

Our View

Voters should turn down Measure 109

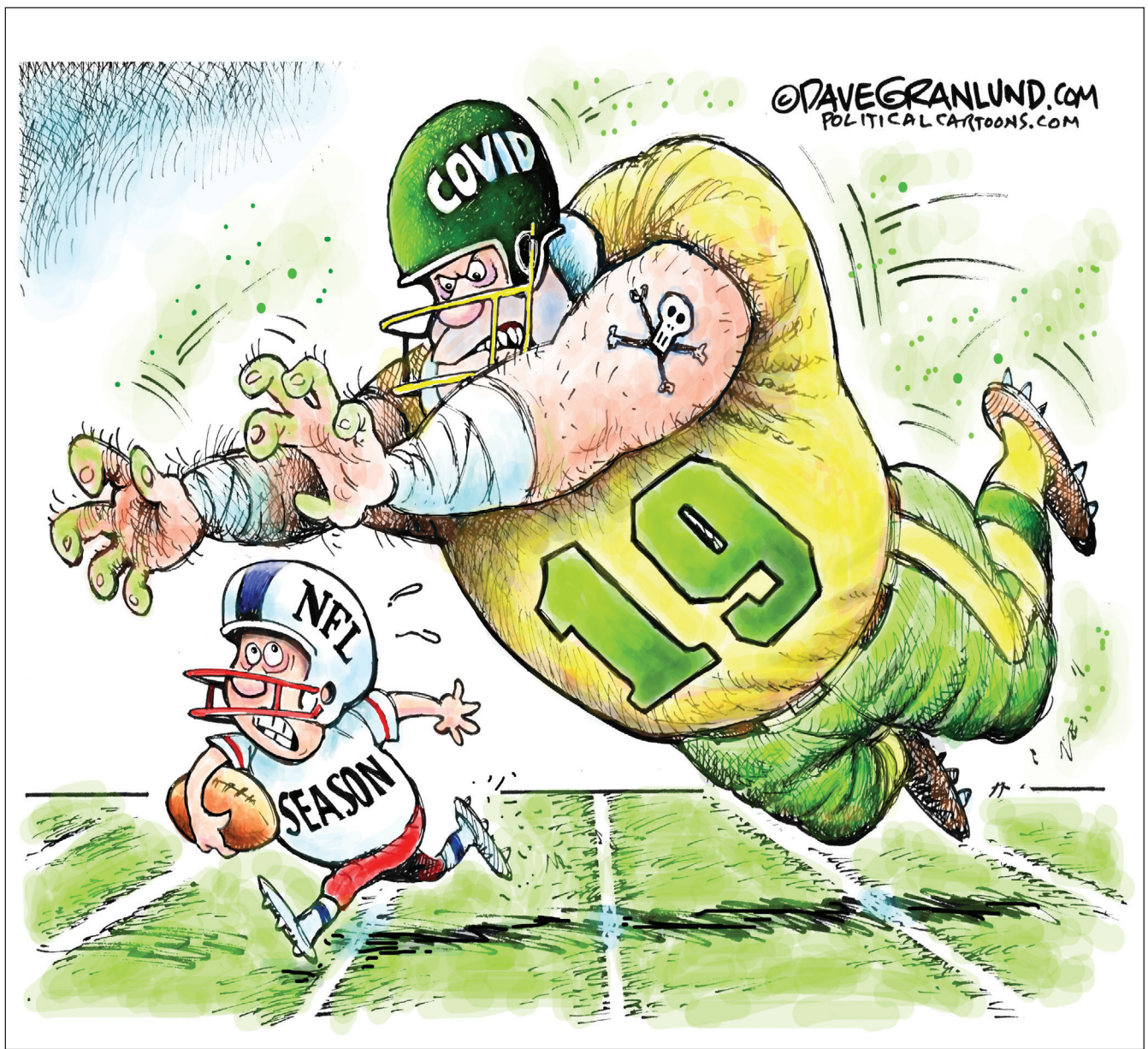
The most surprising item you'll see on your Nov. 3 ballot is Measure 109. Oregon voters are being asked to decide whether or not to legalize psilocybin — also known as magic mushrooms — with very specific rules, restrictions and timelines.

Background: Psilocybin is a compound found in certain mushrooms. It is psychoactive, meaning it has effects on the brain, and it has the ability to induce hallucinations. It is being studied as a treatment for alcoholism and other addictions, and more recently for depression, post-traumatic stress disorder and anorexia. Historically, it has religious and medicinal uses in some cultures, and has a low potential for abuse.

Researchers at well-respected institutions are increasingly studying psilocybin to determine how to best use it to help people. But there is much to be learned. Like all psychoactive drugs, it can have serious side effects.

Psilocybin is a Schedule I narcotic, and it has been decriminalized in a few places, but remains illegal except for medical research.

While it's very possible that psilocybin will become a valuable therapeutic tool in the future, we don't see the advantage to Oregon being out in front of the rest of the nation. We hope the research continues, and that we see a similar measure on the ballot in a few years, but for now, we recommend a "no" vote on Measure 109.



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Letters

Nicole Howard pursues projects that improve lives

I enthusiastically endorse Nicole Howard as the most qualified candidate for La Grande City Council Position 2. Having served in this position for the past four years (and on the city planning commission before that), she has proved she understands how to provide more opportunities for all citizens in our city, regardless of their background, economic situation or level of family support.

