

OUR VIEW

# On the value of high school sports and local journalism

Let's take a moment to show some appreciation for Grant County's high school athletes, who just wrapped up fall sports. Both Grant Union and Prairie City sent teams to the postseason, and while Dayville/Monument had less success this year, we applaud all the student-athletes for their hard work and dedication.

The Grant Union volleyball team capped a strong 2021 campaign by bringing home some hardware. After finishing the regular season with a 19-10 overall record, the Lady Prospectors went 2-0 in the Blue Mountain Conference Tournament to move on to the state playoffs, where they collected a trophy for finishing fourth statewide in Division 2A.

Even though they fielded a much smaller roster than some of their opponents, the Grant Union football team made the postseason after going 3-3 in the 2A Special District 5. The Prospectors bowed out in the first round after falling on the road against Lakeview. One of the Pros' season highlights was scoring a pair of touchdowns against a powerful Heppner squad that hadn't given up a single point in any of their previous league matchups.

The Prairie City volleyball team finished strong, going 2-1 in the High Desert League's tournament to qualify for post-season play. In their first-round matchup, the Panthers faced Central Christian of the Mountain Valley League on the road, falling 3-1.

The Prairie City football team just missed the playoffs this year after losing a 51-48 slugfest to Alsea. It was a tough end to a strong season that saw the Panthers go 6-1 in the High Desert League. The team also racked up the league's Coach of the Year honors for Nick Thompson and Offensive Player of the Year for standout running back Cole Teel.

And while we're at it, we'd also like to express our gratitude to all the hard-working coaches and volunteers who put so much time and effort into helping these kids be the best they can be, not only in their chosen sports but in life as well. Thanks for all you do.

### Here to stay

On today's Opinion page, you'll find a letter to the editor from Gary Davidson, a Canyon City resident who wants to know

about the future of the Blue Mountain Eagle. He's concerned that the paper could lose its local editorial control and become a repository for regional news with little relevance to Grant County readers. We suspect other readers share Mr. Davidson's concerns, so we wanted to take the time to address them here.

The Blue Mountain Eagle is the oldest weekly newspaper in Oregon, tracing its roots all the way back to 1868. In 1979, the Eagle was purchased by the East Oregonian Publishing Co. Now known as the East Oregonian Media Group, the company publishes 15 newspapers and two magazines in Oregon and southwest Washington.

EO Media is not some far-away, publicly-traded corporation beholden to stockholders who care about nothing but profits and dividends. It's a fourth-generation family-owned company with deep roots in Oregon and a demonstrated commitment to local journalism. Here at the Eagle, we don't subscribe to any national wire services, but we are able to use stories produced by other EO media newspapers, including half a dozen right here in Eastern Oregon. We see that as a strength, not a limitation.

We're also able to collaborate with other papers in the group to produce regional stories about topics that have local impacts here in Grant County, leveraging what we're able to accomplish with our small staff. As regular readers will have noticed, we've been down to one reporter since June. We happen to think Steven Mitchell has done a terrific job, but he can't be everywhere at once, and we are actively recruiting to fill our vacant reporter position. Once our newsroom is back at full strength, you'll see even more local stories and photos in our pages.

So, Mr. Davidson, to answer your question: No, this newspaper is not going to be swallowed up by its parent company and stripped of its local identity. The Blue Mountain Eagle is here to stay, and we're going to keep on doing what we've been doing for the last 153 years: serving the people of Grant County, Oregon. We are grateful to all the subscribers who support our mission of delivering strong local journalism. If you'd like to become one of them, go to [www.bluemountaineagle.com/subscribe-now/](http://www.bluemountaineagle.com/subscribe-now/) to see our latest offers.



COMMENTARY

## Tax credit will support local news

Imagine this page was blank except for one question: "What if there were no local reporters?" That was the front-page question posed by our friends at Pamplin Media last week.

It's a good question and regardless of how you get local news — by watching TV, listening to local radio or reading a story in the newspaper or on a news organization's website — it's not hyperbole to say communities suffer when there is no local news coverage or when independently owned media companies are gobbled up by hedge funds that gut newsrooms.

And it's a timely question because there is a bipartisan provision in the federal budget reconciliation bill working its way through Congress that will give media companies a temporary payroll tax credit to hire and retain journalists. Oregon's Sen. Ron Wyden chairs the Senate Finance Committee that will have a great deal of say on whether this provision makes it through to the finish line.

