

# OPINION

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# THE DAILY ASTORIAN

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## OUR VIEW

# Vote Bonamici, Griffith for Congress

The field of candidates running against U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici of Beaverton in the 1st Congressional District is not strong.

Her challengers in the Democratic primary are both political newcomers. And looking forward to the general election in the fall, the last time a Republican held the seat was in 1974.

Bonamici herself has held the seat since 2012. The district she represents covers the northwest corner of the state — including Clatsop, Columbia, Washington and Yamhill counties, and a portion of southwest Multnomah County in Portland.

After operating for years in the Democratic majority in the state House and then Senate, she labors in the minority in the U.S. House of Representatives — perhaps the most partisan political body in the nation.

She is proudest of her work on the conference committee for the Every Student Succeeds Act, she said. She stood with President Barack Obama when he signed the rewrite of the nation's education requirements in 2015.

Opportunities to reach across the aisle have become fewer in President Donald Trump's administration. She has focused on working on behalf of her constituents and fighting to preserve federal money for programs that matter to Northwest Oregon, such as earthquake and tsunami alerts, she said.

Democratic challengers Ricky Barajas and Michael Stansfield have zero political or government experience between them.

Barajas, a dental office manager in Portland, does have a master's degree in political science from the University of Oregon. Bonamici has forgotten about

the working class, Barajas said. He would fight for rent control, increased access to health care and full funding of education. He would also fight the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency's abuses of power in detaining immigrants.

"My platform is about the people," Barajas said. "I want to fight for them."

Stansfield, a software engineer and author from Tualatin, is a one-issue candidate. He talks passionately and emotionally about the struggle of the Palestinian people. He specifically criticized Bonamici's support of HR 1697 — the Israel Anti-Boycott Act — which he describes as a "witch hunt" to silence critics of Israel. The bill has not made it out of the House.

When pressed to talk about issues of importance to Clatsop County voters, Stansfield could not name any.

"My chances of winning may be the same chances of reaching the moon," he said. "For me, this is it."

We agree.

Neither Barajas nor Stansfield make any convincing case. Bonamici has been accessible to her constituents in this county, and to this newspaper. We believe she shares and will fight for the values of the county's Democratic majority, and deserves their votes.

### 'Uphill battle' for GOP

Republicans comprise only 24.6 percent of the 1st Congressional District's voters. Any GOP candidate looking to unseat Bonamici must find a way to

court the 39 percent who list themselves as unaffiliated.

The likeliest candidate to do that is George Griffith, a retired mechanical and design engineer. His platform skews libertarian. He hopes to appeal to fiscally conservative, strong personal liberty voters who do not feel welcome in today's GOP and wants to reel in the party's extreme wing, he said.

Griffith pledges to put Oregon first and his party second. He will support all good ideas, regardless of political ideology, he said. He describes himself as "stubborn as all hell."

Griffith's biggest issue is the effect of money on politics. Big money is not free speech, he said, and corporations are not people. He described the bank bailout as a huge transfer of wealth from the working class to the 1 percent.

"Since I will be a representative of the people once I am in office, I will only accept support from the people, while I am running for office," he said on his campaign website. "No special interests. No big money. No favors to pay back.

It's that simple."

He is active in Habitat for Humanity and wants safe, decent and affordable housing available for everyone, he said. His other issues include education and vocational training, a balanced budget, health care, and restoring a respect for science.

The other Republican candidates, John Verbeek and Preston Miller, seem

less electable. Their statements on the campaign trail may appeal to President Trump's base, but less so to the majority of voters in the district.

Verbeek, a business strategist, has referred to his home as "the people's republic of Portland." He believes Trump's policies are working and is unhappy with the Affordable Care Act, also known as Obamacare.

He has run unsuccessful campaigns in the past for metro councilor in Portland, state senator and state representative.

Taking on Bonamici is a "formidable, uphill battle," he said, but he is open to debate and looking at other points of view, particularly on health care.

"I will speak up for what is right, what I believe in," he said.

Miller, an Army field artillery veteran and Portland State University student, will earn his history degree in June, he said.

