

Now is the time to voice your opinion, vote

Election Day is just around the corner, and if you have not done so already, please weigh in on the issues facing our county and our country by filling out your ballot and turning it in at an official ballot drop box by 8 p.m. Tuesday, Nov. 8.

After a tumultuous campaign season filled with mud-slinging and negativity, it can be easy to be discouraged.

Maybe you feel no candidates represent you. Maybe you feel your vote as a minority party doesn't matter. Maybe you feel the whole system is corrupt, and nothing you can do will change anything.

While these feelings are certainly understandable, we urge you to pick up your pen and take a few minutes to fill in a few ovals, marking your choice for the people to represent you in the important decisions that will be made in the months ahead.

Even if you feel as though no suitable choices exist in a national race or a state race, the ballot is filled with a number of positions far closer to home.

The race for county sheriff, for example, impacts every person in the county, and only county residents have the opportunity to decide who will lead the county law enforcement agency.

Most cities in Grant County will have the opportunity to

select a mayor or city councilor. These people directly represent you in important discussions and decisions that will have a noticeable impact not only in your community but on your wallet as well.

While it may be difficult to choose between the candidates, especially for local volunteer positions, the Eagle has provided resources to keep you informed. Search the candidates on our website. Read the articles from our Capital Bureau. Look at our Election Guide that was published in the paper Oct. 19 or search for it on our website.

Many of the issues can be confusing, but we've tried to make it as simple as possible, so you know what and whom you're voting for.

Take a few minutes. Inform yourself. Then cast a vote.

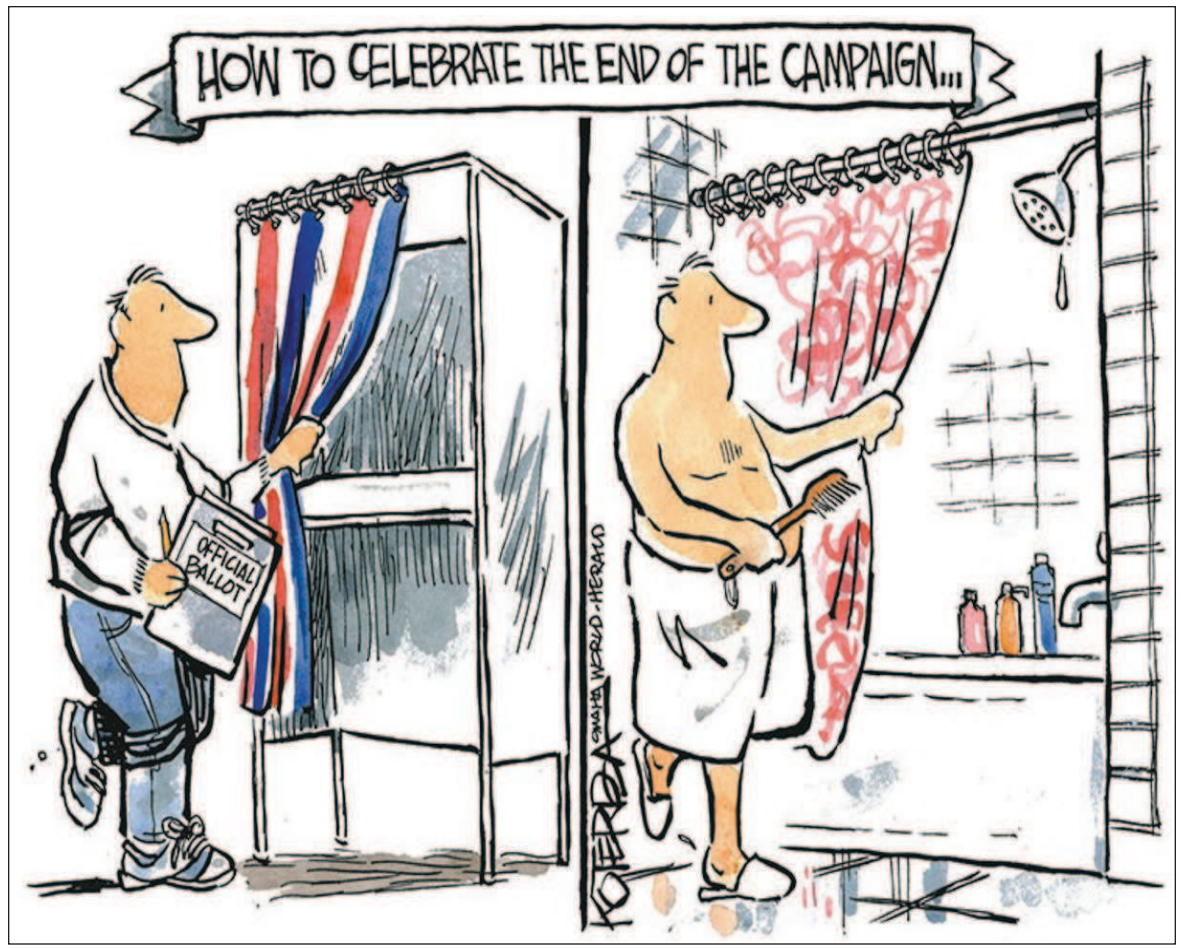
It's that simple.