Wyden is a co-sponsor of the bill written by Sen. Maria Cantwell, D-Wash. Being the son of a prominent journalist, he is a longtime champion of a free press. In a recent interview with the Seattle Times, Wyden responded to a question about the potential for some to dislike government helping the press.



Heidi Wright

He said, "This is not the government putting its hand on certain types of speech. This is about generally empowering local journalism in a big way. By the way,

there are plenty of local journalism outlets that span across the political spectrum, left, right, center, you name it."

On the House side, the bill was co-authored by Rep. Dan Newhouse, R-Wash., and Rep. Ann Kirkpatrick, D-Ariz., and is strongly supported by two key Oregon representatives — Peter DeFazio and Earl Blumenauer.

For anyone who follows the challenges of media companies and the reality of growing news deserts around the country, this temporary tax credit known as the Local Journalism Sustainability Act is a welcome relief that will directly aid news gathering organizations, including an estimated 113 newsrooms in Oregon. It's the only piece — some would say the most important piece — left of an original three-part proposal intended to stabilize and reform an industry upended by the deadly trio of Google, Facebook and the pandemic.

The tax credit sunsets in five years,

giving media companies a reasonable timeframe to build a sustainable business model that supports local journalism in the internet age. It also sends a message to young people that journalism is a career worth pursuing where there will be jobs available with those companies that make the successful transition.

Numerous studies show what happens in communities where there's no professionally trained journalists asking questions and accurately reporting on what is happening at a local level: government waste and potential for corruption by public officials increases, voter turnout drops and communities find it harder to solve their own problems. News deserts create democracy deserts, especially in rural communities.

If you are reading this and want to help, email our Oregon congressional delegation and let them know you support keeping the Local Journalism Sustainability Act temporary tax credit in the budget reconciliation package.

*Heidi Wright is the COO for EO Media Group and the publisher of The Bulletin and serves as treasurer for America's Newspapers, an industry group representing more than 1,600 newspapers across the country. Email her at [hwright@eomediagroup.com](mailto:hwright@eomediagroup.com).*

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

## Turkey carcass compatibility quiz

The holiday turkey carcass triggered the trouble.

The problem at a holiday isn't only what to cook and how to cook it, but what family and friends participate in after the meal. For instance, I might wear my Komfort Fit elastic waistband clothes only to find the host rounded up bicycles for everyone for an after-dinner bike marathon. Knowing this, I can pace myself at the dessert table.

I propose a Compatibility Quiz be taken before accepting an invitation as a holiday dinner guest or serving as a host/hostess. Circle your answers.

After a holiday meal, one expects to enjoy:

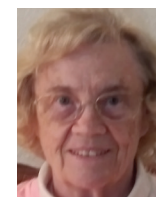
- Vivaldi, Chopin
- TV football game
- Marathon sports event — guests participate (bike, hike, climb, run, etc.)

If one hears what sounds like a Boeing 747 taking off cross-wind at the Portland Airport, it's:

- Uncle Henry, belly up, snoring on the couch
- Family dogs banned to a back bedroom
- The Left-Overs, a rock band that plays with a backdrop of a Sears Craftsman Deluxe automotive tool chest in the garage

If a roar of anguish erupts as though a biker gang invaded the neighborhood, the sound came from:

- TV viewers when the opposing team scored a touchdown
- A nap-deprived 2-year-old who can't find blankie and discovers on



Jean Ann Moultrie

his dinner plate a speck of gravy touching a green bean

When you see the word "organ," you think of:

- Bach fugue
- Turkey giblets in a white plastic bag

What's a giblet?  
 • Second baseman for the New York Mets  
 • Turkey parts including liver, heart, gizzard

A gizzard is part of the digestive tract of turkeys, crocodiles, alligators, earthworms and grasshoppers. (A grandchild and I looked it up on Wikipedia when we weren't sticking olives on our fingers or dissecting turkey heart chambers.)

What is done with the giblets?

- Cooked, chopped, and made into giblet gravy
- Cooked, chopped, and fed to the dog
- Unopened white bag tossed into the garbage

After dinner, family and friends:

- Watch football games on TV
- Nap
- Toss around a football in the yard
- Play board games
- Take a 2-mile hike

(Coming from a family of board game devotees, I found it imperative to know the host family belonged to the marathon hikers when offered a second helping of pie.)

