

# The path to unity is a two-way street

Records and legal challenges notwithstanding, it appears Joe Biden will be president on Jan. 20, 2021.

In declaring victory, the former vice president made the obligatory call for unity. That's always a tall order, particularly in a deeply divided country after such a bitter campaign.

As the victor, it falls to Biden to reach across the divide. He has his work cut out for him.

Farmers and ranchers largely supported President Trump, but that support in rural areas was not unanimous or homogenous. Even among supporters it's not uncommon to hear frank discussions of the president's shortcomings — both in policy and manners.

The president delivered on his promise to reduce government regulation, most notably in reversing the controversial "Waters of the U.S." rule. Farmers and ranchers have mostly benefited from the 2017 tax reforms.

His record on trade was a mixed bag. His on-again, off-again trade war with China had a huge impact on farmers, but eventually there came an agreement that at least in spirit benefits ag. His imposition of punitive tariffs on Mexico and Canada even as he announced a replacement for the North American Free Trade Agreement led to retaliatory duties on farm products. There are bilateral agreements with Japan and South Korea.

Many in agriculture are wary that Biden's election will signal a return to policies that gave them pause during the Obama administration. They have not been comforted by environmental and economic policies promoted by the more radical factions of his party.

What can the former vice

president do to calm farmers and ranchers in the red interior? We have a couple of suggestions.

- Show up. Trump addressed the American Farm Bureau Federation's national convention three times during his term and addressed the FFA's convention once. Three previous administrations had let surrogates handle these events.

Whether the next gatherings are virtual events or live, farmers and ranchers will want to hear about policy proposals directly from President Biden.

- Listen. Trump's critics say he doesn't listen to people with opposing views. During the Obama administration, farmers and ranchers didn't think they had a seat at the table and didn't think they were being heard. They did think they were being spoken down to.

In such a deeply divided country, Biden can't repeat the mistakes of his predecessors.

- Reject the demonization of those with different views. It has become too easy to dismiss those with whom we disagree with pejorative and inflammatory labels — bigot, homophobe, socialist, commie, misogynist, Nazi.

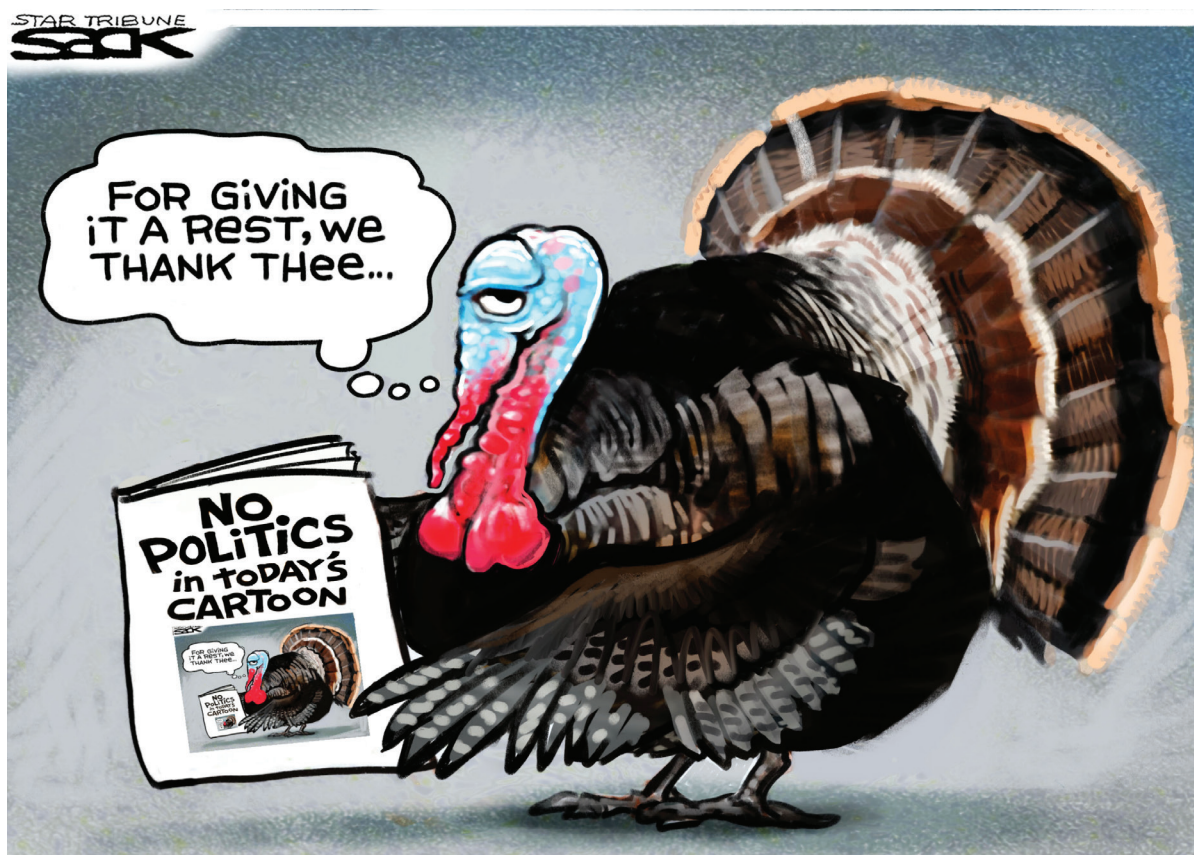
Most of us, right or left, hold no animus toward our fellow citizens. Name calling is no substitute for discussion.

