

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Publisher

DANIEL WATTENBURGER
Managing Editor

TIM TRAINOR
Opinion Page Editor

Founded October 16, 1875

OUR VIEW

Our choices for Pendleton city council

There has been a dramatic change in the makeup of Pendleton City Council in the last few years. McKennon McDonald, just 27 years old, will have gone from the newest city councilor to the second-most tenured in just one term.

More changes are in store in 2018. In this election, longtime councilor Neil Brown is stepping aside, and the untimely death of John Brenne opened another council seat for a competitive race.

So with all this change, it's useful to make sure the new faces are vetted properly, let residents know who and what they are voting for, and introduce the best candidates to their future constituents.

Ward 1

It is an embarrassment of riches in Ward I, where two qualified candidates are running for the position.

We give the slight nod to Chuck LeValle, who has done yeoman's work in his short stint filling out Brenne's term — and has signed up for more. We think his unique viewpoint — as a full-time employee, young father and new city resident — adds a helpful perspective to the council that is currently missing. He has the opportunity to bring a fresh eye to old problems, but also it's clear he appreciates Pendleton for its traditions



Chuck LeValle



McKennon McDonald



Linda Neuman



Jake Cambier

and its character, and won't advocate for wholesale changes.

Carole Innes has plenty to offer as well, we just feel she checks many of the same boxes that current councilors already fill. We appreciate her long résumé of good work and volunteerism, as well as her hard work with door-to-door campaigning. And we imagine she will have plenty more opportunities to make a difference in the Pendleton community.

Musician Dave Chorazy rounds out the field, but we're not convinced he's ready to take on the responsibility of joining the council. He hasn't shown for most local forums, and we get the sense his heart isn't in it.

Ward 2

McKennon McDonald has not been challenged in her run for a second term in Ward 2. As we said in the top of our editorial, we needed McDonald's youth when she joined the council, and now

we need her experience and institutional knowledge.

That no one stood up to run against her is proof that McDonald's constituents are generally happy with her performance. No need for a write-in here.

Ward 3

It's never perfect when a citizen runs unopposed, automatically becoming a city councilor unless a write-in campaign upends them. It's hard for a voter to know that they will get a representative who is even interested, informed and open-minded about what the job may bring.

But Pendleton residents should rest relatively easy when they consider Linda Neuman's candidacy. A retired educator, Neuman is competent and experienced, and independent enough to look at city issues without undue prior bias. She says she plans to join the council with no "pet peeves or projects."

She is running unopposed for the position, and since the filing deadline passed, no one has promoted a write-in campaign against her. That means she's likely to join the council. We'll learn more about her if and when she does — but until then we won't be losing any sleep.

At large

Jake Cambier is running for re-election for his at-large seat, and is challenged by longtime council cynic Rex Morehouse.

It's another fun race. Cambier has done a good job getting up to speed on city policies and projects, and we think he's a welcome addition to the council. He's thoughtful and informed and takes the job seriously.

As we said last time he ran for council, we're big fans of Rex Morehouse. If everyone was as interested and involved in city government as he is, we'd be better off. And city council meetings sure would be more entertaining (although probably quite a bit longer!) But we do still think he does more good from the crowd, pestering the council and forcing them to answer questions from a detractor.

We support Cambier in his race for re-election. Although if you are displeased by recent council actions, Rex is your man.

Vote Tom Bailor for county commissioner

I'm disturbed that George Murdock feels that I am engaged in a negative campaign. The one issue I keep raising is transparency, openness in government, not secrecy. In fact, I've never used that word until now. Members of our community have asked me repeatedly about specific issues where it seems we need greater education and transparency. I feel compelled to raise the issue and elaborate with examples, as goal 1 in Oregon planning is citizen involvement. This is something that we can do better in Umatilla County.

Too many people have commented to me that they feel they are finding out many things after the fact, and that there is very little outreach from our county commissioners prior to making decisions. Specific issues raised by people that I have spoken with include decisions on EOTEC, the county commitments, community consultation on SIPs, the decision to move Veterans' Services after the county spent money fixing up the previous location, and that while we have fixed property tax increase limits in Oregon, our real market value keeps going up on county assessments.

Poor voter participation in Umatilla County is perhaps in part because people feel disenfranchised and disconnected, partly because many people are wholly unaware of the workings of county government. Documents and videos on the web are a good start but are a record of what has already occurred, opportunities for people to participate in dialogue with county commissioners are limited. We must do better.

This is not a personal attack on Mr. Murdock. I respect his time in public service, it is a difference in perspective. I believe we need leadership succession and multigenerational outlook. In a democracy people need deliberation and discourse to make choices and I believe it is our duty to participate in a government of the people, by the people, and for the people. That means voting and running for office.

I believe in citizen involvement in governance and in servant leadership. I have a master's degree in organizational leadership; I have an extensive background in cultural and natural resources management, environmental science, renewable energy, outreach, program management, and organizational development. Currently I am a self-employed small business owner working with leadership and wellness, aging, people struggling with disabilities and with physical and mental health challenges. I feel that I'm well qualified and that I offer a more diverse perspective than is currently being represented.

Tom Bailor
Pendleton

I have known Tom Bailor for several years, and have been impressed with his extensive knowledge of regional issues and opportunities. Tom has good experience in his past work with the Tribes on difficult policy issues, as well as his existing small business track record. Tom would bring innovation, vision, and diversity to the commissioner position. Tom has worked with a wide variety of people, from students to the elderly, and is well respected in his work.

