

# It's time to 'Cowgirl Up!' as GOP women meet in Seaside

By Eve Marx  
For Cannon Beach Gazette

Republican women are hoping an aggressive "get in the saddle campaign" can give a big boost to state and national Republican efforts in this election year.

Oregon Federation of Republican Women President Janice Williamson said her 15 years experience with rodeo, gymkhana, jackpot rodeo and barrel racing plus working horses for the track taught her the importance of putting shoulder to harness and saddling up. "We've got a lot of work to do," Williamson said from her home in Salem.

On March 10, the state federation met at the Convention Center in Seaside to kick off their two-day spring board meeting. Inspired by the theme, "Cowgirl Up," about 100 women are expected to attend.

"I decided to call the meeting 'Cowgirl Up — Freedom

IS a Big Deal' because that's what we need to be doing, Williamson said.

Williamson said she sees the federation as a way to build numbers and strength for the state federation, National Federation of Republican Women and the Oregon Republican Party.

"I'm in a unique position to help us get a voice at the table with Oregon Republican Party," she said. "It will make us stronger, more prominent to increase our membership."

## National president

Carrie Almond, president of the National Federation of Republican Women, will be the March 11 luncheon speaker. Almond was elected National Federation of Republican Women president at the 38th Biennial Convention in Phoenix and took office in January.

A resident of Chillicothe, Missouri, Almond is the former president of the Missouri Federation of Republican

Women, and served as the national federation's second vice president and treasurer. "Pulling Together in an Election Year" will be her speech topic.

Oregon gubernatorial candidates Dr. Bud Pierce and Bob Niemyer will be the afternoon speakers.

The Oregon Federation of Republican Women meets at the same time and place as the 52nd Annual Dorchester Conference.

"We schedule our meeting so that the ladies can attend Dorchester at the same time and participate in that," Williamson said. "That's where they introduce new candidates and sitting legislators so people can meet them in a casual atmosphere."

## Policy platform

Williamson said the federation did a lot of work in 2014, but needs to do more to get more Republicans elected in Oregon.

## Seaside's 'Helping Hands' at federation conference

North Coast Republican Women President Pat Roberts and District 1 Director Coral Rose Shipley will assist with Oregon Federation of Republican Women's "Caring for America" project: "Helping Hands of Seaside." The federation has selected Helping Hands Reentry Outreach Center for their philanthropy project.

As Seaside residents, both Roberts and

Shipley want the North Coast Republican Women to know they would be welcome as members.

Williamson declined to name a Republican Presidential candidate the federation will be supporting. "We have a policy where there are multiple candidates not to come out in support as a federation until after the primaries," she said.

The primary issues for women in the state are jobs and high unemployment.

"What's going on in the capital is terrible right now for the Oregon people," she said. "It's only going to be worse raising the minimum wage."

"The other problem is the health care system in this state only benefits people on Medicaid," she continued. "They've spent all the health care money. The state isn't going to get any more money back from the Feds, so we're left to fend for ourselves to get insurance

and the insurance companies are raising their rates. This is terrible for single mothers with children."

From her home in Missouri, Almond said there are 23 million unregistered voters in the U.S. who lean Republican. "In 2014 the National Federation of Republican Women logged over 4.2 million volunteer campaign hours," she said. "If you put that at \$10 an hour, that means Republican women gave \$42 million worth of our time for our candidates across the country. There are 65 million

women belonging to the National Federation. Working side by side with the Republican National Committee, we will take back the White House."

Williamson said the federation chose Seaside to hold their event because that's where it's been held for at least 30 years.

"You have to have someplace the ladies like to go and a venue large enough to accommodate the crowd," she said.

Sixty to 80 attendees is the norm but because this is an election year, Williamson said she anticipates at least 100.

# Dorchester Conference aiming beyond GOP

## Republicans take on the tough issues at gathering

By R.J. Marx  
Cannon Beach Gazette

Seventeen days, 14 hours 20 minutes and 49 seconds. At the time of this writing that is how much time remains before the 52nd annual Dorchester Conference.

