

O EAST OREGONIAN PINION

ANDREW CUTLER
Publisher/Editor

KATHRYN B. BROWN
Owner

WYATT HAAPT JR.
News Editor

JADE McDOWELL
Hermiston Editor

TUESDAY, MAY 4, 2021

Founded October 16, 1875

A4

OUR VIEW

It's your patriotic duty

It's time for us all to rally together as Americans. It's tragic that the COVID-19 vaccine is seen as a partisan weapon, rather than as the life-saving and economy-restoring tool that it actually is.

If you have not received the COVID-19 vaccine, please reevaluate your decision.

The COVID-19 pandemic is not a partisan issue. It is an infectious disease that has killed at least 574,000 Americans as of May 2. It causes disabling symptoms in some people, yet most have no or minimal effects. Short of daily testing, it is impossible to know if you are infected and a carrier of the virus, capable of infecting others more vulnerable than you.

Umatilla County Commissioner John Shafer deserves kudos for standing tall to deliver a message that should not be necessary but, because of the era we live in, is needed now more than ever.

Last week, Shafer sent a message, loud and clear: Get the COVID-19 vaccine.

"I want people to know — don't be afraid of the vaccine," he said.

Shafer and fellow commissioner George Murdock spoke last week regarding the mystery swirling around how a vaccine designed to help people could become a flashpoint politicized issue. It's much like abortion, climate change, federal spending, or any other subject a corps of misinformed political theorists and television pundits can stir up to get ratings.

On April 21, President Biden described getting vaccinated as a "patriotic duty" for Americans. We agree.

There is historical precedent for this view. During the 1918-19 influenza epidemic, the American Red Cross stated, "The man or woman or child who will not wear a mask now is a dangerous slacker." Americans were urged to think of following health precautions as their patriotic duty. Back then, vaccination was not an option.

A certain amount of caution is normal and expected when a new vaccine becomes available. That is why vaccines go through intensive clinical trials as required by the agencies whose role it is to safeguard the public, such as the Food and Drug Administration and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Vaccines that are available in the U.S. have been tested and deemed safe. When there was even a question of safety — such as the case with the Johnson & Johnson vaccine causing blood clots in a small number of people — officials pulled the vaccine to do further analysis.

In the words of Joe Fiumara, county public health director: "I think people are recognizing that this is our path out of here," he said. "People who were more on the fence aren't so on the fence now that millions and millions across the country are receiving it with very low side effects or down side."

Turn off the TV. Listen to the public health experts. Be a patriot. Get vaccinated.



YOUR VIEWS

Commitment and leadership are important

Our community is truly experiencing a rare occurrence. We have an abundance of interested candidates seeking a seat on Pendleton School Board District 16 R. What an exciting problem and/or gift to experience.

When I first joined our community, it was 1995 and I worked at the *East Oregonian* under the wise leadership of Amy Bedford. One early task was to visit the tribal school, Nixyaawii, to establish a relationship with classroom teachers and students to use the *East Oregonian* in classrooms as a teaching tool and source of news.

With strong leadership and commitment, Nixyaawii has continued to grow and develop into a very successful school. The decisions and guidance of tribal leaders and school board members were used to encourage trust from the community and commitment from the leaders. What a wise way to lead by example.

We educate our students in many ways. Personal responsibility, example and completion of commitments is a strong message and influence to our children, our neighbors and community members. Ms. Spencer is serving on Nixyaawii School Board. It is an honor to serve once and to be voted to serve a second term is reflective of the trust, confidence and leadership skills she has developed while serving and should honor her commitment by completing this term of office at Nixyaawii.

Mr. Gregg has shown interest in serving his community. He too values education and knows it is the pathway forward for our next generation. He has earned our trust in our community, his commitment to his family displays his values and his willingness to work hard reveals his commitment in all that he does.

How blessed our community is to have caring, committed candidates to serve on our school boards. Let's be grateful and have both of these strong leaders serve and share their leadership skills and sense of responsibility.

Sylvia Clawson
Pendleton

Keep equipment, facilities up to date with 30-148

Take a look around and you'll notice western Umatilla County is growing fast. It's important that our emergency response capability is able to keep up.

You can also track the growth in our area through the number of calls for fires and emergency response. At more than 5,000 calls for service in the past 12 months, the current vehicle fleet is running nearly nonstop. We need a plan to make sure we're able to replace these vehicles as they reach the end of their expected lifespans.

Measure 30-148 invests in facilities, vehicles, and equipment for Umatilla County Fire District No. 1. It will provide our first responders with modern tools while saving expensive maintenance costs to keep outdated vehicles on the road. It also makes sure they have the most up-to-date safety equipment.

