

OTHER VIEWS

We must secure our water future

Oregon agriculture continues to persevere amidst historic drought conditions, worldwide supply chain issues, burdensome and unnecessary regulation and global food insecurity at a level not seen in recent memory.

As an industry we can do a lot, but it's time to recognize that things must change. As droughts increase in severity and intensity, we must position ourselves to be resilient and adaptable when it comes to changing conditions.

Our members are consistently looking for innovative new ways to get the work done in an efficient and sustainable manner while continuing their significant role in feeding and clothing the world and making substantial contributions to the statewide, national and global economy.

If we are going to continue to be part of the solution, it is essential that we are able to access our most basic need: water.

Recently, our organizations partnered together to form the Oregon Agricultural Water Alliance, which will focus on strategic water investments and common-sense policies to promote sound water management and agricultural sustainability throughout our beautiful state. The need for this work has never been greater.

Collectively, our organizations represent a broad spectrum of individuals and entities that serve nearly 600,000 irrigated acres and represent over 14,000 producers of food and other agricultural products in Oregon.

The future of irrigated agriculture and the survival of family-owned and -operated farms and ranches in Oregon is at risk like never before. As organizations with diverse memberships throughout the state, we can no longer afford to work separately if we hope to bring much-needed change to the state's water management. We recognize that together we are stronger, and this is how we will operate as we look ahead to a critical legislative session and key election cycle in the months to come.

Our state cannot risk continuing down the path of disinvestment in water storage. State and federal agencies must be accountable for effective and efficient water management. Oregon needs outcome-focused partnerships, not regulatory roadblocks that penalize creative problem-solving. As opportunities arise, we need to be prepared to leverage federal funding for state and local infrastructure projects.

Moreover, the state must facilitate opportunities as part of its own water resources strategy. Unfortunately, we are already behind on this front.

As an alliance, we will work to shift state water policy to prioritize maintaining an adequate, safe, and affordable food supply, creating more water storage both above and below ground, creating drought-resilient programs and projects, increasing interstate cooperation in water supply and management, demanding more agency accountability, and reducing costly and unnecessary state agency litigation.

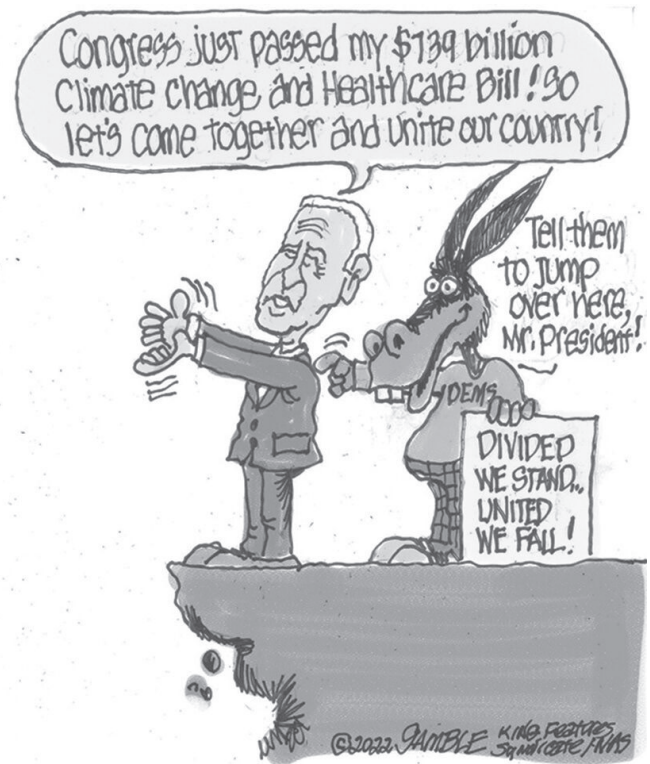
Together, we plan to create positive change by developing viable pathways for water projects implementation, advocating for needed changes to agency processes and administration, conducting tours for legislators and agency staff to highlight opportunities to improve or create water projects, and proactively supporting innovation.

We believe it is critical that the public be informed about the importance of irrigated agriculture for the state's future health and prosperity. A recent poll asked Oregonians about the importance of the agriculture and livestock sectors to Oregon's economy; a whopping 70% of Oregonians, across a wide range of ages, political parties, and geographic areas, responded that the industries are "extremely important."

