

## Your views

### Boyd: Challenge issued to enter items in next year's fair

To the Editor:  
For the past 25 years I have been proud to put canned goods, flowers, sewing, photographs and painted art on display at our county fair. It is a wonderful feeling to be part of the fair, and I never tire of it.

It made me sad to see the lack of participation this year in many of the categories such as flowers, vegetables/fruit, canned goods and art.

I know that the fair is switching over from handwritten entry forms to being able to enter your entry online and print out your own entry sheet.

This year was a transition year and some people got upset because it took so long to get their entry in at the office. I was one of those made to wait, but I understood that this will be much better next year. Hats off to the volunteers who input all of the information every year.

I challenge my fellow Union County residents to get your goods/art/textiles into the fair next year no matter what it is.

Moms, dads, grandparents: work with your kids to make something for the fair. It is a wonderful way to create and get them interested in our community. Let's fill up those empty spaces and show the community how involved we are.

The 4H and FFA displays are always a hit. Those kids work so hard and learn so much and it shows in all of their displays. Again, hats off to the leaders of these groups: you all work hard and it shows.

Don't let our fair go downhill as so many have already for lack of participation. Who will accept my challenge to enter online your items in our wonderful Union County Fair next year?

Jennifer Boyd  
La Grande

### Morrison: Walden's determination to avoid meeting his Eastern Oregon constituents is disturbing

To the Editor:  
Honestly, I wasn't paying that much attention to our representatives in Washington before the 2016 presidential election. At that point, it began to concern me that our congressional representative doesn't even pretend to care about the people he claims to represent.

Do you have an issue you'd like to express your concerns about to our congressman, Greg Walden? Good luck.

You could call his office, in Oregon or in D.C.. Someone will answer, quickly record your yay or nay on an issue and hang up.

You could send Walden an email via his website. You'll

receive a slick, nonresponsive answer.

You could participate in one of Walden's "telephonic town halls" — if you think that participating alongside 2,000 other constituents will allow you to express your views.

Or you could chat with Walden after his appearance in our district, just like you can with Senators Wyden or Merkley. But wait! Walden doesn't make appearances where people can talk to him. In the words of my husband, Walden prefers to "sneak about."

Since 2016, Walden has had exactly one town hall in Union County. Of course, he's had numerous private meetings with other groups. In February, Walden visited La Grande to commend individuals who deliver ice cream to veterans. Walden has also visited Wallowa, with same-day public notice, and Barreto Manufacturing in La Grande.

The problem with talking to Walden at meetings like these is that you never know about them in advance. There are never prior announcements of a Walden visit to our area — just a story in the paper after he's made his getaway.

Recently The Observer reported that Walden agreed to three debates with Democratic candidate Jamie McLeod-Skinner. Now it appears that he is backpedaling even on that commitment.

Whether you are for Walden or against him, whether you generally agree with his views or disagree, whether you consider yourself liberal or conservative, Republican or Democrat, Walden's massive determination to avoid meeting his Eastern Oregon constituents is disturbing.

How can Greg Walden possibly represent us when he is so determined to avoid hearing our views on significant issues?

