

OUR VIEW

# Vote Dorrان for county commissioner

It's fair to say the candidates for Umatilla County commissioner come with some baggage.

Dan Dorrان took home the most votes in the May primary. Ahead of the Nov. 3 runoff, he has support from much of the local political establishment. However, he was arrested for driving under the influence of intoxicants in September after drinking at a golf tournament.

Dorrان's challenger, HollyJo Beers, is an active member of the Three Percenters. In addition to being involved in the failed recall of Gov. Kate Brown and anti-COVID lockdown protests, she's called members of the nearby tribes "the most racist people" she's encountered.

Pat Maier, who has spent 17 years doing business through her company I-A Construction & Fire, came in third place in the primary and is now mounting a write-in campaign. She used a recent voter's forum to compare systemic racism to being kicked off a youth baseball team as a kid.

And just for good measure, the fourth-place finisher in the May primary, Jonathan Lopez, publicized a racist letter he claimed was dropped anonymously in his mailbox before later admitting he wrote it himself.

Not a strong cast of candidates, but like the saying goes, someone has to win.

And in this instance we believe, his recent DUI arrest notwithstanding, Dorrان is the strongest candidate to replace outgoing two-term commissioner Bill Elfering.

The Hermiston resident served on the Umatilla County Fair Board from 1998 to 2017, and during his time on the board, the fair's annual attendance ballooned from around 20,000 at the most to more than 80,000. Dorrان was also a member of the steering committee that worked on the \$21 million development of the Eastern Oregon Trade and Event Center in Hermiston that is now home to the fair.

Most recently, Dorrان served on the county's charter review committee in 2019, giving him a detailed education on the county's structure and bylaws. He currently sits on boards for the Farm-City Pro Rodeo and Umatilla County 4-H Association.

Beers has been politically engaged with Umatilla County's chapter of the Oregon Three Percenters, a group she now leads locally that is devoted to resisting infringements on the Constitution by the U.S. government.

In Umatilla County, the Oregon Three Percenters have particularly petitioned and lobbied for greater protections of the Second Amendment, which Beers claims as essential to protecting the rest.

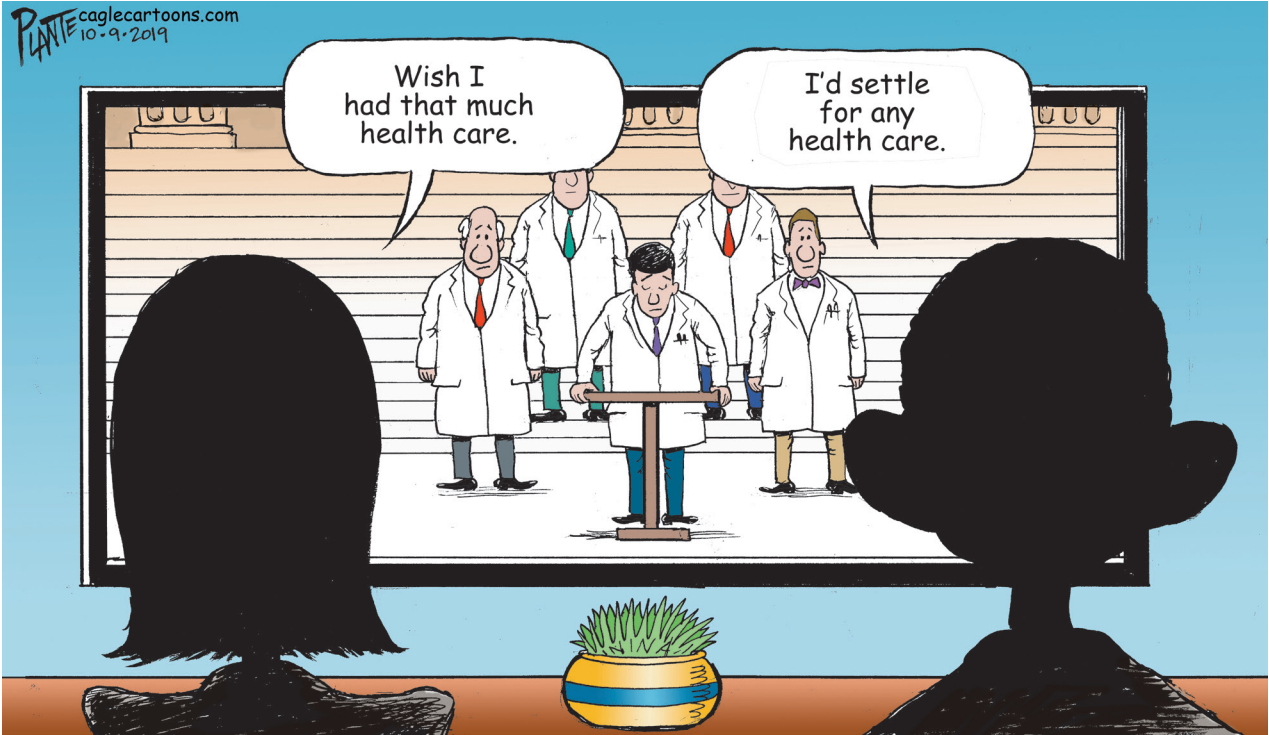
Nationally, the Three Percenters have been associated with protests against immigrants and refugees, and were notably sympathetic toward Ammon Bundy and the 2016 occupation of the Malheur National Wildlife Refuge. The Southern Poverty Law Center classifies them as an "anti-government extremist group," although Beers disputes that description.

