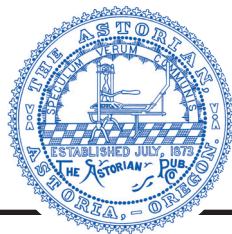


OPINION



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GUEST COLUMN

Republican governor nominee will be chosen by small pool of voters

Roughly 4% of Oregon's voters will choose the state's Republican candidate for governor.

That estimate comes from pollster John Horvick, senior vice president at DHM Research in Portland.

It stems from the fact that 19 Republicans are on their party's gubernatorial ballot at the May 17 primary election. Some have legitimate chances to win. More probably believe they do.

"When the Democrats look weak, it inspires lots of Republicans to run," Horvick said. "When lots of Republicans run, the winner makes it though the primary with a small share of the vote. But because Democrats are weak, the Republican is still competitive in the general."



DICK HUGHES

The enticing question becomes, will those 4% yield a candidate who can appeal to a broader swath of Oregonians in November?

The Democratic race is generally seen as a contest between two Portland-area politicians — former state House Speaker Tina Kotek and State Treasurer Tobias Read — but 15 people are on the ballot.

And well-funded independent Betsy Johnson is waiting in the wings.

Horvick bases the 4% estimate on



Mark Graves/The Oregonian

In early April, 11 of the 19 Republican candidates for governor participated in a debate hosted by the advocacy group #TimberUnity.

historical data — about a 50% voter turnout in the GOP primary and the winner receiving 35% of those votes.

Kevin Mannix won the 2002 Republican primary with 35% and Chris Dudley won in 2010 with 39%. They came closest so far this century to ending the Democratic hold on the governor's office.

Though Democrat Ted Kulongoski won the 2002 general election with 49% of the vote. Mannix gained 46.2%. In 2010, Democrat John Kitzhaber returned to the governorship with 49.3% of the vote, but Dudley was close with 47.8%.

In contrast, Gov. Kate Brown claimed a majority four years ago — 50.1% to Republican Knute Buehler's 43.7%.

The strong showings by Mannix and Dudley occurred at times when DHM Research surveys showed keen dissatisfaction with the state's direction. This year, the satisfaction level — headed in the right direction versus on the wrong track — hit the lowest level in 25 years. Meanwhile, the latest voting registration figures from the Secretary of State's Office show Republicans gained about 1,300 voters in the past month and Democrats have lost that many.

Eleven of the Republican candidates turned out this month for a two-hour debate sponsored by #TimberUnity on natural resource issues. All 11 stressed their conservative credentials and commitment to the timber, agriculture and

related industries.

Among the comments: Brandon Merritt said Republicans are well-positioned to win. He was the rare candidate who said that to do so, Republicans must be able to reach the political center — not changing their conservative values but evolving. He noted there are more nonaffiliated voters in Oregon than either Republicans or Democrats.

Bud Pierce talked about how to get agencies on the side of the timber industry and about the need to expand Oregon's Right-to-Farm Law. Bob Tiernan said conserving water was the best way out of drought, but he also advocated building more reservoirs and canals and exploring cloud seeding.

Stan Pulliam was among those vowing to trim the state workforce.

Christine Drazan and others praised #TimberUnity's carbon emissions proposal that countered Brown's carbon tax and trade plan. "It was Kate's way or the highway. And let's be honest, for House Republicans, we chose the highway," Drazan said.

The candidates were cordial to one another but, unsurprisingly, not to Brown and Democrats.

"Republicans aren't perfect. But the other side, a lot of them are really crazy," said Court Boice.

Dick Hughes has been covering the Oregon political scene since 1976.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

True understanding

Just whom do the Clatsop County commissioners work for?

When my husband and I purchased a vacation home for family use, we chose to purchase on the beautiful north Oregon Coast and, upon arrival, we were greeted by friendly neighbors. Yay, we thought, this is truly a neighborhood environment, one where folks know each other and watch out for each other.

In the seven years that we've owned our home, more and more of the houses in our neighborhood became short-term rentals. Now homes are being sold to actual rental companies, with no pretense of residential living.

Those first neighbors we came to love moved due to health reasons, and their home sold and became a short-term rental. Now we have a true understanding of the impact that rentals have in a residential neighborhood.

