

OUR VIEW

Some changes are coming, in print and online

Here at the Blue Mountain Eagle, we take pride in bringing you a wide variety of content. Most of the stories and photos you see in our pages are produced by our newsroom staff, which consists of two reporters and one editor. In addition, we have half a dozen or so local columnists who produce “Grant County Seniors,” “Shooting the Breeze,” “Off the Beaten Path” and “Farmer’s Fate.” And of course we also draw on some of our sister EO Media Group newspapers, such as the East Oregonian out of Pendleton and the La Grande Observer, for stories and commentary on issues that affect our region.

For many years we have broadened our offerings still further with a pair of national publications that are inserted in the paper on a monthly basis: Relish, a food-focused periodical packed with recipes and cooking tips, and Spry Living, a compendium of health, wellness and lifestyle advice mixed with inspirational stories. Sadly, both publications are going away. The Arena Group, which publishes both titles, recently informed us that they will no longer be produced after this month. We know that many of our readers are fond of Relish and Spry, and we’re sorry that we will no longer be able to provide these periodicals as part of your Blue Mountain Eagle subscription.

There is a silver lining to this dark cloud, however: The Arena Group’s announcement also carried the news that it was transitioning Parade, the well-known national lifestyle and entertainment magazine, from print to digital-only distribution. And while the Eagle does not carry the print version of Parade, we will be able to provide our readers with the digital version as the transition moves forward. According to information from The Arena Group, Eagle subscribers should start seeing Parade in our online e-Edition starting Nov. 23.

We know many of you will miss Relish and Spry Living, but we hope the digital version of Parade will help make up for the loss. And of course we’ll continue to deliver all your local news, sports and feature stories in print and online, as well as our weekly GO! Eastern Oregon supplement and a rotating assortment of special sections such as last week’s Grant County History section, the Grant County Hunting Journal, the Kick-off prep football preview and Explore Grant County, our annual glossy visitors guide.

A word about letters

Letters to the editor make a lively addition to our Opinion page, and we love seeing the variety of views expressed by our readers. But sometimes a reminder about publication guidelines is in order.

We recently received a letter that ran considerably beyond our 350-word length limit. Fortunately, we were able to contact the author, who graciously agreed to send us a shorter version. Another recent submission was dropped off at the office with no signature, return address or contact information of any sort. Like the vast majority of newspapers, we do not print anonymous letters. We also ask that letter writers include their phone number and mailing address — not for publication, but for verification purposes.

Other rules of the road: No personal attacks — challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters, please. No petitions. No more than two letters per person per month. And deadline is 5 p.m. Friday (although sooner is always better). The full policy appears on the Opinion page when space permits and can also be found on our website.

So please keep those letters coming, and please keep these guidelines in mind.



COMMENTARY

M114 would leave you defenseless

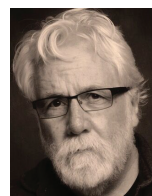
No matter where you stand on guns, the simple fact is someday, somewhere, you may have to protect yourself. And you cannot rely on the police. Under Ballot Measure 114, you could literally wait forever for permission to purchase a home defense firearm.

The measure requires a “class” with live fire training before a person can apply for a permit to purchase a firearm. There are virtually no facilities that will be available for this training. For first time gun buyers, this could well require that you have a gun before you can get a permit to buy a gun.

The measure only allows those approved by police to provide the required “training” to apply for a permit. Police in Oregon are underfunded and understaffed. There is no plan in place to actually provide any training and virtually no police have the facilities to provide classes. Police in urban areas are already not responding to most crimes. Police in rural areas rarely have the facilities for the required class.

The “permitting agent” can demand “any additional information” to issue the permit, opening up endless opportunities for abuses.

The Oregon State Sheriffs’ Association has estimated that if a person somehow could complete the required training, the permitting process would cost



Kevin Starrett

sheriffs almost \$40 million annually. There is nothing in the measure that provides funding, and the fees included would not come close to covering the costs. The estimate of costs to local police is \$51.2 million the first year and \$47.5 million in subsequent years.