It's Dorrان's long-standing engagement in the county that caused us to endorse him in the spring and is leading us to endorse him again, despite his recent arrest. Voters should remember that Dorrان was involved in a two-car collision on Sept. 26. Everyone involved was fortunate that there were no injuries; it could have been much worse. Voters should also remember it wasn't Dorrان taking the initiative to issue a statement that broke the news, but the *Walla Walla Union-Bulletin*.

Once forced to acknowledge the arrest, Dorrان did and said all of the right things — taking "full responsibility," the arrest was a "hard awakening" and he's "100%" owning the choice to get behind the wheel.

If that's the case, then we applaud that. As far as we know, there is no history of DUI in Dorrان's past, and everyone deserves a second chance. But we also believe that elected officials should be held to a higher standard, which is why we published the news and are bringing it up again now.

However, our endorsement is based not on Dorrان's past mistake, but on the future. Going forward, we believe Dorrان will do the best job in leading the county.



OUR VIEW

# Rowan running unopposed for sheriff

Umatilla County Sheriff Terry Rowan is running unopposed in the Nov. 3 general election.

Rowan is seeking a third term as sheriff, a position he's held since first being elected in 2012. In 2016, he defeated challenger Ryan Lenhart.

Rowan's experience in law enforcement is vast and diverse. He has 23 years of law enforcement experience — all in Umatilla County, with service as a dispatcher/control room operator, corrections officer, transport officer, civil deputy, criminal patrol deputy and criminal investigator. Rowan also worked with the Hermiston Police Department as a police officer, detective and agency leader.

Rowan also served as the undersheriff for the Umatilla County Sheriff's Office.

It's an impressive resume, for sure, and overall, we feel the sheriff has done a fine job in office, but there are some areas that could be improved.

We hope in his next term that his office is more transparent and more communicative. Case in point, when a man was killed in an apparent road rage incident outside Hermiston on June 20 it took three days before the sheriff's office released any information or even acknowledged there was a shooting. By the time the sheriff's office released an initial statement that there had been a shooting, they had already worked with other law enforcement agencies to locate and arrest a suspect — a central detail they failed to tell the public for almost three weeks.

In this era of social media, rumors fly and it is important for the sheriff's office to be controlling the narrative — and you need to do that through reliable media outlets.

We also have heard rumblings of growing issues out of the sheriff's office, dispatch center and county jail that include staff resigning for ethical concerns and an unhealthy work environment due to a lack of accountability and transparency from the office's leadership.

It's important to note, again, that at this point they are simply "rumblings" and nothing concrete. However, if they prove to be true, these are concerning issues and deserve immediate — and transparent — attention from Rowan and the county commissioners.

The sheriff's office needs to always be a work in progress. Its leader needs to be striving to improve. Rowan has the leadership experience that gives him a chance to deliver, and we hope if — as is likely — he serves another term as sheriff that he takes these criticisms seriously and works to improve his department.

# Life is better with good friends, good dogs



COREY NEISTADT  
AS I SEE IT

I have enjoyed great friendships with some wonderful people. It just so happens the best of those people have had some great dogs over the years. Specifically, bird dogs.

The second full weekend of October marks the opening of pheasant season in Oregon. For about 30 years, I have been enjoying that weekend in the sod waterways, ditches and draws between Fulton Grain Elevator and Juniper Canyon with an amazing group of people. Some have been in the group since our days as Buckaroos in the mid-'80s. The newcomers to the group joined after college, and now our kids have joined the fray.

