

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

They did it then, we can do it now

To the Editor:
John Day residents came together to fund construction of Gleason Pool more than 64 years ago — doing so under extraordinary circumstances: The city's population was small (approximately 1,573) and the U.S. was in a recession (a.k.a. the Eisenhower Recession), the most significant recession during the post-WWII era, triggered largely by the Asian flu epidemic that killed about 80,000 Americans and resulted in severely diminished labor supply and decelerated production. Inflation-curb-ing measures in effect weakened demand for commodities and raw materials, causing a sharp dive in U.S. exports thereby widening the country's trade deficit and intensifying the recession. Further, unemployment was substantial, especially in commodity industries such as mining and timber.

Given the extraordinary economic conditions to which no one was impervious, were these people selfish? Motivated by feelings rather than thoughtful analysis? Indifferent to the challenges facing friends and neighbors? Blinded by want versus need? Irresponsible spenders?

I don't believe so; neither do I give credence to parallel words spouted today by some attempting to diminish fellow citizens holding different views.

Despite undeniably uncertain times, community forebears rallied to support the promise of their community and its people by investing in a new facility that promoted safety, healthy recreation, economic benefit, and community cohesion. Evidenced by countless testimonials reflecting positive ways residents were impacted by their Gleason Pool experiences, one can reasonably discern that the foresight and conviction demonstrated by previous residents have paid off handsomely for more than six decades.

History offers valuable lessons, not the least of which being to spotlight clarity on current events. In solidarity with the stalwart citizens of the past, today's voters have opportunity to carry on the torch lit long ago by voting in favor of an updated version of Gleason Pool:

- Six swim lanes.
- Legally required adaptations rendering the facility accessible to patrons of all physical abilities.
- Changing rooms to accommodate reasonable modesty needs.
- Administrative space.
- A rentable multipurpose room.
- Design adaptation that would cost-effectively permit future enclosure should local conditions favor building an indoor swimming facility.

Please join me in voting "yes" on the swim bond.

Liz Aleman
John Day

Enclosed pool would be better

To the Editor:
As much as I would like for everyone to have a pool, I do not support the city's current uncovered design. I believe the community would be better served by an enclosed pool offering year-round access.

The old pool was only operational for about 12 weeks out of 52 and averaging somewhere around 60 people a day. Imagine 40 more weeks of 60 people +/- using the pool for a variety of things ... exercise classes, lap swims, swim meets, pool parties, swimming lessons, open swims, fundraisers, etc.

Let's not forget about the revenue that being open those "extra" 40 weeks would generate, not just the pool itself, the meeting rooms could be booked for holiday parties, receptions, meetings, bazaars among other things.

And, as anyone who's owned a hot tub will tell you, there are problems that come up almost every time they're started up after sitting several months, so they keep them full and running all the time.

I've looked at the numbers and I don't understand how \$6 million wouldn't be enough to build an enclosed pool. The tax bond is a percentage of value, so the real cost will climb as the value climbs.

In my opinion, an enclosed pool facility makes the most sense. Not only will it cost more to enclose it at



a later date because it would require planning dollars, permitting dollars, inspection dollars, redesigning dollars, labor dollars, materials dollars and who knows what else. Not to mention the downtime during construction resulting in a loss of revenue.

Al Stein
John Day

We really do need a pool

To the Editor:
We need a public swimming pool because we have Magone Lake. Last summer my parents would take me and my sister up to Magone Lake to play. It gets really hot in the summer. My sister, still a learning swimmer, would stay near the shore catching crawdads while wearing her life jacket. I would swim without my life jacket unless I decided to swim out to the log, then I would put it on. But for a lot of our friends who are not swimmers their way of staying safe was to not even go to Magone. Their parents would just tell them, "It's not worth the drive to Magone if you can't swim." But, if you are prepared and practiced, swimming in that lake is a lot of fun!

We get practice from swimming teachers at public swimming pools, but now we don't have one. I can't imagine what it would be like to need to save a drowning swimmer like I read about in last week's paper. It is not fair to say that a pool is a want and not a need. Parents "need" to prepare their kids for life and part of that is learning to stay safe in water. I hope that everybody who swims knows they are ready.

