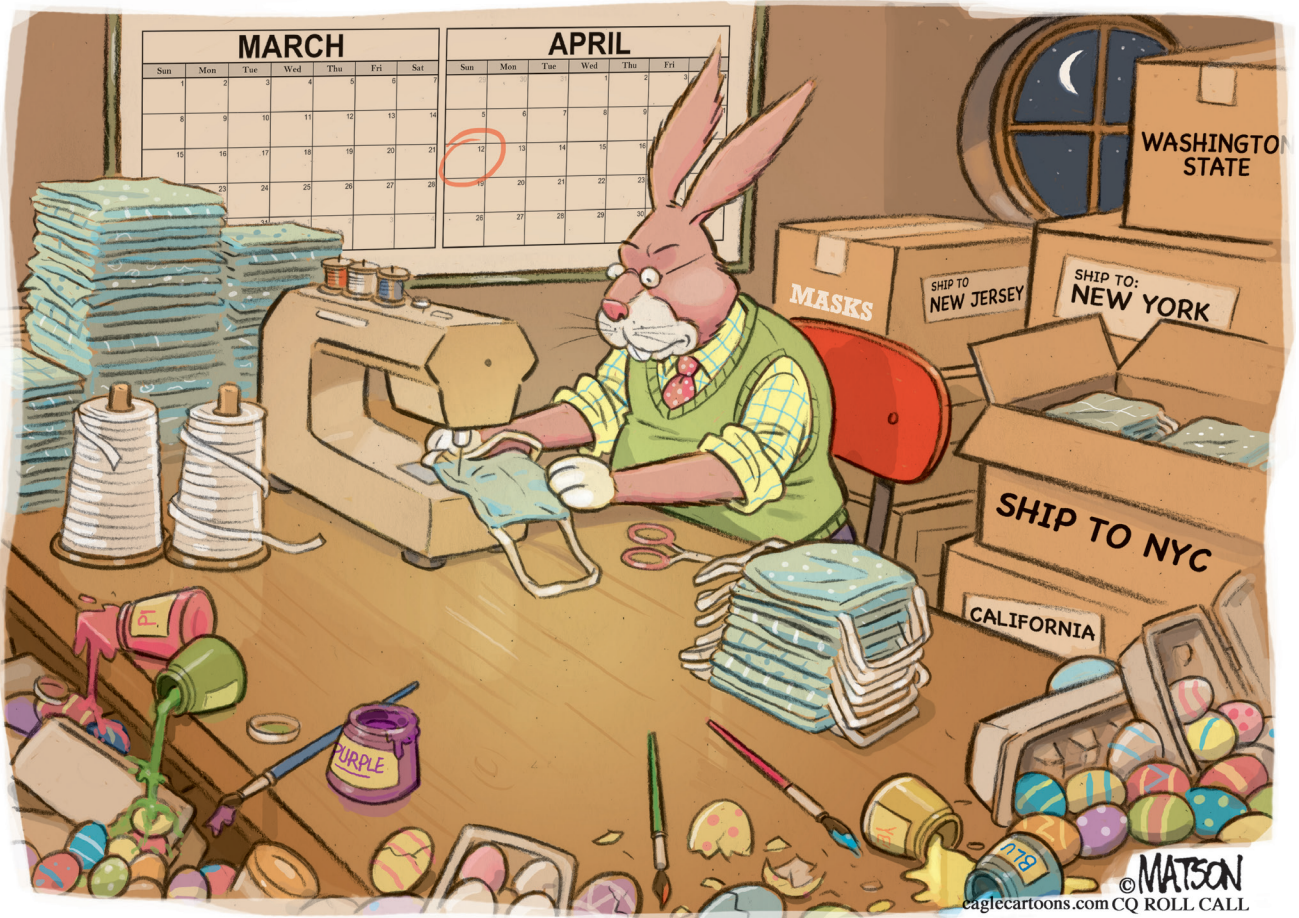


OUR VIEW

Two words for COVID-19

We'll have something more to say Tuesday. But for now, two words about sum up the COVID-19 outbreak, the path all of us have to take to "flatten the curve," the consequences for us, our communities and local businesses, and, yes, The Observer, too:



This sucks.

Your views

Sheriff election is not a popularity contest

The current primary race for Union County sheriff has four individuals competing for the most important job in Union County government. The citizens of Union County need to take heed of the seriousness of this position.