Along the way, I have had the pleasure to hunt over some great bird dogs owned by myself and others in the group. The first was Jake. He was a black lab who had no quit in him. He was a do-it-all dog. He could flush a rooster in the morning and jump ducks in the afternoon. He'd steal your sandwich if you weren't careful. Jake wasn't around long enough. After he passed away, Spike joined the group. He busted through more brush than a coastal logger.

Spike was joined for a few years by sisters Rizzo and Bernice. They hailed from a kennel on Sauvie Island and were the first dogs anyone did any research on before they joined the family. Rizzo and Bernice were like Ferraris, while Spike was more like one of those big Army trucks that only go 45 mph down the freeway.

There weren't many birds that could get through that trifecta. The two sisters would motor through the cover, while Spike lumbered behind, cleaning up the birds they missed. For a few glorious years, we enjoyed these three in front of us in the field. Unfortunately, Bernice inhaled a piece of cheat grass that became infected, and she passed away after only three years. Rizzo grew old with Spike and they lived long, full lives.

Next came Benny. They say you own one great dog in your life. Benny may not have been that dog, but he sure tried — when it was easy. He didn't particularly like busting through the brush for birds. He liked to run where it was easy, catch their scent, then dive in the easiest way possible. Benny hunted this way and drooled on all of us for 11 years.

Up to this point we had been very committed to the Labrador retriever, specifically the black ones. As we've gotten older, some of us are not as fast as we used to be, sporting reconstructed knees and a few extra pounds. A couple of us moved on to the old man dogs, also known as pointers.

Our first pointer was Dot, a German shorthair. Dot just finished her eighth year with us and has always been a pleasure to watch. Guinness, a Drathaar, joined two years after Dot. He is currently in his prime. He pointed and retrieved over a dozen roosters in less than an hour in Juniper Canyon on Saturday.

Also, in our group we've had the pleasure to know and hunt over Libby, Kona, Ally, Chester, Drake and many more. Waiting in the wings to show us their stuff next year are puppies Bunny and Darwin.

Like any group of people who have been lifelong friends, we share major life milestones. We were all married around the same time. We all have kids within a few years of each other. And, it turns out, we've officially reached the age where conversations around the campfire turn to when we'll schedule our first colonoscopy and which of us are suffering from sleep apnea.

Though we generally focus on the happy things in our lives on our annual weekend trip, as a group we've had our share of setbacks and heartache. There have been divorces, the loss of a child, and several in our group have lost a parent. Sunday afternoon as we finished hunting our last ditch, I turned to another member of our group and remarked how lucky we all are. Lucky to be able to drop everything and hunt together for a weekend every year, lucky to live in an area where the hunting is so spectacular and the land so plentiful, and lucky to be able to share the field with each other, our kids and our dogs.

Corey Neistadt is a certified public accountant at Newhouse & Neistadt, LLC in Pendleton.

YOUR VIEWS

## Matlack does what is right for Morrow County

I started in Morrow County as a patrol deputy in 1989, and in the years since I have been honored to work with some outstanding leaders. However, none have been as inspirational to me as Sheriff Kenneth W. Matlack.

I had the honor of working for Ken from January 2005 through March 2016, when I retired as his undersheriff. During that time frame, I came to know Ken as a great administrator, mentor and friend. Ken continually worked to ensure that the sheriff's office not only enforced the laws but

### LETTERS DEADLINE

The East Oregonian does not run endorsements of more than 400 words. The East Oregonian will institute a deadline for letters to the editor, so we can be fair with all the letters we receive and allow for responses before Election Day, if necessary. We run the letters on a first-come, first-served basis. Please submit your endorsement letters to the editor by noon Friday, Oct. 23. You can email them to editor@eastoregonian.com, or mail them to East Oregonian, c/o Andrew Cutler, 211 S.E. Byers Ave., Pendleton, 97801. We will publish our last letters on Saturday, Oct. 31. Any letters received after the deadline will not run. Election Day is Nov. 3.

would also "do what was right" by the citizens of Morrow County whenever possible.

When he was campaigning originally, his slogan was "Go The Extra Mile" and I am here to tell you he has never failed to do just that.

I encourage you to reelect Kenneth W. Matlack as your Morrow County sheriff. Do not risk a proven track record. I know he will have my vote for as long as he wants to remain sheriff.

Steve Myren  
Boardman