

OUR VIEW

# Listening to our readers makes us better

Some weeks back we asked our readers, as we do every year, to take a short survey. In addition to some basic demographic information (which we will keep confidential), readers were asked how they get their news, what kind of information they're looking for from the Blue Mountain Eagle, what we're doing well and where we could improve.

Some 88 of you responded, and we want to thank you for taking the time to do so. This information is invaluable to us, and we particularly appreciate your honest and thoughtful responses to our open-ended questions about how we can do a better job. While answers like "Keep on doing what you're doing" make us feel good (and we got a hearteningly large number of those), there is always room for improvement, and you gave us a number of good suggestions.

Although we received a wide variety of comments about things we could do better, several broad themes emerged. Based on your feedback, we've identified five clear goals for improving our coverage:

- **Community coverage:** There's much more to Grant County than what happens in John Day, but that's where we focus an inordinate amount of our attention. We need to do a better job of covering what goes on in Canyon City, Prairie City, Mt. Vernon, Long Creek, Dayville, Monument, Seneca, Kimberly, Granite and all the other places where Grant County residents live, work and play. This is our No. 1 goal for improvement, and we've already started to take steps to that end, including carving out space on our website for grouping stories by community. As we begin to roll out more stories about some of Grant County's smaller communities, we'll also try to do a better job of labeling them in the paper.

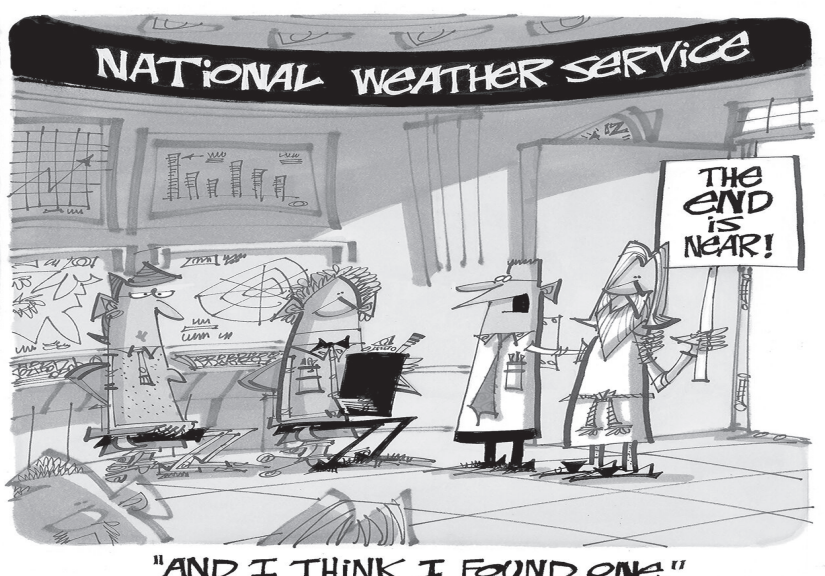
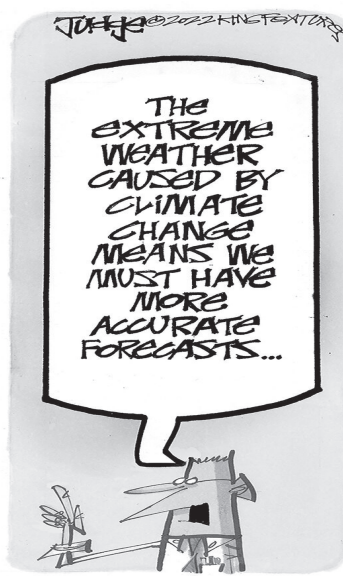
- **Human interest stories:** There's a lot of hard news happening in Grant County, but sometimes we focus on those stories to the exclusion of the softer side of life. Many of you called on us to do more "good news" stories about local residents, especially the kind of everyday people who don't ordinarily show up in the newspaper. Look for more of those stories in our pages as well — and if you've got a suggestion for someone who would make a good profile, please send it our way.

- **Schools coverage:** Even before the survey, we were already starting to do more news, feature and "issue" stories about our local schools, but this is an area where we will continue trying to improve. We also hope doing these stories will open doors to others in smaller communities such as Seneca, Dayville and Monument.

- **Business coverage:** Our goal here is twofold: Not only do we want to do more stories on new businesses around Grant County, but we also want to find ways to incorporate established local businesses into our coverage. As one survey respondent put it, local businesses "keep our lights on here in Grant County."

- **Events coverage:** There's a lot going on here in Grant County, and many of you told us you want to be able to read about those events in the Blue Mountain Eagle. We do our best to get that information out there, but we can certainly do better. Please, if you have an event you want people to know about, send us the information so we can publicize it in the paper. You can email the details to [editor@bmeagle.com](mailto:editor@bmeagle.com), and please remember to get it to us by Friday (or sooner) for publication the following Wednesday.