The sheriff is responsible for a budget of nearly \$5 million of your money. The sheriff is required to supervise more than 30 employees in the department and the jail facility. The sheriff is responsible for your and your family's safety and security and is required to maintain law and order in our county.

The requirements outlined above are a big deal to all of us. The sheriff must be a mature, solid, dedicated leader with the experience and training to be in a command position over his charges. Not their buddy.

The current sheriff has demonstrated to me that he lacks command authority. One of the other candidates is an approximately nine-year deputy and one has returned to our community after a career in the military. These three have an understandable desire to retain or win this position that pays more than \$125,000 per year with benefits.

This is a nonpartisan position, as it should be. The most qualified candidate is the one who should prevail. Unfortunately, the public does not take the time to understand the scope of the sheriff's responsibilities and it becomes quasi-political where the most visible candidate prevails. This is not a popularity contest. You should not be swayed by the candidate with the most yard signs.

The fact that a handful of deputies identifying as a union have switched their endorsement from the incumbent to their former union president is a concern. I believe it demonstrates a breakdown of authority within the department and necessitates a need for new leadership.

In my mind there is only one candidate with the experience, certification and, more important, the life experience to be in command of the most important department in Union County government. Join me in supporting and voting for Bill Miller for Union County sheriff.

*John E. Coote
Island City*

Bill Miller is dedicated to public service and law enforcement

Citizens of Union County, I urge you to go about choosing who to vote for as if you own your own company and you are trying to hire someone to manage it for you. I'm certain your company will do best with someone who will mentor your employees, lead them by example and ensure they produce the best possible product for your customers. Hire someone who knows the ins and outs of the business and who has been there and done that. So, if the sheriff's office is your company, take the time to research the person applying for this very important job. After all, whomever is chosen, will be working for you.

Each candidate published an announcement when he decided to run for sheriff, and each has a Facebook page with a great deal of information available. They are also expected to have a candidate statement in the voter's pamphlet. Treat these items like the candidates' resumes. When you do, you will find that Bill Miller is the only logical choice.

Bill's vast knowledge and experience in corrections, patrol, drug task force, swat, major crimes, parole and probation, and internal investigations make him the most well rounded and best choice in this race. In his 20-plus years in law enforcement, he spent five years on the sheriff's command staff as a detective sergeant. Bill has received many commendations and endorsements that are testaments to his diligence and dedication to public service and law enforcement.

Not only that, he is also a veteran and a graduate of Eastern Oregon University. You won't find anyone more capable of leading the Union County Sheriff's Office than Bill Miller. Bill is the right choice for Union County.

*JoJean Nelson
La Grande*

Mike Barry is an extremely good fit for Union County

I'm writing this letter in support of Mike Barry for Union County Commissioner. I've known Mike Barry for quite awhile now and I couldn't

be happier that he is running for county commissioner.

Mike is a well-educated, experienced candidate. In addition, he is a common-sense and down-to-earth man. Most, if not all of the time I've known Mike, he has served the community in some form or another. His dedication to the citizens of Union County and his openness will be unwavering, as it has been in anything he has done to date. Mike Barry is a good man and an extremely good fit for Union County Commissioner.

This time of quarantines and orders from our governor has put a hardship on any candidate running for any position because there can be no forums, rallies or public gatherings. I encourage you to reach out to these candidates and get to know them. I feel if you reach out to Mike Barry, you will vote for him just as I plan to.

*Mike Moran
La Grande*

Never leave an injured animal to suffer

I hope I am not writing this letter too soon, as I am still very angry. A couple hours before this writing, as I drove down N Avenue between Seventh and Eighth streets, I saw what I first took to be a bag blowing around in the street. As I got closer, I saw it was a cat that had obviously been recently struck by a vehicle and was still suffering. I quickly parked and went to see what I could do, but it died as I reached it. I moved it off the street and went on an unsuccessful search to locate the owner.

I understand that animals will sometimes run out in a way that makes them impossible to miss, but there should always be an attempt to reach the owner. And, you should never leave an injured animal to suffer as this one was. I'm going to do the perpetrator a favor and assume that you didn't realize the full extent of the problem. Because, if you did and left anyway, that makes you something I would never want to be.

Somebody is going to be heartbroken at the loss of their pet and the way it was left. I just hope it wasn't a child's.

*Gary Lillard
La Grande*

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