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OUR VIEW

Fagan for secretary of state

We’d like to talk about a former secretary of state, Dennis Richardson, before we get into our endorsement of Shemia Fagan for that race in the November election.

Looking back helps remember why the office is important and what to look for.

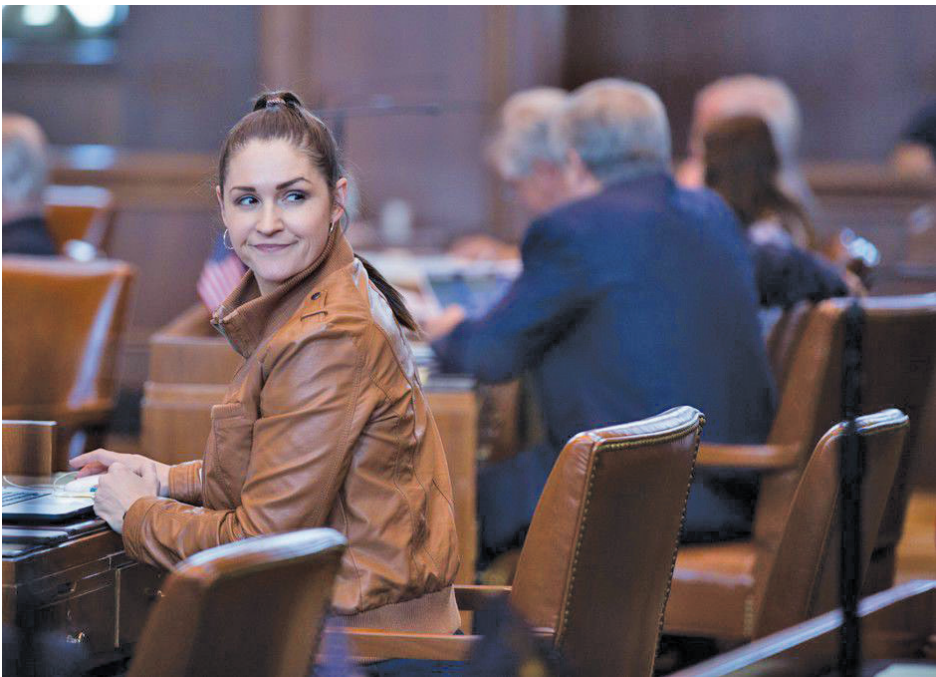
Richardson set a high standard for how to run the office before his death last year that Bev Clarno has followed. Richardson was as Republican as any Republican, but he set that partisanship aside when he was elected to that role.

Partisanship should not play a role in the secretary of state’s responsibility for overseeing Oregon’s election system and the state archives.

The secretary of state also matters because the office wields a powerful tool of oversight in how state agencies run and spend taxpayer money: the statewide audit.

Richardson’s office drilled down with state audits into agencies and programs, ruffling more than a few feathers. Few audits have resonated as powerfully as the audit during his tenure of the failures of the state’s child foster system run by the Department of Human Services.

Richardson also used his office to publicize findings and hold agencies accountable for what they



Bryan M. Vance/Oregon Public Broadcasting

State Sen. Shemia Fagan is the Democratic candidate for Oregon secretary of state.

did to improve.

Both state Sen. Fagan, a Democrat, and state Sen. Kim Thatcher, a Republican, have been partisan politicians. They say they won’t be if elected to this office. We’ll have to wait and see.

Fagan and Thatcher agree on many issues. They’d both like it if Oregon parties opened up primaries. They both say they are fully behind vote by mail. They both say they don’t intend to use the office just as a stepping stone. And they both will use auditing to uncover and solve problems in government.

Fagan has shown a willingness to buck her party’s establishment and do what she believed was right.

She was the lone vote last year against Sen. Peter Courtney, D-Salem, being elected to his ninth term as Senate president. That was after a former employee of Courtney’s testified Courtney disapproved of who she was dating and gave her an ultimatum to resign or be fired.

Fagan has also openly criticized the secret ballots in Senate Democratic caucus meetings that determine if bills make it to the Senate floor. We hope she would similarly

be independent of her party as secretary of state.

