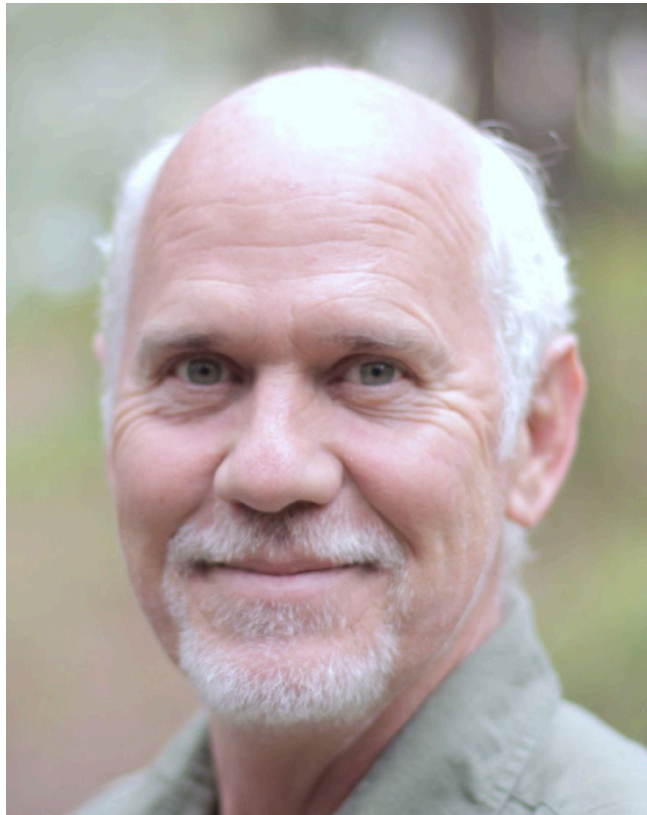


Guest Column: It's a column about nothing

August 24, 2022



I feel a little like I am in political limbo. The filing deadlines for two school board seats and two city council positions have been extended until Wednesday August 17, because the incumbents have chosen not to run. As I write this, I don't know who all is running. By the time you read this, we will know who has filed for these important positions. Maybe next week, I can provide more details on what happened.

Since I have nothing new to report about local campaigns, it occurred to me that I could write a column about nothing. You know like in the old Seinfeld episode when George and Jerry were pitching a TV show about nothing. George says, "You got up and went to work today. That's a show. It's a show about nothing."

The challenge for me is writing 700 words about nothing. When Dan Schmidt first asked me to write this column, my goal was to write 500 words. Early on I stuck to this target. I was surprised that people who liked my column complained that my counter-columnist was getting more ink than me. They thought it was so unfair, but I wasn't concerned. Using more words doesn't always add more clarity.

I try to keep my column shorter to increase the likelihood that people will read it. My word count began ballooning when I started writing about more complex subjects. It just takes more words to provide background and discuss a complicated topic.

I have enjoyed writing my column because it motivates me to drill down on the details of any subject that I choose to write about. I work hard to support my opinions with correct facts. Consequently, I have learned about a variety of subjects ranging from the Klamath Dam Removal to the Tri-Agency Economic Development Authority. I believe that if I can help people be better informed then they will be more prepared to effectively participate in the civic process that often defines the future of our community.

I have also received comments on the title of my column from friends and supporters. They thought it was an insult to me that the newspaper named my column “View from the Left.” They observed that my comments and opinions are not leftist. For the most part this is true.

But the extremist flank of the conservative party has moved so far to the right that there is a wide spectrum available to the left of this.

In any case, I explain to my friends that I chose the title of my column, and I am comfortable with it. Besides it is too late to change now. If I called it something else, how would you find my column?

We all owe a debt of gratitude to my wife, Jill Dovre who has edited every column I’ve written. After I have finished organizing my thoughts on paper, Jill will read it and offer comments to make it clearer and more readable. Not only does she correct typos, punctuation and spelling, but she very often contributes to my thought process when I am writing about policy issues. Her perspective helps me to be more precise in my statements.

I give Jill credit for helping to maintain quality control on my journalistic production line.

This is the 21st column that I have had published in the Triplicate, and only two typos have slipped through. Both times I was missing the word “a”, as in “a” typo.

I appreciate it when readers contact me with comments on my column. So far, all the comments have been supportive. I am grateful that the Triplicate provides me a forum to share my thoughts or lack of thoughts.

Thank you all for continuing to read this column about nothing. Next week I will write about something.

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