

REPUBLICANS GONE WILD?

As the May primary heats up, so does Oregon's Republican Party

When Art Robinson showed up on the political scene back in 2010 to run against Democrat Peter DeFazio for Congress, it seemed like Oregon Republicans had gone off the rails. With positions on the positive benefits of a little nuclear radiation and public schools as nationalized child abuse, Robinson's campaign was almost a political caricature.

Then, six years later, the U.S. elected Donald Trump as its president, and Oregon Republicans brought an attention-grabbing new spokesman to town: Jonathan Lockwood, who is now doing press for at least one campaign with a potential image problem for the May primary election.

Robinson went on to become chairman of the Oregon Republican Party from 2013 to 2015. He also managed to lose to DeFazio in 2010, 2012, 2014 and 2016.

But Robinson's losses are not necessarily a sign of Republican Party sanity. For one thing, the man who calls global warming a "hoax" is running yet again in 2018.

And this year, the Oregon GOP's annual Dorchester conference in March hosted Roger Stone, former political adviser to Richard Nixon and Trump and frequent voice on the *InfoWars* conspiracy theorist website.

Stone then hired Portland's Proud Boys, whom the Southern Poverty Law Center has designated a hate group, for "protection." A photo Jones tweeted of Stone drinking with the Proud Boys making a hand gesture associated with white power incited Democratic anger on social media.

Also at Dorchester, a gubernatorial straw poll passed over moderate Republican candidate Knute Buehler in favor of retired U.S. Navy pilot Greg Woolridge. Lockwood, Woolridge's spokesman, declined to comment on Stone, the photo and the hand gesture Stone and the Proud Boys were making, saying "too many unknowns."

Lockwood is another sign that today's Oregon Republican Party is a far cry from the one that elected Gov. Tom McCall in 1966.

Lockwood is a clever, biting, often charming millennial. Flamboyantly gay in tone, he also seems completely unconcerned about freaking out Democrats or his fellow Republicans.

A transplant from Colorado, Lockwood was called "flat-out deranged" by *The Denver Post* in an oft-quoted editorial before he came to Oregon late in 2016 to be a spokesman for Oregon's state Senate Republicans. Oregon Republicans, he says, are "much more accepting and open-minded in a lot of ways," citing an anti-gay House leader in Colorado.

Some of Lockwood's legislative press release gems have included an August 2017 release on a bill that provides expanded coverage for some Oregonians to



A TWEETED PHOTO OF ROGER STONE WITH PORTLAND'S CONTROVERSIAL PROUD BOYS DURING THE REPUBLICAN DORCHESTER CONFERENCE

access free reproductive health services. "Former abortion lobbyist Gov. Kate Brown signs into law Abortion Free for All," Lockwood writes.

And "VICE CITY — SALEM: Dems kill Republicans' effort to safeguard academic faculty from being exploited by thuggish Unions," said of a defeated anti-union dues bill.

Lockwood acknowledges he has changed the way Republicans are representing themselves. "I could see it, I could feel it," he says. He points to a press release he sent to the rightwing *Washington Times* about Oregon House Democrats "brewing up a coffee tax" and calling the Dems a "laughingstock." The bill did not move forward.

Early in the Oregon gubernatorial race, Lockwood started off as Buehler's spokesman, leading many to speculate Buehler was trying to appear less moderate. They soon parted ways or, as Lockwood puts it, "they basically beat me to the break up," and he soon moved on to open his own communications firm, Jonathan Lockwood & Associates, and to take on the campaign for Woolridge, a motivational speaker.

Of Buehler, Lockwood says: "Is he really a moderate? I'm not convinced he's a moderate."

He adds, "It's really hard to be somebody's spokesman when you don't know where he stands on anything." He points to Buehler's decision-making on assault weapons, saying, "Hello! You are in a Republican primary; what do you think you should do?"

Buehler recently told OPB he will wait to see whether Initiative Petition 43, the proposed assault weapons ban, qualifies for the ballot before taking a stance on the measure.

What people call "moderates seem to be the people who are squishy and don't say a lot," Lockwood says.

In addition to being the mouthpiece for Woolridge's campaign and several other Republican races, he's the spokesperson for Lou Ogden, a Republican candidate for Bureau of Labor and Industry (BOLI) commissioner, a nonpartisan position.