We no longer have a consistent friend across the street, we now have a house that can turn over as many as three times in one week. These visiting groups do not become part of our community of neighbors.

The Clatsop County commissioners are right now deciding whether to change the rules on what is allowed in our Coastal Residential zone.

Short-term rentals are a business, and voters should decide whether they want neighborhoods to turn into business ventures. Please contact your county commissioners and let them know what you think! Let them know they should not be making these important decisions without the voters!

SUSAN PADUANO
Boise, Idaho

Greed of a few

We have reached the end of our ability to accommodate short-term rentals in our neighborhoods. Our Clatsop County commissioners have failed us and now our businesses are struggling to stay open due to lack of staff housing.

We all saw the warning signs from other communities with tourist-based economies, and ignored them because it was easier to reap the benefits of an over-booked destination.

The greed of a few has led to the suffering of many. We need to act now.

Make no mistake, wealthy out-of-town homeowners are running commercial businesses in residential neighborhoods. It would be illegal to build a hotel in a residential zone, but you can build a house and rent out its rooms.

Ask your commissioner where they stand on short-term rental issues, and if they do not believe in drastic change and reform: Vote them out! And, encourage others to do the same.

ROBERT TAYLOR
Warrenton

Humanity

Regarding "Tensions over homelessness make providing social services difficult downtown" (The Astorian, April 14): Erin Carlsen and Osarch Orak,



LETTERS WELCOME

Letters should be exclusive to The Astorian. Letters should be fewer than 250 words and must include the writer's name, address and phone number. You will be contacted to confirm authorship. All letters are subject to editing for space, grammar and factual accuracy. Only two letters per writer are allowed each month. Letters written in response

to other letter writers should address the issue at hand and should refer to the headline and date the letter was published. Discourse should be civil. Send via email to editor@dailyastorian.com, online at bit.ly/astorianletters, in person at 949 Exchange St. in Astoria or mail to Letters to the Editor, P.O. Box 210, Astoria, OR., 97103.

It's just in the City Commission, where the rules continually change in interpretation, that I get into trouble. I believe others in our community have experienced that same problem.

It would be great if the city could get someone with the correct credentials to teach us about what the rules absolutely are, and are not.

RICK NEWTON
Warrenton City Commissioner

No longer ignore

There is a dangerous uprising I can no longer ignore. Plastic is mounting a deadly attack, and I feel called to see beyond the foolishness of this predicament for ways I can help save our planet.

So I am more mindful now of my use of plastic, wiser about its hidden dangers, and I have begun to do my part in helping reduce, recycle and reuse.

Hard to find in the stores where we typically buy groceries and toiletries, I recently purchased silk dental floss. Granted, a small thing in literally a sea filled with wave after wave of plastic around the globe, but it's something, nonetheless, and every time I floss it reminds me to seek eco-friendly alternatives.

Earth Day on April 22 reminds us that care for the Earth is something we are called to do every day of the year. And while responsible use of plastic is a very complicated issue, it can be as easy as flossing with silk.

JERRY R. O'NEILL
Hammond

the two people responsible for operating LiFEBoat Services and Beacon Clubhouse in downtown Astoria, deserve our admiration for their humanity and commitment to the residents of Clatsop County.

They make our county a better place to live for everyone. They spend their time and limited funding to uplift people who are forgotten and denigrated by "better" people.

Those who fear what they are doing, and who they are doing it for, should give them a call and go visit their comfortable rooms. They will learn about the services they offer, and meet the people who stay there and learn to thrive because of Carlsen's and Orak's unwavering dedication to those people in our community who need to find a healthier direction.

We don't need to run people like Carlsen and Orak, and places like LiFEBoat Services and Beacon Clubhouse, out of town, we need to find a way to

come more like them to come in and stay here.

TESS CHEDSEY
Warrenton

Teach us

To the people I represent in the Warrenton/Hammond area: After the publishing of the article in The Astorian on April 14 about the last Warrenton City Commission meeting, it appears my major offense is that I don't follow Robert's Rules of Order under the current interpretation at that moment.

I have read that whole boring book, I work in meetings with a nationally recognized instructor for Robert's Rules, and I have no problem in those meetings, because the guidelines are always in the same place. I do well in the mass amount of meetings I attend throughout the year, all of which are run under Robert's Rules.