Biden struck the right tone last week.

"To make progress, we must stop treating our opponents as our enemy," Biden said. "We are not enemies. We are Americans."

We agree.

We urge Biden to deliver on his promise to bring the country together. But that will also require those who opposed his election to give him the benefit of the doubt. Judge his actions, not the campaign rhetoric.



## GUEST COMMENT

# Shop small this year

It's no secret that the coronavirus pandemic has made a huge impact on how Oregon retailers and restaurants operate. With additional restrictions implemented at the start of the holiday season as cases surge, it's another challenge for local small businesses.

But that's where we as a community can step in. Small retailers and restaurants are relying on us to send a message with our dollars that says, "We've got your back." And in 2020, this support is needed more than ever.

Approximately 62% of small businesses have reported they need to see consumer spending return to pre-COVID levels by the end of this year. While limited store capacity and social distancing might prevent us from going in crowds to visit our favorite local small retailers on Small Business Saturday Nov. 28, there are still ways we can shop small throughout the entire holiday season:

- Order online — many businesses have implemented online shopping. Check business websites



Jeremy Field

to see what options are available.

- Curbside pickup — call in purchases or order online to pick up gifts curbside to eliminate the need to go into a store.

- Gift cards — these are an easy and popular way to support a local small business and please the people on your shopping list. This can include coffee shops, boutiques, personal services, restaurants and other local businesses.

- Start early — with possible delays in shipping and inventory, start your shopping earlier this year to make sure gifts arrive in time.

- Allow extra time for in-person visits — if you opt to mask up and visit your local businesses to purchase gifts, plan for extra time as stores need to limit the number of guests inside.

- Order takeout — enjoy food from your favorite eateries with a pickup or delivery order. You can even consider catering for small

household holiday gatherings.

- Contact stores, local chambers or business associations — many local businesses and associations have designed creative ways to shop small this holiday season. Contact them directly to learn local ways you can participate.

Last year, Small Business Saturday spending hit a record high of \$19.6 billion from an estimated 110 million shoppers nationwide. Our holiday spending — at whatever level our budget can afford this year — collectively makes a difference.

In 2020, every gift purchased from a small retailer or local restaurant has three beneficiaries: the gift recipient, the small business and our local community. Join me in shopping small this holiday season. Our local small businesses are depending on us more than ever.

*Jeremy Field is the regional administrator for the U.S. Small Business Administration Pacific Northwest Region which serves Washington, Oregon, Idaho and Alaska.*

## GUEST COMMENT

# Celebrate ag this holiday season

Thanksgiving is all about making time to reflect on the many things in life for which we are grateful. In conversations around the dinner table, Oregon Farm Bureau urges readers to remember the farm and ranch families who grew the food you'll be enjoying not only on Thanksgiving day, but all year long.