He is a study in contrasts. He fully supports President Trump and wants to turn Oregon into a red state, but believes in marriage equality and LGBTQA rights, and doesn't want to overturn the Supreme Court's Roe vs. Wade decision legalizing abortion, he said.

He also sends mixed signals. On the one hand, he says he's not happy with partisan politics. On the other, he falls back into Fox News talking points, including referring to Bonamici as a "Pelosi stooge."

Miller's Army stint included a combat tour in Afghanistan. We thank him for his service and for his interest in pursuing a career in politics. His passion and energy might be a better fit at the local level before aiming for Congress.

"I may be young, but we have to start somewhere," Miller said.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Vote Orr for state representative

I have known John Orr and his family since they moved to Cannon Beach back in the 1980s. I spent the last six years as John's lead investigator for his law practice. I can say without equivocation that — despite the apparent proclivity of some politicians toward deception and lack of moral values — I have the deepest respect for John and his adherence to the American values we all hold so dear.

John is a student of history, and a tireless researcher, and I cannot imagine anyone more suited to a political avocation founded on those values and ideas, coupled with a deep-rooted sense of honesty and integrity.

If we're going to affect change in the "infected" brand of political self-serving that threatens those values and beliefs, I can't think of anyone more suited to the task than John.

Please vote for John Orr. We deserve adult leadership.

PAUL and MARGO DUEBER  
Cannon Beach

### National parks urgently need maintenance

National Park Week ran from April 21-29. It is a time to celebrate what national parks mean for our history, culture and economy. We in Astoria, especially businesses like ours, who benefit from tourism activity, are lucky to have the Lewis and Clark National Historical Park in our back yard.

Fort Clatsop continues to draw an important connection to our local and national past for hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Those visitors help support Fort Clatsop, but also support our local economy by spending more than \$16.5 million in communities surrounding the park, according to 2016 National Park Service estimates.

What visitors may not see are the extensive costs required to keep the park accessible and fresh for visitors. Our park is facing over \$2 million in deferred maintenance needs, including repairs to buildings, water, waste and electrical systems, trails and more. The National Park system is facing over \$11 billion in deferred maintenance that is affecting every park's ability to provide the best possible experience for the visitors.

The good news is that many of our Oregon members of Congress are supporting bills like the National Park Restoration Act and the National Park Service Legacy Act that will begin to tackle this problem. We encourage

all friends of Fort Clatsop, and all supporters of local businesses, and a robust Astoria economy to applaud those efforts.

RICHARD AFORNORPE  
Astoria

### Thanks to Lee, Moore for civics class

Our Exploring New Concepts Of Retirement Education (ENCORE) class on the U.S. Constitution and local governments of April 26 was presented by Clatsop County Commission Chairman Scott Lee and County Manager Cameron Moore.

Both gentlemen acquitted themselves most admirably of the task. Both accepted the invitation with alacrity, came prepared, and answered the many questions of the astute audience. More than one of the listeners commented on the knowledge and professionalism of our county leaders in a potentially controversial environment. Thanks, Messrs. Scott and Cam.

ERHARD GROSS  
Astoria

### Please do not shoot the elk

Please. Please. Do not shoot the elk. They were here first ... then came the humans. If we can land on the moon, certainly we can find a way without firing a shot.

For certain, the garden, flowers and shrubs I have, or had, return better after the herd has romped, stomped and chomped their share.

