

OUR VIEW

Voters want results from elected officials

Our elected leaders on both sides of the aisles politically need to do much more to realign themselves with the middle ground of America and shun the high-powered rhetoric and shouts of the lunatic fringe.

True, everyone in our great nation has the right to express an opinion, and that right is a sacred one that must be guarded. However, during the past decade it seems those who sit on the opposite poles of the right and left have gained new prominence, their voices louder, their dogma more militant.

In the Oregon Legislature there is a clear divide among Democrats and Republicans with the GOP vastly outnumbered and relegated to an ineffective minority. The state assembly political roster mirrors our own national stage politics in the sense there apparently exists a wide gulf between what each side desires. In Oregon, the majority Democrats have the power and use it in ways lawmakers believe their constituents want.

Usually, when major political conflicts erupt, Republican lawmakers face few alternatives other than simply leaving the building to erase a quorum needed for votes.

That means, essentially, that on really critical issues, the normal discourse needed by a Democracy to succeed breaks down. One side gains the advantage, or in Oregon’s case at times, one side is left standing alone on the dance floor while the other is long gone.

What those types of actions accomplish is create a wider dissatisfaction that continues to grow.

Oregonians have shown in polls they want more out of this year’s gubernatorial race than the usual name-calling added to a good dose of fear-mongering from the far edges of both parties. Voters don’t want more fighting. They want results.

Therein lies the problem. Because results are not being measured — either here at home or on the national political stage — by practicable results but instead by which part of the far left or right can gain ascendancy.

Our elected lawmakers on both sides of the political fence need to begin to work together and to develop concrete solutions to difficult problems. Calling Democrats liberals bent on destroying the Republic and Republicans as people who want to create some kind of Hand-maid’s Tale system is not only ludicrous but prevents problem-solving and creates more turmoil.

The future of our nation and state rests on our lawmakers’ ability to work through problems. Not fighting.

EDITORIALS

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• 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, personal attacks against private individuals or comments that can incite violence. We also discourage thank-you letters. • Letters should be no longer than 350 words and must be signed and carry the author’s name, address and phone number (for verification only). We will not publish

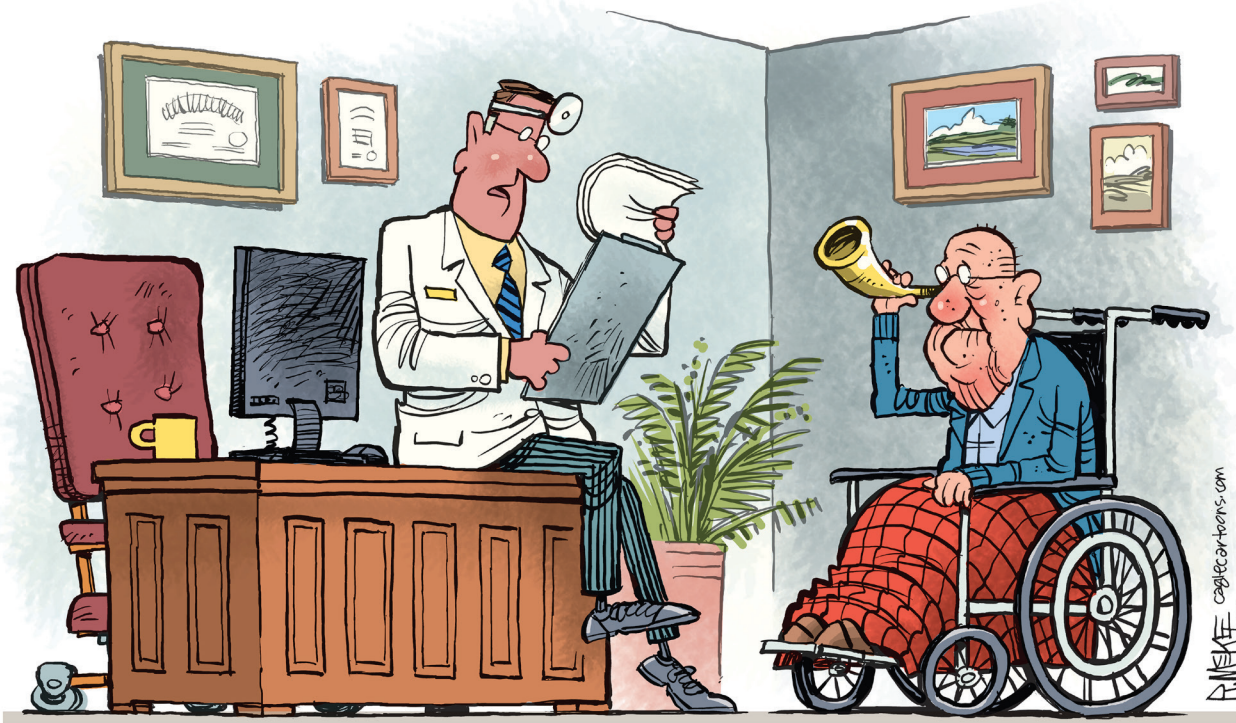
anonymous letters.

