

# Congratulations, you get to live on an airplane

Beneath occasional moments of glamor, being a member of Congress is an awful job

A candidate came to see me. He's running for the Republican nomination to oppose U.S. Sen. Ron Wyden.

As I listened to his pitch, a thought bubble over my head said "Why?"

Sam Carpenter of Bend — the GOP Senate aspirant — brought me his book, *Work the System: The Simple Mechanics of Making More and Working Less*. Carpenter is a business fixer. Owners pay him to turn their firms around.

When I meet a first-time candidate for Congress, I ask why they want that job. I'm really wondering if they know what they are getting into. What they often don't know is that beneath the very occasional moments of glamor, it is an awful job. Being a member of Congress from Oregon means you live on an airplane. Spending so much time going back and forth from Washington, D.C., makes one wonder: Which time zone are they really in?

Years ago, when Wyden was a member of the House, one of his aides told me: "You will never outwork Ron Wyden." That's one reason why he's impregnable. The other is that Wyden will easily roll up a huge margin in Multnomah County, and he'll also do well in rural Oregon, because he spends so much time there and because he's helped them (think Grant County forest stewardship program).

The election season once contained an element of enlightenment and even entertainment. Not any more. It may be that I've seen too much of this. Or it may be that the species of *homo politicus candidatus* is in decline.

Some five years ago, a friend who was an aide to a dynamic Northwest congressman said: "It used to be that new members came to the House to do something. It's unclear whether these new crops of members want to do anything."

The other odd element in electoral politics is the candidate who's running for personal exposure, but not to win (Think Ben Carson, who saw sales of his book balloon).

Running for office is a heady business — a bit of a rush. Having seen this happen to people, I think we should be restrained in suggesting that someone run for office.

The ego-feed that comes with campaigns and elective office is addictive.

If you watch candidates long enough, you can spot "the look," which is the man or woman who feels like a winner. In 1980, I met two of them within the same month. Ron Wyden was running as a Portland Democrat for the House. Denny Smith was running as a Republican for the big Eastern Oregon House seat. The look in their eyes said winning candidate. And both won in that big Ronald Reagan election.

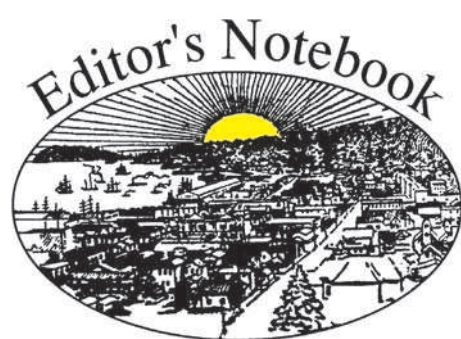
Winning is only the first step, and many candidates fail to grasp that truth. While Wyden took off like a rocket as a freshman congressman, another Oregon freshman failed to ignite, even though he had far more experience than



Steve Forrester



Sen. Ron Wyden speaks during a group discussion at Fort George Brewery in July. The discussion was part of Wyden's tour of Oregon's seven wonders to promote the economic impact of tourism and recreation.



## Running for office is heady business.

Wyden. Rep. Bob Smith of Burns had been a stand-out senior Oregon state legislator. Many of us expected Smith to quickly become a leader. To our great surprise, that didn't happen.

"Moving from a state Legislature to Congress is not just going to a larger playing field," Congressman Les AuCoin told me. "It's the difference between playing chess and playing three-dimensional chess."

Growing up in a newspaper family, politicians were occasional dinner guests and the topic of conversations. One of our family legends was about my grandfather, E.B. Aldrich, who was editor of the *East Oregonian* when Wayne Morse was a young politician in the 1940s. My grandfather was so averse to Morse's renowned powers of argument that he would leave his office when Morse came to town. "I know he'll convince me," he told his family.

Relatively few of today's Oregonians had the experience of seeing Morse. He was a blinding intellect and a ferocious speaker.

The saddest aspect of being a candidate or being in Congress is that it can be a home wrecker. One night in Washington, D.C.,



Sam Carpenter

my wife and I saw vivid evidence of those destructive forces. Our dinner was with a congressman and his wife whose relationship had suddenly grown chilly. They subsequently divorced.

Following dinner, we walked to a nearby bookstore to browse. In the shop was a con-

gressman's spouse whom our friends knew. The woman loudly shared with the entire bookstore her anger at the lot of being a political spouse. If any of us had ever thought about running for office, that experience inoculated us against ever taking that plunge.

