

OPINION



the Astorian

editor@dailyastorian.com

Founded in 1873

KARI BORGEN
Publisher

DERRICK DePLEDGE
Editor

JEREMY FELDMAN
Circulation Manager

JOHN D. BRUIJN
Production Manager

CARL EARL
Systems Manager

OUR VIEW

Weber for state House

An open seat in state House District 32 presents us with the most difficult choice on the November ballot.

Democrats have held the district, which covers Clatsop and portions of Tillamook and Washington counties, since 2002.

In our endorsements for the May primary, we outlined our criteria. Legislators from rural areas have a greater responsibility to serve as advocates for their districts, not ideologies for their political parties.

We want a representative with an independent streak who can partner with state Sen. Betsy Johnson, D-Scappoose, and learn how to be effective no matter which party or faction is in power in Salem.

We endorse Suzanne Weber.

The Republican is a retired elementary school teacher who helped run a cake and catering business and a retail store.

For the past decade, Weber has served as the mayor of Tillamook after several years on the City Council.

Holding nonpartisan, elected office in a small town where she has lived for 50 years, she has had to navigate local issues important to friends, neighbors and businesses while also being an advocate for her city’s interests at the county, regional and state levels.

Any successes, Weber said, were not “based upon whether or not you were a Republican or a Democrat. They were based on how can you get the most, and the best, done for the people who live here.

“And so that has been my focus.”

Weber ranks education, housing and transportation as the most important policy issues facing the state.

“I think I’m connected with the people. I think I am a very good listener. I think that I am in touch with the issues in this area,” she said.



Suzanne Weber is the mayor of Tillamook.

Tillamook Headlight Herald

“And I know enough people that when I need information — from both sides of whatever question it is that I’m addressing — that I can go and get good, honest answers that will reflect the values of the people that I’m going to be representing.”

Reservations

We disagree with Weber’s opposition to cap and trade.

We opposed House Bill 2020 last year, mostly because we were concerned higher fuel costs would have had a disproportionate impact on rural communities. But we supported the new version this year as a step forward on climate change that recognized regional economic differences.

We also think Weber is wrong about the corporate activity tax, a vital source of \$1 billion a year for the Student Success Act that could improve our schools.

While we don’t have a litmus test on any one bill or law, our endorsement does come with reservations.

The Republican walkouts in Salem over cap and trade were a stain on Oregon. If Republicans are frustrated in the minority, they

should come up with more compelling ideas, recruit better candidates and win more elections, not obstruct the legislative process.

Rep. Cheri Helt, from Bend, was the only House Republican this year who chose to stay at the Capitol and do the job she was elected to do. We expect Weber, if she prevails in November, to do the same.

Difficult choice

Rep. Tiffiny Mitchell, who was elected in 2018, announced she would not run for reelection just before the filing deadline in March. FuturePAC, the campaign arm for House Democrats, recruited Debbie Boothe-Schmidt as a last-minute replacement.

Boothe-Schmidt has worked as a trial assistant and is the co-owner of Phog Bounders Antique Mall in Astoria. She was elected last year to the board of the Sunset Empire Transportation District.

Boothe-Schmidt has been a leader in the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees. She is at her most persuasive when she talks about how her union back-

ground has shaped her. The experience has given her confidence and helped her understand how to lead, listen, bargain and compromise.

As a small-business owner, she understands the financial pressures of making payroll and the importance of treating employees fairly.

Boothe-Schmidt ranks the budget as the biggest policy issue facing the state.

“I feel we need to make sure that the most vulnerable in our districts are taken care of,” she said, “that we’re not sliding back on those that rely on certain services within the district.”

In our primary endorsement in May, we were concerned about Boothe-Schmidt’s independence, given her union background representing government workers and the fact she was hand-picked by House Democrats to replace Mitchell.

We’re still concerned. Labor and pension costs are among the driving forces in state budget debates. Public-sector labor unions, like AFSCME, already have influence in Salem and the ear of majority Democrats.

We were also distressed before the primary that Boothe-Schmidt would not take a position on cap and trade.

Even now, months later, she explained that amendments to the new version of the bill were still being drafted when Republicans walked out, so she does not have all the information necessary.

“I think cap and trade has really divided our district and we really need to get back to working together,” Boothe-Schmidt said.

We understand the politics are difficult. A definitive answer could alienate voters.

But we want a representative who can tell us where they stand, even when it’s politically inconvenient, even when we might disagree.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Face the sins

Our world has been so chaotic lately, it’s hard to keep track of the many crises we are facing.

We have a president who openly mocks people who wear masks to protect themselves and others from the coronavirus, and who doesn’t trust science-based facts, who has tested positive for the virus. Is this just a cruel irony, or is there something we can learn from this?

I believe we, as individuals, and our society, as a whole, are being forced to find the bedrock principles or values upon which we will eventually tame the virus and, equally important, establish a humane and forgiving society.

Throughout our history, we have had equally chaotic times in which prophets have emerged who have offered hope and a path forward.

