

The hospital's \$1.8 million question

As Blue Mountain Hospital welcomes Derek Daly as its new chief executive officer, we encourage him to improve communications with county residents. It would be an important and necessary move forward for the hospital.

Between the hospital district's permanent property tax rate and the temporary bond, the hospital is anticipated to receive more than \$1.8 million from county residents in the current fiscal year.

That is more than 23 percent of total property taxes collected in the county and more than any other district except for Grant County Education Service District.

For this ample payment, residents deserve honesty, transparency and accountability.

The interim CEO Daly replaces did not appear to think these were priorities. When asked about ambulance volunteers leaving the organization, Steve Erixon said a decline in volunteerism and an increase in certification requirements were driving a nationwide decline in ambulance volunteers. That's true — to an extent.

When asked if volunteers could still join, Erixon told the Eagle yes, as long as they were qualified. When asked if any volunteers had been turned away, he said no.

When asked about a specific qualified volunteer from Monument who had been turned away, he quickly changed his tune and said: "That's a personnel issue."

For \$1.8 million in annual property taxes, county residents deserve a better answer.

Hospital board chair Amy

Kreger, who was also present during the Eagle's interview with Erixon, appeared exasperated to have to answer such a question — as though she had already answered it many times before. This was the first time the Eagle had posed this question, and our readers deserve to know how their property taxes are being spent.

Worse, the county rumor mill started churning after the Monument volunteer who requested to rejoin the ambulance crew was told: "We currently do not have an opening available." That sounds a little different than a "personnel issue."

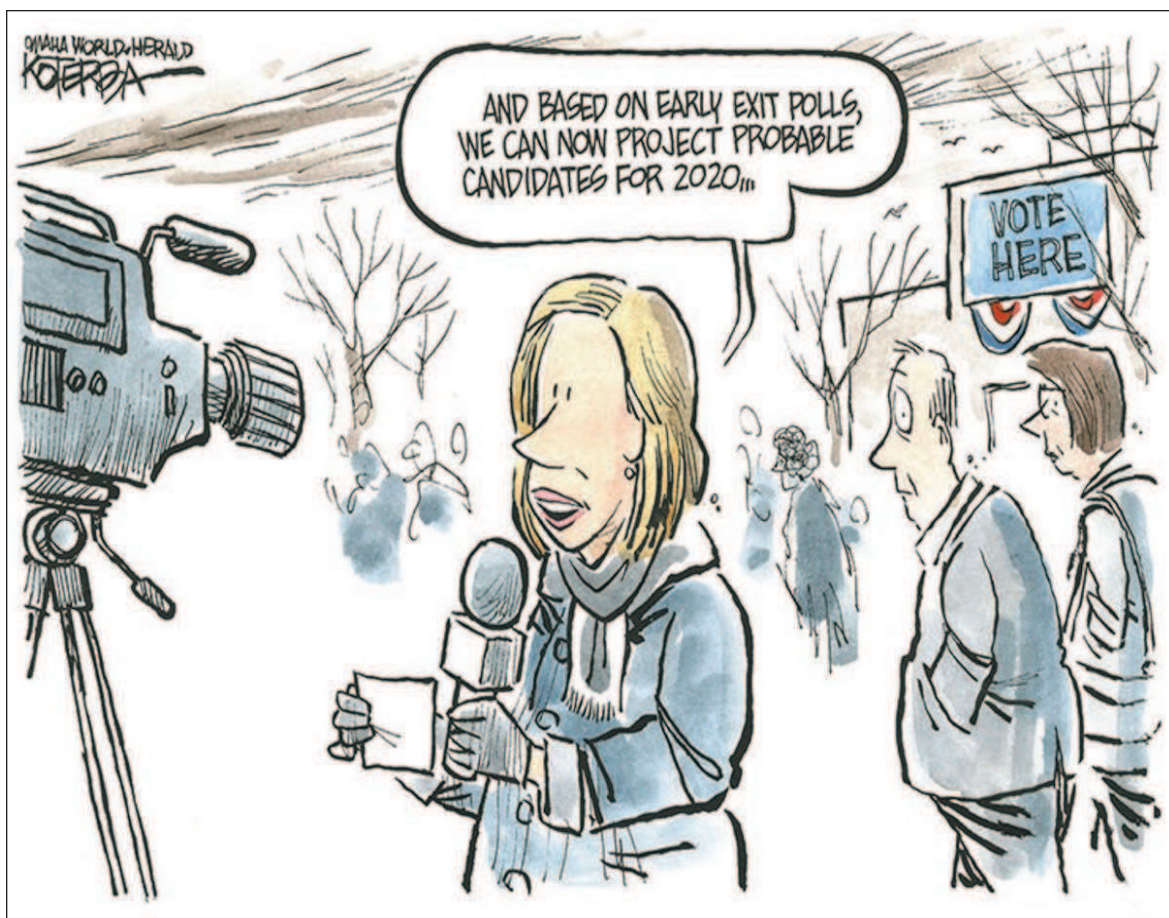
While there may have been a reasonable issue preventing the return of the Monument volunteer after she retired, she is not the only volunteer from the area to leave the ambulance crew.

