

MY OPINION FROM BEHIND THE GREEN DOOR

State of denial

BY CHRIS BRATT

If you lived in Applegate this fall, you must have enjoyed the grand fall weather, striking leaf colors and the undeveloped space that surrounds us. I had some added treats (no tricks) with precious visits from grandchildren, pleasing get-togethers with friends and family and a new puppy added to our household.

With these kinds of experiences possible in our lives every day, it becomes more and more difficult to continually encounter the harsh passions and asinine thinking worldwide over our social, ecological and economic troubles. Isn't it time we had a blueprint to eradicate poverty, stabilize populations and restore the earth's natural systems? Can we find a global set of solutions to the problems we all face without beating each other up over a way forward? I know we must. We are running out of tricks to squeeze more from the earth than it can give. We are running out of time, too.

To bring an example of a ludicrous issue closer to home, I will point out the recent series of secessionist movements proposed at many levels of our government. Commissioners in two counties in Northern California and in Klamath County in Oregon are proposing separating themselves from their existing states and forming a new State of Jefferson. Similar secessionist movements are being proposed to separate some southern states from the United States of America.

These people wishing to withdraw from our existing political bodies are saying that this kind of change is necessary to protect them from being outvoted by the more populated and liberal sections in their designated jurisdictional areas. They also are saying that the existing government entities are not meeting their needs (whatever they are). Many proponents of the southern states wanting to secede from

the union again go further by claiming that they are the ones that have the real interpretation of our constitution and laws regarding states' rights.

If it's any consolation to my conservative friends who don't like being outvoted, my political opinions (admittedly more liberal than most) have rarely been represented or put forward even by politicians I voted for and who won the election.

My sense is that these people who want to secede have become so strongly attached to their intolerant opinions or prejudices that they think the only way to solve our country's problems is to set up shop using only their narrow exclusionary doctrines. I think we fought the Civil War (and others) over some of these very same issues. Not again, I hope, though there seems to be enough uneasiness and guns around to start something.

The same turmoil reflected in these cries for secession here in the United States is being played out everywhere. Individuals, local communities, states, nations and continents have huge problems to solve, and yet people seem to be dividing into sects that adhere to a negative, uncooperative ideology. They believe the solution to their troubles lies within their dogmatic principles. But the problems that have brought unrest and destabilization to large portions of the world won't be solved by shrinking our involvement with fellow humans. On the contrary, to bring about any satisfactory answers to the momentous problems all of us face, we will need everyone's cooperation across the planet. We are living in a landscape that is literally falling apart and we need to come together to fix it.

When I was in high school in San Francisco soon after World War II, the United Nations (UN) was forming and

holding its first meetings on how to solve the world's problems and prevent another war. I was lucky enough to observe the UN delegates in action in the city's cavernous War Memorial Opera House for a whole

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day with my classmates. I can't tell you how excited and emotional everyone was at the possibility of building a safer, more just and peaceful world.

I know it sounds like heresy to some folks in America, but we need to support

the United Nations' solutions to the overriding threats we face in this century.

Despite its detractors and dented image, I believe the UN is the only logical way to tackle these pressing issues. For almost 70 years America has tried to solve the problems alone, by exerting our economic and military power to transform many of the world's nations into a more democratic way of life. There have been some successes, but today there are greater issues and challenges than we can handle, including the future of civilization itself.

I'm looking forward to more visits from my grandchildren, getting together with family and friends, and watching the new puppy grow up. That's why we have to keep the world going. Let me know your plan.

Chris Bratt
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Chris Bratt

Applegate Valley Community Grange news

BY JANIS MOHR-TIPTON

The second annual community Harvest Brunch on October 20 was celebrated by nearly 100 people from local communities. Brunch was served from 10 am to 1 pm, prepared from food mostly produced or raised by people in the Applegate Valley, many of them organic farmers. Grange members wish to thank Thompson Creek Organics, GoodBean Coffee Company, Medford Food Coop, Watson Family Honey, Blue Fox Farm, Fry Family Farm, Wandering Fields Farm, Whistling Duck Farm, Barking Moon Farm, Boyajian Livestock, and Bjorn Everson—all of whom either donated or provided products at cost for the delicious meal. We would also like to thank all the volunteers from the community, including members of WHOW ("Women Helping Other Women") and By George Farm for providing assistance to the Grange members before and during the event.

The hall came alive for socializing, neighbors seeing each other and spending time together. To many in this community, the Grange is a vital hub and the brunch was a celebration of the community's accomplishments in reorganizing the Grange, as well as its current efforts in restoring the building to be secure and usable for future generations.

The funds raised at this event will help preserve the main roof and rebuild the front entrance roof this year. Earlier in October, Grange members Paul Tipton, Rick Barclay, Bjorn Everson, and Jack Duggan, and community members Richard Goodnough and Noah from Wild Wines all helped make repairs to seal the main roof for winter. The Grange will continue to raise funds to support re-roofing of the front-entry portion of the hall, which needs a sloped metal roof to replace a flat, leaky one.

A "gratitude's table" was organized by Audrey Eldridge featuring plants, seeds, and farm products from Grange members. Participants gave a donation and took

home items they wanted for their own yards and gardens.

Fund-raising also included a raffle with a beautiful watercolor painting from Grange member Carolyn Roberts, and two gift baskets of products and services from the local community including Rise Up! Artisan Bread, Michael Zapponi's heirloom grafted apple trees, honey from Betsy's Bees, tomato veggie sauce, a custom jewelry piece from Simply Beaded 4 U, a leather pouch from Country Spirits, music CDs from Kristi Cowles and Gypsy Soul, and a crafted candle. We also sold raffle tickets for a handmade quilt made and donated to the Grange from the local WHOW group. This quilt raffle will continue into December; you can still get tickets by contacting Thalia Truesdell at thalia@thaliaweaver.com.

We are settling in, building membership, and continuing the Grange's place in the community. Watch for our next community meal when we bring back the very popular St. Patrick's Day Corned Beef and Cabbage Dinner. We have had constant inquiries if it would be back; look for banners advertising this March 2014 event.

Thank you to everyone who supports our continuing efforts as the "renewed" Grange in the Applegate Valley. Please join us at our monthly meeting and see if you would like to become part of the new movement to preserve the Grange in the community, enjoy educational programs we've planned for 2014, and have fun at our community events.

We meet the second Sunday of each month. From November through February, the potluck is at 5 pm and the meeting at 6 pm. From March through October, the potluck is at 6 pm and the meeting at 7 pm. For more information, contact Paul Tipton, president, at 541-846-7501 or applegategrange@gmail.com.

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**Whaddaya call an alligator who wears a vest?
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