American Red Cross says starting swim lessons as early as possible will save lives, and that it is never too late for someone to learn to swim. Please vote for a pool to return to John Day. Thanks.

Artemis McKnab, 10
Canyon City

Pool costs higher than advertised

To the editor:
In these late days of the pool bond we are seeing, in print, the actual costs of the draft operating budget. The final operating budget, which comes through the city, for the P&R is \$103,100. The truth "finally" came out. Far more than the \$50,000 that the Parks and Rec has been stating when they brought up this once-defeated plan.

The Friends of JDCC Parks and Rec stated in a flyer that Measure 12-85 is "almost half" paid for. What they fail to say is the actual debt on the citizens, which continues to rise by the very people who have pushed this project forward. This is a city-born project and now, in the latest figures, totals \$7 million plus. Where were all these people when we had a community pool? Total hypocrisy by these individuals.

In the operating budget, it includes a John Day subsidy of \$17,500. Not only will the citizens in John Day pay for the yearly debt service if this bill passes, but they will also have to come up with that subsidy. Creative financing.

It surprises me that the medical community has publicly supported this pool and entered a hot political battle, which half of our citizenry has already voted and turned this circus down. I believe our county hospital was \$1 million over budget last fiscal year. Most of the doctors practic-

ing here in the past usually leave in a shorter time period before this bond will be paid for.

If the parks and rec district cannot stand on their own on this or any other project, then we do not "need" them. The \$50,000 operating cost, as advertised, that was used was just another deceit tactic by both the city and P&R.

Vote "no" on this measure if you still have your ballot. Vote "yes" for Heather Rookstool for mayor. Do not vote for Shannon Adair for councilor. (She currently is under investigation by the state ethics commission.) Vote for Sherri Rininger and Ron Phillips for councilors. These fiscally runaway administrations need to be retired on Nov. 8.

Bob Pereira
John Day

A fact needing clarification

To the Editor:
Government is only a governing body, not a public land owner. "We the People" are the owners of public land. Elected government officials shrug off obligations of their office to non-elected representatives who hand it down, layer by layer, to local representatives, who forget they are simply glorified hired help justifying their positions by composing never-ending rules and regulations in a book that requires a forklift to move.

In the Associated Press on Wednesday, the situation with a local escaped prescribed burn that destroyed private land was reported by Andrew Selsky. The story attacked the Hammonds and Bundys (why did it avoid Finicum?) in a rambling discourse attempting blame-shifting from the Forest Service to private parties despite very similar circumstances.

Prescribed burns have frequently escaped public lands managed by the Forest Service and are usually justified because it overlaps on another planned burn or the "let it burn" mentality comes into play. Public land is being burned by carelessly ignited or unchecked natural ignition fires and no one is held responsible. Merchantable timber is destroyed, wildlife dies, watersheds fail, local economy suffers, and there is no compensation. There was compensation for COVID-related losses, so why were "we the people" not compensated for destruction to our publicly owned land, not to mention private homes and land from the Canyon Creek complex?

Our duly-elected Sheriff McKinley and District Attorney Carpenter have my full support by doing their job dictated by law and in facing the criticism from governmental hired help at any of the myriad of layers. If anyone attempts to pick my missive apart in myopic parcels, you have my support to file them in a personal receptacle.

Judy Kerr
Canyon City

Burn boss arrest questionable

To the Editor:
Todd McKinley may be the only Republican running for public office that I have voted for in recent years. I hope that wasn't a mistake.

I'm struggling to understand why he arrested the Forest Service burn boss in the middle of a fire at the apparent bidding of the Holliday Ranches. It's my understanding that

the fire crews were being harassed and feeling they needed the sheriff's protection.

It leaves me wondering if the wrong party was arrested or if anybody should have been arrested.

Terry Steele
Ritter

Feeling positive about pool bond

To the Editor:
As Election Day approaches, I want to remark on how amazing it is to see many in this community put our differences aside and come together to support the pool bond, just like we have before on other important issues and at times of need. Though there are many issues that still divide us here and across the country, in the last few weeks I've observed people from all walks of life and across the political spectrum come together to support a pool. The conversation has been overwhelmingly positive as I've spoken with my neighbors, friends and strangers. I hope you'll join us and be part of the positivity by voting yes on Measure 12-85 to build the pool, and make sure to turn your ballot in by Nov. 8.