While the measure caps the cost for a permit, there are no caps on the costs for the required training, which is unlikely to be available. The measure requires that a sheriff or local police department issue a permit within 30 days after a background check has been completed by the Oregon State Police. But there is no limit on how long the state police can take to complete the background check and no penalties if they do not complete it. There are no estimates of the cost of these checks to the state police. The “permit” does not even authorize you to purchase a firearm. It only allows you to ask for permission a second time when you actually try to make the purchase. And once again, the state police can literally take forever.

The measure requires a public list of persons who attempt to purchase fire-

arms. Victims of domestic violence will be at risk for all their private information being made public along with their efforts to purchase a firearm for self-defense.

The measure creates a whole new category of victimless crimes at a time when the police are grossly underfunded and real criminals are being released onto our streets.

M114 removes the one safeguard that protects gun buyers if the state police do not complete their background check.

State and federal law allow the transfer of a firearm if the state police don’t complete a background check in three business days. This measure removes that safeguard. So a single mom with threats against her and her children could literally wait forever to get permission to get a home defense firearm.

The ballot measure flatly outlaws almost all home defense shotguns, but it also outlaws the most common shotguns used for trap and skeet events. Many of the people competing in these safe and sanctioned events are young people who were introduced to safe gun handling through these competitions. Please see stop114.com for more information.

Kevin Starrett is the director of the Stop 114 Committee and the executive director of the Oregon Firearms Federation. Starrett lives in Canby.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

motel, eating at the restaurants, shopping at the stores.

Our kids enjoy their time with their summer swim team friends from different towns. There are also families that stay longer and have a family vacation in the area, camping and rafting. We have missed coming the past three summers and hope to come back soon.

Annette Shullanberger
Lakeview

Editor’s note: The author is president of the Lakeview Swim Team board of directors.

Keep Grant County a great place for kids

To the Editor:
Citizens of Grant County, let’s invest in our children and in our community; this new pool project is something that we can do locally to benefit ourselves. The ability to swim is a critical life skill and we would be setting our children up at a disadvantage by denying them this opportunity. Vote yes for the pool because Grant County is a great place to raise children and we all want it to stay this way.

Erik Romstad
John Day

Grant County kids deserve a pool

To the Editor:
We will be voting yes on the pool bond measure. Here are our thoughts concerning a very important measure for our county.

Owning a small business in Harney County for 40-plus years, we were strong supporters of our youth and community both financially and with our time. Involving ourselves through 4-H, school board, CASA, school activities, swim team, mentoring young minds through clinic youth employment and job shadowing has given us a clear view that our youth deserve safe and structured activities along with infrastructures they can attend to learn, socialize, laugh, play and grow on their way to productive adulthood.

Adequate infrastructures in our rural towns are essential to grow communities that offer a wide variety of modern updated facilities that look to the future for growth and prosperity.

Growing up 30 miles from town on the 96 Ranch in Bear Valley, my parents saw that I (Susan) had a year of swim lessons. I can swim but not very well and I am uncomfortable around water of water. While boating with friends, rafting the Rogue River or river fishing, I wished my swimming skills were fine-tuned, not only for safety but also for enjoyment. My husband, Leon, grew up in a small southern Idaho town swimming at the local public pool and is a strong swimmer and loves the water.

Retiring to Grant County and becoming senior citizens, we are honored to support Grant County youth and sup-

port growth and prosperity within our communities.

If you do not know the precise cost of your share of the tax bond, go to <https://www.swimcenter.vote>. A helpful tool is provided to calculate your obligation. If this is a financial burden, your “no” vote is respected.

This summer, midafternoon, driving past the pool in Harney County, our hearts soared with the sight of children playing and shrieking with laughter and giggles. Please consider a yes vote so we can hear the same shrieks and laughter from our Grant County children.