As a candidate, Ogden has a Google problem. Type his name into the search engine and on the first page of hits are a 2012 *Oregonian* story on the \$100,000 the Tualatin mayor spent on conference travel and a 2013 KATU story headlined "Tualatin Mayor Lou Ogden running for fifth term despite housemate's child porn case."

Eugene Weekly reached out to Ogden, who says that despite the stories having "already come and gone in the media," he is happy to discuss them. He says the travel was over a multi-year period and "all travel was approved by the city, and largely in conjunction with the opportunities to participate as part of both League of Oregon Cities, and the National League of Cities."

The porn case resulted in Ogden's housemate's conviction. "He was on his own computers and paid for his own internet cable separate of my home," Ogden says. "He was evicted immediately."

At the time of the housemate's arrest, Ogden told *The Oregonian* that "I think someone's innocent until proven guilty."

Ogden tells *EW*, "As a father and step-grandfather, I believe protecting children is one of the most important things we can do as a society."

Lockwood says of the expenditures and the porn-convicted housemate, "I think those are resolved issues."

He says Ogden would be good for Oregon business as BOLI commissioner, and that historically BOLI has not been "very friendly to business."

When asked for comment, Eugene Democrat Val Hoyle, who is also running for the BOLI position, says, "I'm running to be commissioner of BOLI, not running against Lou Ogden. I'm running for this seat."

Lockwood and Robinson have something in common beyond their work in Oregon Republican politics. They are both affiliated with the climate-change-denying Heartland Institute.

Lockwood has also been a fellow of the Charles Koch Institute and of ALEC, the American Legislative Exchange Council, a group that writes "model bills" that seek to change state laws in ways that benefit corporations, weaken environmental protections and are anti-gun control. ■

ACTIVIST ALERT

- The Babb family invites family, friends and the community to honor and remember Capt. Brian Babb on the three-year anniversary of his death. The gathering is 7:30 pm Friday March 30, in the Oregon Electric Station Library Room. Babb, a veteran, was shot and killed by the Eugene Police Department in 2015. Find out more at captbrianbabb.com.

- A town hall with Reps. Julie Fahey and Nancy Nathanson and Sen. James Manning is 6:30 pm, April 4 at the North Eugene High School cafeteria. The legislators say, "We'll be focused on summarizing and answering questions

about the 2018 short legislative session, as well as on hearing your thoughts for next year's session."

- On the 50th anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King JR.'s assassination, CALC will read excerpts from his last sermon "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution" at 7 pm, April 4, at First Christian Church, 1166 Oak. The theme is "maintaining hope and refusing a politics of despair." For more info: 541-485-1755, or calclane.org.

- At 5:30 pm Thursday, April 5, at the First United Methodist Church, 350 Eugene and the Civil Liberties Defense Center will present a know your rights

training for youth who are speaking out against gun violence. Details at world.350.org/eugene. On that same day, 350 Eugene and Cascadia Wildlands will offer a comment writing workshop 6 pm at 120 Shelton McMurphy Boulevard in advance of the 10 am Tuesday, April 10 State Land Board Meeting in Salem. 350 Eugene says, "This is another opportunity to let Gov. Brown, Secretary of State Dennis Richardson and Treasurer Tobias Reed know of your concerns regarding fracked gas moving through Oregon."

- Oregon State University is observing Holocaust Memorial Week. At 7:30 pm Monday, April 9, there will be a talk by

Randall Bytwerk, "Building Hatred from a Firm Foundation: Anti-Semitic Propaganda in Nazi Germany" in the Horizon Room, OSU Memorial Union. Bytwerk will discuss how Nazis used the media to raise the level of hatred toward Jews in Germany. At 7:30 pm Wednesday, April 11, Holocaust survivor Henry Friedman, author of the memoir, *I'm No Hero: Journeys of a Holocaust Survivor*, will speak in the Austin Auditorium at the The LaSells Stewart Center, 875 S.W. 26th Street, Corvallis. Attendees are encouraged to get free tickets in advance at bit.ly/2FVheZb. A book-signing follows. Other events are at holocaust.oregonstate.edu.