

'COWGIRL UP!'

GOP women to meet in Seaside

By Eve Marx
For Seaside Signal

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 meets 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

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Janice Williamson,
Oregon Federation of Republican
Women president

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 Niemeier 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.

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



SUBMITTED PHOTO/SEASIDE SIGNAL
Carrie Almond, president of 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.

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.

Dorchester Conference aims beyond GOP

Republicans take on the tough issues at gathering

By R.J. Marx
Seaside Signal

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.

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 Ferr-

iol, 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?



Dorchester Conference 2016 President Tom Simpson



Tucker Carlson

"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.

Naturalist Maine to give presentation on rainforest

Join naturalist Neal Maine of PacificLight Images for a conversation in words and images about the forest native to this coast in a presentation titled "How to See a Rainforest" Wednesday, March 16, at 6 p.m. at Seaside Public Library. It is the third program in the 2016 Listening to the Land speaker series, which this year is following the theme of water. Admission is free; refreshments are served.

To begin to understand our rainforest — past, present, and future — you need to do more than follow the rain as it splashes on a tree's needles, runs down the bark, and reaches the roots in the soil. For instance, the biologist notes, "They look like a bunch of individual trees, but in fact they are literal-

ly all communicating with one another." As always, Maine will take us below the surface of things, from how things seem to work to how — according to the latest science — things really work and what scientists still don't understand about the rainforest biome.

After a 30-year career as an award-winning biology teacher at Seaside High School, Neal Maine became the first executive director of North Coast Land Conservancy. Since his retirement in 2010, he has pursued his passion to make deeper connections to the coastal system, using photography to record some of his experiences and to develop greater public appreciation of living in what he considers paradise.

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