Thanks again for all your suggestions. We'll do our best to put them into practice.



"AND I THINK I FOUND ONE."

OFF THE BEATEN PATH

## Tent camping survival tips

**M**y goal one summer as a kid: Achieve survival while tent camping.

My inaugural overnight campout would test my mettle in dealing with the potential screams of hungry carnivorous wildlife sniffing out a meal at night, the darkness so dense the light of a waning moon wouldn't penetrate the tree cover. I anticipated little sleep as I would need to listen for the creak of a tree limb, the whisper of dried leaves as bloodthirsty critters crept closer.

Setting up my tent campsite in the daytime simplified the procedure. Back then, as a kid, this would be my first time sleeping alone outside in the dark. My campsite — the family's fenced backyard. In daylight, the surroundings seemed friendly. By dark, I knew I'd sleep with clothes and shoes on in case shadows against the tent indicated a deranged passer-by or ... too scary to contemplate.

I'd reached that time in life when living in the wilderness, subsisting on berries and roots, seemed the solution to ordinary living and unreasonable demands: "Clean your room, weed the tomatoes and corn."

I studied my dog-eared copy of wilderness survival tips. I worked on lashing tree branches to build a chair that ended up looking like mounds of kindling swathed in enough rope to tie a ship to a dock.

First order of business on my



Jean Ann Moultrie

wilderness camping launch day — construct a tent. Easy enough. Clear out a camp spot below supporting wires (mow the lawn under the clothesline).

Next, gather old blankets. I hauled outside a stack of threadbare chenille bedspreads, some worn Army blankets with moth holes, and a bag of clothespins. I draped the blankets over the clothesline so they touched the ground and secured the structure with about 200 clothespins.

By anchoring the bottom of the blankets on the lawn with whatever old cement blocks, rocks, etc., I could scrounge up, I achieved an architectural marvel. The structure resembled an airborne blimp that crash-landed.

Slide a camp cot inside and pile on blankets. With attention to construction details, the west and east sides of the tent remained impenetrable. Note the open north and south ends — providing fresh wilderness air.

Darkness spread over the fenced backyard — er, wilderness campsite. I headed out to my tent as my parents and younger brothers watched from the porch, the bug-resistant porch light casting a pale, yellow glow around the door.

"We'll leave the door unlocked in case you need to come in," Mom said.

Before I dozed off, a stiff breeze blew in from the north. Fearing frostbite to my ears, I pulled my pillow over my head. The wind increased as the north-to-south opening funneled the cold and bitter wind over my shivering body. I wanted to return to my warm, wind-free room. Pride glued me to my camp cot. I couldn't give up my wilderness quest.

The back door clicked open. "Pretty windy out there," Dad said.

"Why don't you come in," Mom said.

My brothers stood on the porch staring out into the gloom.

A delicate situation arose. I wanted to maintain my tough, wilderness-loving, adventurous persona, not let my brothers see me give up.

I knew if I remained adamant about staying outside, the folks would let me stay in my tent.

The tricky part — make it look as if I wanted to stay outside, and grumble so it looked to my younger brothers as though the folks made me come in. I grabbed an armful of blankets from the cot and raced to the porch.

Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. Should anyone want to replicate her first tent, it's the model named "Wind Tunnel."

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Look at downsizing cost of pool bond

To the Editor:

Though I applaud the ladies for their passion and dogged determination in forming a PAC to seek a levy for constructing a new pool facility, I can't help but wonder if they are actually listening to the citizens of Grant County.

The current White House administration has put all of us in a precarious situation with inflation, increased gas prices, food shortages and a looming recession. Most think that the passage of this levy affects only property owners, when actually renters need to consider that increased taxes to the property owner will most likely be passed on to them and reflected in their monthly rent. I am concerned about John Day's low/fixed-income residents and the potential hardship this would cause.

The election results for the levy to fund the new pool facility reflected a 50/50 tie. A PAC advocate stated, "I felt like we had the momentum to go forward and we knew there were other yes votes out there that didn't get to be counted." Couldn't the same thing be said for the no votes?

I think it's time to step back and see if perhaps the project could be scaled down in order to make it more affordable for our community. Personally, I look forward to having a public pool and believe it is essential to our community, but it just can not be at any cost.

Suzy Burton  
John Day

### An inside look at fentanyl problem

To the Editor:

This week, as I count down the last few days of my 30-day sentence here in Cell Block 400 in Canyon City, I can't help but notice that fentanyl is at the forefront of nearly every news story.

I've been hearing about fentanyl

for years now as heroin manufacturers are known to cut their expensive product with this inexpensive synthetic toxin which, as I understand it, does basically the same thing (ruin your complexion, make you wanna sleep, and make you super-addicted). I paid little notice to this fact as it had no bearing on me or those of my ilk (or so I thought).

