

EDITOR'S DESK

Sharing a home with 7.7 billion roommates

When the word “environment” comes up in mixed company (and in this case, I mean Republicans and Democrats), it generally doesn't take long for the conversation to devolve into an argument about whether man-made climate change exists.

That is unfortunate. You can completely set climate change science aside and still have dozens of reasons why we all benefit from being better stewards of the Earth's resources.



Jade McDowell
NEWS EDITOR

Polluted air, water and food contribute to health problems. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, health effects of air pollution costs the United States roughly \$6.5 billion each year through problems, such as increased emergency room visits for asthma. Scientists are also concerned about how pollutants, such as microplastics, pesticides and pharmaceuticals, make their way into our food and water are affecting our bodies.

In an in-depth investigation into radioactive fracking waste of the kind that companies were recently fined for dumping illegally near Arlington, *Rolling Stone* stated, “Expert testimony in lawsuits by dozens of Louisiana oil-and-gas industry workers going back decades and settled in 2016 show that pipe cleaners, weld-



A plastic jug and a light bulb, neither of which should be recycled with glass, sit in a pile of clear glass at Sanitary Disposal Inc. in Hermiston in 2017.

ers, roughnecks, roustabouts, derrickmen, and truck drivers hauling dirty pipes and sludge all were exposed to radioactivity without their knowledge and suffered a litany of lethal cancers. An analysis program developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention determined with up to 99 percent certainty that the cancers came from exposure to radioactivity on the job ... in every case the workers won or the industry settled.”

Scientists say deforestation and other types of habitat destruction also fuel disease by creating more contact between humans and certain types of animals, creating increased opportunities for new pandemics and foster-

ing ideal conditions for certain disease-carrying pests.

In a recent episode of “Last Week Tonight,” John Oliver used the example of Lyme disease, first discovered in Connecticut in the 1980s. According to disease oncologist Richard Ostfeld, interviewed for the show, the probability of a tick picking up Lyme disease when it feeds on a white-footed mouse is about 90%. As forestland was turned to suburbs, most mammal species began disappearing from those areas, other than the white-footed mouse — making it the meal of choice for ticks and boosting the number of ticks carrying Lyme disease.

“As we reduce diversity, we're losing the species that protect us and favoring the ones that make us sick,” Ostfeld said.

We must also face the reality that the Earth has finite resources and limited areas in which to dump waste. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, the United States threw out 35.7 million tons of plastic alone in 2018, only 3 million tons of which was recycled.

If none of that is a motivator, on a personal level, being environmentally conscious is also a money saver. The savings from simple conservation efforts — such as watering your lawn for limited periods after dark two to three times a week instead of running the sprinklers for hours each day — can add up, along with replacing all light bulbs with LED bulbs, buying energy-efficient appliances, adding insulation, sealing up cracks, replacing old windows and repurposing items instead of throwing them out.

When it comes to the environment, there are a lot of important discussions to be had about the validity of certain strategies to protect it. There are certainly bad ideas out there, and ideas that need to be heavily refined. But at the end of the day, personal efforts at conservation and a societal goal of a cleaner, healthier Earth for all should be a bipartisan issue.

We're all roommates sharing one big home. We should act like it.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

When the going gets tough, Wolfe steps up

Serving on the Umatilla Electric Co-Op Board of Directors is not a glamorous job. But it's an important one.

Bryan Wolfe and the other directors have helped find the opportunities hidden within a challenging year. Our region has felt the effects of the COVID-19 and the UEC board has responded by making sure members have utilities and financial assistance, creating a business-friendly environment, and keeping electric rates low.

True leadership is tested during an emergency, and Bryan has shown his character and ability as he has helped guide UEC through 2020. As we recover from this difficult year, we need leaders like Bryan to continue to put the needs of the community first and find creative ways to serve members.

Please join me in voting for Bryan Wolfe for Umatilla Electric Cooperative District 3 director.

Steve Wallace
Hermiston

Wolfe investing in the future for Umatilla Electric Co-op

Bryan Wolfe has his priorities straight when it comes to Umatilla Electric's role in our community. He also has the long-term vision and track record of strong leadership to earn reelection to the UEC Board of Directors.

