

OPINION

editor@dailyastorian.com



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KARI BORGEN
Publisher

JIM VAN NOSTRAND
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

DEBRA BLOOM
Business Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
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CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

Kujala, Thompsons for commissioner

The Clatsop County Board of Commissioners will look very different next year.

At least two and as many as three new faces could join the five-member board in January as a result of this year's elections.

Voters will choose May 15 from three candidates in District 1, three in District 3 and two in District 5. Anyone who gets 50 percent plus one vote wins their seat outright. Otherwise, the top two vote-getters in each district move on to the general election in November.

The stakes could not be higher this time around. The winners will fundamentally alter the balance of power on the board, which has been beset by months of turmoil between some commissioners and County Manager Cameron Moore. We sincerely hope that the drama resolves itself before January.

If Moore decides not to resign, he will have to deal with a new board chairman, elected by fellow commissioners. The new chairman could well be one of the new faces.

District 1

Andy Davis, George McCartin and Mark Kujala are vying to replace board chairman Scott Lee, who is not running for re-election. The district covers Warrenton, Hammond and the west end of Astoria.

Kujala, the membership director at the Astoria-Warrenton Area Chamber of Commerce, has by far the most public service experience of the three, and is the clear choice for our endorsement. He is personable, knowledgeable, and has deep experience working with local people to achieve consensus and get things done.

He served 12 years on the Warrenton City Commission and as the city's first elected mayor. He is part of the state Department of

Fish and Wildlife Fish Passage Task Force and the Oregon Community Foundation's North Coast Leadership Council. He is the owner of Skipanon Brand Seafood. His brother still fishes on a trawl boat, and he has championed for the creation of rock-fish conservation zones.



Mark Kujala

He also worked on a task force looking at the long-term facilities needs of the Warrenton-Hammond School District and was chosen by his peers in that group to present its findings. He supports the proposal for a new county jail, but realizes that the proposal will compete with several other bonds in this election cycle. Warrenton, for example, is asking for \$32.4 million to begin the process of moving its schools out of the tsunami inundation zone.

Kujala believes the county manager and commissioners need to work harder to engage in a constructive dialogue, perhaps through a retreat and work sessions to define individual roles, he said. Whoever is chosen as the new board chairman needs to show more leadership in amicably resolving disputes, he added.

McCartin, a retired attorney, has been a frequent attendee at commissioner meetings. He is highly engaged and articulate.

He has public service experience as an investigator for the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission regional office in San Francisco. He has ample time to devote to the job and would do so "benevolently and efficiently," he said, adding that he has worked to bring people together for 53 years.

McCartin opposes the proposal for a new county jail in its current form. He has argued in the past for a less-expensive option. His priorities would be addressing the homelessness and workforce housing issues facing the county, as well as fighting for more facilities and resources for the mentally ill, he said.

Davis, a medical data analyst, is active in the local Democratic Party and a delegate to



Colin Murphey/The Daily Astorian

Candidates for Clatsop County commissioner prepare to answer questions during a forum at Astoria High School.

the state convention. Commissioner elections are nominally nonpartisan, but he believes voters should look at Democratic values when casting their ballots, he said. He advocated for Measure 101, which levied new taxes on hospitals and health care providers to fund Medicaid services for the poor.

He worked for two years on the Bloomington, Indiana, Commission on Stability, and serves on the city of Astoria's budget committee.

Davis believes he has a decent relationship with Moore and thinks Lee does a pretty good job, he said. His top issues are behavioral health services, affordable housing and family-wage jobs. He hopes that any discussion of a new jail will include realistic mental health facilities for county residents.

District 3

Peter Roscoe, Doug Thompson and Pamela Wev aim to replace Lisa Clement, who chose not to run for re-election. The district includes parts of Astoria, Miles Crossing, Jeffers Garden, Lewis and Clark, Youngs River, Olney, Green Mountain and parts of Walluski.

This race is a tough choice — all three candidates have government and political experience.

Roscoe and Thompson are both former Astoria city councilors. Wev worked in government service for decades and served five years in former Portland Mayor Vera Katz' administration on a board evaluating policy.

Our nod goes to Thompson, who served on the City Council for 11 years and has a track record of getting things done.

We think Thompson has the right temperament — direct, well-spoken, diplomatic and analytical — to help bring order to the board. He called the situation "unsustainable" and said the current board has shown a collective lack of leadership.

Part of the problem may be structural, he said. Some home rule counties allow voters to directly elect the board chairman, rather than leaving the choice to a majority of the elected commissioners.

Thompson manages low-income apartment units in the Astor Hotel Building in downtown Astoria, including tenants with disabilities. Affordable housing is one of his top issues.



Doug Thompson

"We've got to get innovative as hell to build our way out of it," he said, referring to the countywide housing shortage.

He also supports the proposal for a new county jail. The details can and should be debated, but "we just have to add the beds," he said.

He would also work to protect the county's fishing and forestry industries, he said. "I will be a fierce advocate for the gillnetters."

One interesting dynamic to this race is that Thompson and Wev both served on the Clatsop County Democratic Central Committee. Thompson resigned as the party chairman to run for commissioner.

Wev, a land use consultant, said the county needs to make a very strategic investment in mental health, particularly a facility that police can take someone to be safe from themselves. Not a hospital, but something between a hotel room and a prison.

She is disappointed that the proposal for a new county jail doesn't include more accommodations for the mentally ill, she said.

