

OUR VIEW

For the latest election results, see our website

By the time you hold this copy of the Blue Mountain Eagle in your hands, the dust will have settled (for the most part) on the May 17 primary election. Republican and Democratic voters will have chosen their parties' nominees for governor, senator and congressional representative. Locally, Grant County voters will have expressed their preferences in the three-way race for county commissioner, and those who live within the boundaries of the John Day-Canyon City Parks & Recreation District will have determined whether they're willing to support a \$4 million bond to pay for a new community swimming pool.

Sadly, because we go to press at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and the polls don't close until 8 o'clock Tuesday night, we were not able to get the results of the election into this Wednesday's print edition, and because we are a weekly newspaper, we will not be able to do so until next Wednesday's paper on May 25.

But here's the good news: This is the internet age, and we have a website.

If you're still wondering how the elections turned out, put down this paper right now and go to www.bluemountaineagle.com on your smartphone, tablet or other internet-connected device.

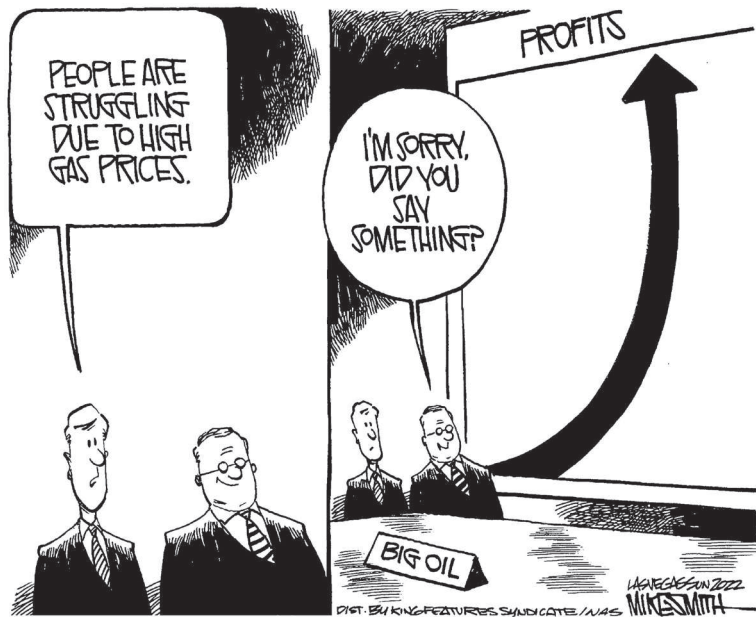
You'll find a special tab for election stories in the navigation bar at the top of our home page.

Blue Mountain Eagle reporters were stationed at the Grant County Clerk's Office on Election Night, so they could get the local election results as soon as they were announced and file stories to our website as soon as possible after the polls closed.

Also on our website you will find stories about the outcomes of the biggest statewide races contributed by our partners at the Oregon Capital Bureau, a consortium of news organizations from around the state that includes our parent company, East Oregonian Media Group.

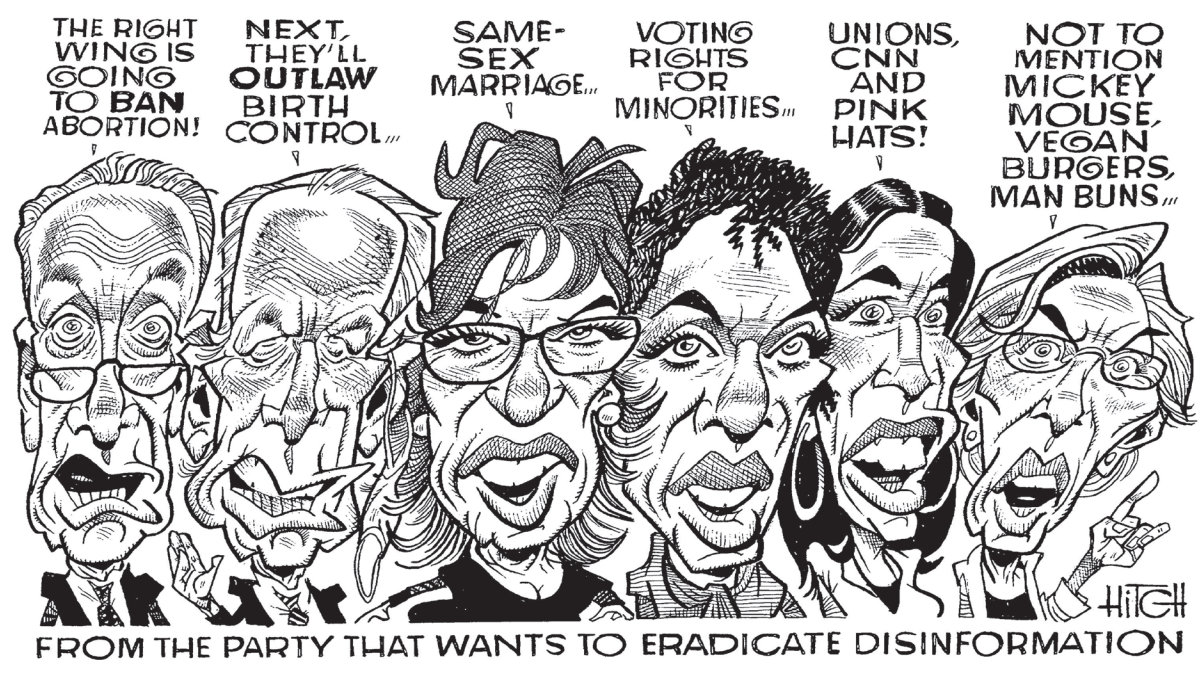
And because timely access to trustworthy election news is so important, we are dropping our paywall — the feature on our website that limits how many stories you can read online for free — for our coverage of this election. (Of course, if you want unlimited access to all our content online, you can always become a subscriber.)