Thatcher has been a strong advocate for public disclosure of government records and has done so much more.

But we have two concerns that tipped the decision for us to Fagan. Thatcher was willing to essentially help her fellow Republicans shut down the state Legislature to prevent the Democratic cap-and-trade bill from moving forward. We understand why Republicans felt they had to walk out to stop the bill. It does make us wonder how much disruption of state government Thatcher would be willing to indulge in if she does not get her way as secretary of state.

Second, Marion County Circuit Court Judge Tracy Prall in 2010 ruled that a company owned by Thatcher intentionally destroyed a hard drive and intentionally deleted other accounting records to avoid turning them over during an investigation of contracting fraud. That’s at least unnerving for a person we would trust to audit government agencies.

We recommend a vote for Fagan. One final thing to consider. In Oregon, we don’t have a lieutenant governor who takes over if the governor leaves office. The secretary of state does. So when you vote in this race, think about that, too.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Trust

When choosing a candidate, I look for someone I can trust. Based on a campaign in which Suzanne Weber has taken money from big timber while willfully (and sort of melodramatically) misrepresenting her opponent, I don’t trust her.

I want to know how the money of Weber’s campaign contributions from large, out-of-state companies would affect how she represents us. I want to know how her decisions would affect in-state businesses, especially in rural Oregon, where so many of these timber companies have mechanized work, leaving fewer and fewer jobs.

I want to know why Weber equates corporate taxes with sales taxes paid by consumers. Weber seems to want to leave corporations to call the shots, when in fact Oregon already has some of the lowest corporate tax rates in the country. And in states that collect higher corporate taxes than Oregon does, those monies aren’t considered sales tax revenues.

I want to know what Weber has to say about #TimberUnity being a tool that big corporations are using to manipulate us, the hardworking people of House District 32, into advocating for corporate interests that prevent us from preparing for our future.

Debbie Boothe-Schmidt has my trust. She is calm, collected, articulate, informed and dedicated. With leadership experience, small-business ownership and especially her willingness to stay at the table and work through issues — while honoring her commitment to listen to all the people of this district, not just a select few — Boothe-Schmidt has my vote.

NANCY MONTGOMERY
Astoria

Rural values

Remembering the details of the recent fire event behind Bay City, namely the Pike Road fire, we can be extremely thankful for the local resources that quickly went into action.

I counted 15 logging, excavation and forest product companies that quickly surrounded the perimeter and kept it from spreading. They were local companies that harvest and help manage our private and state forests. Without the expertise of these people, we most likely would have had a different outcome.

The equipment used in this operation were gas and diesel powered. This is the very fuel that is being threatened by the powers in Salem, who are raising the costs of doing business for them, along with many other regulations for living that are

strangling the very businesses who saved us.

When you see a logging truck, a chip trailer, an excavation wide load trailer, please wave, smile and support. They saved us, and would do it again when called upon.

This is the way of life in rural Northwest Oregon. We have forests that should be managed and maintained by those who know how. Trees are cut, replanted and they grow back. The hills are bare for a little while, but it doesn’t take long to get back to green.

We have Suzanne Weber, who understands and lives this way of life. This is just one issue where she will fight for us, and bring common sense and rural values back to Salem.

MARLENE ACKER
Nehalem

What am I missing?

I must be missing something. The Astorian disagrees with Suzanne Weber’s opposition to cap and trade.

The Astorian thinks 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.”

The Astorian does not support the Second Amendment sanctuary. Weber initially would not take a position. Debbie Boothe-Schmidt opposes it.

The Astorian has expectations, and hopes that Weber would not walk out with fellow Republicans during contentious issues. She has said she might (“... extreme circumstances call for extreme measures”).

What am I missing? The Astorian has made a mistake. It seems like they are more aligned with Boothe-Schmidt, as I’ve reiterated above. Stand by that conclusion. Endorse and vote for Boothe-Schmidt.

With Debbie, at least we’ll have a chance to have hope for a cleaner environment, and money for helping our children’s subpar schools and reproductive freedom.

