

Alliance offers exciting potential

Last month a coalition of agricultural and environmental groups announced an historic alliance to recommend proposals to the Biden administration to address climate change.

The new Food and Agriculture Climate Alliance, or FACA, brings together groups typically pitted against one another.

It's exciting stuff, and the participants have reason to celebrate.

FACA was formed in February by four groups that co-chair the alliance: the American Farm Bureau Federation, National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, Environmental Defense Fund and National Farmers Union.

It was later joined by the Food Industry Association, National Alliance of Forest Owners, National Association of State Departments of Agriculture and The Nature Conservancy.

"We're proud to have broken through historic barriers to form a unique alliance," American Farm Bureau Federation President Zippy Duvall said at a virtual press conference Nov. 17.

The goal, FACA's leaders say, is to have a hand in climate policy on the front end rather than just fighting on the back end. This way, they say, farmers are less likely to get hurt.

"Our goal from the start was to be at the table with the policy development process, not sort of reacting after the fact," Chuck Conner, president and CEO of the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, said.

Environmental groups that signed on were similarly impressed with the newfound fellowship and the progress that has been made.

"It's been surprisingly cordial. There's a lot more we could agree on than any of us thought we could," Callie Eideberg, director of government relations at the Environmental Defense Fund, said.

FACA members have developed more than 40 climate policy recommendations to hand over to the Biden administration and Congress.

The coalition says the policies are all voluntary, incentive-based programs designed to simultaneously slow environmental degradation and support farmers.

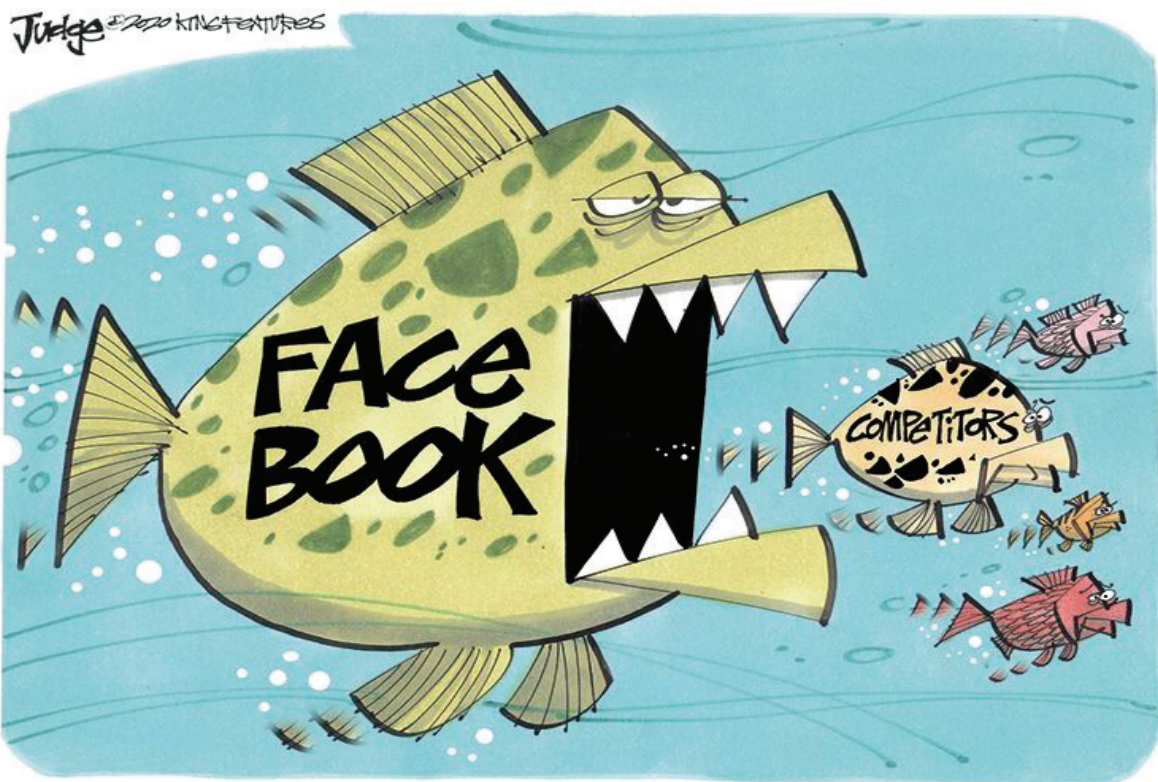
That sounds good, and there's no doubt that this is an unprecedented alliance. If ag interests can have a hand in crafting policy proposals before they become law, then the effort will be worthwhile.

A bit of skepticism might be in order.

No matter how many environmental groups join the alliance, there will always be one more that's a little more hardcore outside the group that's ready to file a challenge. The real test of a friendship will come when the lawsuits start flying.

Nonetheless, we support any effort that seeks common ground and better understanding between traditional adversaries. Dialogue is most often preferred to debate.

New friendships always require a leap of faith. But we suggest all parties enter the alliance with arms, and eyes, wide open.



SURVIVAL OF THE FATTEST

EDUCATION CORNER

Dyslexia — what is it?

Dyslexia is not simply letter reversals or not trying hard enough. With the advancement of technology, researchers have been able to observe the brain while people who struggle with reading are reading information. From this research, they determined people with the current definition of dyslexia often struggle with language development along with distinguishing sounds found in our language and transferring them to text.

