

# When it comes to pests, it's us or them

Farmers and ranchers learn to keep a sharp eye out for invasions. Not the military kind, the pest kind.

Whether they are insects, amphibians, mussels or rodents, they are up to no good.

Perhaps the most famous of the invasive species are the Asian giant hornets, which have shown up in British Columbia and Washington state in the past couple of years. These oversized insects are not only ominous-looking, they can tear through a honey bee hive in a matter of minutes, beheading any bees in their path.

Then there is the tiny spotted wing drosophila, which has made its way to the Pacific Northwest. These pests are unique because they destroy fresh fruit, not just fruit that is already rotten.

The even tinier citrus psyllids have brought another plague from Asia — Huanglongbing, which translated from Chinese is yellow dragon disease. It causes citrus greening, which makes citrus fruit unmarketable and kills the trees.

The quagga mussel has Northwest agriculture and wildlife biologists on red alert. These small fresh-water pests multiply rapidly once they take hold — so fast that they can clog irrigation pipes, pumps and canals and municipal water systems. Most recently, they have been spotted in Oregon pet shops in sponge balls for fish tanks, causing state regulators to ban the products.

Cuban tree frogs from the Caribbean also have shown up in Oregon. While only two

were found, regulators are keeping an eye out to make sure no others hitchhiked to the region.

But nothing — and we mean nothing — is as daunting as the invasion parts of Australia have been subjected to: mice.

In our experience, few pests are as destructive as mice. They eat crops, which is bad enough. They get into bins and elevators, destroying whatever they come across. And they eat the wiring in cars, trucks, tractors and any other vehicles they can get into. They reproduce exponentially and live in walls, crawl spaces, attics, brush — anywhere. They urinate on everything in sight, rendering it unusable.

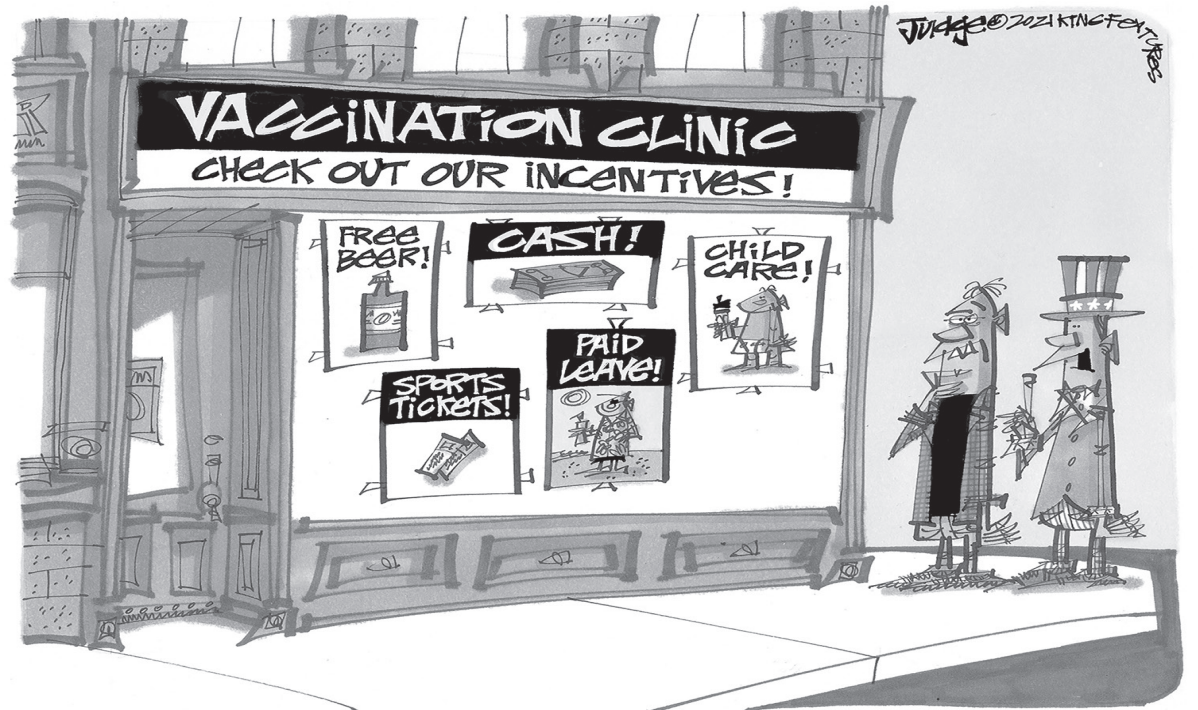
In Australia, the mice have overtaken much of the countryside in New South Wales. At night, farmers describe “carpets” of mice as far as they can see. They have taken over houses and other entire buildings. One farmer said a single water trap killed 7,500 mice in one night.