We're a small newspaper with a small staff, but that doesn't mean we have to think small. Here at the Blue Mountain Eagle, we will use every resource at our disposal to get you the news you need in the timeliest possible manner.



WHERE TO WRITE

- GRANT COUNTY**
 • **Grant County Courthouse** — 201 S. Humboldt 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: tocc1862@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: governor.state.or.us/governor.html.
 • **Oregon Legislature** — State Capitol, Salem, 97310. Phone: 503-986-1180. Website: 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, oregonlegislature.gov.
 • **Sen. Lynn Findley, R-Vale** — 900 Court St. NE, S-301, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1730. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: sen.lynnfindley@oregonlegislature.gov.
 • **Rep. Mark Owens, R-Crane** — 900 Court St. NE, H-475, Salem 97301. Phone: 503-986-1460. District address: 258 S. Oregon St., Ontario OR 97914. District phone: 541-889-8866. Website: oregonlegislature.gov/findley. Email: rep.markowens@oregonlegislature.gov.



OFF THE BEATEN PATH Heart-pounding herpetology

SSSSNAAAKE!
 My younger brothers chased me around the yard with a large, venomous snake. Or so it seemed. Actually, the snake was a garter snake about the size of a yellow school pencil. I knew I shouldn't have resorted to running. I thought of squaring my shoulders, facing the foe and showing an interest in the snake.

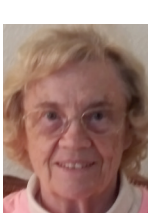
"What a cute critter," I'd say. "That dry, scaly skin. Perhaps later I'll hold him. For now, look how he's curled around your arm — he's bonded with you."

Instead, I screamed and scrambled to get away. My actions armed younger brothers with ammo against their older sibling, the ammo considered harmless, and more interested in insects than in a panic-filled sister.

Through the years, I avoided snakes. I carried a stick while on hikes to tap on rocks to scare away snakes.

A pollster with a clipboard took a poll in a mall parking lot of what people fear. Poll results — most feared: Snakes, mice and rats, thunder and lightning storms, plane rides, spiders, clowns, large spiders wearing clown suits, heights, cabbage and kale casseroles, aggressive birds, fourth-grade long division, and pollsters with clipboards.

My luck avoiding snakes seemed to run out while visiting a remote farm after dusk. I strolled out towards



Jean Ann Moultrie

a barn while family visited with the locals on the porch. In the dark, I stumbled over some debris, then heard the dreaded sound — rattle, rattle, rattle. The sound stopped. I took a couple more steps. Rattle, rattle. With each pause — silence. With each step — a rattle sound.

When I spotted a yard light illuminating a corral fence, I took a running leap and scrambled up the corral poles. I noticed a looped piece of baling twine hooked around my boot and trailing a branch of dried leaves. I kicked off the twine and dried leaves. No more rattle, rattle.

The ultimate fright occurred at a relative's chicken/egg-laying operation. On a visit, I wandered around the yard bordered by chicken coops. Out of the brush, a snake did a slow, U-shaped slither. About the size of an inflated fire hose, the snake's body kept coming and coming. I wondered if he had gone from dining on rodents and on to feasting on small dinosaurs, given the dinosaur fossil research in the area.

