

Williams has a town council?

BY MIKE SMITH

The Williams Town Council and Citizen's Advisory Committee (WTC/CAC) started over 30 years ago when Josephine County had over a dozen citizen advisory committees. All the others stopped functioning due to lack of volunteer interest or challenges in communicating with the county. The Williams CAC is the only active CAC left in the county. Purely an advisory body, lacking any formal authority or budget, it allows Williams residents to participate in land-use, long-range planning, and other issues relating to the planning and development of Williams.

The organization has two primary functions. One is to hold town meetings on matters that are timely and important to the community or that present difficult problems or discontent. These meetings give WTC/CAC a chance to support residents on projects that are beneficial to the development of Williams, such as bike, horse, and pedestrian pathways, or events that encourage a healthy community.

The WTC/CAC's other primary function is its advisory role to the Josephine

County Planning Division. The CAC reviews, researches, and may comment on development permit applications that it receives from the county. If an application appears controversial or could have significant community impact, the WTC/CAC can call a town meeting for discussion and input, which may inform the CAC's advisory comments to the county.

Historically, the WTC/CAC has assisted the community with challenging issues such as industrial logging, a proposed cell tower near the elementary school, and the sale of hard liquor in Williams. In recent years, the WTC/CAC saw little activity until the legalization of marijuana. Since then large recreational marijuana grows have been submitting applications to the county for processing plants, inviting community comment.

Of course, the introduction of any industrial-scale business into a region that includes residential areas, such as the "green gold" (marijuana) industry in Williams, comes with its challenges. As many residents know, marijuana production has many social and environmental impacts,

especially when we consider the cumulative effects. Local citizens have clearly expressed to WTC/CAC their complaints and concerns, such as traffic, excessive noise, and light pollution from greenhouses.

At this point, issues concerning noise and night light are particularly difficult to resolve when the grow is on property zoned EFU (exclusive farm use), which is considered "resource land" zoning that is possibly protected by an old "Right to Farm" act. If the grow is on property zoned RR (rural residential), current county ordinances apply. The state legislature has ruled that counties can pass "reasonable regulations" to mitigate these issues on "resource lands." Many counties have passed such measures. Josephine County has yet to consider such action.

The WTC/CAC is currently working to help resolve some of the growing pains we are experiencing. By holding town meetings and encouraging citizen involvement in the planning and development of Williams, perhaps we can collectively find solutions to the very real problems we face and nip them in the bud. As one of the permaculture principles states, "We are the problem; we are the solution."

Mike Smith, WTC/CAC member
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How Clean IS Your Well Water?

with Tami Quinn Hollenbeck

Ever consider what might have gotten into your drinking water? Is your well head surrounded by dirt, or in a little building outside where your pet raccoon or rat has made it's home?

Often your well is out of sight and out of mind. Just because you turn the faucet on and water comes out doesn't mean you are fine.

Take a walk out to the well where the casing comes up out of the ground and look around. Is there insulation falling around the top of the well, spiders, ants, frogs, or mouse droppings? If this stuff is around the top of your casing then, **EWW**, because there is always a chance that it can get into the well & contaminate your water source.

When you get back to the house and can think again - give you favorite Water Well Pump and Filtration Service a call and ask about getting your water tested. It just might be time to ensure that you have safe clean drinking water for your family.

Water is a geological cocktail, so DRINK MORE WATER!



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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Pay attention

Dear Applegater:

I was lucky enough to attend an event in the Applegate Valley where my husband and I visited with old friends and neighbors. Even though my family moved to Ashland over 20 years ago, many of our friendships in the Applegate remain intact. The closeness and caring of living for 20 years in the valley are still very meaningful and grounding in our lives.

At the gathering, we all spoke about the happenings of the past year and our gratitude and love of place. We spoke about fears for the next four years, and a number of friends spoke of their commitment to their watershed and their valley, focusing their attention on what's taking place close to home. While it's very worthwhile and beneficial to take care of our families, neighbors, and friends, I feel the urgency of issuing a strong warning not to bury our heads in the sands or close ourselves off in the mountains. It's important, now more than ever, to stay awake, stand up, and be heard. I'd like to remind my friends that Hitler, too, was elected into a democratic government and demagogues have a way of distorting the truth, separating groups from one another and destroying democracy. After World War II there was a famous quote from a European priest that I paraphrase and update here: "First they came for the Muslims and I say nothing, then they came for the Mexicans, the gays, the blacks and I still say nothing. And then they came for me."

Although I am not saying it will happen, and I actually have confidence in our people's love of country, but anything can happen, especially if good people are in hiding, not speaking out or standing up. The beauty and strength of living in the United States is that we have safeguards, we have freedoms, and we need to keep them alive and current. Yes, care for our communities close to home and still pay attention to what is happening around you because you are truly not separate from any of it.

Sincerely,

Sheila Canal, Ashland, Oregon (Applegate Valley property owner)

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Climate changes

Editor:

Maybe all folks living in Oregon, the nation, or the world think the same. Certainly, many of us in the Applegate Valley think this is the best place in the world to live. But we are also noticing the rising temperatures that the weather service reports—over two degrees during the last century. We are noticing the trend of reducing snowpack, even though we've had a couple of decent snow years. Water shortages resulting from this trend are also troubling us. And we are aware that drought is becoming an ever-present threat while our fire season and fire risk are both increasing.

It's time for Applegaters to join concerned peoples across the nation and the planet in addressing the global warming that is causing these climate changes. And we need to do it before our entire way of life is compromised.

Fortunately, we can do this. The Oregon legislature is considering placing a cap on the climate pollution that is causing our problems. The proposal will reduce pollution and generate funds earmarked to provide economic assistance to rural southern Oregon as we transition to a clean-energy economy with better-paying jobs. Data show us that reducing climate pollution can help our economy.

Sincerely,

Alan Journet, Jacksonville, Oregon

Co-facilitator, Southern Oregon Climate Action Now

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Community issue

Dear Editor:

A problem with large-scale cannabis production that has not been mentioned is that it often invites crime. When a large crop of cannabis nears harvest, there is the likelihood of theft, and the perpetrators (as well as the growers) are often armed. This should be mentioned in meetings concerning the pros and cons of this new community issue, as it has been a real problem in other locations.

Thank you,

Pete Gerard, Jacksonville, Oregon

SUMMERTIME

Continued from page 5

while the elite attend
 NY Fashion Week
 pretending we can all go on
 like this

And I don't know how to fit
 into this poem
 the millions of refugees
 that have streamed into Europe
 running from
 insane zealots with arms,
 both sides intent
 on killing each other 'til
 no one's left standing

The I Ching says,
 "may you live in interesting times"
 the Buddhists call it *samsara*
 the Christians—I gave up on them
 a long time ago,

and the only thing that makes sense

is to plant lettuce in October, 'cause
 it's way too warm for fall spinach

sing praise to the velvet-petaled rose
 as she opens one last time

bring water to the raspberries
 and hope to see the shy green frog
 hiding among their canes

Speak truth
 Honor beauty
 Practice love

All else is folly.

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