The ticking clock online heralds the tradition-rich, Republican gathering, started by U.S. Sen. Bob Packwood 52 years ago "as a vehicle to get the senator elected," Dorchester's 2016 President Tom Simpson said recently. Most of the years, the conference has convened in Seaside, except for a few when the group met in central Oregon.



Tucker Carlson



Tom Simpson

While traditionally associated with the GOP, Simpson said the conference is aimed at the "moderate-middle, especially the moderate side of the Oregon electorate."

"It is 'Participatory Democracy 101,' a way for people to come together and chat with people they just met, (be) challenged on the beliefs they have, and go away hopefully smarter and having met some people they might not normally have met," Simpson said. "That's what we set out to do."

Opening ceremonies begin March 11. Tucker Carlson of Fox News appears as keynote

speaker Saturday morning, followed by a Q&A. State Sen. Ted Ferrioli, R-John Day, and Rep. Mike McLane, R-Powell Butte, share the dais Saturday. After lunch, state treasurer candidates from the Democratic, Republican and Independent parties debate. Breakout sessions, social hour and a tent show follow. For \$40, guests can have their photo taken with Carlson, with proceeds going to the nonprofit Returning Veterans Project.

A presidential straw poll Sunday will provide a glimpse at the state's November leanings, although they do not serve as an endorsement, Simpson said.

While associated with the Republican Party, Simpson encouraged Oregonians of all political affiliations to attend.

"We like to think we're allowing conversations that aren't taking place," Simpson said. "There were certain conversations that weren't taking place

in the Republican Party. If you're a one-party state, what's not being talked about? We try to set it up in such a way that we can have that conversation."

Simpson said he hoped to challenge the beliefs of those attending the conference.

What does it mean, for example, if Oregon's ranchers are fighting to privatize some public lands?

"We want people to consider what it means to have a public land," Simpson said. "Could beaches be privatized as an unintended consequence?"

Gun control was an issue originally considered "off the table" for the conference, he said.

Simpson fought to bring it back in. "We were told that it's not an issue open to debate. Which says to me that's why we should be debating it. If you're closing off argument on a topic

because you believe it's settled, I can guarantee in Oregon, it's not settled."

"We shouldn't be throwing bombs at each other," he added. "It needs to be talked about. Reasonable people can disagree."

When he's not involved with the Dorchester Conference Simpson, 53, works as director of government affairs for Standard Insurance.

The conference is an event, the Lake Oswego resident said, he's been involved with all his life.

"I have pictures of my mother Josephine running the forums," Simpson said. "A lot of my peers would go skiing or play golf — I would go to Dorchester."

Those interested in signing up for the Dorchester Conference may do so through Saturday, March 12.

## PUBLIC MEETINGS

**Tuesday, March 15**  
Cannon Beach Public Works, 9 a.m., City Hall 163 E. Gower St.

**Seaside School District**, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin St.

**Thursday, March 17**  
Cannon Beach Design Review Board, City Hall, 6 p.m. 163 E. Gower St.

**Thursday, March 24**  
Cannon Beach Planning Commission, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Friday, March 25**  
Cannon Beach Emergency Preparedness Committee, 10 a.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

**Tuesday, April 19**  
Cannon Beach Public Works, 9 a.m., City Hall 163 E. Gower St.

**Seaside School District**, 6 p.m., 1801 S. Franklin St.

**Thursday, April 21**  
Cannon Beach Design Review Board, City Hall, 6 p.m. 163 E. Gower St.

**Cannon Beach Planning Commission**, 6 p.m., City Hall, 163 E. Gower St.

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- Inn at Haystack Rock
- Mariner Market
- Martin Hospitality
- Mo's Restaurant

- Picnic Basket
- Pig 'N Pancake
- Purple Moon/Morris' Fireside Restaurant
- RE/MAX Coastal Advantage
- Sea Ranch RV Park
- Sea Sprite at Haystack Rock
- Sea Sprite on the Estuary
- Surfcrest Market
- Sweet Basil's Cafe & The Wine Bar
- The Land's End Motel
- The Ocean Lodge
- The Stephanie Inn
- The Waves Motel
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