Amidst the carnage of the Civil War, Abraham Lincoln stood amidst the graves at Gettysburg and proclaimed, “that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain — that this nation shall have a new birth of freedom and that government of the people, by the people, for the people, shall not perish from the earth.”

Amidst the upheaval of the civil rights movement, Martin Luther King Jr. proclaimed: “I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.”

The coronavirus has no respect for race, gender, notoriety or wealth. It has forced us, however, to face the sins of our nation’s past. Are we ready to move forward to face our challenges?

CAROLYN EADY
Astoria

Roots

I am writing to voice my support for Debbie Boothe-Schmidt for my state representative. Debbie has roots in our community as a dedicated public servant and small-busi-

ness owner, and was a strong advocate as our union representative.

No matter our race or place, every Oregonian should be able to have a good, reliable job. We should all be able to live in communities that enjoy clean air, clean water and natural resources now, and for generations to come.

Republican candidate Suzanne Weber is endorsed by the #TimberUnity PAC. This PAC tries to divide, so we won’t notice that big corporations are using our forests for their short-term profits, jeopardizing ecosystems and water sources.

By coming together to elect leaders like Boothe-Schmidt, we can help make sure we’ll have a voice that represents us in Salem, not someone who’ll side with big corporations that will use our tax dollars as their piggy bank, while working families and small businesses struggle.

Please join me in voting for Boothe-Schmidt. She’ll work for all of us to make sure we have good, reliable jobs and thriving, livable communities now, and in our future.

JULIA HESSE
Astoria

False choice

Jobs and a healthy environment are not mutually exclusive. We all want our families to be able to have reliable, good-paying jobs now, and in the future.

But the corporate interests behind the #TimberUnity PAC, along with Koch Industries and other large corporate interests, have created a false choice in rural Oregon: either economic prosperity or clean drinking water and air, healthy forests and thriving wildlife.

These corporations want short-term profits that leave our communities with fewer jobs. Mechanization of logging and mills has greatly reduced the employment that the timber industry historically provided.

That’s why we need to elect new leaders like Debbie Boothe-Schmidt to be our voice in Salem. Her opponent, Suzanne Weber, is

endorsed by the #TimberUnity PAC.

Debbie will work to ensure that rural Oregon has the reliable, good-paying jobs we need. And she’ll help ensure that we have the clean drinking water and air, healthy forests and thriving wildlife that we cherish now, and in the future.

NADIA GARDNER
Arch Cape

Show up for us

When election season rolls around, I sometimes get tired of all the campaign noise. But I also know how much is at stake. Now, more than ever, we need good, honest people to represent us.

From what I’ve observed, Republican candidate Suzanne Weber wants us to point fingers at one another so we won’t notice that she has taken thousands of dollars from corporate special interests. Meanwhile, too many of us struggle to make ends meet, and our communities are left without the revenue we need for basic services.

When we vote, we choose what jobs we can have, whether we can afford to go to the doctor, the quality of our schools, how we care for our seniors and kids and the care we provide people suffering from mental illness or substance abuse.

That’s why I’m voting for Debbie Boothe-Schmidt. She knows we need affordable housing and health care, support for our small businesses and quality schools. She’ll show up for us, not just for her big donors.

JOHN and BETH McKINNEY
Astoria

No respect

Once again the neighbors surrounding Fred Lindstrom Memorial Park, at Niagara Avenue and Sixth Street, get to witness the Monday morning aftermath of people who have no respect for others or for the environment.

Fast-food wrappers, plastic bottles and

clothing litter the basketball court, the trash cans overflow and debris blows across the landscape.

Parents, do you have a child who goes to this park? If so, please tell them that this is unacceptable, and it’s their responsibility to pick up after themselves. Let’s demonstrate kindness to our community.

CONNIE DILLON
Astoria

Positive trajectory

I am writing regarding the Gearhart City Council election. I would like to call attention to the commitment and dedication of our city councilors, Paulina Cockrum, Reita Fackerell and Dan Jesse.

They have safeguarded Gearhart through promoting emergency preparedness and the Community Emergency Response Team. As our community and country know firsthand, preparation is key to keeping us and our loved ones safe.

Gearhart’s community thrives, due to Cockrum, Fackerell and Jesse’s support of short-term rental regulations, helping us to maintain primarily residential neighborhoods. Their commitment has led the way for the state of Oregon in creating these laws.

From what I have seen on social media and in my attendance at City Council meetings, their opposition offers only division, criticism and negativity.

We need continuity to maintain the positive trajectory of the city of Gearhart under the leadership of outgoing Mayor Matt Brown, to whom we owe a huge “thank you.”

Gearhart is a unique and valued treasure to call home. I would like to thank Cockrum, Fackerell and Jesse for their tireless commitment to Gearhart, transparency, accountability and care of our community.

Please support Gearhart by voting for Cockrum, Fackerell and Jesse.

SHEILA NOLAN
Gearhart