

**GUEST EDITORIAL  
FROM THE ALBANY  
DEMOCRAT-HERALD**

## Want to have a voice? Register to vote

By **Mike McNally**

Ballots for the Nov. 6 election will be in the mail less than three weeks from now.

That is, they will be if you're registered to vote. If you're not registered, you won't get a ballot. You won't be able to vote.

And you'll want to vote in this election, just like you should want to vote in every election: It's the one sure way to have your voice count on some of the biggest issues of the day.

This election doesn't feature a presidential race at the top of the ticket, but that doesn't mean you can ignore it and just plan to check in again two years from now.

That's because the Oregon ballot has the next best thing to a presidential race: a competitive race between two strong candidates for Oregon governor.

The incumbent, Democrat Kate Brown, was able to brush off her last GOP opponent, the well-meaning but underfunded Bud Pierce. But in this year's opponent, Brown faces off against Republican challenger Rep. Knute Buehler, who has the political experience that Pierce lacked. And both Brown and Buehler have money in their campaign coffers; already, this is the most expensive governor's race in state history. You'll want to be able to weigh in on this race.

The state ballot also features measures you'll want to consider on hot-button issues, from Oregon's status as a sanctuary state to a measure that would ban spending state money to pay for abortions.

All the more reason why you should want to be sure that you'll have a say in this year's election. But if you're not registered to vote by the end of the day on Oct. 16, you'll be shut out of the November election.

The good news is that Oregon, to its credit, has worked hard to make it easy to register. Our guess is that you'll have plenty of opportunities to register as you go about your daily business over the next couple of weeks. If you happen to be near the courthouses, you can stop in and register to vote at the elections offices there; it won't take more than a couple of minutes.

But there's no need to wait even another day. You can register to vote online, by going to the Oregon Secretary of State's website at <https://sos.oregon.gov/voting/Pages/registration.aspx?lang=en>

It won't take you more than a couple of minutes. And if you let it slide another couple of weeks, you run the risk of missing the deadline. Register now.

And while we're talking about elections (and we will be, of course, for the next six weeks), here's another reminder: You might be annoyed by the political signs sprouting up. You might wonder why your neighbors have seen fit to post a dozen or so signs in their yards (in full compliance with local sign ordinances). You may be so weary of or enraged by politics that all you want to do is storm over to the signs right now and rip them out of the ground.

Don't do it.

Most every election season, we hear fresh reports of people vandalizing or stealing or defacing campaign signs. Not only are these actions illegal; they are useless as well: Swiping or vandalizing an election sign has never in the history of politics convinced anyone to switch a vote.

You want to make a difference this election? Here's a case where the old ways are the best: Register to vote. And then vote.

## Your views

### Thompson: Mona Williams is best qualified for the job

To the Editor:

Governor Brown appointed Wallowa County District Attorney Mona K. Williams to the position of circuit court judge in mid-2018 after conducting a thorough review and vetting of professional credentials and personal background checks of all candidates. Judge Mona K. Williams was the best qualified lawyer at the time of the appointment, and nothing has changed.

While serving as the Union County District Attorney between 2006 and 2014, I worked regularly with Mona Williams and her staff. I had many opportunities to observe her in personal and professional roles. She is thoroughly enjoyable on a personal level and this carries through into her professional life. Mona Williams possesses impeccable integrity, a comprehensive knowledge of criminal and civil law and an admirable work ethic.

Most important, Mona Williams has a well-developed sense of fairness, justice and accountability. These qualities must be utilized in the correct measure to ensure fair litigation and resolutions to parties before the circuit court. Litigants need fair hearings, victims should be heard and supported, public safety should be promoted, and offenders need to be held accountable for their actions.

I urge citizens in Union and Wallowa counties to support Judge Mona K. Williams.

*Timothy R. Thompson  
Former Union County District Attorney  
Dallas*

### Frett: Fighting human trafficking should be a priority

To the Editor:

Cherise Kaechele's article regarding U.S. Rep. Greg Walden meeting with Union County officials to discuss human trafficking is an important subject to address, and I support April Oswald's suggestion to provide resources as well as trained individuals to help victims of human trafficking. While her approach should definitely be implemented, government officials should also be thinking of other ways to fight against this epidemic.

The Borgen Project, which is a national, nonprofit organization that focuses on ending global poverty through U.S. foreign policy, promotes

innovations in poverty reduction efforts and builds awareness of successes occurring, including the fight against human trafficking that is affecting over 20.9 million people around the world.

While Union County officials and Representative Walden begin to address this issue, I encourage the community to become involved in advocating for a change as well. This includes contacting and messaging political leaders to make the fight against human trafficking a priority.

Like Representative Walden, whom I deeply appreciate for addressing this issue, congressional members want to hear from the people and will listen to what everyone has to say. Using social media is also a great way to reach out and get others to become aware as well as involved in helping those victims of human trafficking. Posting and sharing about how important it is to end this epidemic can change the lives of many affected around the world.

Human trafficking is a human rights violation. I urge Sen. Ron Wyden, Sen. Jeff Merkley as well as Rep. Greg Walden to fight and continue to fight against both local and global human trafficking.

*Charlene Frett  
La Grande*

### Lepper: Wes Williams will see clearly and judge wisely

To the Editor:

I am writing to support Wes Williams for judge in the upcoming Nov. 6 election.

Wes has helped me and many others. We worked together for seven years. In that time I realized how important the position of judge is. Any of us could find ourselves in front of the judge, and what we want for ourselves, our family members and our friends is a person knowledgeable about the law and our constitutional rights and who possesses wisdom for a fair consequence.