Since then, other employees — from ambulance volunteers to department heads — have either left voluntarily or have been forced out. The hospital, for whatever reason, has undoubtedly lost valuable personnel.

With the reduction in the Monument ambulance crew, people in the northern part of Grant County have valid concerns about response times that could mean the difference between life and death.

These are serious issues. People have a right to be concerned. We hope new CEO Daly recognizes this and is willing to communicate honestly with the people he serves. His job will not be easy, even though he inherited these problems and was not the cause.

We believe he has the opportunity to bring many positive changes to the hospital and the community.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

'Some kind of special stupid'

To the Editor:

The democratic process in this republic has elected a president. However, the choice did not suit the liberals, and they are protesting by burning American flags in the cities.

They must be some kind of special stupid.

Louis Crabtree
John Day

'Rural America has spoken'

To the Editor:

As the final votes were tallied Tuesday night, the rejection of Hillary's deceitful and corrupt life was readily apparent across a red-colored map of the United States. The only blue showing on this map was the cities. "City folks" predominately accepted what the Democrats advocate: big government, more control and higher taxes.

Hillary was their choice to continue this tradition. Rural America chose Trump in a bid to bring government under control and cut regulations so Americans can be free to work again. By shedding the shackles Obama has imposed on us, we can make America great again in the vision our forefathers had.

The liberals living comfortably in the cities must understand this. The food they eat, energy and fuel consumed on a daily basis and the resources for their industries all come from rural America. They cannot survive without us! Wake up! Rural America has spoken.

Tom Baum
John Day

'Safe rooms' versus foxholes

To the Editor:

How far have we fallen? I heard today that several of our nation's colleges and universities, some here in Oregon, have set aside "safe rooms" for students who are distraught over the election.

The rooms come equipped with counselors, warm beverages and even play dough for the students to soothe their troubled psyche.

Contrast that to their grandfathers, who at that age were in foxholes faced with kill or be killed decisions in a far away place called Vietnam, which many of us had barely heard of.

A generation before, their great-grandfathers were fighting both Germany and Japan for the very existence of our wonderful country.

Most of them are gone now, but I wonder what they would think of their descendants after hearing this news.

Ralph Goodwin
John Day

Stand up for veterans

To the Editor:

Elections are over; the people have spoken. That's the American way. I have not always agreed on the outcome of measures and candidates, but we all have to live together to make our country better. Better is seen by some people different than others, but there is always common ground we all can work on together. With that said, I was surprised over one, Measure 96. The 1.5 percent proceeds of state lottery to help support services for Oregon veterans. It passed, but there was over a quarter million Oregonians that voted no.

Was this a new tax? Would more money come out of our pockets? Where are our priorities?

I would have expected only a few votes against, and most of those would have been mistakes on their ballot. If we don't stand behind our military and government, we won't have to worry about voting every four years.

This may fall on deaf ears of the majority of no voters, but we as a county had 728 who voted no. Remember our men and women in uniform, and keep them in your prayers.

Ken Koser
Prairie City

'Today is the beginning of many, many tomorrows'

To the Editor:

Obama and his puppet have been defeated! Today is a great day for those who love the simple rural life of liberty and independence. Ranchers will be free to graze the forest, loggers will be free to mill the trees and our guns will be safe in our homes unless we choose to take them where we wish. It's a shame there isn't a Starbucks to hold a Second Amendment parade!

Every victory is bought with a loser's defeat. You can hear the riots in Portland over the Ochocos. It serves them right, though. The liberals never listened when they were in power. They never listened when we couldn't afford Obamacare. They never listened when they protected birds over our livelihoods. They just don't listen. We have a way of life here, and that is something they just don't understand.