I am sure that when the existing commissioners first took office, there was a steep learning curve. Tom is a quick and insightful study, and I have confidence in his ability to move into the position effectively.

Jeff Blackwood
Pendleton

Givens for commissioner

I support Larry Givens in his race for Umatilla County Commissioner. Although I do not know his opponent, I just can't see the case for making a change. Larry has been a conscientious and hard-working commissioner, and has given of his time and energy over and over again on behalf of the citizens of this county.

As a regular exhibitor at the Umatilla County Fair, I appreciate his efforts to get the fair up and running at its new location on Airport Road. Larry knew that we long ago had outgrown the old fairgrounds in town, and he worked with the city of Hermiston to develop the new fairgrounds out by the airport into a first-class facility. Last year's fair, the first in the new location, was a great success.

Whenever you go to a farm-related event, you will see Larry there. Whenever you have a problem involving county government, you can count on Larry to roll up his sleeves and try to address it. That's why I think we should keep him in place, working for us in Umatilla County.

Marianne Smelser
Hermiston

Murdock for commissioner

I am writing to endorse my friend, George Murdock, for re-election to the Umatilla County Commission.

George and I have clearly different political stripes. I identify as a progressive, left-leaning Democrat, and George makes no secret about his personal politics as a Republican. I voted for Hillary, and he voted for our current president. So as part of my recovery from the shock of the 2016 election, I asked George if he would sit down with me to have an honest, respectful dialogue about our respective politics. This was my attempt to better understand the other side, and it turned out to be an incredibly worthwhile exercise for both of us. I recommend it to any patriotic citizen sincerely interested in the future of our country and in bringing people together.

YOUR VIEWS

I have found George to be a thoughtful and moral man, with a complex set of values that don't fit neatly into any D vs. R box — clearly important attributes for someone holding a non-partisan office. He is considerate and reflective, and his questions of me showed a real desire to understand the "other side." He knows how to seek the common ground, cares about people, and is appreciative of the importance of the trust that citizens of this county have put in our county commissioners.

William (Bill) Aney
Pendleton

Umatilla County is extremely fortunate to have attracted a seasoned and successful former school administrator to a county commissioner seat. It is in our best interest to support George Murdock in his bid for a second term and hope that less experienced commissioners will learn from George the rudiments of strong fiscal oversight, the ability to negotiate complex relationships, and the value of being in your office available to county employees and the public alike. You don't just walk off the street with these skill sets.

Fritz and Karen Hill
Pendleton

Please join me in supporting George Murdock for county commissioner. In his first term as county commissioner he has demonstrated multiple examples of his "get 'er done" way of achieving positive results in a transparent and forthright way.

Examples include the initiation of the Charter Review Process, which could put his position in jeopardy but was the right thing to do. He was instrumental in formulating the EOTC transfer agreement; a leader in developing a plan to partner with the city of Hermiston to provide new infrastructure to create new housing in North Hermiston; and resurrected the Drug Court and created plans to double the number of deputies for Umatilla County, among his numerous achievements.

Chuck Wood
Pendleton

George Murdock has proven himself a very capable county commissioner and deserves to be re-elected.

George is a person that gives his all to a job, does his homework and cares for the better good of Umatilla County. The county is in the best financial shape in decades, and a big reason for that is George's leadership and insistence on spending public resources prudently.

Tom Winn
Helix

Innes for Pendleton council

I have known Carole Innes for more than 15 years. I have found her to be an enthusiastic supporter of Pendleton. I have seen her chair finance committees and

foundation committees. I have observed her coordinating all the parking of RVs for the Pendleton Round-Up through the Altrusa organization and Pendleton Chamber of Commerce. She has been a volunteer on a couple citizen review committees for prospective school superintendents. She takes her responsibilities very seriously and spends due diligence investigating the best candidate for Pendleton.

Carole will be a terrific addition to our city council.

Wiki Lange
Pendleton

Vote for McLeod-Skinner

Jamie McLeod-Skinner, candidate for the U.S. Congress in our district, has dedicated her life to helping others and the environment we live in.

At a young age, Jamie spent several years in Tanzania where her mother was a teacher. This experience started Jamie on her way to a career in public service.

Her desire to better understand legal proceedings in water and environmental issues led Jamie to the University of Oregon, to earn a Juris Doctorate in environmental and natural resources law.

In the past 20 years, Jamie has facilitated finding sustainable solutions for urban and rural communities, especially in water and other environmental issues.

Jamie McLeod-Skinner is our Congressional candidate; she steps up and works hard. She has dedicated her life to public service work, working for people like you and me.

Vickie Hendricks
Pendleton

Send Jim Cray to Congress

Jim's campaign 100 percent funded by individual donations — no PACS, corporations, or special interests. He has signed the Candidates With a Contract (he helped write it), focusing on combating corruption in politics and campaign finance reform. He is the only Oregon candidate to have signed this.

He has also signed the No NRA Money pledge — again, the only Oregon candidate to sign this pledge. And, he has signed the OFF Fossil Fuels Act pledge, HR3671, introduced by Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii), one of 121 candidates who have signed this pledge. He has received a Candidate Distinction from Moms Demand Action Gun Sense, and is endorsed by Mayor Embanks of Madras and Manuel Gutierrez, Hermiston city councilor and member of the Hispanic Advisory Committee.

With Jim Cray as our CD2 Representative, we won't have to stand on the corner and ask Where's Walden?

Barbara "BJ" Thomas
Bend