Wev would like to see more openness on the Board of Commissioners. There's not enough public discussion of proposals, she said, and she doesn't think county officials reach out enough to other communities to see how they've solved problems.

"I know good government when I see it," she said. "Most people don't understand how it functions."

Roscoe, a former restaurateur, served two terms on the City Council and one year on the city's Planning Commission. He also spent six years on the Columbia River Joint Task Force and 10 years with the Columbia-Pacific Economic Development District.

He said he doesn't like the partisan drama on the board, but he offered no thoughts on how to cut through it.

"I have a very creative mind, and can help find solutions," he said.

Roscoe believes the natural resource industries in the county are good stewards of the land. Increasing timber production would not be a bad thing, he said.

He also will work to support the proposal for a new county jail, he said.

District 5

Susana Gladwin is challenging Lianne Thompson, the only incumbent in this year's commissioner races. The district covers southern Clatsop County, including Cannon Beach, Arch Cape, Elsie, Hamlet and Jewell and portions of Seaside.

They are polar opposites in personality, to put it mildly.

Thompson is the outspoken one. She is engaged in a long-running feud with county manager Moore, with each publicly questioning the other's grasp of their responsibilities under the county's home rule charter.

She has also come under severe criticism from fellow commissioners for her spending on official travel outside the region. The board agreed in November to reimburse her for travel and other expenses she incurred, though she may have to pay her own way on some future trips. At least she took the initiative to educate herself on public policy issues.

As we noted in last Friday's editorial, Thompson is within her rights as a county commissioner to ask tough questions of Moore. He reports to the board, and Thompson reports to the voters. They don't have to like each other. Sure, it would be better if they could work together amicably. We aren't going to hold our breath on that.

The bottom line is that South County residents have a passionate advocate on their side in Thompson, and we endorse her for re-election.

Voters uncomfortable with her methods have an alternative in Gladwin, a Jewell farmer who served with Thompson for four years on the county Planning

Commission. They took pains to compliment each other during endorsement interviews with The Daily Astorian's editorial board.

Gladwin is more soft-spoken, yet passionate in her own way. She agrees with Thompson that the board of commissioners is very tightly controlled by Moore and Lee, without much room for dissenting views. She would work to change that in a more amicable fashion, she said.

Gladwin brings a deep understanding of forestry issues to the table, she said. She owns 9 acres of timberland and believes more logging would be devastating to the North Coast's environment. District residents in Seaside are very concerned about clearcuts and spraying, she added.

Her other top issues include affordable housing, the opioid crisis, and the lack of mental health and detox beds in the county, she said.



Lianne Thompson

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Not everyone is on an equal footing

Like many of you, I have been pondering what has caused this great divide in our country. We need to keep in mind that President Donald Trump is the result of the divide, not the cause.

A new Pew Research Center pole showed that 74 percent of Republicans feel we all have a fairly equal chance at success in America, as opposed to 37 percent of Democrats, who feel we all start out on an equal playing field. Frequently, a conservative will cite an example of some person who was very poor and disadvantaged in other ways, but managed to graduate from Harvard — pulled themselves up by their own bootstraps.

There are many reasons we are all not starting on an equal footing, but one thing that is rarely mentioned is IQ. It is generally held that you need at least a 120 IQ to get a master's degree. Well, following the bell curve IQ theory, for everyone with a 120 IQ, there is an equal number of people with an 80 IQ which generally keeps you out of any

decent-paying jobs.

Just something to think about, next time you want to refuse someone food stamps for their kids because you think they are just not working hard enough.

JEAN HOOGE
Astoria

Vote Orr for state representative

I am writing in support of John Orr to represent District 32 in the Oregon Legislature. John's long experience as a lawyer, especially his role as a public defender, has given him unique insights into the issues our community struggles with.

John understands the connections between drug abuse, homelessness and crime, and the importance of social services, education and job training. John is committed to protecting forests, watersheds and our beaches as sources of beauty, inspiration, clean air and water and economic opportunity.

I'm especially impressed with John's inde-

pendence, and the diverse group of people he has recruited to assist with his campaign. Please join me in voting for John Orr.

JACK HARRIS
Astoria

Josi yes — Portland no

I am disappointed, yet not surprised, that Portland Democrats are attempting to interfere in local North Coast politics. While this race was originally between Tim Josi and John Orr, both longtime local residents, Portland service unions, along with other extreme left-leaning progressive groups, stepped in to recruit a local new comer at the last minute.

The Oregon Coast is a unique political area with our own unique culture. We value local connections and people who support our fisheries, our timber industry and our farmers. Ultra-liberal Portland elites have no place imposing their philosophies on our North Coast.

Please vote for my candidate for District 32, Tim Josi, with his local connections, emotional equity and our moderate views, not a

Portland-bankrolled liberal.

MARCIA DARE LANSING
Hammond

Bow hunting is state-sanctioned cruelty

I expect most readers of The Daily Astorian have seen the recent photos of two deer in southern Oregon, still alive and upright, impaled by arrows ("2 deer found in Oregon with arrows caught shot in head, neck," April 29). While I'm sure the scofflaws who shot these animals were not legally hunting, this episode still raises a larger issue.

To my thinking, bow hunting is little more than state-sanctioned cruelty to animals of the west-south. I will spare you the details about the slow demise of animals killed with arrows. I know I can say nothing that will change the laws; I just hope a few people will think twice about how to spend their leisure time.

BILL DYGERT
Astoria