

GUEST EDITORIAL

FROM THE ALBANY DEMOCRAT HERALD

Aretha will always be Queen of Soul

Although the music business has given us plenty of contenders and pretenders over the decades, there was never been any doubt: There's only one Queen of Soul.

And even though pancreatic cancer claimed Aretha Franklin on Thursday at age 76, she always will hold that title.

Upon hearing news of her death, if you're like us, you probably spent time revisiting the Franklin playlist. It's quite a list: "Chain of Fools," "Think," "Young, Gifted and Black," "Freeway of Love," "Spanish Harlem," "Daydreaming." It goes on and on: Over the years, Franklin charted more than 100 times on the Billboard charts and notched 17 Top 10 Pop hits.

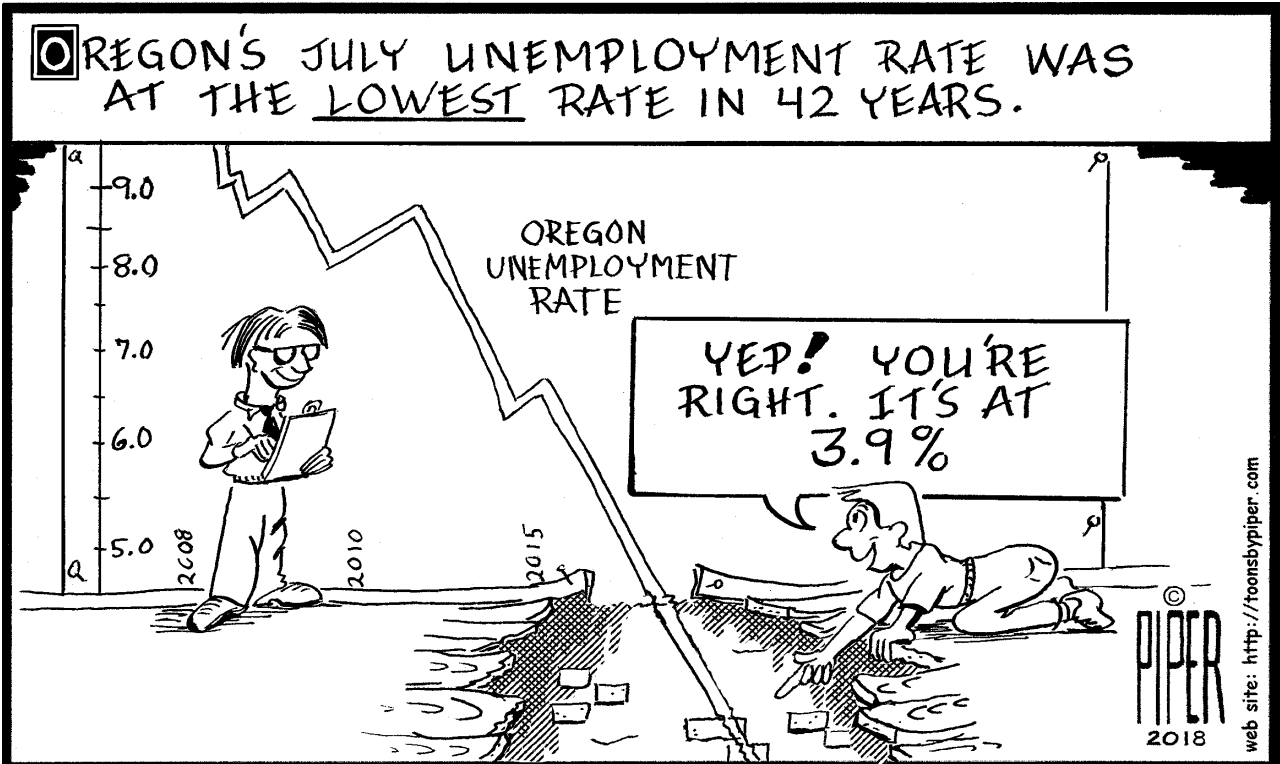
But even if Franklin had never done anything other than her classic tracks for Atlantic Records in the late 1960s and early 1970s, we'd still be talking about her. After a series of hit-and-miss early albums for Columbia, designed to showcase Franklin's astonishing skills in a variety of genres, she signed with Atlantic, which specialized in R&B.

