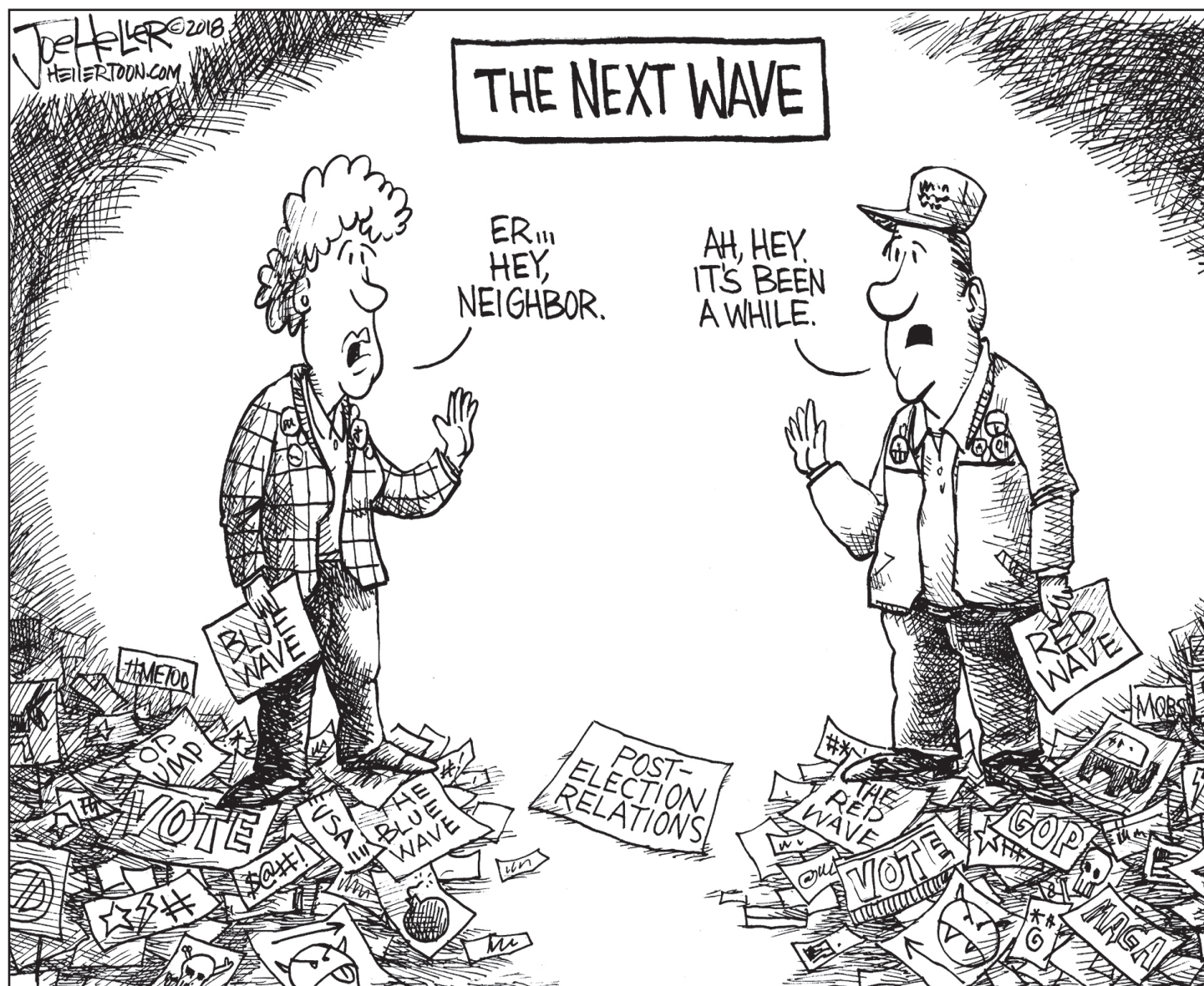


OPINION

The First Amendment

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition their Government for a redress of grievances.



Letters to the Editor Policy
 The Sentinel welcomes letters to the editor as part of a community discussion of issues on the local, state and national level.

Emailed letters are preferred. Handwritten or typed letters must be signed. All letters need to include full name, address and phone number; only name and city will be printed. Letters should be limited to about 300 words. Letters are subject to editing for length, grammar and clarity. Publication of any letter is not guaranteed and depends on space available and the volume of letters received.

Letters that are anonymous, libelous, argumentative, sarcastic or contain accusations that are unsourced or without documentation will not be published.