The worst part: the millions of rotting dead mice that have accumulated have soured the countryside.

Mice can do as much damage as any pest around. We know of a mouse family that destroyed a car's wiring, causing thousands of dollars in damage. We know another case in which a couple of mice died in the fan of a truck's heater, causing a permanent stink.

Any invasive pest must be “terminated with extreme prejudice.” You know what we mean.

When it comes to farming and ranching, the choice is simple: It's us or them.



“BECAUSE NOT DYING CLEARLY ISN'T ENOUGH.”

## BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

# Help wanted!

It seems that everywhere we go there are “Help Wanted” signs. Worse yet are those flyers hung in the window that say, “We’ve had to reduce our hours because we are short-staffed.”

What’s going on?

There are a variety of answers, but perhaps a more pertinent question is, “Where can I find people who want to work?”

Of course, there are the traditional means like posting a job with the Employment Department or utilizing online platforms such as Indeed, but employers may want to take a closer look at their neighborhood community colleges, universities and, yes, even high schools to fill vacancies.

There are often stereotypes about this group of people regarding their perceived work ethic, difficulty with attendance, keeping them off their cellphones, etc. However, several employers have successfully utilized the skills of many college and high school students and have found them to be excellent employees.

Yes, there is a learning curve (for both the employer and employee), and time will need to be spent outlining expectations and perhaps teaching or reinforcing basic soft skills which, for whatever reason, are not always taught to students. But hiring any employee is an investment, and Generation Z has important skill sets which can be beneficial to a company.



Greg Smith

First, interns or recent graduates can bring energy and creative problem-solving techniques to your team. Certainly, their in-depth knowledge of technology is something nearly every company can benefit from. Perhaps most importantly, they can provide necessary insight into what young consumers are looking for and how they think.

The oldest of Generation Z is 25. According to an article in Business Insider, “Gen Z currently earns \$7 trillion across its 2.5 billion-person cohort. By 2025, that income will grow to \$17 trillion, and by 2030, it will reach \$33 trillion, representing 27% of the world’s income and surpassing that of millennials (the oldest of whom are now 40) the following year.”

In short, they’ve got a lot of money to spend, and knowing what they want no doubt can help a business’s bottom line.

Here is some interesting information about those in Generation Z shared in the same article from Business Insider:

According to a recent study, money isn’t the single most important way to attract them. They are interested in opportunities to advance. Valuable career experiences and even unpaid internships so they can build on their career can

definitely pique their interest. Taking the time to mentor them and offering things like employee health and wellness programs as a reward for their dedication are important. They are seeking opportunities for growth.

While millennials thrive in teams and love collaboration, Gen Zers work more autonomously.

They grew up with technology and know how to access information quickly and, because of this, they do not like to waste time. They are used to having information at their fingertips, and for this reason, they may be found (and prefer) working at odd times.

They are highly efficient at multi-tasking.

Big projects are something they like to be a part of. While it’s understandable to task them with smaller duties at first, they will quickly lose interest as they are interested in being part of the bigger picture.

Regardless of whether employers choose to recruit individuals from Generation Z right now, they will soon be a major part of the global workforce. Understanding their strengths and preferences will be important for businesses to succeed.

Greg Smith is the director of the Eastern Oregon University Small Business Development Center, 1607 Gekeler Lane, Room 148 in La Grande. For free, confidential business advising, call 541-962-1532 or email eousbdc@gmail.com.