In the end, making this wise investment today will lead to cost savings down the line while giving our local fire district the tools it needs to continue providing

Letters deadline for May 18 elections

The *East Oregonian* does not run endorsements of more than 400 words.

The *East Oregonian* will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary.

We run local letters of endorsement on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by 5 p.m. on Friday, May 7. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to *East Oregonian*, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, OR 97801.

We will publish our last letters on Saturday, May 15. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is May 18.

a high level of service. I'll be voting in support of Measure 30-148.

Bruce Jones
Hermiston

Spencer's approach sets her apart

I have known Briana her whole life and enjoyed watching her grow into a compassionate adult. I had served on the CTUIR Education and Training Committee with Briana, where I witnessed her professionalism and passion for education. She sees through a lens of cultural awareness, which brings a well-rounded perspective to the table.

The public and I have had ample opportunities in the past few weeks to analyze the aims and objectives of the various competitors in the upcoming elections. Briana Spencer's honest and practical approach sets her apart from the other candidates. She has shown great concern for the community residents and is willing to listen to people's problems.

I am writing today to show my support for her Pendleton School District Board Position 7 campaign. She has my vote.

Eugena Burnside-Stacona
Pendleton

Spencer is a voice of reason

I am a traditional health worker-family support specialist in the state of Oregon. I write this letter to kindly and enthusiastically endorse Briana Spencer for Pendleton School District, Position 7.

I am an enrolled member of the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation and have had the pleasure of knowing Briana since we were children. Since youth, Briana has been a voice of reason and a person that never hesitated to stand up for those afraid to use their voice. She is articulate, intelligent and has an infectious smile.

The Pendleton School District has the opportunity to benefit from a person willing to serve and willing to stand up for all the students in the Pendleton School District. Please consider voting for Briana. She is the right person to serve your district.

Sierra Quaempts
Pendleton

Spencer a demonstrated leader

During the past year I have been impressed by Briana Spencer's involvement with community activities.

She has consistently demonstrated her ability to organize and lead large events, and has worked constructively with the city of Pendleton to ensure these events were safe and complied with city ordinances. She is solutions-oriented, well

organized, articulate and energetic.

I believe these talents and experiences will be valuable to the Pendleton School Board, and she has my endorsement for Position 7.

John Turner
Pendleton

Spencer an exceptional candidate

I support Briana Spencer for the Pendleton School Board, Position 7.

I am honored and proud to stand by Briana. She has a voice that is spirited, a courageous attitude, and is highly knowledgeable. Throughout the years, she has shown dedication and compassion for her community by sharing tools and resources, volunteering for different functions, and advocating for various causes.

Those skills and accomplishments make Ms. Spencer an exceptional candidate for the position. She is an avid supporter of education and I know she will do great things.

Fabian Spencer
Mission

Let's stop this border disorder

Upon crossing into Idaho on Interstate 84 there used to be a sign reading "Idaho is too great to litter." I used to joke the sign should read "Idaho is too illiterate to be great."

The joke hit home, however, when a Greater Idaho leaflet landed in my mail, claiming that I'd be better off if I was an Idahoan. It would be effortless, I wouldn't have to move, they would simply elasticize Idaho's boundary and stretch it around Oregon's more desirable acreage. That done, I'd supposedly be happy with lacking infrastructure; for example, why waste good tax money filling in those unattended pot holes.

No, I live in Eastern Oregon and hopefully will continue to do so. Besides, I wouldn't be caught dead driving around with license plates that champion Famous Potatoes. It's true Eastern Oregon is often overlooked by Salem or that we have to apologize for Portland's behavior — but that's no reason to surround us by Idaho.

There are alternatives. If I want the Idaho experience I can always move to Douglas or Josephine counties and watch old episodes of "Duck Dynasty." Or, why not physically move Idaho. Ship it to the Middle East; plunk it down right between the two other "I" countries, Iran and Iraq. It would at least give mask-less Ammon Bundy something to whine about.

Meanwhile, I'm happy living here with Eastern Oregon's present borders, values and laws. Or maybe I'll create a new movement. I'll call it Greater Hawaii.

Whit Deschner
Baker City

EDITORIALS

Unsigned editorials are the opinion of the East Oregonian editorial board. Other columns, letters and cartoons on this page express the opinions of the authors and not necessarily that of the East Oregonian.

LETTERS

The East Oregonian welcomes original letters of 400 words or less on public issues and public policies for publication in the newspaper and on our website. The newspaper reserves the right to withhold letters that address concerns about individual letters and products or letters that infringe on the rights of private citizens. Letters must be signed by the author and include the city of residence and a daytime phone number. The phone number will not be published. Unsigned letters will not be published.

SEND LETTERS TO:

editor@eastoregonian.com,
or via mail to Andrew Cutler,
211 S.E. Byers Ave. Pendleton, OR 97801