Letters containing poetry or from outside The Sentinel readership area will only be published at the discretion of the editor.

Political/Election Letters:

Election-related letters must address pertinent or timely issues of interest to our readers at-large.

Letters must 1) Not be a part of letter-writing campaigns on behalf of (or by) candidates; 2) Ensure any information about a candidate is accurate, fair and not from second-hand knowledge or hearsay; and 3) explain the reasons to support candidates based on personal experience and perspective rather than partisanship and campaign-style rhetoric.

Candidates themselves may not use the letters to the editor column to outline their views and platforms or to ask for votes; this constitutes paid political advertising.

As with all letters and advertising content, the newspaper, at the sole discretion of the publisher, general manager and editor, reserves the right to reject any letter that doesn't follow the above criteria.

Send letters to:

nhickson@cgsentinel.com or cmay@cgsentinel.com

HOW TO CONTACT YOUR REPS

Oregon state representatives

• **Sen. Floyd Prozanski**
 District 4 State Senator
 PO Box 11511
 Eugene, Ore. 97440
 Phone: 541-342-2447
 Email: sen.floydprozanski@state.or.us

• **Rep. Cedric Hayden**
 Republican District 7 State Representative
 900 Court St. NE
 Salem, Ore. 97301
 Phone: 503-986-1407
 Website: www.leg.state.or.us/hayden
 Email: rep.cedrichayden@state.or.us

Oregon federal representatives

• **Rep. Peter DeFazio**
 (House of Representatives)
 405 East 8th Ave.
 #2030
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: defazio.house.gov/contact/email-peter
 Phone: 541-465-6732

• **Sen. Ron Wyden**
 405 East 8th Ave., Suite 2020
 Eugene, Ore. 97401
 Email: wyden.senate.gov
 Phone: (541) 431-0229

• **Sen. Jeff Merkley**
 Email: merkley.senate.gov
 Phone: 541-465-6750

Voting is more than just a privilege



different reasons. Sometimes it was because I connected with the ideals of one candidate over another. Other times it was

represent us. For that reason, this time it wasn't about enjoying the privilege of voting as much as it is about accepting the

or what measures do or don't pass. But to *not* vote would mean compromising my own ideals as an American, as well as the expectation our forefathers had for each of us when they fought for our right to vote in a democracy protected by the Constitution.

As I said, there have been moments where the thought of casting my vote in this midterm election has left me shaking my head. But when the votes are finally tallied, knowing that I took the time to cast my vote will keep me from hanging my head instead.

And regardless of the results, I support your choice. Not as a Democrat. Not as Republican or Independent. But as an American.

Write to Ned Hickson at nhickson@cgsentinel.com

From the Managing Editor's Desk

Ned Hickson

because I felt their vision or reason behind a particular measure was better defined and more suited the temperament of our changing world politically, economically or socially.

Over the years, I have voted for Democrats, Republicans and Independents.

I even voted for Ross Perot, whatever he was.

In each case, voting was a privilege I enjoyed because, no matter who won, I still felt our country or state would be in capable hands.

