

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

## Deadline nears for political letters

COVID-19 continues to dominate local news and beyond. But we also are in the midst of an election season. We have a front page story today about House District 58 candidate Barbara Wright of Pendleton pushing a coronavirus conspiracy theory that lacks basis in fact.

In the coming weeks, we intend to cover elections, focusing on local races — such as the four-way race for Union County sheriff — and



**PHIL WRIGHT**  
OBSERVER EDITOR

providing some general information about regional and national races. Our role is to wade through the noise and provide relative information to help you make an informed decision when ballots go out in the mail on April 29.

And since we are in election season, it's time for a reminder about letters to the editor, especially those that aim to influence the outcome of an election.

Letters to the editor often are a favorite feature of a newspaper and vital to the health and well-being of our opinion page. A strong letters section is a good way to gauge reader involvement, providing something of a potluck of feedback from readers and a forum for opinions that can showcase differences and reflect shared community goals and values.

The goal of the letters to the editor section is to harvest as many different viewpoints regarding a variety of subjects as possible. Printing four or five letters to the editor from a single source runs the risk of pushing out other letters from new sources that are interesting and thought-provoking.

The Observer welcomes letters original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper has the right to refuse to publish letters that don't adhere to community standards, for example, or that engage in personal attacks or level consumer complaints against businesses. That's not what the letters page is for. Likewise, we will not publish poetry.

We require letters include the name of the author, their city of residence and a daytime phone number. We will not publish the phone number but that helps us to verify authorship. We also will not publish anonymous letters. On rare occasions, we publish letters that are not specifically for The Observer.

A broad range of opinions and sentiments are what makes a good letters section. So, keep churning out those letters, but please limit your letters to no more than one every two weeks. We want to give space to as many voices and views as we can in a timely manner.

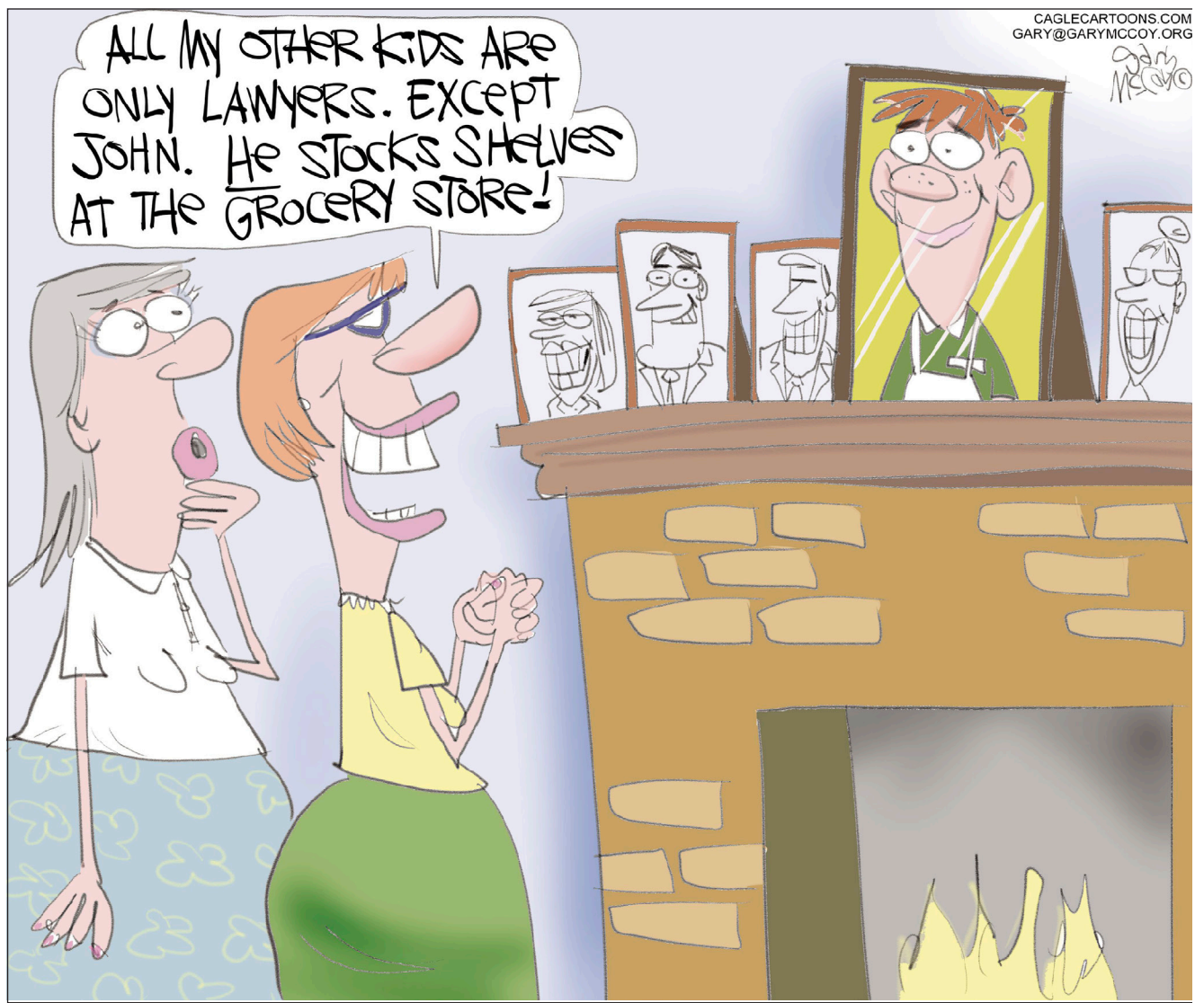
To that end, political letters play a role in a robust editorial page.