—S.A.F.

## Open forum

### Reject recall

For several decades my wife Connie and I have enjoyed visiting Cannon Beach, initially as casual once or twice a year visitors. Over the years those visits grew in frequency, until it made sense for us to buy a second home in one of the world's most beautiful places. For over 20 years that home became our treasured escape from the daily rigors of our professional lives in Seattle.

During that time we made many new friends in Cannon Beach, marveling at the community's collective commitment to maintaining a livable town, and the volunteer hours contributed by so many to ensure that status would be in place for future generations.

We watched as the community wrestled with growth and social issues, always seeming — after sometimes heated debates — to arrive at solutions reflecting the mutual goal of making Cannon Beach an even better place to live. A perfect example of that process in action is the Cannon Beach Fire District Board of Directors, a group of five dedicated citizens who every four years submit themselves to the scrutiny of the electorate, at least those citizens who participate in our democracy by voting.

During the past two decades that board, with the assistance of a dedicated team of volunteer firefighters, has grappled with a myriad of issues that ultimately improved service and kept insurance rates low throughout the district, including relocating the fire station from inadequate space in downtown to the midtown area, replacing aging equipment with modern state-of-the-art tools, and improving the service available to Arch Cape, among others.

In addition to those fiscally responsible actions, the board has functioned as the district's personnel manager. It is the exercise of that fiduciary responsibility that has led to the current effort by the family and friends of the former fire chief to lodge a recall election against three current members of the board, a recall effort based on as yet unproven allegations that the former fire chief was wrongly terminated.

That recall effort should be answered with a resounding rejection from district voters. The board, in executing its fiduciary personnel oversight duties followed, with advice from counsel, the applicable statutory process. To have done otherwise would have been a breach of their sworn obligations. The board is

to be commended for its action, not condemned by heated rhetoric that tests the bounds of libel and slander.

Vote no to recall at the April 5 election.

PHIL AND CONNIE WINBERRY  
Seattle

### No recall

I wanted to clear the air about the situation at the Cannon Beach Fire Department. The majority did not sign the recall. As a matter of fact, only 10 of the 26 members signed. Many members feel as I do, that the board was doing the job they were elected to do.

I support the fire district and the board members. A recall will only hurt the fire district. If you feel someone needs to be replaced, do it when we vote on new board members in the next year or so. We are here for you, so please support us and vote no on the recall.

LT. MIKE JOHNSON  
Cannon Beach Fire and Rescue

### Confident in Trump

I get very tired of hearing people attack Donald Trump. To begin

with, I never listened to him on the TV shows. I wasn't interested in any of that type of show.

When I first heard him, he — along with the others — was saying what he would be doing to fix what is wrong with our country, and the president, and politicians, and the rich businesses going overseas and keeping the money in their pockets. Also, giving the money we pay in Social Security taxes everywhere. That money should not have been spent, and the trust fund left with IOUs.

I've found Trump says things after being accused of things he never said, or the press exaggerates or adds to what he says. It reminds me of when F. D. Roosevelt put the U.S. together. The ones who always put the money in their pockets fought him.

Trump's the only one with the most good ideas. He's confident because he knows how to do things. I am a confident person, or was, when I was young.

All I can say is, if you vote for someone who are desperate to get in, that's what you'll get. I believe in each person voting for their choice.

FLORENCE HAWKINS  
Long Beach, Washington

### Thank you

The family of Ray Hickman would like to thank the Cannon Beach Police and Fire Departments, the Coast Guard, the search and rescue teams from Clatsop, Tillamook, Washington, Multnomah and Clackamas counties, Mountain Wave Search and Rescue, and all the volunteers, neighbors and friends who spent time and effort in such inclement weather to search for Ray when he went missing on Jan. 30. Many of you are still looking as time permits, and we appreciate that so much.

We'd also like to thank everyone who donated money, and the man from Hamlet who lent the use of his drone.

We've learned that many Cannon Beach and Seaside restaurants donated food for the searchers. And we know that many from the community donated food for the searchers and for us. Thank you all.

Such an outpouring of support from the entire community has been just overwhelming, and very special. It keeps us going every day. We appreciate all of it so very much.

ANITA, HOLLY, MICHAEL AND MAYA HICKMAN  
Cannon Beach



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