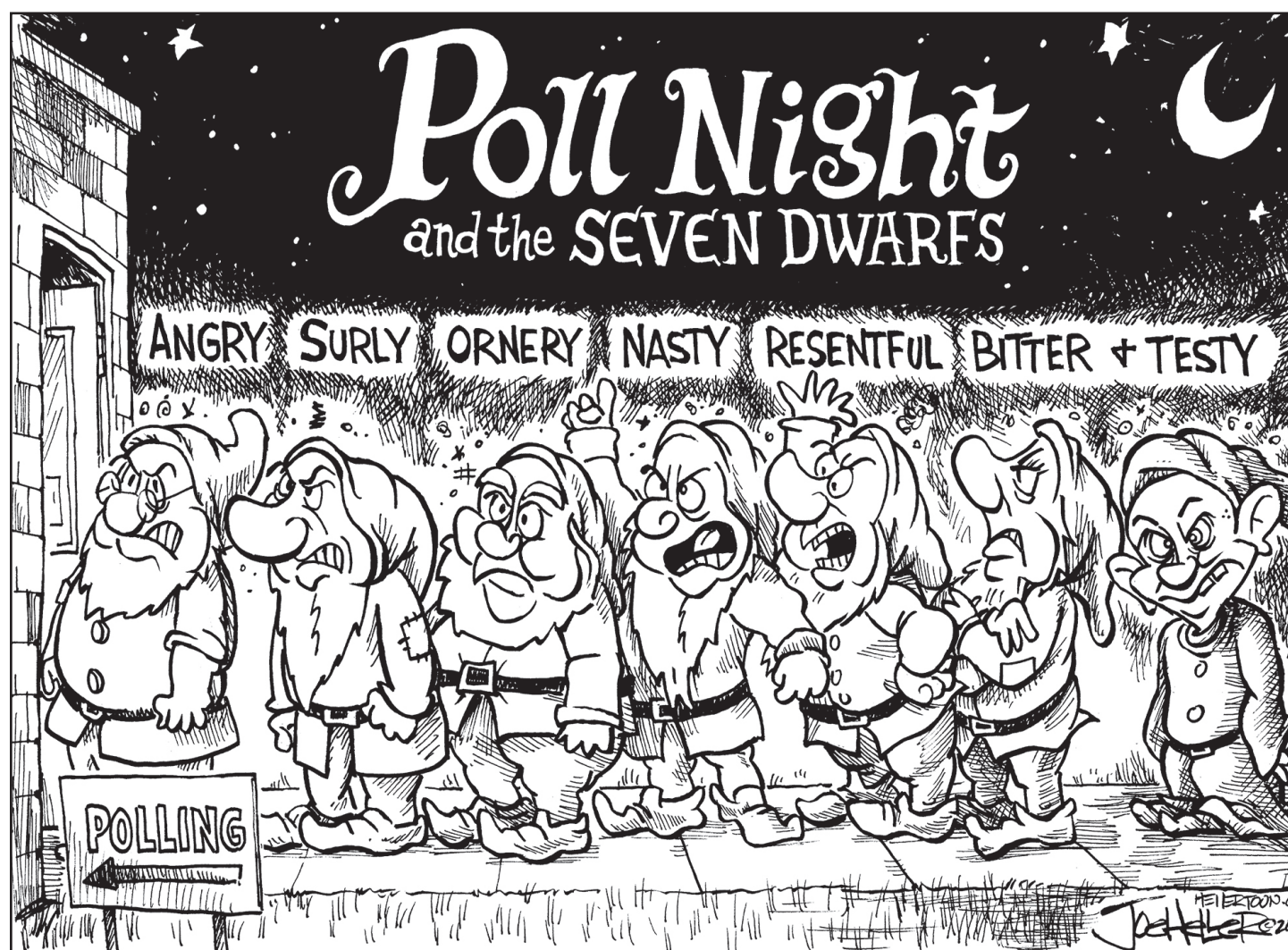
This time, I'm not so sure as the importance of partisanship seems to outway the needs of those elected to

obligation I have, as an American and Lane County resident, to educate myself and make an informed decision — not by relying on spoon-fed rhetoric, headlines, carefully staged interviews, rants on social media or even some of the news sources that claim to be unbiased.

I had to roll up my sleeves, dig in and do the work so that, come Election Day, I could do the *right* thing instead of the easy thing.

It still means I will have to accept — and live with — the results, no matter who is elected to which positions

There have been moments over the last several weeks where the thought of casting my vote for a candidate or measure left me shaking my head. I've spoken with several people who have told me that the the political rhetoric from both sides has soured them to the point that they would not vote in the midterms. I understand this. However, I have always believed that our right to vote is not merely a privilege we enjoy as Americans; it is an obligation. Most years, it has simply been a privilege as I went to the voting booth or mailed in my ballot in support of candidates or measures for



Cottage Grove Sentinel

(541) 942-3325

Administration

Jenna Bartlett, Group Publisher
 Gary Manly, General Manager Ext. 1207
gmanly@cgsentinel.com
 Allison Miller, Multimedia Marketing Specialist..... Ext. 1213
amiller@cgsentinel.com
 Gerald Santana Multimedia Marketing Specialist.....Ext. 1216
gsantana@cgsentinel.com

Editorial

Ned Hickson, Managing Editor.....541-902-3520
nhickson@cgsentinel.com
 Caitlyn May, Editor Ext. 1212
cmay@cgsentinel.com
 Zach Silva, Sport Editor Ext. 1204
zsilva@cgsentinel.com

Customer Service

Mandi Jacobs, Office Manager..... Ext. 1200
 Legals, Classifieds Ext. 1200
mjacobs@cgsentinel.com

Production

Ron Annis, Production Supervisor Ext.1215
graphics@cgsentinel.com

(USP 133880)

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