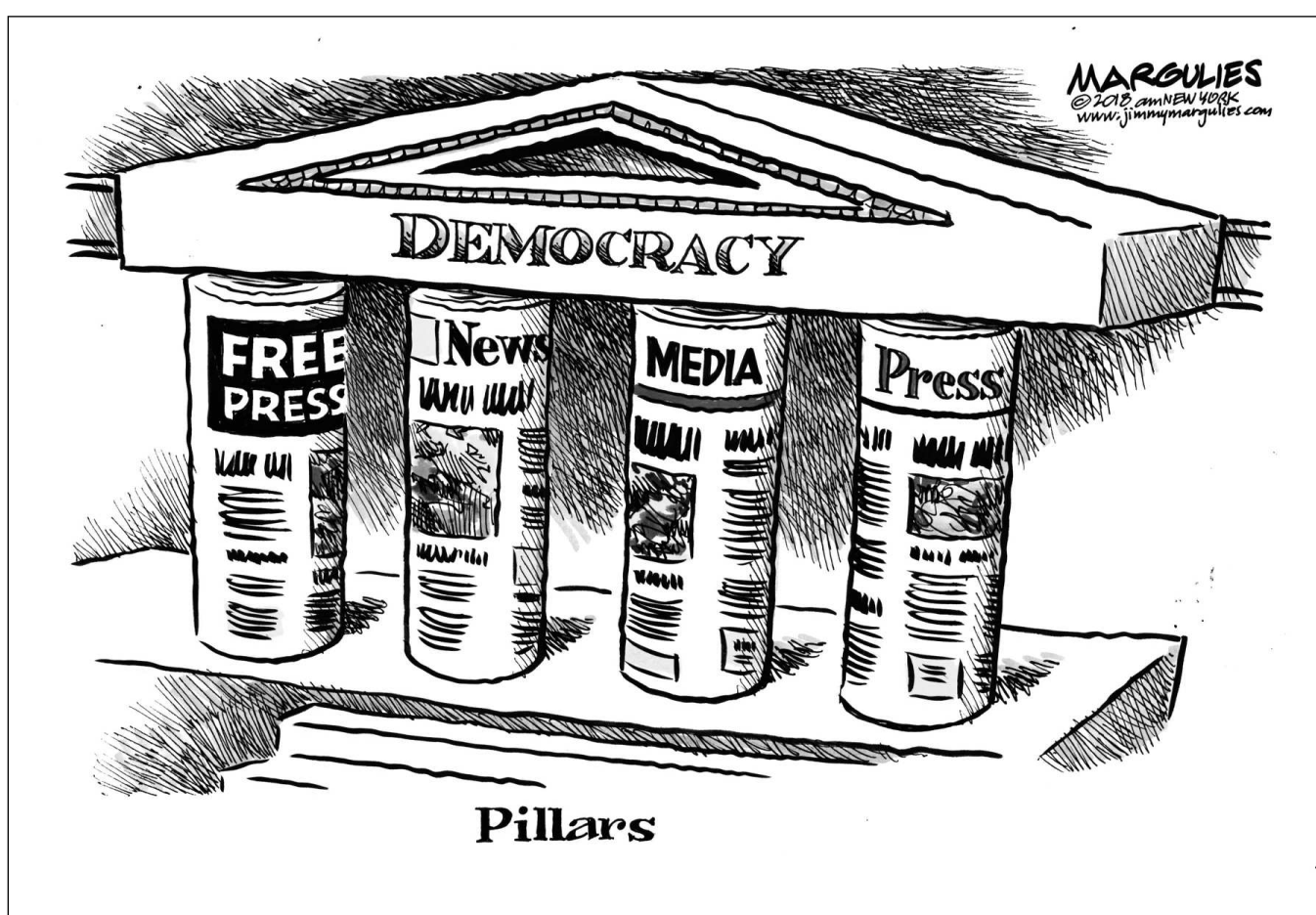
Anne Morrison  
La Grande

### Lester: Automatic sprinklers put damper on picnic

To the Editor:  
The La Grande High School graduating class of 1961 had its annual picnic at Riverside Park on the 11th of August. We had a potluck with lots of variety, an informative business meeting and lots of fun and fellowship. Then the sprinklers came on. I didn't know old people could move so fast.

Seriously, I didn't think sprinklers were supposed to be on over the weekend. Who was responsible? There were many groups there that day and I wonder who else got wet.

Ruth Lester  
La Grande



Pillars

## U.S newspapers to Trump: We're not enemies of the people

By David Bauder  
AP Media Writer

Newspapers from Maine to Hawaii pushed back against President Donald Trump's attacks on "fake news" Thursday with a coordinated series of editorials speaking up for a free and vigorous press — and, not surprisingly, Trump didn't take it silently.

The Boston Globe, which set the campaign in motion by urging the unified voice, had estimated that some 350 newspapers would participate.

They did across the breadth of the country. The Portland (Maine) Press-Herald said a free and independent press is the best defense against tyranny, while the Honolulu Star-Advertiser emphasized democracy's need for a free press.

"The true enemies of the people — and democracy — are those who try to suffocate truth by vilifying and demonizing the messenger," wrote the Des Moines Register in Iowa.

In St. Louis, the Post-Dispatch called journalists "the truest of patriots." The Chicago Sun-Times said it believed most Americans know that Trump is talking nonsense.

The Fayetteville Observer said it hoped Trump would stop, "but we're not holding our breath."

"Rather, we hope all the president's supporters will recognize what he's doing — manipulating reality to get what he wants," the North Carolina newspaper said.

On Thursday morning, Trump took to Twitter to denounce the effort, saying the Globe was in collusion with other newspapers.

He wrote: "THE FAKE NEWS MEDIA IS THE OPPOSITION PARTY. It is very bad for our Great Country... BUT WE ARE WINNING!"

The Morning News of Savannah, Georgia, said it was a confidant, not an enemy, to the people.

"Like any true friend, we don't always tell you what you want to hear," the Morning News said. "Our news team presents the happenings and issues in this community through the lens of objectivity. And like any true friend, we refuse to mislead you. Our reporters and editors strive for fairness."

Some newspapers used history lessons to state their case. The Elizabethtown Advocate in Pennsylvania, for instance, compared free press in the United States to such rights promised but not delivered in the former Soviet Union.

The New York Times added a pitch.

"If you haven't already, please subscribe to your local papers," said the Times, whose opinion section also summarized other editorials across the country. "Praise them when you think they've done a good job and criticize them when you think they could do better. We're all in this together."

That last sentiment made some journalists skittish.

Some newspapers, including the Wall Street Journal and the San Francisco Chronicle, wrote editorials explaining why they weren't joining the Globe's effort.

The Chronicle wrote that one of its most important values is independence, and going along with the crowd went against that.

Both the Chronicle and Baltimore Sun said that it plays into the hands of Trump and his supporters who think the media is out to get him.

Nolan Finley, columnist and editorial page editor of The Detroit News, spoke up for the press but added a scolding. He said too many journalists are slipping opinion into their news reports, adding commentary and calling it context.

"Donald Trump is not responsible for the eroding trust in the media," Finley wrote. "He lacks the credibility to pull that off. The damage to our standing is self-inflicted."

The Radio Television Digital News Association, which represents more than 1,200 broadcasters and websites, is also asking its members to point out that journalists are friends and neighbors doing important work holding government accountable.

"I want to make sure that it is positive," said Dan Shelley, the group's executive director. "We're shooting ourselves in the foot if we make this about attacking the president or attacking his supporters."

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The Observer welcomes letters to the editor. Letters are limited to 350 words and must be signed and carry the author's address and phone number (for verification purposes only). We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We do not fact check. We will not publish poetry, consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.

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Send columns to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850, fax them to 541-963-7804 or email them to news@lagrandeobserver.com.

It remains unclear how much sway the effort will have. Newspaper editorial boards overwhelmingly opposed Trump's election in 2016.

Polls show Republicans have grown more negative toward the news media in recent years: According to the Pew Research Center, 85 percent of Republicans and Republican-leaning independents said in June 2017 that the news media has a negative effect on the country, up from 68 percent in 2010.

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