As a teacher and parent, I am impressed by her diligence in pursuing projects that improve lives, especially those of seniors, youth and community members who have few resources. I feel certain that Nicole will continue to advocate for programs such as our city library, with its Wi-Fi hotspots, computer access and literacy programs that have helped so many. She is working toward the creation of a library district, which would bring improved revenue streams and would link ours more directly to libraries throughout our region. Additionally, she supports the endeavors of the parks and recreation department in its pursuit of more opportunities for year-round athletic and wellness activities for our residents.

Most important, Nicole is very observant. She is a problem solver who seeks creative solutions despite the constraints of our city budget. She, along with current council members, understands the expectation for transparency and accessibility. Please know that, in my experience, she will welcome your input if you choose to give it, and she will respond honestly and consider your ideas thoughtfully.

Please join me in reelecting Nicole Howard for City Council Position 2.

Anne March
La Grande

Use critical thinking to evaluate claims

I'd like to remind everyone that the La Grande mayor and the city council are nonpartisan offices. There's no surprise at the attempt to politicize them, that's been going on all over the country.

I'd also suggest that the idea that there's a plan for the city to involve itself with anti-fascist protests is as silly as the rumors that there was a busload of anti-fascists making their way here. We're getting this sort of noise every week, and we need filters to keep things straight.

Here are two rules from Carl Sagan about critical thinking that I use for that purpose. Take them for what they're worth:

- Wherever possible there should be independent confirmation of the facts.
- Encourage substantive debate on the evidence by knowledgeable proponents of all points of view.

The internet has given everyone in the world a voice. That's never happened before. We need to listen to as many of those voices as possible — otherwise we're all stuck in an echo chamber. I like to step out of that chamber and take it all in. I hope to see others around me doing the same thing.

The mayor and the city council are not Republicans or Democrats. They are public servants.

Norm Cimon
La Grande

Grandma's Golden Rule method could be useful today

I had a loving but stern, no-nonsense grandmother. When a grandchild would bite, say a naughty word, yell, lie or speak unkind things to another person

— look out! Grandma would cut a thin slice of her special bar of Ivory soap. The offender would have the soap chip placed in their mouth for exactly two minutes. During that time, Grandma would lecture on how what we did was harmful to someone else. Having your mouth washed out with soap was very effective. The faint taste of soap and the lecture made a lasting impression.

Is there something similar to do in 2020 to stop the avalanche of accusations, name-calling, lies, mean spirited speech and slander? Yes, there is.

I propose that if someone speaks ill, is unkind, fires off unfounded personal attacks or lies by use of a cellphone or a computer, we just update Grandma's methods. The offending phone or computer must be placed in soapy water for two minutes.

As one is buying a replacement phone and searching for new computer components, I would hope that would be an opportunity to reflect on the behaviors that caused this situation.

Call it karma or the Golden Rule, none of us will be made happier by being unkind or bringing pain and distress to another person.

On the bottom of all of my emails is this quotation: "Be kinder than you think is necessary. Everyone you know is going through some sort of difficult battle."

True dat.

Zee Koza
La Grande

Work of city council makes La Grande a better place to live

I want to express my sincere gratitude for Mayor Steve Cle-

ments and all La Grande city council members, especially Nicole Howard and Corrine Dutto.

It is evident to me that:

- You take your roles seriously.
- You have given much of your time in service to the community of La Grande.
- You look at all sides of issues before making decisions for our community.
- Individually and as a group you have made our city a better place to live.

I appreciate your willingness to be in the public eye and do the work that helps make La Grande a wonderful place to live.

Lisa Foggia
La Grande

La Grande council challengers lack real platform

Mr. Alex McHaddad and his fellow Republican-endorsed La Grande City Council candidates present a number of ideas about city governance as their platform.

Central to their platform is the idea that city government lacks transparency. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The city more than meets all requirements for meeting notification and posting of minutes. There are multiple routes for citizens to receive such notifications.

McHaddad has suggested that all committee and commission meetings should be recorded. Of course, city council and budget committee meetings already are. How much would his proposal cost? Five committees meet monthly. That's 60 meetings a year, at \$600/session to Brent Clapp. That's \$36,000 a year. Three other committees meet on an as-needed basis. If they

each meet twice a year, that's an additional six meetings, and the total video cost would be nearly \$40,000. Is this the best use of our tax dollars? I think not.

Another central point in their platform is snow removal. Currently, the city starts plowing if 6 inches of snow have fallen. McHaddad proposes plowing all arterials if 2 inches of snow falls. It takes a day for snowplows, trucks and operators to do this, and costs \$20,000. A 2-inch arterial plow policy could easily necessitate 10 extra plows a year. Should we earmark \$200,000 of our already stretched public works budget for 2 inches of snow? I think not.

McHaddad proposes a police commission. The number of complaints about police in La Grande is vanishingly small. Do we really need a commission? I think not. Do I need, as McHaddad proposes, to have "coffee with a cop"? I think not. I'd rather have police on the street than meeting with me. We have a great police department. Let them do their job.

The reality is Mr. McHaddad and his slate don't have much of a platform to run on. So they fabricate issues where none exist and propose unnecessary and expensive solutions without discussing where the money will come from.

Our city government functions pretty darn well. Hard choices about resource allocations have to be made, and not everyone will agree with council and the city manager's actions. But, given the economic constraints the city faces, we should be giving council and staff a big thank-you. One way of doing this is to retain our incumbents with your vote when your ballot arrives.

David Moyal
La Grande

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