If nothing else, consider it the last task you must complete to bring an end to this ugly campaign season.

The candidates and measures you choose may not win in the election, but at least you'll know you tried.

You'll know you did everything you could to make positive changes in your county and your country.

And, if you're dissatisfied with the results, you've got a while to start campaigning for the next election.



GUEST COMMENT

Make mental health a priority

By Susan Johnson
To the Blue Mountain Eagle

Many of us ignore physical symptoms — an aching tooth, a shoulder which locks up, early signs of diabetes or high blood pressure. Maybe we're afraid of the dentist, don't want to face possible surgery or don't want to deal with medications and lifestyle changes.

We may also ignore signs of depression and other mental illnesses for a variety of reasons. We might feel mental illness is a sign of weakness, or fear that friends, family or employers would judge us or discriminate against us. Already, too many Americans experience prejudice, discrimination, abuse and victimization based on a mental health diagnosis. And for too long, Americans paid for health insurance that did not recognize that treatment for mental health and substance use disorders is as essential as other medical treatment.

It's time for us to let people who are living with mental health conditions know that they are not alone, and that this administration is providing important protections for people experiencing mental illness.

A recent report from the Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Parity Task Force includes a series of new actions and recommendations to ensure that insurance coverage for mental health and substance use disorder services is comparable to — or at parity with — general medical care because, just as with other illnesses, we can't afford to neglect our mental health.

Mental illnesses take huge tolls on individuals and society as a whole. The annual direct and indirect economic costs of mental illnesses in the United States, particularly untreated mental illnesses, are estimated to be in the hundreds of billions. Productivity and income are reduced, healthcare costs for other illnesses rise and addiction, homelessness and disability rates rise. Most importantly, individuals and families suffer.

According to the most recent statistics, 43.4 million adults aged 18 or older experienced some form of mental illness in the past year, and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention project depression will be the second leading cause of disability worldwide by 2020.

Though disabling when symptoms persist, depression is treatable, and most Americans greatly improve with treatment, services and recovery supports. Signs of depression include experiencing some of the following, most of the day, for at least two weeks:

- Persistent sad, anxious or "empty" mood
- Feelings of hopelessness or pessimism
- Irritability
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness or helplessness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Decreased energy or fatigue
- Moving or talking more slowly
- Feeling restless or having trouble sitting still
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening or oversleeping

- Appetite and/or weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, or suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps or digestive problems without a clear physical cause and/or that do not ease even with treatment

Physical diseases like diabetes, arthritis or heart disease can increase your risk of depression. Factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, family history, major life changes and where you live can also play a role in depression.