Without the proper investment in water storage, and a shift in water policy and management, it will be a matter of time before we lose significant portions of our distinctive and diverse agriculture industry — a critical piece of what makes our state the exceptional and unique place that it is.

To learn more about the alliance, please visit: www.oawa.info.

Signatories to this column are: Todd Nash, president of Oregon Cattlemen's Association; Mike Miranda, president of Oregon Dairy Farmers Association; Angi Bailey, president of Oregon Farm Bureau; Josh Robinson, president of Oregon Association of Nurseries; Jake Madison, president of Northeast Oregon Water Association; Rex Barber, president of Water for Life Inc.; and Brian Hampson, president of Oregon Water Resources Congress.



OFF THE BEATEN PATH

Flour mill fire sparks memories

Flames filled the structure in the photo a friend sent. News of the fire at the Pendleton flour mill followed.

My response: shock and sadness to see this over 100-year-old landmark structure in flames. A thankful note — no injuries reported.

I recall my visit to the flour mill years ago. At that time, the mill accommodated retail customers. I was deep into my interest about wheat, grains in general, and bread baking. At the mill office, I met a staff person I considered the ultimate expert on wheat flour. The list of available flours included several different blends just for making bagels.

I learned about hard red winter wheat (good for breads), white spring wheat (grown in the Northwest) and durum wheat (grown in Montana and popular for making noodles and pasta).

Pallets held sacks with a variety of flours. After getting a shrink-wrapped covering, the bundles of flour were loaded into railroad cars — the train tracks visible in photos of the flaming mill.

At the mill, I chose flour blends to purchase. The trunk of my car sagged when I left. Later I heard that the mill stopped selling retail. Perhaps it was a time issue — customers mulling over sacks of grain like shoppers debating additions to their summer



Jean Ann Moultrie

wardrobes.

My earlier interest in wheat and bread-baking developed when our children still lived at home. My goal: fix tasty, nutritious meals, and bake wholesome bread

for the family, the aroma of loaves fresh from the oven pulling the family together at the kitchen table.

My first attempts at bread baking — the bread possessed the texture and taste of hockey pucks. Skilled bakers offered me baking tips. I didn't get the hang of baking bread until a friend shared an instruction sheet put out by a yeast company of how to bake bread complete with ink-drawn illustrations and time-worn enough that the stove pictured was a wood-burning model.

I needed more practice. I wasn't working outside the home. New goal: bake all the bread and grain products for our family of seven children for a year. That included many types of breads, muffins, cakes, calzones, noodles, etc. My bread never advanced to county fair, blue ribbon status. I shifted to attainable goals — no one eating our meals or my bread developed scurvy, rickets, etc.

Through the years, I paid more

attention to flour products on trips on my VLB (very low budget) travel plan. In Finland, a family farmhouse still stands. A Swedish-speaking great-grandmother baked her rye bread in a wood-burning brick oven. The flat loaves, with a center hole about the size of a donut, were strung on wooden poles that nestled in ceiling-high wooden slots.

In a rural village in Italy, a mother and adult daughter served up the finest pizza from a wood-fired brick oven. A Hungarian homemaker gave me a lesson on spaetzle, the noodle dough shaved through what looked like an over-sized carrot grater.

This week, with the flour mill fire on my mind, I pulled out ingredients to concoct an original bread to honor the Pendleton flour mill.

Disclaimer: Should there be an unintentional error in the above, the author notes that the "original recipe dough" she vigorously kneaded turned out to be the size of an over-inflated basketball. By the time the author finished kneading, she may have developed low oxygen levels impacting cognition.

Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. Readers need not fear the author's original bread recipe turned loose on the public. The author didn't write the recipe down. She looks forward to a successful rebuild of the flour mill.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Courage in the face of opposition

To the Editor:

Charlene Morris, an active member of the Grant County Conservatives PAC that campaigned in opposition to the pool ballot measure this spring, has filed a recall petition against Lisa Weigum, a longstanding Parks and Recreation District board member.

The basis for this petition is Mrs. Morris's claim that Ms. Weigum violated public meeting laws and public records laws.

Here's the nice thing about living in the United States in the 21st century, as opposed to 18th century France. We don't have public executions by guillotine just because Madame DeFarge has knitted your name on her political kill list (and has an insatiable appetite for revenge).

