

OPINION

VOICE of the CHIEFTAIN

Your votes are more important than ever

The upcoming race for Oregon governor will be historical in a number of aspects, not the least of which is the notion that for the first time in a long time, there appears to be real competition on all sides. While that is problematic for the candidates, it is good news for voters.

Yet for the state, the key piece of the election will be a simple one — voters must vote.

The three candidates — former state House Speaker Tina Kotek, a Democrat; former House Minority Leader Christine Drazan, a Republican; and former state Sen. Betsy Johnson, running unaffiliated — all bring different elements to the electoral table. They also present voters with a choice. In a Republican bastion such as Eastern Oregon, the choice, of course, for most will be Drazan. Typically, for voters in a Republican stronghold the candidate's credentials — whether they can govern effectively — means little as long as they have a "R" behind their name.

That's not unprecedented or unusual. Certain areas of the nation are known to have strong ties to either party.

The hard part, though, for voters will be the very act of filling out the ballot. We, as a nation, face a dwindling interest in participating in the democratic process. There are surely many reasons for this circumstance, but the reality is when those who are eligible do not exercise their right to vote, democracy is weakened.

The governor's race will also be significant because it is already beginning to tighten up. Where months ago, Kotek could easily appear to be a shoo-in, that scenario has changed. Right now, many political pundits see the governors race as a toss-up.

That means your vote will count more than ever this November. It is easy to be disenchanted with our political process. One glance at the national news is usually enough to drop one's confidence in our system, but it is important to remember that our democracy remains vibrant. It will not remain energetic, though, if voters don't participate.

So, when that ballot arrives in the mail this year, don't put it off to the side. Instead, find time to review the candidates — even if you are certain you have picked one already — and think carefully about what your choice will mean for our great state.

And vote.



LETTERS to the EDITOR

'Digital only' savings at Safeway are unfair

Today I went to Safeway and the first thing I saw was a notice that the sale prices of everything in this fruit display was "digital only." This leaves out many of our visitors and regulars to this store. A friend of mine has been walking to the store to get small amounts of groceries. He does not have a cellphone. He has an old rotary phone, he doesn't get the benefit of these ads.

The paper ads have taken the \$10 for \$50 benefit away. In small print in the paper is a \$5 for \$25 but it is digital only. In a time when groceries are getting more expensive for less merchandising, people are having a hard time paying their rent (if they are lucky to have a place to live), pay their utilities and other bills, buy gas. Every day the media mentions the problems with food needs yet Safeway/Albertsons has chosen to ignore these people. In the ad Aug. 17 there was cheese for \$.74, blueberries for \$.97, orange juice for \$1.83. These are just examples of the "digital only offers." These foods are nutritional especially for children. I get SNAP, which I am grateful for, but that doesn't cover the basic cost of living. Everything has gone up in price, utilities, rent, gas, etc.

I have another friend who drives out of town to do her shopping. She doesn't want to encourage Safeway/Albertsons markets to make more money on the backs of the poor while the entitled get the benefits. I have gone to Safeway for years. If there was another big grocery store in our area, I would change. I am thoroughly disgusted with this trend to help the rich and step on the poor. Shame on you! Are you going to "digital" oatmeal, bread, vegetables, meat, eggs? Look around you and see the poverty, talk to some of the people, see how they feel about the changes.

I may have SNAP dollars but I still look for the buys. It is time to take back our benefits and tell the CEOs we will not sit around and let the rich tell us we must have a cellphone to get special prices. I for one do not want "big brother" know-

ing every step I take, where I am and where I am going. So far we haven't lost our "Just For You." There is little privacy left in this world. At least let the grocery store be safe.

I know our store here in Enterprise can't do anything about this but if enough people get together and let the big guys know that they can't get away with robbing the poor, maybe we can get something done.

Diana A. Bolin
Enterprise

We need to know the people we are voting for

Everyone knows that it is the right and the duty of American citizens to vote for their choices to represent us in all aspects of government whether it be city, county, state or national. It is the way we choose the kind of city, county, state or national governments that affect our lives. We know how important it is to vote, but we also need to know and have a relationship with the individuals we vote to represent us.

We need to know the persons we vote for. We ought to know what their values are, what they have done in the past and the goals they want to achieve for us if they are elected. They should know us and our expectations of our representatives. And it takes our effort to make this happen.

For instance, Joe Yetter is a candidate for U.S. representative and he is expected to be here in the county on Sunday, Sept. 11. Our district, which he will represent if elected, includes about half of Oregon and he is spending all of his time now getting around the district to meet the voters. His opponent was here recently and also met with some voters.

I believe it is our responsibility to get to know and to decide which of these candidates will better represent us. I want to vote for the person whose values and goals and abilities will serve the people in Oregon's Congressional District 2. I hope you do, too.

I hope you will meet Joe Yetter next Sunday at the Enterprise City Park at 6 p.m.

Bring a lawn chair or blanket to sit on and enjoy dessert with Joe. For more information, you can call me at 541-432-3252 or email me at evelynswart@gmail.com.

Evelyn Swart
Joseph

Appreciative of Carper's expression of American pride

My wife and I have attended Chief Joseph Days for many years and attended the rodeo this year on Saturday night after visiting with friends in the Hospitality Room. In addition to being an elected official in Washington state, a retired Army lieutenant colonel, competing in many rodeo arenas, owning a second business and home in Wallowa County, our Wallowa County business has been a Chief Joseph Days sponsor for years.

We appreciated and understood the need for announcer Jody Carper's words of support for those who served this country and his expression of American pride and patriotism. After giving many talks on the American flag and patriotism, writing a booklet on flag etiquette, explaining the meaning of and leading the Pledge of Allegiance, my children placing my words in a booklet, I receive appreciation from many people for my words, just as we appreciated Jody Carper's patriotic words.

We were appalled reading some were not appreciative, nor apparently understood, Jody Carper's words of patriotism and thanksgiving for living in a country founded on God-given values where freedoms are taken for granted. Today forces work to divide us. Jody Carper's words offered encouragement to come together, overcoming all that tries to divide and destroy us.

To those who object to his words of pride for living in the greatest country the world as ever known, we ask that you think of the freedoms you take for granted and how you would feel if you did not have those freedoms.

Skip Novakovich
Kennewick, Washington