For a couple of years I've heard ridiculous rumors that fentanyl was being put in crystal methamphetamines. Well, I took no heed of these reports as the mere thought of mixing this evil toxin with my amphetamines was simply preposterous. Even sitting here, knowing what I know, it still makes no sense — or cent\$, if you will.

What I know is this: The wrecking of my motorbike that led to this incarceration required me to be flown out to Boise (twice), where the wonderful folks at St. Al's saved my life (twice)!

A tox screen was done at St. Al's, and fentanyl was the thing that jumped out at me. Anyone who knows me knows that I'd not take an opioid, nor any fentanyl, even at gunpoint. I didn't even take the pain meds prescribed to me by St. Al's. (I'm more of a bourbon and gummy guy.)

So, in summation, I guess my point would be this: Tweakers, take heed. Notice how your "amphetamines" ain't got that "punch" anymore? It's because you're being sold a bunch of crap that is not what it is advertised to be. Imagine — dishonesty in the drug trade.

I will close with this: Support your local gummy dispensary, and always — and I do mean always — wear your gosh-darned helmet!

Tony Steele  
Canyon City

### You must decide who to believe

To the Editor:

Hi, everyone, hope your summer is going well. First, I would like to reassure you that myself and the coun-

cil have the best interests of the city in our minds and in our hearts in all our decisions that we have made.

Over the last couple of years, you have heard and seen a lot of misinformation on display in front yards, letters to the editor, and at some meetings. Although we have tried to address this at our council meetings, in our newsletters, the newspaper, and on the radio, we still have a lot of negative opinions in people's minds about some of our decisions. Some of that negativity involves personalities, some a lack of knowledge about the issues and some we did a poor job of getting you the reasoning behind the decisions and the status of them.

Most of the people that made all the decisions grew up here, went to school here, raised our families here (some have stayed or are returning), have businesses here and eventually retired here. To think that we are putting our city's future in jeopardy by making irresponsible decisions doesn't make any sense at all. Also, people who think we were coerced or influenced in any way, by anybody, to all vote the same way on most issues doesn't know me or any of the council, past or present.

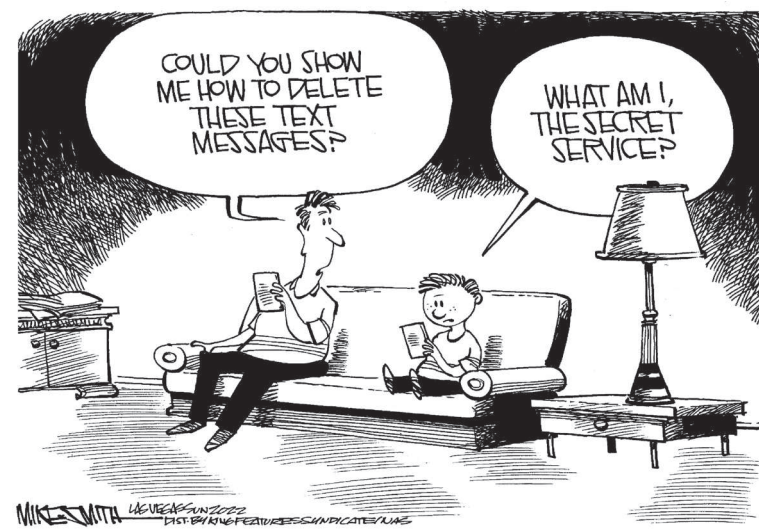
Finally, all of us on the council encourage participation and welcome your questions and concerns. If you don't feel comfortable in front of a crowd, seek us out individually.

Question people's motives about what they are saying and have them explain their concerns. Just saying it doesn't make it true.

Be patient — you are starting to see what we have been talking about and planning for the last five years. I hope that what all our planning and teamwork will have accomplished will be enough to change some of those negative thoughts into positive ones.

To all of you who support our vision for our community, we say thank you! Your continued support means everything!

Mayor Ron Lundbom  
John Day



## WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humboldt 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](mailto:tocc1862@centurylink.net).
  - **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: [dville@ortelco.net](mailto:dville@ortelco.net).
  - **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: [cityjd@centurytel.net](mailto:cityjd@centurytel.net).
  - **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: [info@cityoflongcreek.com](mailto:info@cityoflongcreek.com).
  - **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: [cityofmonument@centurytel.net](mailto:cityofmonument@centurytel.net).
  - **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: [cmtv@ortelco.net](mailto:cmtv@ortelco.net).
  - **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: [pchall@ortelco.net](mailto:pchall@ortelco.net).
  - **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: [senecaoregon@gmail.com](mailto:senecaoregon@gmail.com).
- SALEM**
- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: [governor.state.or.us/governor.html](http://governor.state.or.us/governor.html).
  - **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: [leg.state.or.us](http://leg.state.or.us) (includes Oregon Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

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