Lucky for us, Mrs. Morris has not been appointed judge, jury, and executioner in this matter. The only body determining whether a violation of public meetings law occurred is the nine-member Oregon Government Ethics Commission appointed specifically for that purpose — and they have made no such ruling.

We are better than this.

I've had a few policy disagreements with Ms. Weigum myself. Some of them included a bit of voice inflection and some salty language that would make a sailor stand up and take notice.

But here's the thing about Lisa. She has integrity. She's an unpaid volunteer who contributes her time (hundreds of hours a year) to serve on numerous boards and committees. And she has been unfairly treated and targeted for having the courage to stand behind her convictions.

Grant County does need a pool. And law enforcement. And a whole lot of other things. What we don't need ... is more of this.

Targeting public officials by weaponizing public records requests, filing recall petitions, and obstructing them in the conduct of public meetings may be in vogue in certain circles, but in reality, it accomplishes nothing. This recall petition says more about the person who filed it than the person it was filed against.

Send a message to the Grant County Conservatives PAC to class it up a bit. Don't sign this unwarranted petition.

Nick Green
John Day

Facts and figures about pool bond

To the Editor:

The city of John Day and the John Day/Canyon City Parks and Recreation District was approached by the Yes to JDCC Swim Center political action committee to place the \$4 million pool bond back on the November general election.

Some facts are appropriate to clarify the issue: An undated "Draft 7th Street Aquatics Center – Capital Construction Budget" by the city identifies income of SB 5534 \$2,000,000, city of JD \$200,000 Gleason Pool sale proceeds, city of JD \$350,000 cash from interim financing (i.e. line of credit), city of JD \$450,000 in-kind site improvements (streets, utilities, broadband), Parks & Rec District \$3,000,000 general obligation bond net proceeds subtotal income \$6,000,000. Expenses: \$20,000 grant admin. & construction mgmt.

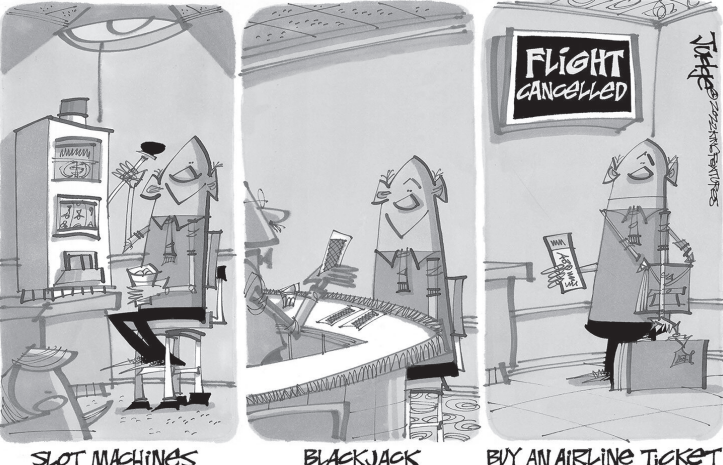
fee (John Day), \$25,000 conditional use permit & preliminary design, \$20,000 SDAO Consulting Services, \$550,000 architectural design and engineering, \$25,000 community survey, \$150,000 SDC connection fees, \$50,000 city of John Day interim credit facility costs, \$140,000 parking lot land acquisition/building demolition & site prep (city) in-kind \$450,000, \$4,570,000 aquatics center capital construction. Yes, this is a draft! However, the SB 5534/HD 5006 grant will not be available until 2023 and money has already been spent (i.e. community survey, conditional use permit, architectural design and engineering).

Other concerns: The meeting prompting the city's July 26 letter to JDCC Parks and Recreation District voicing support for a second pool measure was hosted by the city and as such limited the public comment to one minute. It is questionable if the appropriate notification was given to the tax-paying residents of Canyon City and rural areas of the district were provided an agenda and comment limitations. One participant identified discrepancies for ORS 192.620 public meeting notification.

The OPM (Other People's Money), i.e. Yes to JDCC Swim Center group did not voice a concern when the city voted to demolish Gleason Pool because that made repair a moot issue. The community survey that resulted in a 16.8% participation had 58% in favor of the levy and 57% of the eligible voters in the district (1,604 of 2,785) cast votes. This tends to indicate 1,181 voters either did not cast ballots for or against the measure or just did not choose to vote on this specific issue.

John Morris
John Day

THREE WAYS TO GAMBLE...



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