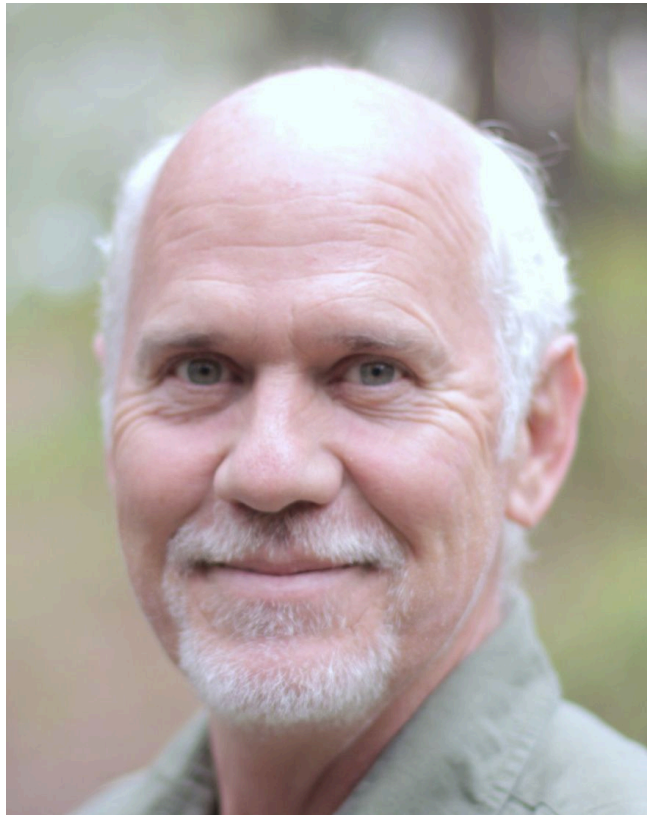

Guest Column: The cast of characters is set

August 27, 2022



Last week, I was watching and waiting to see who would file to run for city council and school board.

Today, I am going to focus my observations on the three races that just closed last Wednesday. If you were not watching closely, you missed the drama of who was or was not going to declare their candidacy. Here is a report for those who are keeping score at home.

Sometimes it gets a little confusing. The deadline for declaring candidacy was August 12 for all the races where the incumbent is running. However, if the incumbent did not run, then the deadline was extended five more days to August 17. Three incumbents decided not to run, one city council and two school board members.

The story on the city council race has a special twist. The three city council members' terms that are expiring include incumbents Blake Inscore, Isaiah Wright and appointed Council Member Ray Altman.

Ray was appointed in 2020 to fill the vacancy when another council member resigned. But he was only appointed to serve until the next regular election which is November 8, 2022. This leaves a two year, "short

term” that was open for filing this year.

Ray had the option to run for the short term or the full four-year term, which is what he did. Isaiah Wright also filed to run for the full term. No one had filed for the short term, until three days before the August 12 deadline, then Blake Inscore stepped up to run.

Since the incumbent Blake Inscore did not run for the full term, the city council deadline got extended until August 17. This left a tense five days waiting to see if anyone would file at the last minute.

In the end, no one else filed to run for city council so the three that filed win by default. Ray Altman and Isaiah Wright are elected to a full four-year term and Inscore will serve for another two years. Ray took Blake’s seat and Blake took Ray’s seat. When the music stopped, everyone had a chair.

Don’t worry there is plenty of drama left.

Because Angela Greenaugh and Jamie Forkner declined to run for the 2nd District and 5th District school board seats, this filing deadline was also extended to August 17.

There are two candidates that have filed to run for the 2nd District School Board seat. William Meriwether is an Army veteran and currently teaches political science at the College of the Redwoods. Abbie Crist recently retired and returned to Del Norte County after practicing law for 33 years in the Los Angeles area. I look forward to substantive discussions of education policy from these two.

There are also two candidates running for the 5th District school board seat. Phillip Williams is an Army veteran and lifelong citizen of Del Norte County. He currently serves as a Yurok Tribe councilman. Michael Greer is a retired special education teacher and a recent immigrant from Paradise, California where he served on the school board. I will expect nothing but respectful discourse from these two gentlemen.

The race for harbor commissioner closed on August 12 because both incumbents Rick Shepard and Gerhard Weber are running. Three additional candidates have stepped up to vie for a seat at the table: Annie Nehmer, Linda Sutter and Kevin Hendrick. This is by far the most crowded and potentially tumultuous competition. I will leave it up to the voters to vet these candidates. The top two with the most votes win.

The 1st District school board deadline was August 12 because incumbent Don McArthur decided to run for reelection. No one else filed to run against him by the deadline, so Don wins unopposed. It appears that everybody likes Don McArthur.

Don’t forget we still have two live county supervisor races for the 4th and 5th Districts. The 4th District voters must choose between businesswoman Patty Adams and businessman Joey Borges.

Last but not least, the voters in the 5th District have a stark choice between two very different candidates.

Former Sheriff Dean Wilson was a founder of the local Tea Party Patriots. He also advocated for Del Norte County to secede from California to join the State of Jefferson. This effort was voted down by 59 percent of the County voters in 2014.

In contrast, Supervisor Susan Masten helped to write the constitution for the Yurok Tribe and is an economic development leader. She has demonstrated a commitment to building partnerships which will move our community forward together.

Now that the cast of characters is set, it's time for voters to pay attention to what these candidates are saying. It's 74 days until the election and ballots will arrive in seven weeks. The decisions we make as voters will determine who will be representing our interests on the board of supervisors, school board and harbor commission. Please inform your vote and make it count.

Congratulations to Councilmembers Ray Altman, Isaiah Wright and Blake Inscore and school board member Don McArthur on your re-election. Thank you for your service.

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