In Bryan's eight terms on the board, he has championed local development and local members. He has played an

ENDORSEMENT LETTER DEADLINE

The Hermiston Herald will accept endorsement letters for the May 18 special election until Monday, May 10 at 5 p.m. Endorsement letters must be less than 300 words and may be edited for length, spelling, grammar or clarity. They should include the author's name and city of residence, which will be published, along with the author's phone number, which will not be published. Letters are run on a first-come, first-served basis. You can email letters to editor@hermistonherald.com or drop them off or mail them to the Hermiston Herald, c/o Jade McDowell, 333 E. Main St. in Hermiston.

We will publish our last letters on Wednesday, May 2. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is May 18.

integral role in maintaining low rates to create a business-friendly environment, leading to billions of dollars in economic development. He has also ensured members receive the maximum returns in annual checks through wise financial investments.

Umatilla Electric is truly a member-owned cooperative, and Bryan puts those members first. As our region continues to grow, these investments will ensure we're all seeing the benefits of new development.

Bryan Wolfe has earned another term on the UEC Board of Directors. Please join me in voting for him.

Bill Kik
Hermiston

Wolfe the clear choice for UEC District 3

Umatilla Electric members have the opportunity to vote for a true leader and champion for local development in Bryan Wolfe.

All members who have received a ballot have until Friday, April 10, to return it in order to make their voice

heard in the upcoming election. Bryan has more than earned my support for another term on the board.

First, he has helped fulfill the mission of a cooperative — putting members first through fiscally responsible budget decisions that have resulted in larger annual membership checks. Bryan and the board have also ensured members have access to utilities and financial assistance through the difficult times of 2020.

Second, he has created a business-friendly environment by maintaining low electric rates, which allows both large- and small-scale developments to do business here. This investment will pay dividends well into the future.

And third, he has helped create a strong support system for the employees and line workers, who serve our members.

The combination of these three priorities have made Umatilla Electric a stronger organization, and Wolfe has my vote to keep up the good work.

Brian Medelez
Hermiston

CONTACT YOUR REPS

U.S. PRESIDENT JOSEPH BIDEN

The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW
Washington, DC 20500
Comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414
whitehouse.gov/contact/

U.S. SENATORS RON WYDEN

221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg., Washington, DC 20510
202-224-5244; La Grande office: 541-962-7691

JEFF MERKLEY

313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, DC 20510
202-224-3753; Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

U.S. REPRESENTATIVE CLIFF BENTZ

1239 Longworth House Office Building,
Washington, DC 20515
Phone: (202) 225-6730; Medford office: (541) 776-4646
Ontario office: (541) 709-2040

STATE REP. GREG SMITH, DISTRICT 57

900 Court St. NE, H-482, Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1457
Email: Rep.GregSmith@state.or.us

STATE SEN. BILL HANSELL, DISTRICT 29

900 Court St. NE, S-423, Salem, OR 97301
503-986-1729
Email: Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

GOV. KATE BROWN

160 State Capitol, 900 Court Street
Salem, OR 97301-4047
503-378-4582
Email: www.oregon.gov/gov/Pages/share-your-opinion.aspx



CORRECTIONS

It is the policy of the Hermiston Herald to correct errors as soon as they are discovered. Incorrect information will be corrected on Page 2A. Errors committed on the Opinion page will be corrected on that page. Corrections also are noted in the online versions of our stories.

Please contact the editor at editor@hermistonherald.com or call (541) 564-4533 with issues about this policy or to report errors.

SUBMIT A LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Letters Policy: Letters to the Editor is a forum for the Hermiston Herald readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters should be kept to 300 words.

No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. The Hermiston Herald reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content.

Letters must be original and signed by the writer or writers. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. Only the letter writer's name and city of residence will be published.

OBITUARY POLICY

The Hermiston Herald publishes paid obituaries. The obituary can include small photos and, for veterans, a flag symbol at no charge. Expanded death notices will be published at no charge. These include information about services. Obituaries may be edited for spelling, proper punctuation and style.

Obituaries and notices may be submitted online at hermistonherald.com/obituaryform, by email to obits@hermistonherald.com, by fax to 541-276-8314, placed via the funeral home or in person at the Hermiston Herald or East Oregonian offices. For more information, call 541-966-0818 or 1-800-522-0255, x221.