Political letters can provide readers with a mixture of different views that can be useful once ballots arrive in the mail. American elections are all about input from voters and votes declaring their support — or nonsupport — for a specific candidate or issue.

An opinion page should be a vibrant place where voters — readers — can furnish a viewpoint in a balanced, well-thought-out way that resembles a giant community bulletin board. We won't publish letters that are diatribes or add little to the larger political dialogue, but we do welcome reasoned, precise viewpoints.

We will continue to run endorsement letters as we receive them. All political letters are due by noon April 22 and the final day we will run them in print is Saturday, April 25.

We will not publish letters we receive after the deadline.



## Your views

### Miller has compassion, understanding

I met Bill Miller during the Basic Police Academy in Salem. Bill and I took to each other pretty easily as we were the two oldest guys in the class. I could tell right away that Bill was a straight shooter and a man who kept his word. Both are genuine characteristics I look for in my friends.

About halfway through our academy, a fellow student was being harassed by another student. She was fearful of how to handle the situation and of reprisal. She came to Bill and I, asking for our advice. While she told us the story, Bill listened patiently to her and gave his full attention. She was very adamant that she did not want to report the harassing incidents and just wanted them to go away.

Bill explained to her that the repeated incidents were severe enough they should be reported to our training supervisor. With utmost compassion, Bill explained to this student that as officers/deputies, we are held to the highest standard because of the trust given to us by the public when we take the oath. Bill even suggested that we go with the student when she spoke to our training sergeant and volunteered to remain by her side through the process.

In the end, our fellow student was able to stand up for herself and tell her story. She graduated the academy with us and went on with her career.

If you want a leader for sheriff who will show compassion, caring and understanding to those in need, then you should vote Bill Miller for sheriff of Union County.

*Scott Williams  
Grants Pass*

### Rasmussen the right choice for sheriff

Boyd Rasmussen has served Union County as sheriff for 15 years and has 26 total years in law enforcement. He is an integral part of our community and has raised a wonderful family here. It has been my pleasure to know his siblings and parents. A man of integrity like Boyd

does not devote his life to public service very often. We are all very fortunate to have Sheriff Rasmussen with us in this community. I have never known a more honest and devoted person to anything he works toward.

A time of economic and social turmoil is upon us and as such this is not the time to have drastic change in the local law enforcement arena. In these uncertain times we need a home-grown man of integrity with steadfastness, strength, experience and judgement to see us through, Boyd Rasmussen is that man.

I know I am very thankful for Sheriff Rasmussen and the attributes he brings to the sheriff's office. We all know we will be treated fairly and be shown respect from the highly trained and well-staffed sheriff's office.

Sheriff Rasmussen has improved the equipment and available resources of the sheriff's office through a steady upgrade policy based on sound budgeting and allocation of funds. Due to Rasmussen's leadership, deputies are better equipped and trained to serve Union County.

For all the above reasons and many more please re-elect Boyd Rasmussen For Union County sheriff.

*Dan and Nancy McDonald  
Summerville*

### Miller has what sheriff's office needs

Printed in section 4A of the April 4, 2020, Observer is a letter from Michael Gove of La Grande. Mr. Gove says, "I don't know why I'd vote to send someone not qualified to be my sheriff to the police academy for 16 weeks on my tax dollars to become qualified to do the job I'd already be paying for."

I agree! Let me inform you that Bill Miller is qualified and remains certified. He will need 8 hours of use of force updating and a medical exam. He will not need to leave the county to complete these things.

Mr. Gove also says, "I don't know why I'd consider folks that say one thing and do another. Let's see, a deputy is in charge of union busi-

ness, that organization votes to support the current sheriff. The deputy leading the union resigns his position and runs against his boss. The association withdraws their support. Re-read my first sentence."

Once again, I agree with Mr. Gove. This does raise some interesting questions, and it is also a testament to internal problems within the sheriff's office. Mr. Gove says that it's not time for a change while things are going fine. Would a deputy be running against his boss if things were fine? Would the union revoke their endorsement of the current sheriff if things were fine? Mr. Gove says it's time for a change when things aren't fine. He is right about that. Bill Miller knows the changes that need to be made within the sheriff's office. He has the desire and experience to make these needed changes. Bill will unite this office and lead the employees to better serve you.

Michael Gove suggests we not reinvent the wheel. He says the sheriff has built inroads and contacts throughout his years in service. I don't doubt this. Bill Miller has been in law enforcement in this county for 20 years. Bill has developed trusted working relationships with partnering agencies. As evidence, I urge you to visit Bill Miller For Union County sheriff on Facebook and examine the many endorsements he has from trusted leaders in the law enforcement community that have worked with Bill over the years.

Vote for Bill Miller. He will serve us well.

*Sharon Glasson  
Elgin*

### Business owner supports Rasmussen for sheriff

As a business owner and member of our community, I wanted to voice my support for Boyd Rasmussen as sheriff of Union County. He has always worked diligently and with the utmost care and respect anytime we have needed his assistance.

Respectfully,

*Eric Laurence  
La Grande*

### Write to us

Mail: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850  
Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com

•The Observer welcomes letters to the

editor. We edit letters for brevity, grammar, taste and legal reasons. We will not publish consumer complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Thank-you letters are discouraged.  
•Letters are limited to 400 words and must be signed and carry the author's

address and phone number (for verification only).

•Letter writers are limited to one letter every two weeks.  
•Visit The Observer's website, www.lagrandeobserver.com, for more news, opinion and other content.

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