Leon Pielstick, DVM
Susan Lemcke Pielstick
John Day

It’s time to stop ignoring the obvious

To the Editor:
First we lost the police. Not that it was necessary. Mr. Green had COVID funds (\$180,000) that could’ve been spent on the police to cover the \$150,000 “shortfall.” At the time, no one knew he’d received those funds. Wonder why he didn’t tell anyone?

Next, a vote to increase taxes to bridge the \$150,000 police funding shortfall occurred; thus, a special election — keep in mind, the COVID funds would’ve easily kept the JD police going until the regular voting cycle was scheduled. Increasing taxes, even though not necessary, might’ve even passed if the special election was held during the normal voting cycle. Sadly, the funds existed and the vote was unnecessary, but the JD police were dissolved expeditiously.

Then Mr. Green received the \$375,000 police funding grant. Yet his rush to dissolve the JDPD eliminated any option of those funds being applied.

Was it by chance, maybe “coincidence,” the police went away (as one JDCC member exclaimed about the pool being demolished as just “coincidence” before the vote on the levy)? Does it strike you as, maybe, “engineered” and not “coincidence”?

Wildly, there will now be a third(!) vote on the pool, yet nothing on the police. Ask yourself, “Who is doing this engineering of the electorate’s vote?” What are their priorities? The electorate’s, or their bonus?

Now we have JDCC members who have exclusive benefits of advertising on the Discover John Day web page; not one other local business is listed on that website. Ask yourself, Why? And one who was awarded, as well, the single choice lot for their new facility on the John Day River without it ever having been competitively bid on. It was an unheard deal, or what? Sadly, these people (and one’s paid quite handsomely), attack those who have a different opinion. Clearly, they don’t work for us, they work for themselves. It’s high time to take back our city of John Day.

Dwaine H. Winchester
John Day

Time is right to invest in new pool

To the Editor:
I don’t know how many thousands of hours I spent at Gleason Pool through early swim lessons, swim team, open swim, and more swim team. And then working as a lifeguard, Red Cross swim instructor, and swim coach. That time at Gleason Pool shaped me, challenged me and charted my future in unexpected ways. All that happened because decades ago a community said yes to a pool.

Beyond my story, I’ve witnessed what a pool has meant to the community. I saw kids learning to swim and acquiring vital water safety skills, infants snuggling close to a parent in their first moments in a pool, adults having a place for healthy exercise and physical therapy during the dog days of summer, or just breaking through decades-old barriers and learning to swim for this first time. And, of course, there was countless kids having great, safe summer fun even on the hottest of days.

I remember coaching kids of all ages and seeing their joy and sense of accomplishment when they were able to swim faster than they might have ever imagined. I remember hundreds of kids and their families flocking to John Day for the annual John Day Invitational swim meet. And of course, that meant all the downtown festivities and the church pie social!

All this was possible because many decades ago a community came together and decided people of all ages deserved a swimming pool. Gleason Pool served the community well, but now it’s time for a new pool. It’s time for voters to make another investment for the kids, and for the future. The Seventh Street Complex is a special place with so many healthy opportunities for so many. It has been a long-term labor of love by the community. A new pool would be a remarkable addition and such a meaningful statement for the kids and the future. I encourage you all to vote yes on Measure 12-85.

Shane Spell
Seaside

Editor’s note: The author is a former Grant County resident who is now the coach of the varsity swim team at Seaside High School.

Missing swim meets at John Day pool

To the Editor:
On behalf of the Lakeview Swim Team, we would like to express our support for a swim pool in John Day. Our community has fully supported our swim pool and shown how important it is for our children’s, as well as adults’, health and well-being; it is utilized by people of all ages.

Our swim team has brought at least 30-plus swimmers and their families to John Day each summer for a three-day swim meet. Some years it’s twice in the summer. Our families really enjoy coming to John Day, staying at the park or a



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