

CANDIDATES

Continued from Page A1

has yet to hear a response from Thielman.

Thielman said he does not recall making a comment about the definition of a white supremacist and said the media often “throws out name calls without giving any definition to the term.”

“If Tim had an issue with me he should have talked to me like a man, a grown-up, a professional rather than draw a conclusion about that,” Thielman said. “I am glad Tim is signed up in the race, he is the first African-American, and he is a hero to me and I appreciate his conviction.”



Thielman

Following the Linn County forum, McCloud said he was uninvited to the Josephine County forum, something he had committed to on April 16.

“Three days after (the white supremacist remark) was made, I got an email from Josephine County telling me that what would be best for me is to pursue a lower office and I was no longer invited,” said McCloud of the April 29 event.

McCloud said he can’t prove the two things are related, but he believes it all shows that as a legally qualified candi-

date he is not receiving equal treatment. Thielman said he has no ability to invite or disinvite McCloud to events and does not see the conclusion being made as accurate.

Holli Morton, chair of the Josephine County Republican Party, said the number of candidates was reduced for the forum by taking into account numerous factors. She notified five of the 12 candidates that they were not going to be included in the forum.

Morton said name recognition, financial ability, government experience and business experience were the factors taken into consideration when inviting candidates. Candidates had to meet at least two of the four factors to be included. The business experience criteria was set for someone who has run a business and had at least \$10 million annual revenue with 12 or more employees.

“Our forum was two and a half hours long with just the seven candidates we had,” she said. “We made the same response to five candidates and it is not personal. We felt those candidates did not meet the criteria that we established.”

McCloud also takes issue with not being invited to the Dorchester Conference at Mount Hood Oregon Resort on April 22-24 where a gubernatorial debate and straw poll was held.

“The Dorchester brands itself as the oldest Republican conference west of the Mississippi, and they also say all Oregon Repub-



Dick Mason/The Observer, File

Tim McCloud, left, speaks with Steve West, a Union County resident, on Thursday, April 28, 2022, during a campaign stop in La Grande.

lican governors come through Dorchester,” he said. “For them not to have reached out to me or invited me says one thing.”

Thielman did attend the conference and won the straw poll, something McCloud’s name was left off of. McCloud sees a connection between the events at the Linn County forum and the results of the Dorchester Conference contributing to him being excluded from other gubernatorial events. He said there are a number of Oregon counties he has reached out to multiple times since beginning his campaign that he has heard no response from.

McCloud said Oregon Republican National Committeewoman Tracy Honl told him any changes to party bylaws would occur after this year’s election.

He believes there is strong evidence that his race plays a part in all these events.

“All I am asking, as a legally qualified candidate, is to be treated equally among other legally qualified candidates, but that is the exact opposite of what I have seen in my experience as a Republican running for office,” he said. “Marc Thielman has made several comments with me in the room (involving race).”

Despite the unfair treatment he perceives, McCloud said he is as “driven as ever” to continue fighting for justice and election integrity.

“I believe these actions are in direct violation of Oregon voter integrity because it doesn’t give equal opportunity to legally qualified candidates within the party to speak to their party members,” he said.

McCloud, a Linn County resident, is a former Eastern Oregon University student from 2012-2016 who works for an aerospace and defense manufacturer as a business analyst. During his time at EOU, he was homeless and supporting his family, which includes his wife and three daughters. He is four credits from graduating with a degree in public administration and a minor in business administration.

CHOIR

Continued from Page A1

which forced the cancellation of the competition in 2020 and 2021.

LHS A Cappella Choir Director Kevin Durfee said the group’s complete lack of state competition experience made preparing for state more challenging, but he said the choir’s members rose to the occasion.

“They did an outstanding job,” Durfee said. “I’m proud of the job they did.”

LHS has now won six state titles in the past 10 years, claiming the title in 2012, 2013, 2015, 2018 (when it tied for first) and 2019, all under the direction of Durfee. This is the second time LHS has won three straight state choir titles — it won state championships in 2001, 2002 and 2003 under the direction of Michael Frasier.

LHS junior Samantha Perry said she is proud to be part of a program with such a strong legacy and she was delighted by the sense of joy she saw on the faces of

her fellow choir members when the final results were announced.

“I was so happy for everybody,” she said.

Screams to remember

Many, including LHS senior Kierstyn Harder, expressed their emotions vocally.

“I kind of screamed and everyone else was screaming too,” she said.

Junior Owen Rinker credits this year’s state title to the fact that everyone in the choir made winning at state a primary objective.

“We all had the same goal and we worked together,” he said.

Sophomore Kai Carson, who is a member of the choir with his brother, Braden, a senior, noted that their oldest sister, Marissa, was a member of the LHS A Cappella Choir when it won a state title in 2015.

“It is nice to continue a family tradition,” Carson said.

LHS sophomore Kaitlin Brock said she was not

extremely tense at the state championships and enjoyed the experience.

“I didn’t feel pressure,” she said. “It was fun to be around friends and be close to them.”

Attention to details pays dividends

Sophomore Lana Emerson said the success of the LHS A Cappella Choir is a credit to Durfee and his wife, Kascie, its assistant director.

Maezie Wilcox, also a sophomore, commented on the Durfees’ attention to details.

“They focus on the small things to make us better,” Wilcox said.

Kevin Durfee agrees that he and his wife are always sticklers for details.

“We know what we want to hear,” the director said. “We are addicted to high-quality sound. We are relentlessly trying to get it day after day.”

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