And there, it all came together. All those other musical genres — pop, classical, jazz, even a touch of opera — didn't fade away but instead blended in that voice. Those tracks rank among the greatest American recordings. "I Never Loved a Man (The Way I Love You)," "Think," "Chain of Fools." A little song, written and originally recorded by Otis Redding, called "Respect."

In Franklin's hands, "Respect" became something substantially more than Redding's desperate plea to a lover: It was a woman making a joyous stand for equality and being clear that nothing less would do.

"Respect" isn't the only song by other writers that Franklin would claim as her own: Her version of Paul Simon's "Bridge Over Troubled Water" is definitive. And although ("You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman" was written by Carole King and Gerry Goffin, it's Franklin's version we'll remember. Redding didn't mind that Franklin made his song her own, and we suspect that's true for those other writers as well.

There's a reason why Rolling Stone magazine put Franklin at the top of its list of the greatest singers of all time: The sound of her voice is the sound of America. The Queen of Soul may be gone. But that voice will endure.



Your views

Haechrel: McLeod-Skinner offers real partnership

To the Editor:

I have become increasingly frustrated with our congressman's lack of responsiveness to us, his constituents, over many years, but even more so over the past nearly two years. His letters are form letters and do not answer my questions. His staff members upon answering my phone calls always reply they haven't "discussed that" with him no matter the subject. He seems to avoid direct contact with us, and his staff can never tell us his schedule.

Additionally, he has now seemed to renege on having debates with his opponent. He is "too busy with government business" but had time for an expensive fundraiser outside his district.

On the other hand, his congressional opponent, Jamie McLeod-Skinner,

not only specifically answers direct questions but actually carefully listens to us Eastern Oregonians. That is what we should expect and are entitled to from our representatives. Thoughtful discourse with a smart, experienced person without ties to industries we don't have here, such as pharmaceuticals and internet providers, has been refreshing to me, and I look forward to a great real partnership with a new real representative.

Please get the word out, help get the vote out, and vote with me for Jamie McLeod-Skinner for District 2 Representative Nov. 6.

Sandra Haechrel
The Dalles

Vigil: McLeod-Skinner would actually represent us

To the Editor:

This is a response to those who argue that Greg Walden's seniority means we should vote for him. If Greg Walden were actually representing Congressional District 2 Oregonians, this argument would make sense.

The reality is, however, that Greg Walden represents only the corporations that fund his campaigns, the richest 1 percent. If he cared for his constituents, he wouldn't have tried to pull health insurance from thousands of us. If he cared for his constituents, he would not support the racism, sexism, bigotry, anti-science ignorance, incompetence, treason, racial profiling and simple inhumanity that is represented by the Trump administration. This is not what Oregon stands for; this is not what Oregonians want. Walden is a Trump enabler. Voting for Walden means voting for "Treasonous Trump."

Write to us
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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). Email your letters to news@lagrandeobserver.com or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

Alternatively, we could vote for sanity and humanity and support Jamie McLeod-Skinner for Congress. Jamie would represent us in Congress; Walden does not.

Trisha Vigil
Medford

CONTACT YOUR PUBLIC OFFICIALS

President Donald Trump: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave., Washington, D.C. 20500; 202-456-1414; fax 202-456-2461; to send comments, go to www.whitehouse.gov/contact.

U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley: D.C. office: 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-3753. Fax: 202-228-3997. Website: merkley.senate.gov/. Email: merkley.senate.gov/contact/. Portland office: One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St. Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; 503-326-3386; fax 503-326-2900. Pendleton office: 310 S.E. Second St. Suite 105, Pendleton 97801; 541-278-1129; email elizabeth_scheeler@merkley.senate.gov.

U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden: D.C. office: 221 Dirksen Senate Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20510-3703; phone: 202-224-5244; fax 202-228-2717. Website: wyden.senate.gov. Email: wyden.senate.gov/contact/. La Grande office: 105 Fir St., No. 210, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-7691; fax, 541-963-0885; email kathleen_cathey@wyden.senate.gov.

