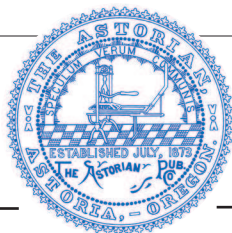


OPINION

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THE DAILY ASTORIAN

Founded in 1873

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OUR VIEW

Endorsements around the county

Eleven days to go until the Nov. 6 general election.

Eleven long days of waiting for local candidates in Clatsop County.

Eleven frenetic days of knocking on doors and talking to voters, most of whom should already have received their ballots.

Here are The Daily Astorian's endorsements for contested races in Warrenton, Gearhart, Seaside and Cannon Beach.

Thanks to all the candidates who took the time to meet with the newspaper's editorial board in recent weeks, and who took the stage at election forums we co-sponsored with community partners in Astoria, Seaside and Cannon Beach.

Our endorsements for local bond measures will appear in Monday's newspaper.

and Hammond would be well-served in keeping him as mayor.

That said, we are impressed with Washington's enthusiasm and his determination to make sure Hammond residents are equally represented in city government. He has some good ideas about affordable housing. We hope he continues to be involved in the city's affairs as a volunteer if he is not elected.



Smith for Gearhart council

In Gearhart, Jack Zimmerman has come on strong in an election that has lived up to the city's history of spirited and vigorous debate.

Zimmerman is looking to unseat Kerry Smith, who was elected to City Council Position 1 in 2014. Paulina Cockrum, who was appointed in 2015, is running unopposed for Position 3.

It is tempting to believe, as Zimmerman proposes, that Gearhart has the option to bypass state housing goals that could require expansion of the urban growth boundary, but it is unlikely that challenge would succeed or be worth the resources.

Zimmerman's aggressive stance on no growth is appealing, but the city's inventory of buildable land already limits development. Short-term rental regulations, put into place while Smith was a member of the council and with his support, further limit commercial expansion and investor speculation that could threaten Gearhart's commitment to enhancing its residential community.

Keeping the fire station at its current location at 698 Pacific Way, as Zimmerman proposes, may play well with some, but doesn't make sense in case of a tsunami. Other locations, including the city park on Pacific Way on North Marion, provide the necessary elevation to meet a "medium-size" wave scenario.

Zimmerman has alleged the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife has been negligent in its supervision of Gearhart's elk herd, but we see little evidence that ODFW is not doing its job. Smith supports a "no-feeding" ordinance supported by other council members — a small first step.

Smith's first term has promoted emergency disaster protection, sound environmental policy and maintaining the goals of the city's original vision — so celebrated in the

100th anniversary year.

Smith has earned our vote in Gearhart.



Barber for Seaside mayor

In Seaside, John Chapman is trying to unseat Jay Barber, who was appointed mayor after the death of former Mayor Don Larson in December 2015.

Chapman has distinguished himself as a broadcaster, station owner and tireless community volunteer. His contributions to the Seaside Gulls as an announcer and coach are significant, and he in many ways exemplifies the spirit of Go Gulls.

Barber has teamed with a cohesive, focused board that has delivered on a number of fronts, including working with the school district on the bond project for a new campus, offering a path forward for replacement of the Avenue U bridge and aesthetic upgrades at the south end of town, a \$15 million bond issue to renovate the Seaside Civic and Convention Center, and a new five-year agreement with Hood to Coast.

Chapman is critical of the Hood to Coast deal, but we believe revisiting it would revisit territory already trodden and put the city's relationship with a cherished partner at risk.

While both agree on the need for affordable housing, they have different approaches to homelessness, incentives for affordable housing and changes in system development charges to promote housing. While the current City Council has yet to come up with a comprehensive plan for a Cascadia disaster response, Chapman has offered no path forward. In a devastating tsunami, the likelihood is "there won't be a Seaside anyway," he said, "as the city would be decimated."

Nature may dominate in the end, but government at all levels owes each resident and visitor a lifeline — considered evacuation, resiliency and recovery scenarios — when the Big One hits.

Barber's dignified style, graciousness and sense of teamwork play well in Seaside.

We're confident that Barber is leading a forward-thinking council that works well on all cylinders, and has embarked on a positive agenda to meet emergency, infrastructure and social concerns.



Benefield, Swedenborg for Cannon Beach council

Mike Benefield, Robin Risley and Greg Swedenborg are running for two at-large seats on the Cannon Beach City Council.

All three candidates are strong, highly qualified and worthy of our vote.

Benefield, the incumbent, has served since 2014. He has experience on the Planning Commission as well as the council, and has first-hand experience in city governance.

He wants to steer lodging tax dollars away from supporting tourism promotion and more toward improving tourism-related facilities. He advocates investing more in public art, more events and concerts, or using the money to develop an event center at the old Cannon Beach Elementary School site.