Jessi Brunson
Canyon City

Kudos to Canyon City candidates

To the Editor:
I appreciate the election coverage and the profiles for the candidates running for the various positions.

I also appreciate the people willing to run for these positions. They are volunteers who are willing to accept a huge responsibility and step up for their respective communities.

I live in Canyon City, and I will be voting for Jim Johnston and Les Percy for City Council. I believe both of them will do a great job.

Jim has been on the city council for several years and has always worked hard and done a great job for the people of Canyon City.

Les worked for Canyon City for years and understands how the city works. He will be a great council member.

I will be writing in Matt Turner for city council as well. Matt has been dedicated to Canyon City for many years as our fire chief and has decided to run as a write-in. I hope you will join me in writing his name in for Canyon City Council. He cares about our city and he is willing to step up and do his part to keep Canyon City a place we love to live.

Tammy Bremner
Canyon City

Don't forget you are the electorate

To the Editor:
Are you tired of the current regime? Tired of being canceled for what you say, print or write? (Cancel: the suppression or striking out of matter in type or print.) Are you tired of being called a danger to our democracy simply because you disagree with the oligarchy of the moment?

Let us understand first that we don't live, and we as free Americans don't exist in or under a democracy. Our nation is a republic and has been since the inception and the founding of the Constitution and our government.

A republic is a state in which the sovereign power resides in a cer-

tain body of the people (the electorate) and is exercised by representatives elected by and responsible to them. An electorate is the body of persons entitled to vote in an election. We the people; and according to the 26th Amendment, a citizen of the United States 18 years of age or older.

Be aware you are being manipulated and sold out by some of your current representatives, two of which are Merkley and Wyden, who both voted against three measures to take action on our southern border to stem the flow of illegal aliens coming into our country. Every single Democrat in the Senate voted against these measures, votes 297, 322 and 294.

Now it's our turn and our time to vote. Are you tired enough of the doublespeak? Stand up. Speak with your pen. It can be mightier than the sword, if we will wield it.

According to the First Amendment of the Constitution of our republic, we the people are the government, and free speech and the press shall not be abridged. Don't forget you are the electorate.

Michael Christensen
John Day

Politics getting out of hand

To the Editor:
The number of large profane political signs displayed along the two main roads through John Day is really impressive. In fact, one wonders the impression taken away by thousands of tourists who travel through John Day.

A local person who runs for political office returns home to discover someone threw acid on the family dog, which suffered severe burns.

It goes without saying that people are entitled to personal political beliefs. But this isn't politics. This is pathology.

John H. Van Gundy
John Day

We hope to see you at the pool

To the Editor:
I am writing a letter in support of community. When I moved to John Day almost a decade ago, this place immediately grabbed my heart. In my first year here, I saw our community come together to rebuild in the aftermath of devastating wildfire. Coming from Portland, it was a new experience for me to see people helping friends and neighbors through hardship. Since then, I have made friends, met my husband, and started a family here. In 2019, our little one, Henry, was born with significant disabilities. We didn't know if we would be able to bring him home and care for him in remote Eastern Oregon, but the community here made it possible. After a long stay in the NICU, we got home and were immediately embraced by friends, neighbors and strangers. We would go on walks around the neighborhood. The skilled people from Home Health and Early Intervention came to our house. Someone we have never met started a meal train for us. We got our feet under us and knew we were going to be OK.

Over the past four years, our ties to the community have deepened as Henry has grown and started preschool. This past summer, Henry went to camp here for the first time. The other kids easily figured out how to communicate with him and play on a playground in his wheelchair. I am grateful to have witnessed this effortless inclusion from the young people in our community.

I have always been impressed by Grant County's spirit of inclusion and generosity when it comes to helping each other out, and I know how much this community has to offer to disabled people. A public pool would be a valuable asset for everyone who lives here, but especially members of our community with disabilities, offering access to fun, play and friends.

This letter is also a thank-you to a community that has been there for us. Thank you, everyone. You have helped make caring for Henry the joyful experience it is. We hope we can see you at the pool!

Hannah Grist
Canyon City

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