition of the column "Shooting the

Breeze" by Dale Valade (most of the time), Rod Carpenter and Marc LeQuieu.

This is a great addition to our local newspaper. Being such a rural, agricultural and wild-life-rich county, the subject matter is always something that most of us can relate to in some manner.

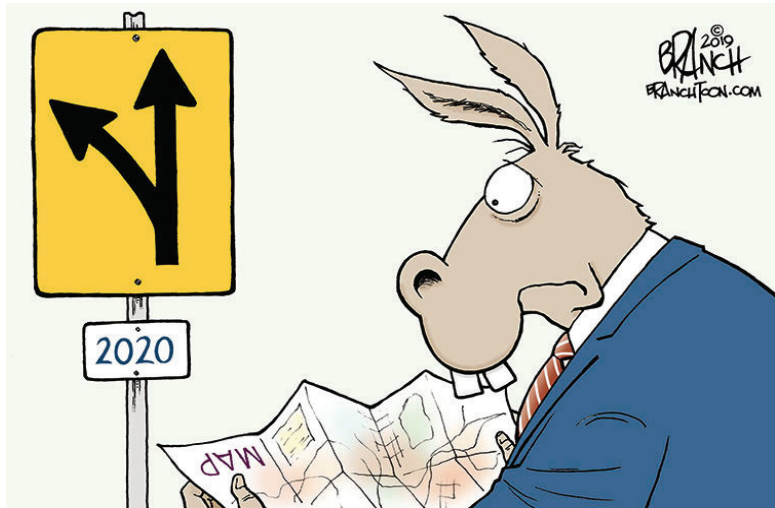
Myself being a hunter, conser-

vationist and reloader for the better part of 60 years, I find everything that has been printed in this column since its inception to be accurate, valid, interesting and well done.

Thanks to you and the contributing writers for adding it to our weekly reading!

Jerry Russell
Kimberly

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