Help is available. If you or someone you love exhibits signs of depression or another mental illness, the first step is to get screened. In Oregon, you can call or visit Alcohol and Drug Help Line at 1-800-923-4357, Mental Health Crisis/Suicide at 1-800-273-8255 or Youthline at 1-877-968-8491 for assistance.

For providers near you, visit Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's Treatment Services Locator, or call 1-800-662-HELP (4357). If someone is in immediate danger, call 9-1-1.

The National Institute of Mental Health has a list of suggestions to help support treatment. You can also find more information at SAMHSA's website or at mentalhealth.gov.

Mental health is essential to overall health. Make mental health a priority!

Susan Johnson is the regional director of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Region 10.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Bacteria of truth grows every day'

To the Editor:

Running for the highest office in the land, and she can't pass a criminal background check. The bacteria of truth grows every day.

W. Toop
Canyon City

Robocalls and junk faxes illegal

To the Editor:

In light of being interrupted multiple times by junk faxes and robo-calls, I'd like to give my neighbors some information on laws pertaining to this issue.

As of Oct. 16, 2013, federal law requires prior express written consent for all autodialed (robo) and/or pre-recorded calls/texts sent/made to cell phones and pre-recorded (robo) calls made to residential land lines. All unsolicited calls and texts made specifically cell phones are 100 percent illegal!

Congress first addressed annoying telemarketing calls and junk faxes in the Telephone Consumer Protection Act of 1991 that amended the

Communications Act of 1934 and has since been re-amended in 2013, 2015 and 2016.

Under the act, robocalls are unsolicited prerecorded calls to landline home telephones and all autodialed or prerecorded calls or text messages to cell phones, emergency numbers and patient rooms in health care facilities. SMS text messages to cell phones are considered "calls" under the TCPA and illegal. Purely informational calls and calls for non-commercial purposes are exempt only if they are made to a landline; even then it applies only to calls that are manually dialed and do not contain a pre-recorded message. The TCPA provides for either actual damages or statutory damages ranging from \$500 to \$1,500 per unsolicited fax/call/message.

Dishonest companies ignored portions of the law and/or outsourced their operations overseas, so Congress amended the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003 (Public Law No. 108-187) making it illegal to send junk faxes from within the United States, and made it illegal to send them into the United States from countries outside our borders like Mexico, India and China.

Oregon Sen. Gordon Smith

wrote the Junk Fax Prevention Act of 2005: senders of an unsolicited advertisement to a fax machine are strictly liable for a minimum of \$500 per page; even if one sends an unsolicited fax by accident, minimum liability of \$500 per page attaches. Before you say, "It's a waste of time," think about this: If Sen. Gordon Smith could consider your time and supplies valuable enough to write a law that penalizes junk faxers \$500 per page, then why wouldn't you?

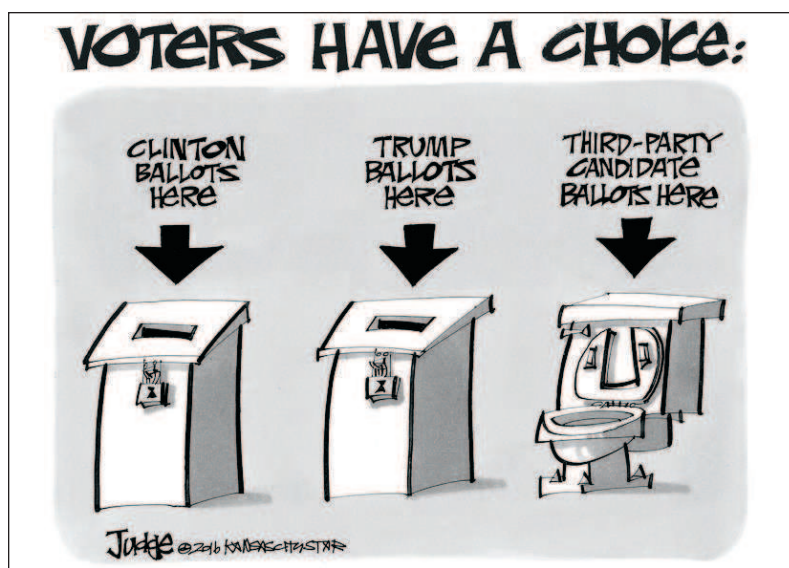
Lynn Johnson
Bena

Town cleanup a notable difference

To the Editor:

You may have noticed the people cleaning up around town on Saturday, Oct. 22. These were people who donated their time and effort without so much as a whimper, without asking for thanks or recognition. Their work made a notable difference, and I would like them to know they made a difference by giving up their entire Saturday simply to help others.

Kay Cotham
John Day



WHERE TO WRITE

GRANT COUNTY

- **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humbolt St., Suite 280, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0059. Fax: 541-575-2248.
- **Canyon City** — P.O. Box 276, Canyon City 97820. Phone: 541-575-0509. Fax: 541-575-0515. Email: toccc1862@centurylink.net.
- **Dayville** — P.O. Box 321, Dayville 97825. Phone: 541-987-2188. Fax: 541-987-2187. Email: dville@ortelco.net
- **John Day** — 450 E. Main St, John Day, 97845. Phone: 541-575-0028. Fax: 541-575-1721. Email: cityjd@centurytel.net.
- **Long Creek** — P.O. Box 489, Long Creek 97856. Phone: 541-421-3601. Fax: 541-421-3075. Email: info@cityoflongcreek.com.
- **Monument** — P.O. Box 426, Monument 97864. Phone and fax: 541-934-2025. Email: cityofmonument@centurytel.net.
- **Mt. Vernon** — P.O. Box 647, Mt. Vernon 97865. Phone: 541-932-4688. Fax: 541-932-4222. Email: cmtv@ortelco.net.
- **Prairie City** — P.O. Box 370, Prairie City 97869. Phone: 541-820-3605. Fax: 820-3566. Email: pchall@ortelco.net.
- **Seneca** — P.O. Box 208, Seneca 97873. Phone and fax: 541-542-2161. Email: senecaoregon@gmail.com.

SALEM

- **Gov. Kate Brown, D** — 254 State Capitol, Salem 97310. Phone: 503-378-3111. Fax: 503-378-6827. Website: www.governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
- **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: (503) 986-1180. Website: www.leg.state.or.us (includes Oregon

Constitution and Oregon Revised Statutes).

- **Oregon Legislative Information** — (For updates on bills, services, capitol or messages for legislators) — 800-332-2313.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

- **The White House**, 1600 Pennsylvania Ave. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20500; Phone-comments: 202-456-1111; Switchboard: 202-456-1414.
- **U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden, D** — 516 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510. Phone: 202-224-5244. Email: wayne_kinney@wyden.senate.gov Website: http://wyden.senate.gov Fax: 202-228-2717.
- **U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley, D** — 313 Hart Senate Office Building, Washington D.C. 20510?. Phone: 202-224-3753. Email: senator@merkley.senate.gov. Fax: 202-228-3997. Oregon offices include One World Trade Center, 121 S.W. Salmon St., Suite 1250, Portland, OR 97204; and 310 S.E. Second St., Suite 105, Pendleton, OR 97801. Phone: 503-326-3386; 541-278-1129. Fax: 503-326-2990.
- **U.S. Rep. Greg Walden, R** — (Second District) 1404 Longworth Building, Washington D.C. 20515. Phone: 202-225-6730. No direct email because of spam. Website: www.walden.house.gov Fax: 202-225-5774. Medford office: 14 North Central, Suite 112, Medford, OR 97501. Phone: 541-776-4646. Fax: 541-779-0204.
- **Pending Bills:** For information on bills in Congress, Phone: 202-225-1772.



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