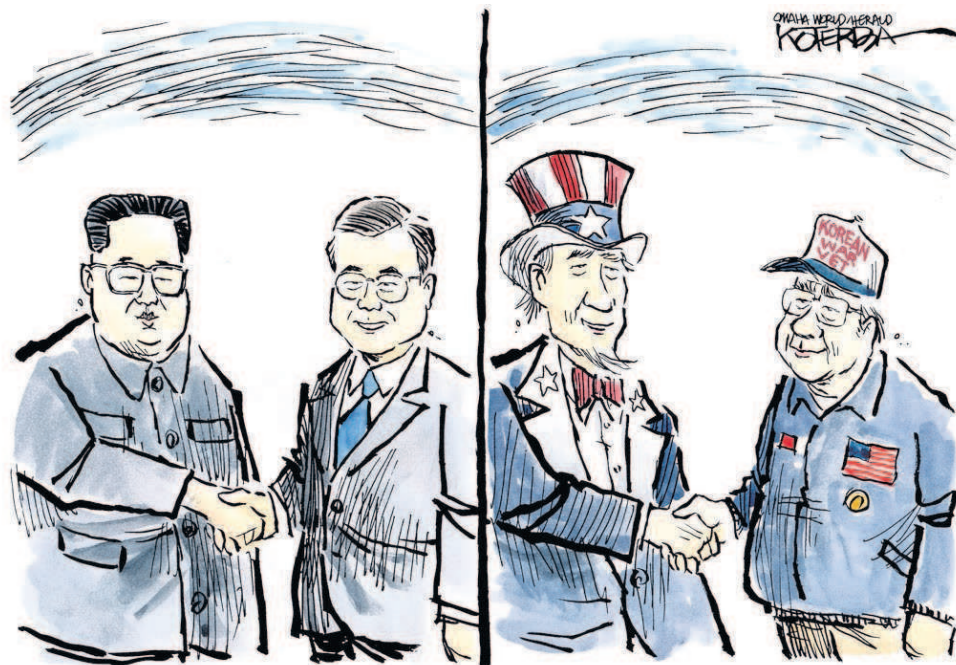
Remember, the good Lord provides the elk for our enjoyment, to view and protect.

DENNIS JAMES MURPHY  
Gearhart

### Vote Wev for county commissioner

Please use your individual and important vote to choose Pamela Wev for the Clatsop County Commission. Her experience in land-use planning and running a small business has given her on-the-job experience that would be an asset for our county leadership. Her clear understanding and respect for constitution between commissioner and constituent will be a big improvement for the transparency of our working local government.

Ms. Wev has promised to take the time to converse and answer questions that her constituents have. I know this to be true, as she graciously met with me and answered my que-



ries, which were less on what her plans were (as they are published), but more on how she would accomplish what she has set out to do.

For example, two of my many questions were: how would she balance the needs of forestry, farming, and fishing; and how would a commissioner affect the economic viability of our county.

Our discussion was lengthy; her answers were thoughtful, insightful and considerate. Moreover, she used real-life planning and work examples to outline her plans. I was grateful and impressed with her answers that blended wisdom with experience; I learned a great deal.

Pam Wev would be a great asset to this community, I sincerely hope she is elected.

DANNELL DAVIS  
Astoria

### Vote Gladwin for county commissioner

Dear fellow citizens of District 5 in Clatsop County: Please vote for Susana Gladwin for our district commissioner. She is seriously involved in protecting our natural resources, and has been for years.

She fought the liquefied natural gas (LNG) project to the end, and she fought to save the wetlands in Arch Cape, to name just a couple of her projects in the past.

She believes in responsible logging practices, and is adamantly against aerial spraying of chemicals that are not only harmful to humans, but also affect the wildlife and our water resources.

Susana has lived in Jewell for over 40 years, and has been active in our community from the beginning. I believe she will bring positive energy to our board of commissioners, and will continue to work on improving our quality of life in Clatsop County.

Please vote for her, and help save our beautiful area for future generations.

KAY BRIGGS  
Seaside

### Educate yourself and vote

This is the season that the majority of letters to the editor contain personal endorsements of candidates in the upcoming election. While I appreciate that, I prefer to hear it from the horse's mouth. I applaud the Astoria American Association of University Women for conducting a candidate forum, and compliment the reporting and recognition given in The Daily Astorian's editorial on April 26, "Candidate forum a useful exercise in civic discourse." But, it was disappointing to see such a low turnout.

For those of you who could not attend, you can hear what every candidate said by tuning in to the podcasts on Coast Community Radio at bit.ly/2HvEu4P. And, learn more from each county commissioner candidate by listening to the interviews conducted by Joan Herman.

Even though I'm not in a district for which there is an election this year, I know each county commissioner affects the whole county, and I want to be an informed citizen. Educate yourself, so you can have an informed voice. And use that voice to have a say: Vote.

TITA MONTERO  
Seaside