While Oregon isn't a major producer of turkeys, we do specialize in beef cattle; cattle and calves rank as Oregon's Number 3 top agricultural commodity by production value, drawing in over \$625 million a year.

Your holiday dining will almost certainly feature other prominent Oregon ag products. Oregon is Number 1 in the nation for producing hazelnuts and Dungeness crab; Number 2 for pears and onions; Number 3 for cranberries; and Number 4 for green peas and potatoes. Milk is Oregon's Number 4 top ag commodity, valuing at \$552 million, and is used to create a host of delicious dairy products.

You'll celebrate ag when you raise a toast during the holidays. Oregon-grown hops are to thank for many of the region's craft beers, and our state ranks Num-



Anne Marie Moss

ber 3 in the United States for growing hops. The Oregon wine industry has surged over the past decade, now to 1,297 vineyards with 908 wineries. Wine grapes are the state's Number 7 top ag commodity, valuing at \$238 million.

Few things are more festive than purchasing a fresh Christmas tree. Did you know that Oregon is Number 1 in the nation for Christmas tree production? Because more people are staying at home this year due to the pandemic, there is expected to be increased interest in purchasing a live, fragrant tree that can be enjoyed all season long.

Beyond seasonal favorites, there are many other reasons to celebrate ag.

For one, Oregon agriculture is sustainable. Through Oregon Farm Bureau's Century Farm & Ranch Program, an impressive 1,235 farms and ranches have remained operational, on the same land, and within the same family for at least 100 years, and 47 families have reached the 150-year milestone. Agriculture is also family based.

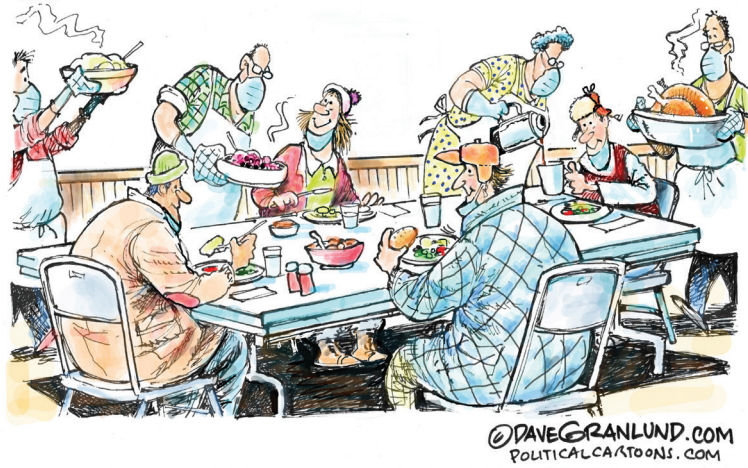
Nearly 97% of Oregon's farms and ranches — including commercial-scale farms — are family-owned and operated. Some are "corporate farms" that incorporated for tax purposes or succession-plan reasons. In agriculture, "big" doesn't mean "bad."

Agriculture benefits the environment. The wide, open spaces created by farms and ranches not only preserve Oregon's cherished landscapes, but also provide 70% of the state's wildlife habitat: 551,000 acres of Oregon ag land are enrolled in the voluntary USDA Conservation Reserve Program, which helps improve water quality, prevent soil erosion and reduce loss of wildlife habitat on private land. And, combined, U.S. agriculture, land use and forestry are a net sink for carbon emissions, removing 172 million metric tons of CO2-equivalent emissions from the atmosphere in 2017.

Whether for the simple pleasure of enjoying Oregon-grown food — or for agriculture's countless other contributions to society — please join us and take a moment to celebrate ag this holiday season.

*Anne Marie Moss is the Oregon Farm Bureau communications director.*

# THANKS for GIVING



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Don't 'judge my Christianity'

To the Editor:

Terry Steele, how dare you presume to judge my Christianity based on who I voted for.

Diane Strasser  
Mt. Vernon

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