My heart pounded. I trembled as sweat dripped from my forehead. I'd moved from cautious fear to full-blown phobia. I stumbled into the

house, packed and left. Years later, grandchildren mentioned a science event at a science museum. I'm invited.

The theme: herpetology. An auditorium filled with snakes in cages. A fun-filled time where visitors get to hold actual (non-aggressive) snakes. A time where a grownup with snake fears can pretend to enjoy holding a snake on her towel-covered lap to show budding, science-minded grandchildren what fun science can be. What fears we hide for the sake of children!

A couple years ago I spotted a small snake about the size of an al dente linguine noodle near my front porch. I wasn't sure about his markings. A neighbor came over, shovel in hand.

"Nope, not a rattlesnake. That's a bull snake. I'll move him out of your way."

My own "pet" bull snake dines on earwigs and potato bugs. While mowing, I noticed my favorite snake weaving through the grass, heading towards open ground. A hawk circled above as though he'd spotted lunch. It's challenging to herd a snake to the safety of a rockpile.

Jean Ann Moultrie is a Grant County writer. The author reports that "snake scientists" who bring research projects home sometimes prefer to call themselves herpetologists on dating sites.

OUR VIEW

Let Postal Service ship booze, wine

FedEx can do it. UPS can do it. Why not the U.S. Postal Service?

We are talking about shipping booze and wine directly to customers.

The answer to the why not question is: There is a federal prohibition in place banning the Postal Service from being able to do it.

Oregon Sen. Jeff Merkley, a Democrat, introduced legislation to change that. The ban would be over. If a cidery, a brewery or a winery had a license, it could ship directly to someone of legal drinking age through the mail.

One important caveat: No preteen would be able to check the mailbox and start sipping on the latest from the wine of the month club selection before mom and dad got home. Merkley wanted appropriate protections in place. The bill says the recipient of the delivery "shall be an individual at least 21 years of age, and shall present a valid, Government-issued photo identification at the time of delivery."

Dr. Reginald Richardson, executive director of the Oregon Alcohol and Drug Policy Commission, sent a letter this month to Merkley urging him to drop his sponsorship of the

bill, as reported by Willamette Week. Richardson wants Merkley to think about the downside of improving people's access to alcohol. Alcoholism can ruin lives and families. Excessive drinking can lead to a host of problems.

The increased revenue from the ban might mean \$180 million a year in additional revenue for the Postal Service. Richardson says alcohol harm causes Oregon \$4.8 billion a year.

The ban for the Postal Service stretches back to the Prohibition era. If it's now fair to ship through FedEx and UPS, it's fair for the Postal Service.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Eliminating privacy envelope a bad idea

To the Editor:
 Eliminating the privacy envelope for mail-in ballots in Oregon was a mistake. All states have used secret ballots since 1891, and it is now common practice in much of the world. In Oregon's mail-in system, a name and signature is required on the outer postal envelope but not on the ballot itself. Even if you voted in person, you would be required to identify yourself but there would be

no name or signature on the actual ballot, ensuring your vote is secret and private.

What separates the postal envelope and the ballot in Oregon's mail-in system used to be a privacy envelope. Election workers could open the outer postal envelope and confirm who the voter is, then set the ballot inside the privacy envelope aside for later opening and insertion into the ballot counting machine.

Without the privacy envelope, the person who opens the outer postal envelope could theoretically glance at the ballot and link the name to the

voter's choices. The privacy envelope separated the voter's name from the ballot choices.

I happen to personally know and trust the Grant County election officials, so my concern is a theoretical one. Voting in the United States is regulated by the states and conducted at the local level. I don't understand why the privacy envelope is no longer used — was it a money-saving measure? Protecting privacy should be a government's goal, particularly with elections.

Richard Hanners
John Day

LETTERS POLICY: Letters to the Editor is a forum for Blue Mountain Eagle readers to express themselves on local, state, national or world issues. Brevity is good, but longer letters will be asked to be contained to 350 words. No personal attacks; challenge the opinion, not the person. No thank-you letters. Submissions to this page become property of the Eagle. The Eagle reserves the right to edit letters for length and for content. Letters must be original and signed by the writer. Anonymous letters will not be printed. Writers should include a telephone number so they can be reached for questions. We must limit all contributors to two letters per person per month. Deadline is 5 p.m. Friday. Send letters by email to editor@bmeagle.com; by mail to Blue Mountain Eagle, 195 N. Canyon Blvd., John Day, OR 97845; or by fax to 541-575-1244.

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