We are impressed by Benefield's dedicated service, considered input and the deep respect he holds from residents and fellow council members alike.

Over the course of three decades, Risley has served on several boards and committees, including the Cannon Beach and Clatsop County planning commissions, the Oregon State Parks and Recreation Commission and Cannon Beach Chamber of Commerce board. She was also appointed the president of the Clatsop Association of Realtors last year.

"I am firmly committed to protecting this community's thoughtful planning values and village character for future generations," she said.

Swedenborg, a Cannon Beach native and co-owner of The Waves Oceanfront Lodging, decided to run after feeling the business community and working families needed a stronger voice.

"I care about the people and businesses in this city, and I think I could add to the discussion," he said.

Swedenborg has taken the extra step in reaching out to communities throughout the state to consider solutions to parking, traffic and other critical issues. He went so far as to dust off an old city traffic study and evaluate its weakness and strengths. His idea to collect parking revenue in state-run parking lots is a real-world solution that could have benefit for residents and help fund city programs.

All three candidates are well-liked and communicate well with the community. They are solution-oriented and willing to do the hard work necessary to make this small city manage its outsized role in welcoming tourists, protecting our coastline and keeping Cannon Beach a magical place to live.

We narrowly lean to endorsing Benefield and Swedenborg — Benefield for his experience, and Swedenborg for the great ideas he has brought to the table.



Balensifer for Warrenton mayor

Mayor Henry Balensifer, communications manager for Lektro Inc., faces challenger John Washington, a retired automotive technician and commercial truck driver.

Balensifer has served on both the Planning Commission and the City Commission, and was appointed as mayor last year to serve out what remained in former Mayor Mark Kujala's term after Kujala stepped down.

Washington is a political newcomer and portrays that as a selling point. He told The Daily Astorian's editorial board that he wants to run a clean campaign, but has repeatedly hammered Balensifer for an alleged lack of transparency.

We believe that charge to be unfounded. Balensifer is one of the most open and communicative leaders we've seen at the local level, and has hosted open forums on issues confronting the city. We're sure he would be willing to consider any constructive suggestions for improving dialogue with citizens.

Washington does not back the Warrenton school bond as written, citing the tax burden on residents, he said. He "absolutely" supports the bond for a new county jail, to protect the county's law enforcement officers.

Balensifer said he supports the school bond, but takes no position on the jail bond.

Balensifer is clearly the best-qualified candidate, and voters in Warrenton

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Vote Lower for rep, Buehler for governor

This November, Clatsop County voters have some serious choices to make for governor and state representative.

Seems like every other year the state is always \$2 or \$3 billion dollars short. The Public Employees Retirement System (PERS) is \$22.5 billion behind in its obligation, with no end in sight, and state programs are costing billions this state doesn't have. Oregon is in a state of confusion right now, under the present leadership.

Who pays for their mistakes? Of course, we do. Make no mistake people, there need to be changes on how this state operates. It isn't working. We cannot afford, or continue, to live like this; it's expensive to live in Oregon. That's why we need someone

like Knute Buehler for governor. Knute is someone willing to step up and make the tough decisions required to operate a state like Oregon.

Everyone knows the shortage of affordable housing here in Oregon. And it's not too difficult to see that our roads, bridges and other infrastructures need major repairs or reconstruction. The need for creating family wage jobs still exists, and improving school conditions and reducing state taxes. All are high on Vineeta Lower's agenda.

Now is the time. So, let's take advantage of this opportunity to turn things around in Oregon. So please, Clatsop County, check out and vote for Vineeta Lower for state representative, and Knute Buehler for governor. You will be glad you did. Two positive solutions now, and for the future. So, let's make the right choices for us, and

our state.

RAYMOND GARDNER
Warrenton

We need Jones' emergency experience

I'm writing to urge fellow Astorians to vote for Bruce Jones for mayor. In Bruce we have someone seasoned in emergency planning and rescue — resources that we need.

Our region lies under the grim, substantiated forecast of coming violent shifts in the Cascadia Subduction Zone. I rode out the Loma Prieta earthquake and Tropical Storm Irene. Communities need thorough planning and preparation well in advance of catastrophes.

Bruce led the Coast Guard response to Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, a rare resource, an experience that shaped both his character and his ideas for future planning. The fruits of our efforts now could affect our continued survival.

I'm a volunteer at the Columbia River Maritime Museum, and I have observed Bruce Jones earning his daily bread. He has good instincts — intelligence, mental agility, low-key gravitas, compassion, social aptitude, and a marvelous sense of humor.

Should the wreck arrive early, I have had a blessed life. This isn't about me: I want the children and grandchildren here to have the chance to say the same thing — because we loved them, thought of them, planned for them.

STEPHANIE SMITH
Astoria