I remember my brother Tom saying, "Kath, if you have any legal questions, stop Wes Williams out of the office and he will answer your questions without a fee." I found this to be true. Wes is always willing to take a few minutes to clear up a question, to share his knowledge. So now is your time to stop Wes, chat, ask questions. Check out his Facebook page.

Judge is such an important position. With the drop

### Write to us

#### LETTERSTO 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).

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.

Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks. Email your letters to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com) or mail them to La Grande Observer, 1406 5th St., La Grande, Ore., 97850.

#### Letters deadline

The Observer does not run endorsements of more than 350 words.

The Observer will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day if necessary. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 26. You can email them to [news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com), drop them off at our La Grande location, or mail them to The Observer, 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, 97850.

We will publish our last letters on Friday, Nov. 2. Election Day is Nov. 6.

of the gavel, what is done is done. Let's put the gavel in the hand of a man who has the background to see clearly and judge wisely. I encourage you to vote Wes Williams on Nov. 6.

*Kathy Lepper  
La Grande*

### Welch: Wes Williams believes in honesty, fairness and equal

To the Editor:

I support Wes Williams as a judicial candidate because he has real ethics and exhibits exceptional understanding, not only of the law but of the human condition itself. Wes is a man of high integrity and unwavering compassion, who makes himself available to the people he serves.

I first came to know Wes many years ago when my husband and I enlisted his services as an attorney. In that capacity, we found him to be knowledgeable, courageous and committed to understanding our needs and doing the very best he could for us. He was a strong ally, who always treated us with great care and courtesy.

In the years since that time, my family has continued to rely on Wes as an attorney, and from that relationship we quickly came to regard him as a trusted friend. Through the years, we have had many occasions to see how readily he comes to the aid of those in need and how deeply he cares for his fellow men and women.

I have no doubt Wes will be an exemplary judge. He believes in honesty, fairness and equality and in serving people — all people — to the best of his ability. I can think of no better quali-

cations for the position of judge, and I can think of no one I would more wholeheartedly endorse.

*Judith Welch  
La Grande*

### Clark: O'Toole is an excellent choice for city council

To the Editor:

I endorse Ashley O'Toole for La Grande City Council. I have had the pleasure of working with Mr. O'Toole for six years, and he is an excellent choice for city council. Through his real estate experience he has gained a great skill set for budgeting, management, dispute resolution and coordination of important tasks. He has volunteered a large amount of time to spearhead activities to improve the quality of life and build community in La Grande, such as the New Year's Eve Ball Drop in downtown and the well-lauded Eastern Oregon Beer Festival, which generates a significant amount of income on a yearly basis. Think of what more he might be able to accomplish with additional political power and resources behind him.

Mr. O'Toole is a fiscal conservative and a combat veteran of the Iraq War. He is very responsible with his clients' money and property, and that care will extend to solving the budgeting issues with the city. He is full of creative ideas and is a high-energy individual with a strong desire to serve all the constituents of La Grande, just like he served our great nation.

Vote Ashley O'Toole for La Grande City Council this fall.

*Jeff D. Clark, Realtor  
La Grande*

#### SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

##### SUBSCRIBE AND SAVE

NEWSSTAND PRICE: \$1.50

You can save up to 34% off the single-copy price with home delivery.

Call **541-963-3161** to subscribe.

Stopped account balances less than \$5 will be refunded upon request.

##### Subscription rates per month:

By carrier.....\$10.50  
By mail, all other U.S.....\$15

## THE OBSERVER

An independent newspaper founded in 1896

(USPS 299-260)

The Observer reserves the right to adjust subscription rates by giving prepaid and mail subscribers 30 days notice. Periodicals postage paid at La Grande, Oregon 97850. Published Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays (except Dec. 25) by Western Communications Inc., 1406 Fifth St., La Grande, OR 97850 (USPS 299-260)

COPYRIGHT © 2018 THE OBSERVER  
The Observer retains ownership and copyright protection of all staff-prepared news copy, advertising copy, photos and news or illustrations. They may not be reproduced without explicit prior approval.

Phone:  
**541-963-3161**

Toll free (Oregon):  
1-800-422-3110

Fax: 541-963-7804

Email:  
[news@lagrandeobserver.com](mailto:news@lagrandeobserver.com)

Website:  
[www.lagrandeobserver.com](http://www.lagrandeobserver.com)

Street address:  
1406 Fifth St., La Grande

POSTMASTER

Send address changes to:

The Observer, 1406 Fifth St.,

La Grande, OR 97850

Periodicals postage paid at:

La Grande, Oregon 97850

#### STAFF

Regional publisher.....	Karrine Brogotti	Home delivery advisor.....	Amanda Fredrick
General manager/ Regional operations manager .....	Frank Everidge	Customer service rep .....	Mollie Lynch
Regional audience development director.....	Kelli Craft	Advertising representative.....	Karen Fye
Editor.....	Cherise Kaechele	Advertising representative.....	Juli Bloodgood
News clerk.....	Lisa Lester Kelly	Advertising representative.....	Amy Horn
Sports editor.....	Ronald Bond	Graphic design supervisor.....	Dorothy Kautz
Reporter.....	Dick Mason	Graphic design.....	Cheryl Christian
Reporter.....	Audrey Love	Lead pressman.....	Chris Dunn
Reporter.....	Max Denning	Pressman.....	Jay Magnuson
Classifieds.....	Devi Mathson	Distribution center supervisor.....	Larra Cutler
Customer service rep.....	Sharon Magnuson	Distribution center.....	Terry Everidge



A division of

Western Communications Inc.