## OFF THE BEATEN PATH

# A moral dilemma

I first became aware of a moral dilemma at age 10 when I tumbled into a den churning with a mass of moral dilemmas.

The story begins with my bicycle, a one-speed wonder, sturdy as a dump truck and felt as heavy as one when I pushed it up a hill too steep to ride. My two younger brothers and I with our bikes explored the woods and fields beyond town. The only hitch — no matter where we went, we had to be home for lunch at noon. Mom devised a hard-hearted punishment if we were late — we were sentenced to stay in the yard the rest of the afternoon. Talk about controlling how far we roamed.

One day, fellow kid bike riders reported that at a farm a man offered to let kids ride horses for 25 cents for 15 minutes. My brothers and I raced home and scooped up a handful of quarters.

At the barn, the man showed us how to lead a horse to the pole fence, climb up and slide onto the horse bareback, grab the reins and head down a lane to a logged-over pasture.

In the pasture, tree stumps wider than a garbage can lid and 3



Jean Ann Moultrie

feet tall dotted the land.

I didn’t know the horses knew tricks until my horse galloped around a stump, braked and sent me flying. Fortunately I didn’t land

on the sharp edge of a tree stump, but on a soft cushion of poison oak. I caught my horse, led him to a stump so I could re-mount. All of us horse riders spent more time catching horses and climbing on stumps to get back on the horses than we did riding.

At lunch, I casually mentioned to my mom our activity — riding horses. I think she visualized county fair pony rides where ponies walked in circles tethered to the ride.

The next day my brothers and I headed back to the horse farm. We splurged for the half-hour ride.

After a bruise-induced morning, I checked my watch. Just enough time to ride back to the barn, retrieve our bikes and pedal furiously toward home. Back at the barn, one brother and I waited for our younger brother join us.

Coming down the lane, younger brother’s horse broke into a gallop and took a sharp turn, which sent him flying. He ended up in a heap with the wind knocked out of him.

It was at this point that moral dilemma kicked in.

To be home on time, my other brother and I needed to leave immediately and pedal like crazy. We’d be safe from the consequences of being late. The brother still in a heap could come later. If we recounted to Mom how we left the other boy, we could be grounded longer than an afternoon.

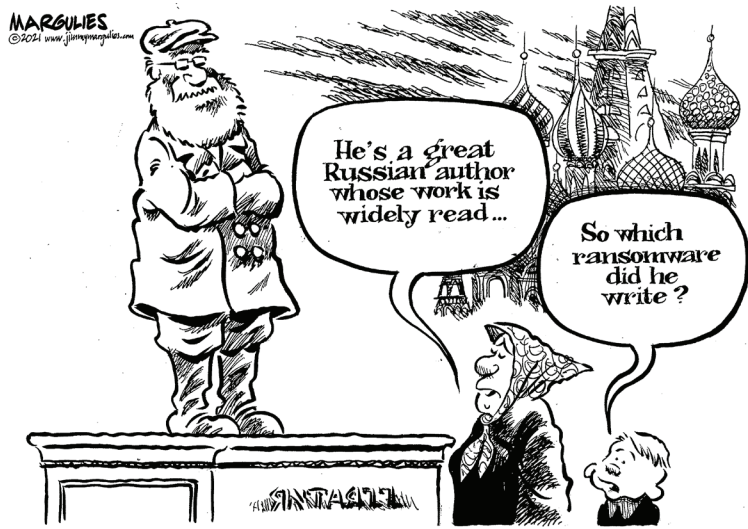
Or we could wait until younger brother was steady enough to ride a bike and help him along. Showing brotherly love meant being late. Perhaps Mom would praise our good judgement and skip a punishment. Probably not.

A lose-lose situation.

All three of us arrived late for lunch. We spent the afternoon in the back yard weeding. That was the last of the 25-cent horse riding.

The moral dilemma — the first of many.

The author, a resident of Grant County, occasionally still feels the bite of a moral dilemma.



## WHERE TO WRITE

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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).

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**POSTMASTER**  
 send address changes to:  
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 195 N. Canyon Blvd.  
 John Day, OR 97845-1187  
 USPS 226-340

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