Language is a natural skill that we all develop at different levels whereas text has been created by man. About 20% of the population's brains have difficulty processing man-created symbols. There is no correlation between intelligence or creativity. Dyslexics are often very visual and creative in their thinking.

Children who appear to be dyslexic often have a family history of dyslexia. The spectrum of dyslexia is wide and a person may only exhibit minor indicators whereas others may exhibit many indicators to an extreme. With early identification and interventions often, the characteristics can be minimized making education and reading easier for them. Not hearing sounds in words and rhyming as a pre-schooler is an indicator along with rapidly reading colors, objects or letters. With practice, pre-schoolers and kindergartners have no problem mastering these skills and move on to letter recognition and sound representations.

Normal reading patterns go from pre-alphabetic, partial alphabetic, full alphabetic and consolidated alphabetic. Pre-alphabetic begins in preschool and increases during kindergarten. This is when the child



Dr. Scott Smith

begins becoming aware that letters have meaning and begins to use visual clues. Partial alphabetic is when the child knows their letter names (upper and lower case) and is becoming

aware of sounds in words and linking them to the letters. This happens most often towards the end of kindergarten and during the start of first grade. Full alphabetic awareness should be strong by the middle of first grade. Students understand the phoneme/grapheme relationship and are able to blend words of which phonics skills have been taught. Consolidated understanding should be mastered by the end of first grade and at the latest in the first part of second grade. This means the students are able to read decodable texts fluently along with being able to spell words applying their phonic knowledge.

Dyslexic students often exhibit other instructional difficulties such as dysgraphia (inability to write coherently), visual processing issues, auditory processing issues, attention problems such as ADHD, memory struggles, language development, mood swings and coordination. The dyslexic spectrum is wide and a person may have many indicators or exhibit just a couple. One thing for sure is that dyslexia is not a determination of intelligence.

Dyslexia is not just found in one sex. It is equal, though how the different sexes display frustration with dyslexia can be quite different. Boys most often become frustrated and become active, often lead-

ing to behavior problems. Therefore, they are often identified earlier. Girls many times become complacent and quiet. They are often not identified as having dyslexia until upper grades or even in college. Even though they have the same struggles, many appear to be able to develop coping skills and are able to move through the system.

Dyslexia affects every person differently and no two are the same. They may have some of the same characteristics but their brain makeup is different. Often, they have problems with spoken language, reading, writing and other subjects in school. But they may also deal with self-image issues and interactions with peers. It is something they deal with for life whether it be dealing socially or needing to read something aloud. They carry that worry and anxiety with them every day. Many times it leads to depression later in life.

Though there are weaknesses and struggles, many dyslexics have strengths that others may not have such as thinking outside of the box. They are often able to imagine in a three-dimensional mode and are able to see the "big picture" when presented with projects. They usually love to problem solve. These are all skills we need in every part of our society.

Dr. Scott Smith is a Umatilla County educator with 40-plus years of experience. He taught at McNary Heights Elementary School and then for Eastern Oregon University in their teacher education program at Blue Mountain Community College. He serves on the Decoding Dyslexia — OR board as their parent-teacher liaison.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The silence is deafening

To the Editor:

Your paper has been printing up-to-date information regarding new infections and deaths due to COVID-19 — but the needed accompanying facts are glaringly missing. We went a long period of time with few local infections apparent — but also apparently very low testing numbers. Then, suddenly more aggressive testing — and guess what, lots of new hidden infections likely there all the time, but no test, no evidence of infections. Now, likely in an effort to bring official infection stats down to appease business owners and parents with school age kids, testing is

again limited, sporadic and tricky to obtain. We taxpayers pay for health department activity, and we subscribers pay the newspaper to provide meaningful, well-detailed info. So, telling us there are five "new cases" of COVID is meaningless without knowing how many tests were done to get those numbers. What are the local age groups most infected, and how many ICU cases are being treated locally, or shipped elsewhere, and where is "elsewhere"? I'm not talking intrusion of privacy, but facts that make the headlines meaningful. The silence concerning detailed, meaningful info is deafening, both from the health department, and the newspaper.

Gary Davidson
Canyon City

Editor's note: The information presented about testing is not entirely accurate. After an uptick of cases was already recorded in Grant County, the health department offered curbside testing in early November, which identified more cases. Since then, the health department has been offering testing Mondays through Thursdays. The health department provides daily updates when new cases are recorded but does not provide the number of tests administered in those daily updates. The health department and hospital have declined to provide information about patient ages, intensive care or transfers due to patient privacy concerns, except at a regional level, which the Eagle has published.

WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
- Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: tocc1862@centurylink.net.
- Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
- 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: cmty@ortelco.net.
- Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
- Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

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.



Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

- Editor & General Manager**Sean Hart, editor@bmeagle.com
- Reporter**Rudy Diaz, rudy@bmeagle.com
- Reporter**Steven Mitchell, steven@bmeagle.com
- Sports**sports@bmeagle.com
- Marketing Rep**Kim Kell, ads@bmeagle.com
- Office Assistant**Alixandra Hand, office@bmeagle.com

- 1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES** (including online access)
- Grant County\$45
- Everywhere else in U.S.\$57

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER send address changes to: Blue Mountain Eagle 195 N. Canyon Blvd. John Day, OR 97845-1187

USPS 226-340

Copyright © 2020 Blue Mountain Eagle All rights reserved. No part of this publication covered by the copyright hereon may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means — graphic, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, taping or information storage and retrieval systems — without written permission of the publisher.