HOPE HARRIS
Astoria

Waterfront development

Citizens of Astoria who are concerned about waterfront development should be aware that although we have a Riverfront Vision Plan in place, there will be upcoming master plans from the Port of Astoria that will be decided by the Astoria City Council.

Master plans can change hard-fought height limits, building sizes and land uses.

Discussions have ranged from a “marina village,” proposed by Mark Hollander in the Bridge Vista area, to a “Fishermens Wharf” with a cruise ship dock at the East Mooring Basin.

It is very important to have a city council that respects the Riverfront Vision Plan. That’s why I am supporting Joshua Conklin for Ward 4. Joshua was raised in Astoria, and attended Astoria High School and Clatsop Community College.

He has served the community through volunteer work with The Harbor and Astoria Pride. He is concerned about the impacts of outside developers making changes that will “impact Astoria for a lifetime.” He is especially focused on affordable and workforce housing.

Joshua believes in “locals first,” and working towards a balance of “honoring Astoria’s history and working towards a future that helps everyone.”

Vote for Conklin in Ward 4.
ELIZABETH MENETREY
Astoria

Favorite month

October is my favorite month. In past writing I have called it “the month of the spider.” They are everywhere spinning their webs. To me, they are beautiful. My car’s outside mirror has webs encasing it. They go from bush to bush. The web gets you as you go out the front door.

October is a changing of season and colors. Soon we will go to standard time, and darkness will come earlier. The fog rolls in and the days become colder. Most people like to frolic in the summer. I like to settle into winter and enjoy. Yes, the rains will come. We know this and still live here because most love it.

This is also a tense year in history because of the virus, and also the emotions of the coming election, which divide us. But we are happy to have this divide in a country which gives us freedom of expression and choice.

As the October days go by, we anticipate the changes. Halloween is coming, then Thanksgiving and finally the Christmas season. The past decorations are searched for. An old gourd or plastic pumpkin is found.

Whether we like it or not we are getting ready for the approaching season. The witches are hung from the street lamps in Astoria, and the excitement of children is always there.

The virus doesn’t make this an easy time. Mostly working hard to get through this very nasty bug. With patience and effort, we will.

NORM HOOGE
Astoria

THE ASTORIAN’S ENDORSEMENTS

President: Former Vice President Joe Biden (D)

Vice President: U.S. Sen. Kamala Harris (D)

U.S. Senate: U.S. Sen. Jeff Merkley (D)

U.S. House: U.S. Rep. Suzanne Bonamici (D)

Oregon Secretary of State: State Sen. Shemia Fagan (D)

State House District 32: Tillamook Mayor Suzanne Weber (R)

Measure 107 (campaign finance limits): Yes

Measure 108 (tobacco taxes): Yes

Measure 109 (psilocybin therapy): No

Measure 110 (drug decriminalization and treatment): No

Measure 4-205 (Second Amendment sanctuary): No

ASTORIA CITY COUNCIL

Ward 2: City Councilor Tom Brownson

Ward 4: Tom Hilton

WARRENTON CITY COMMISSION

Position 1: Gerald Poe

GEARHART CITY COUNCIL

Position 2: City Councilor Reita Fackerell

Position 4: City Councilor Dan Jesse

SEASIDE CITY COUNCIL

Ward 4: David Posalski

Improvisation

President Donald Trump should take an improvisation class to make the stories he creates richer in detail, and help him craft stories that at least sound like they could be true.

An August scene performed by Trump and Laura Ingraham of Fox News demonstrated just how much Trump could benefit from a beginners’ improv class.

Ingraham gave him great prompts that he couldn’t build on. She asked him to describe things on planes and he said they were wearing “dark uniforms, black uniforms with gear and this and that.”

Then he said they came from “a certain city” (unspecified) and that he heard all that from “a person.”

If you did an improv that lazy on a stage, the audience would demand its money back.

Nonetheless, Trump does seem to have what it takes to be a solid improv performer — a wild imagination and a truly demented stage presence.

ROBERT BRAKE
Ocean Park, Washington