

OUR VIEW

# Council makes right decision on censure

There is little doubt sitting on a local elected board can be a hard job. Hometown politicians do not get paid much and they receive, at times, plenty of criticism.

Sometimes, even, basic decorum can fade as appears to have been the case in Joseph. Recently the Joseph City Council removed city councilor Kathy Bingham from office as mayor pro-tem, pulled her committee assignments and forbid her to interact with city employees as part of a move to censure her.

The censure has its roots in several different areas, including five letters of complaint asserting Bingham acted inappropriately in her role as a city councilor.

One complaint the council considered the most serious was a claim from a local businessman, Gary Bethscheider, that Bingham accused him of “flipping her off” during a February council meeting. Other claims against Bingham revolved around alleged harassment of city employees and violations of executive session privacy.

Finally, Bingham did not act appropriately under council rules.

As far as the censure goes, the council did the right thing. Just the violation of council rules should be enough to deliver some type of rebuke from the rest of the sitting members of the elected board.

One of the inherent strengths of our political system is ordinary Americans can be elected to positions, such as a city council slot. One of its weakness is that these people are — obviously — not professional politicians.

That means democracy is almost always messy, as was the case in Joseph. Whether local politicians like it or not, when they are elected they must adhere to a certain kind of acceptable behavior.

Another problem rural politicians often run up against is the one of transparency. The challenges the Joseph City Council faced, and how they dealt with them, were and are public record. The voters have a right to review every decision made by any elected board anywhere in the United States at any time.

The Joseph City Council appears to have made the right decision. Now their task will be to move forward and leave behind the obvious dysfunction of the past.

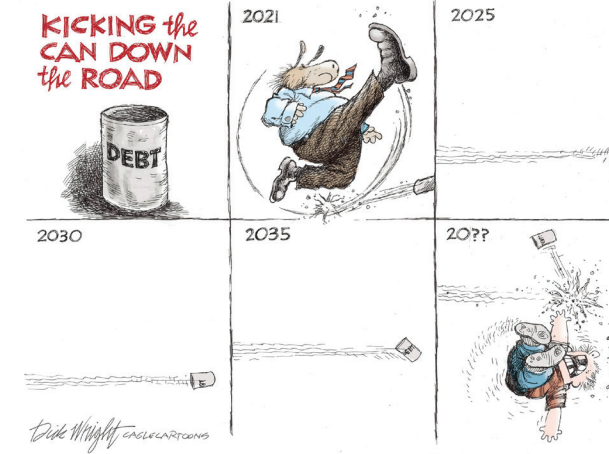
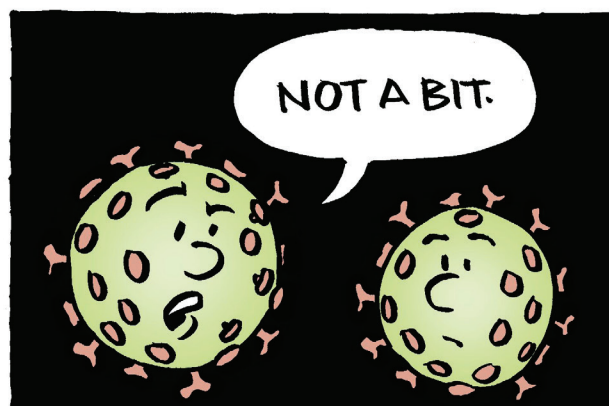
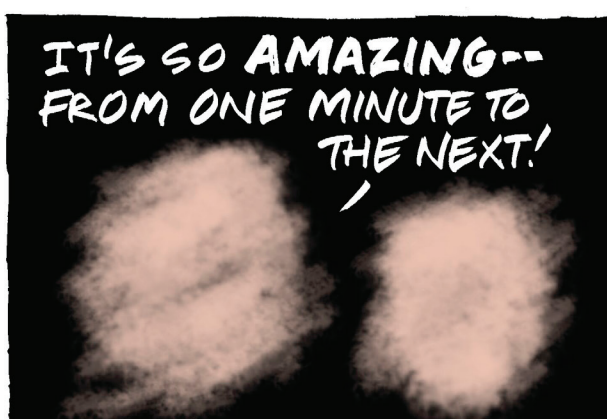
We ask a lot of our local politicians, that is true. But they freely sought their office. Once they are elected, they have a responsibility to act appropriately.

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## Looking forward to better days ahead



**JEREMY DAVIS**  
OTHER VIEWS

Back in March of 2020, the best defense against COVID-19 was to limit exposure. There was no official cure and no effective treatment.

Less than 18 months later, we have a variety of coronavirus treatment options and new vaccines. We are experiencing a downward trend in the numbers of COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations and deaths.

The best news may be that as of June 30, most of Oregon was able to fully open. Health care, however, is one of the industries excluded from the lifting of restrictions.

We at Grande Ronde Hospital ask for your patience as we comply for your protection and that of our workforce.

Approximately 36% of Union County residents are now vaccinated with many more in progress. We understand there are concerns about the new vaccines. We encourage you to discuss concerns with your provider. Your provider knows your history and health issues and will best understand

and respect your concerns about COVID-19 vaccines and treatment options.

Unfortunately, the mental, physical, and financial fallout from the pandemic is still impacting our nation's efforts to move forward.

One example is in the health care industry, as “COVID fatigue” is trending as a reason some health care workers, nursing staff in particular, are opting for something other than hands-on patient care. We saw this trend coming and have proactively worked to ensure we provide the best care for our patients.

Of bigger concern is the national trend of pandemic-delayed routine health maintenance — the best way to stay physically healthy to fight viruses or diseases.

Sadly, health professionals across the nation are seeing patients put off regular health maintenance appointments, diagnostic testing and screenings, only to find they now may need surgery or hospitalization. Delayed care costs you money and impairs your health.

Please be vigilant about your own self-care and contact your provider with concerns. If you are a GRH clinic patient and have MyChart, you can securely message your GRH provider with

questions or request an appointment to discuss them.

We are here to care for you. For a year and a half, our employees have navigated the changes to providing care, protecting patients and serving our community under often contradictory and ever-changing guidelines and regulations.

Our frontline and support staff have weathered concerns and complaints while continuing to show up each day with a smile. Our patient care staff has cried at the bedside of COVID patients who did not get to go home, and cheered enthusiastically for those who did.

Our vision statement reads, “Quality health care is our mission. Patients are our passion.”

We did not come up with that statement in the board room. We did not hire a public relations firm to craft it. We asked our employees what they thought.

We do not think of ourselves as an institution. We are your community hospital. We're your neighbors and friends. And we are moving on to better days ahead with you — side by side.

*Jeremy P. Davis is the president and CEO of Grande Ronde Hospital, La Grande.*

### CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

#### U.S. PRESIDENT

**Joe Biden**  
The White House  
1600 Pennsylvania Avenue NW  
Washington, DC 20500  
Comments: 202-456-1111

#### U.S. SENATORS

**Ron Wyden**  
221 Dirksen Senate Office Bldg.  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-5244  
La Grande office: 541-962-7691

**Jeff Merkley**  
313 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, DC 20510  
202-224-3753  
Pendleton office: 541-278-1129

#### U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

**Cliff Bentz**  
2185 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515  
202-225-6730  
Medford office: 541-776-4646

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Phone:  
541-963-3161

Toll free (Oregon):  
1-800-781-3214

Email:  
news@lagrandeobserver.com

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