U.S. Rep. Greg Walden (2nd

District): D.C. office: 2185 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515-0001, 202-225-6730; fax 202-225-5774. Website: walden.house.gov/. Email: walden.house.gov/e-mail-greg. La Grande office: 1211 Washington Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-624-2400, email jorden.noyes@mail.house.gov.

U.S. Department of Justice: Main switchboard, 202-504-2000; comment line, 202-353-1555.

Oregon Gov. Kate Brown: 900 Court St. N.E., Salem, OR 97301; 503-378-4582.

Oregon Secretary of State Dennis Richardson: 136 State Capitol. Salem OR 97310-0722; 503-986-1523.

Oregon State Treasurer Tobias Reed: 350 Winter St. N.E., Suite 100, Salem, OR 97301-3896; 503-378-4329.

Oregon Attorney General Ellen Rosenblum: Justice Building, Salem, OR 97301-4096; 503-378-4400.

State Sen. William S. Hansell (29th District/Pendleton): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., S-423, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1729. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/hansell.

Email: sen.billhansell@oregonlegislature.gov.

State Rep. Greg Barreto (58th District/Cove): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-384, Salem, OR 97301; 503-986-1458. Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/barreto. Email: rep.gregbarreto@oregonlegislature.gov.

State Rep. Greg Smith (57th District): Salem office: 900 Court St. NE., H-482, Salem, OR, 97301; 503-986-1457. Heppner office: P.O. Box 219, Heppner, OR 97836; 541-676-5154; Website: www.oregonlegislature.gov/smithg. Email: rep.gregsmith@oregonlegislature.gov.

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City of La Grande: Mayor Steve Clements, City Manager Robert Strope; P.O. Box 670, La Grande, OR 97850; 541-962-1309; fax 541-963-3333.

Union County Commissioners: Donna Beverage, Steve McClure and Jack Howard; 1106 K Ave., La Grande, OR 97850; 541-963-1001; fax 541-963-1079.

Wallowa County Commissioners: Paul Castilleja, Todd Nash and Susan Roberts; 101 S. River St., Room 202, Enterprise, OR 97828; 541-426-4543, ext. 11; fax 541-426-0582.

Elgin City Councilors: Mayor Allan Duffy, 501 N 11th St., 541-437-1016, mayor@cityofelginor.org; Mary West, 260 N 5th Ave., 541-805-0443, councilor3@cityofelginor.org; Kathy Warren, PO Box 697, 541-786-9611, councilor6@cityofelginor.org; Councilor Teresa Hylton-Shaffer, 540 N. 10th Ave., 541-663-6666, councilor5@cityofelginor.org; Risa Halgarth, PO Box 525, 541-437-9462, councilor2@cityofelginor.org; Rocky Burgess, 800 N 14th St., P.O. Box 854, 541-786-2417, councilor1@cityofelginor.org; David Reed, 1011 Detroit St., PO Box 368; 541-975-3306, councilor4@cityofelginor.org; Ryan Martin

Enterprise City Councilors: Mayor Stacey Karvoski, mayorofenterprise@gmail.com; Jenni Word; Dave Elliott; Ashley Sullivan; Micah Agnew; Larry Christman; Chris Pritchard; 541-426-4196; mail to City of Enterprise, 108 N.E. 1st Street, Enterprise, OR 97828

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La Grande City Councilors: Mayor Steve Clements, Gary Lillard, Nicole Howard, Corrine Dutto, Mary Ann Miesner, Troy Pointer, Justin Rock; through the City Manager's office, 541-962-1309

Union City Councilors: Mayor Leonard Flint, Leonard Flint@cityofunion.com; John Farmer, johnfarmer@cityofunion.com; Randy Knop, councilorknop@cityofunion.com; Sue Hawkins, susanhawkins@cityofunion.com; Matt Later, mattlater@cityofunion.com; Jay Blackburn, jayblackburn@cityofunion.com; Walt Brookshire, waltbrookshire@cityofunion.com

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Phone:
541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon):

1-800-422-3110

Fax: 541-963-7804

Email:

news@lagrandeobserver.com

Website:

www.lagrandeobserver.com

Street address:

1406 Fifth St., La Grande

POSTMASTER

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STAFF

Regional publisher.....Karrine Brogotti

General manager/
Regional operations manager Frank Everidge

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