While dinner clean-up is underway, you prefer to entertain a:

- Teething tot
- Tantrum-prone toddler
- Surly teen banned from electronics for the day
- Politically active Aunt Edna pushing a petition to ban land mines and green

bean bake  
 What grosses you out?  
 • A kid with olives on each finger passing the bowl of mashed potatoes

- Runny noses
- Uncle Rupert's dentures sitting on the TV remote

Leftover turkey should be:

- Eaten at midnight with a side of congealed dressing, the culinary equivalent of a bowling ball
- Chopped with feline nibbles and fed to the cat

End of the meal, what to do with the turkey carcass?

- Boil it into a rich broth to make soup (Aunt Edna comes from the school of turkey bone soup)
- Toss it into the garbage

During clean-up the hostess said, "Throw out the carcass."

The problem for Aunt Edna surfaced at airport security. She triggered alarms when a TSA agent caught her trying to smuggle in the turkey carcass taped to her chest.

*Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer, devotee of turkey bone soup, and one-time-a-year-marathon Monopoly player.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### What's the future of Blue Mountain Eagle?

To the editor:

No song and dance, or soft lights and background music, let's have the straight and honest truth!

Is it the Eagle's plan to soon dissolve and merge the local operation of the Eagle into a conglomerate of other scattered similar — but different — "local" news outlets, and the printed page be eliminated and replaced by "online area news only"?

In other words, is this "local" paper about to be swallowed up, digested, and regurgitated as what amounts to a general Eastern Oregon news publication — one that adds lots of subscriber out-of-area (and unwanted?) bits and pieces, but precious little actual local news coverage, other than miscellaneous volunteer senior correspondent columns and such?

Will we be enticed by the lure that our classified ads will now be read by a

larger — but scattered — readership as a replacement to the focused and real, local coverage and subscriber access we have had so far?

Yeah, we've seen it steadily happening all around the nation — and our state. Tell us the truth: Is it about to happen here in Grant County as well?

Gary Davidson  
 Canyon City

### Exercising freedom not to wear a mask

To the editor:

Regarding a letter to the editor in the Nov. 10 edition ("Have Consideration for Other People"): Some of us believe we live in a republic where we ourselves have the power to choose. Indeed, when England followed the "free-thinking" pilgrims to the New World in order to control/rule them, these people fought back. Freedom was very important to them. To some of us, it still is.

Obviously, that road does not run both ways with some folks. In other words, it's none of your business if I wear a mask or do not wear one. As you admit, you mask up and have gotten the vaccine plus booster. You are protected. Why do you insist that I do the same?

I am not selfish when I can put together the facts and see that we are faced with not so much of a virus issue as a people issue. Certain people refuse to conform to a mandate (not a law, mind you) that is unconstitutional and infringes on my right as an American citizen to choose my own medical freedom. I am not stupid, nor am I selfish. I am an American.

Please do continue to mask up if you choose. That is your right as a citizen of this country and I will fight for your right to do so. But I will not be badgered and belittled by close-minded people.

If we stand for nothing, we fall for anything.

Marsha Christensen  
 John Day

**Blue Mountain EAGLE**  
 Grant County's Weekly Newspaper  
 Email: [www.MyEagleNews.com](http://www.MyEagleNews.com)  
 Phone: 541-575-0710

USPS 226-340

John Day, Oregon

MEMBER OREGON NEWSPAPER PUBLISHERS ASSOCIATION

EDITOR Bennett Hall, [bhall@bmeagle.com](mailto:bhall@bmeagle.com)  
 REPORTER Steven Mitchell, [steven@bmeagle.com](mailto:steven@bmeagle.com)  
 SPORTS [sports@bmeagle.com](mailto:sports@bmeagle.com)  
 MULTIMEDIA Alex Wittwer, [awittwer@eomediagroup.com](mailto:awittwer@eomediagroup.com)  
 MARKETING REP Kim Kell, [ads@bmeagle.com](mailto:ads@bmeagle.com)  
 OFFICE ASSISTANT Alixandra Hand, [office@bmeagle.com](mailto:office@bmeagle.com)

PUBLISHED EVERY WEDNESDAY BY EO Media Group

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

Blue Mountain Eagle  
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.  
 John Day, OR 97845-1187

Copyright © 2021 Blue Mountain Eagle

SUBSCRIPTION RATES (including online access)  
 One year .....\$51  
 Monthly autopay .....\$4.25

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.

Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery POSTMASTER — send address changes to

[www.facebook.com/MyEagleNews](http://www.facebook.com/MyEagleNews)

[@MyEagleNews](https://twitter.com/MyEagleNews)