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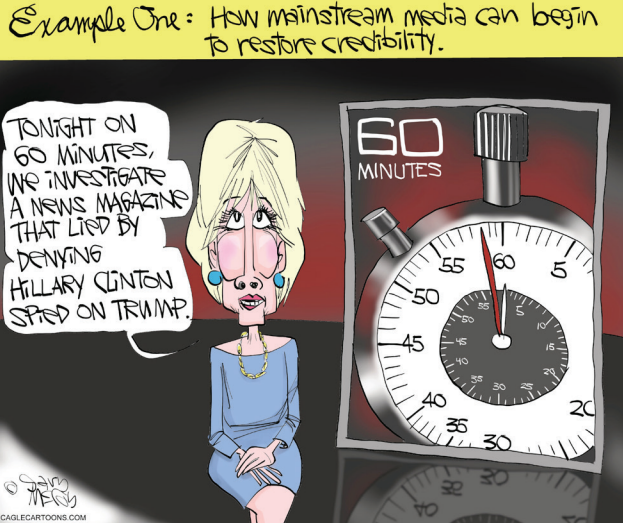
• Longer community comment columns, such as Other Views, must be no more than 700 words. Writers must provide a recent headshot and a one-sentence biography. Like letters to the editor, columns must refrain from complaints against businesses or personal attacks against private individuals. Submissions must carry the author’s name, address and phone number.

• Submission does not guarantee publication, which is at the discretion of the editor.

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"I'M NOT GOING TO SUGARCOAT IT, MR. FINKLY... AT THIS RATE, IN A FEW MORE YEARS, YOU COULD BE PRESIDENT."



The Observer newsroom is addressing feedback from surveys, reader comments



KARRINE BROGITTI

FROM THE PUBLISHER

Ken Blanchard, known best as a business consultant, management expert and speaker, has been credited for a quote that’s floated in and out of my head on many occasions over the course of my newspaper career.

“Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”

It’s taken on slightly different meanings over the years, but the foundational message has resonated and stuck with me like a nice, hearty bowl of oatmeal. Just as breakfast is said to be the most important meal of the day (ask any mother or grandmother), feedback from our readers and the communities we serve gives us the opportunity to take stock of our operations and our coverage and ensures that we’re putting our valuable, but limited, resources and energy into what matters most to you. Not into the things that we think matters.

A well-balanced breakfast helps refuel your body and mind, restoring focus and helping lift your mood. Your

feedback serves a very similar purpose for our business and our shared community. When you’re hungry, it’s more difficult to perform at your best. Likewise for The Observer. Without feedback, news organizations like ourselves “starve” without the fuel of input from readers — operating in a vacuum and limiting our opportunities to improve and enhance our news and advertising content.

Very recently, we conducted a survey of The Observer’s readers, asking them to provide us with feedback (oatmeal) on various aspects of the paper, including questions about what topics interest them and what types of stories they would like to see more or less of. We also posed scarier questions (What could we do better? What are we missing from our content?), hoping we’d get some honest responses.

And we did.

The valuable input you shared breathes new energy and focus into our newsrooms and gives us a roadmap for future features and stories. Based on your candid suggestions, constructive criticism and a slew of heartfelt compliments, we’ve already added resources and energy into expanded business coverage —

both new businesses and features on existing businesses, as well as local reactions to wider business trends. Many responders said they’d like to see more stories related to news and topics impacting our smaller communities and we agreed. You’ll see enhanced coverage and stories from the outskirts of La Grande in print and online — and so far, readers are enjoying it. We’re looking forward to delivering more of what you’ve asked for in the coming weeks and months. I hope for some, you recognize these enhancements as something you yourself indicated as important or overlooked when contributing to our survey.

A very special thank you to our print and digital subscribers who were willing to participate in our survey and to share the good (and oftentimes great!), the bad and the ugly. And to those of you who weren’t part of our May reader survey, consider this your personal invitation to reach out to me with your own “breakfast suggestions.”

If feedback is indeed the breakfast of champions, The Observer is eating like a king.

■ Karrine Brogitti is the publisher of The Observer and the Baker City Herald.

CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVES

U.S. PRESIDENT	U.S. SENATORS	U.S. REPRESENTATIVE
Joe Biden The White House 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. NW Washington, DC 20500 Comments: 202-456-1111	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
Gov. Kate Brown 160 State Capitol 900 Court St. Salem, OR 97301-4047 503-378-4582	STATE REPRESENTATIVES Bobby Levy, District 58 900 Court St. NE, H-376 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1458 Rep.BobbyLevy@state.or.us	STATE SENATOR Bill Hansell, District 29 900 Court St. NE, S-415 Salem, OR 97301 503-986-1729 Sen.BillHansell@state.or.us

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Phone: 541-963-3161

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

Email: news@lagrandeobserver.com

POSTMASTER Send address changes to: The Observer, 911 Jefferson Ave., La Grande, OR 97850

STAFF

Regional publisher Karrine Brogitti

Interim editor Andrew Cutler

News clerk Lisa Lester Kelly

Reporter Dick Mason

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Reporter Shannon Golden

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