We have felt the bitterness of our complaints falling on deaf ears. We have taken upon ourselves the burdens given by federal regulators on our lands because we have no choice. We have watched our neighbors leave because the jobs have vanished. Communities from Coos Bay to White City, Roseburg to Burns, Klamath Falls to Vernonia, along with many others, have been dying for decades. Very little compassion was given by "those people" living in the valley as these towns disappeared. You know "those people." Today is a terrible day for "those people." It probably feels good to watch them squirm for

a change. Righteous vindication is everywhere at this moment.

That's unfortunate because today isn't only great. Today is the beginning of many, many tomorrows. Starting Jan. 21, the Republicans inherit the responsibility of governing a nation to ensure the liberty of all American citizens. I only hope that God blesses us with the wisdom to not be blinded by self-righteousness, but instead guides us to turn the other cheek and listen to those who need compassion, even if they haven't treated us fairly. We have felt pain; perhaps because of this we will know how to govern with benevolence and justice.

Christopher Parker
John Day

Three cheers for re-election of Glenn Palmer

To the Editor:

In spite of rumors, assumptions and outright lies — some by the ownership and management of the Blue Mountain Eagle — Glenn has rightfully retained his office. As a retired production manager of one of California's leading medium-sized daily newspapers directly responsible for 32 employees, I occasionally had to deal with disgruntled and malcontent employees. If direct one-on-one counseling proved ineffective, it was strongly suggested the malcontent find other employment. If that didn't work, we made the decision for them! Any operation of any size will at times have to deal with unenthusiastic and disruptive workers, and that cannot be allowed to indefinitely exist and spread to other workers who represent the business, and are responsible for expensive equipment. Hopefully, there will be several employees within purview of Glenn Palmer who will soon be encouraged to seek employment somewhere distant to Grant County. And hopefully, the local paper will spend more time accurately reporting the news, and less time trying to manufacture it!

Gary Davidson
Canyon City

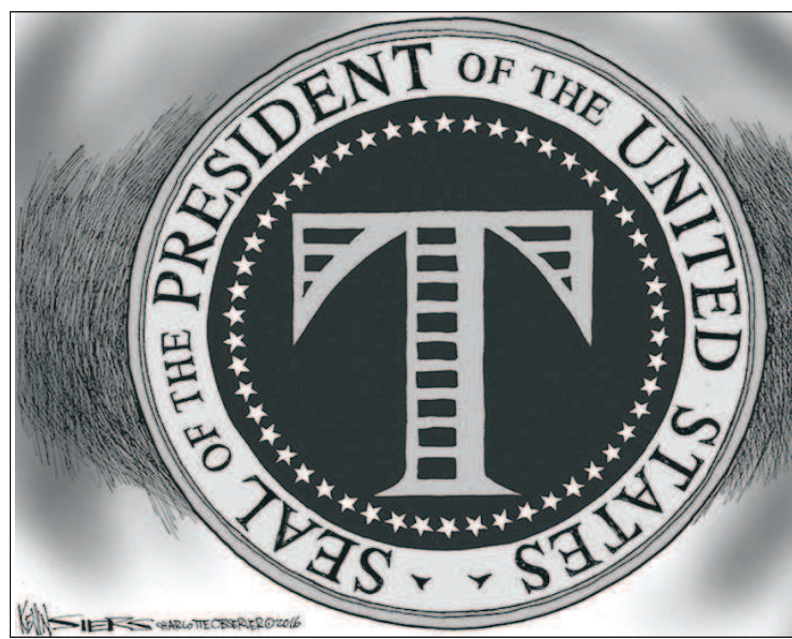
Bizarre election

To the Editor:

Amazing. America has elected an inexperienced but inspirational black man two times running to the presidency; but when an exceptionally qualified woman runs she gets rejected, and we elect an outrageous man with no past public service.

And on the local level, we reelect a sheriff that has nothing going for him but the Christmas dinners he provides each year and turn down his opponent who had everything going for him. I love democracy, but sometimes it gives us pretty strange results.

Terry Steele
Ritter



WHERE TO WRITE

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Grant County's Weekly Newspaper

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1 YEAR SUBSCRIPTION RATES

(including online access)
 Grant County\$40
 Everywhere else in U.S.....\$51
 Outside Continental U.S.....\$60
 Subscriptions must be paid prior to delivery

Periodicals Postage Paid at John Day and additional mailing offices.

POSTMASTER
 send address changes to:
 Blue Mountain Eagle
 195 N. Canyon Blvd.
 John Day, OR 97845-1187

USPS 226-340

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